

Marshall News Messenger: Viewpoint:

Our View: Wednesday, April 12, 2006

Tilting at windmills, again

Tilting at windmills seems to be a favorite past-time for some concerning Caddo Lake. The latest iteration of this is the 6-3 vote by the Cypress Valley Navigation District board to ask for \$400,000 originally given to the Caddo Lake Institute be given to the CVND.

To be clear, six members of the Cypress Valley Navigation District want:

- U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, who worked to help the Caddo Lake Institute get the \$400,000, to change her mind about a project she obviously supports. This is highly unlikely.
- The federal government to take back grant money it has already given to the Caddo Lake Institute. Even if the first highly unlikely event takes place, this seems even more unlikely, unless there were some evidence of wrong-doing.
- The federal government to then take the money it has taken back from the Caddo Lake Institute and give it to the Cypress Valley Navigation District, for, well, uh, stuff. So far as we know, the CVND has no grant application pending. Does anybody think that this would ever, ever happen, even if the first two highly unlikely events were to come true?

We guess at least six people must think so.

The CVND's stated cause is to clean water plants from the lake and improve navigation and this is a highly worthy goal. It could be that there is a way the CVND or some entity could get just a grant.

But neither the government, nor any private entity, issues grants for wishes, hopes or dreams. They want serious plans. They want to know what is going to happen step-by-step and they want every penny of the grant money accounted for in some fashion.

If you want to kill the vegetation you must show the government how you plan to do it, who exactly is going to do it, when it will be done, how much it is going to cost, tell them why it needs to be done, who will benefit and give a reasonable assessment of your chances of success. Do all of that – in detail – and you might have a chance at getting a grant.

But it is patently silly to think the government is going to take grant money from one group and just allot it to another, just like that. To think it might happen shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the process.

We would imagine, however, that those who voted for the resolution understand this process very well and are just taking another stab at attacking the Caddo Lake Institute.

That's really the only explanation that makes sense, no matter what people might be saying.

So our relationship with Caddo Lake interests takes another step backward and most of us are left to wonder, when are we ever going to learn?