

Sanders honored for conservation efforts

By Steve Bandy, News Messenger

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JEFFERSON — Long-time supporters of efforts to maintain the natural beauty of Caddo Lake, Dr. Jack Sanders and his wife Mary Jane Sanders were honored by The Nature Conservancy here Thursday

The Sanders were presented the Fred and Loucille Dahmer Conservation Award by David Bezanson, Northeast Texas program manager for TNC, during the concluding session of the two-day Cypress Basin Flows Workshop at the Jeffersonian Institute.



Courtney Case/News Messenger
(ENLARGE)

Dr. Jack Sanders, left, and his wife, Mary Jane Sanders, look over their plaque from the Nature Conservancy Thursday at the Jeffersonian Institute in downtown Jefferson.

"This couple has provided the lion's share of the assistance we've received with Caddo Lake," Bezanson said in making the announcement of the annual conservation award.

"They've each given so much of their own time to protect Caddo Lake. We are blessed and fortunate to have Caddo Lake and to have people like this who work so hard for it."

In accepting the plaque, Mary Jane Sanders pointed out that she was only 2 weeks old when she first went to Caddo Lake "and it's been part of my life ever since. I have Caddo water running in my veins."

Dr. Sanders related a story of walking across the earthen levies at Caddo, adding that he had many fond memories of experiences at the lake.

Bezanson said it was the Sanders' standing in the community that helped to bring conservation efforts at Caddo Lake to the forefront.

"Dr. Sanders was a veterinarian in the area for many, many years. He knew everyone and everyone knew him," Bezanson said. "In addition to that, he was a member of the Marshall City Commission in the early 1960s so he had the 'political' connections."

Both helped to organize the Longpoint Caddo Lake Club in the 1960s, an organization whose primary goal at the time was to keep the boat roads open in the lake, according to Bezanson. "Those efforts eventually led to the formation of the Cypress Valley Navigation District."

Both also are members — since 1960 — of the Red River Valley Association, Dr. Sanders having served as vice president of that group.

Dr. Sanders is a past recipient of the Forest Conservation Award of the Texas Conservation Program for Region IV of the five regions in Texas. He has been involved with Soil Conservation of Texas and with the Texas Forestry Service since 1958. He remains active in land and water conservation, beef production and tree farming, raising pine timber and hardwood.

In addition to a long list of community and civic contributions, Ms. Sanders currently serves as secretary of the board for the Friends of Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

As an organizing member of the Longpoint Caddo Lake Club, Ms. Sanders also helped with marking the boat roads and the procurement of a replacement dam at the lake.

In 1963 she wrote a letter to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior concerning conservation efforts at the lake.

Both are members of the first Greater Caddo Lake Association and "have been staunch supporters of the development of the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge," Bezanson said.