

## Workshop discusses ways to improve flow into Caddo

[By ROBIN Y. RICHARDSON, News Messenger]

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JEFFERSON – A two-day workshop focusing on restoring environmental flows into Big Cypress Bayou from Lake o' the Pines to maintain the health of the bayou and Caddo Lake ended Wednesday at the Jeffersonian Institute.

The workshops drew a crowd of more than 50 attendees ranging from scientists, community members, collegians and state officials who came to discuss the flow prescription process and hear updates of on-going work on Big Cypress and Caddo Lake.

"They will make recommendations for ideal flow variations to produce the healthiest wetlands," explained Jack Canson, a member of the Caddo Lake Institute. The institute along with the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Nature Conservancy's Sustainable Waters program hosted the workshops.

Bruce Moring, a biology specialist with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), disclosed his agency's activities on Big Cypress Creek.

"Our efforts have largely been evaluating the flow prescription—part of the Big Cypress building block," he said. "We're looking at sediment, but really need some flow releases from Lake o' the Pines before we do a sediment budget."

He said USGS is also doing baseline geomorphological evaluations to better assess the responses during flow releases. This process looks at sediment characteristics, channel cross section and general assessment of channel conditions.

In addition, USGS is doing an assessment of in-stream habitat at different low flood levels.

"We're looking at fishes, in particular, non-game fishes," Moring said. "Our reach of intent is Lake o' the Pines just about a mile below Jefferson."

Moring said the USGS targeted three sites to study. One of its first efforts at the sites included installing pressure transducers to record pressure and temperature of the area.

"It's a benchmark of the site," he said. They have been documenting their findings every three weeks since March.

Through the agency's fish assemblage survey, they discovered all three sites have a cumulative of 34 species.

Moring said USGS also plans to do a sediment budget, better sediment characterization at Big Cypress and maybe some additional fish surveys.

In his report, Ryan Smith with The Nature Conservancy of Texas shared information about Big Cypress and the watershed geomorphic classification process at Caddo Lake, which has not started yet.

"This is a key component," he said, explaining the procedure involves gathering information about watershed and landscape. The purpose is to better understand watershed contact of the river and how biological characteristics impact natural characteristics.

In his report, Paul Price informed guests about the water quality in the Caddo Lake basin. He said his agency has done systematic monitoring to detect problems. They also do habitat biological samples.

"We have made some real positive steps to understanding how flow and habitat relates," said Joe Trungale, representing the Caddo Lake Institute.