

# Henley's institute signs lease on bayou land

By Diane Jennings

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Two years of negotiations came to fruition Friday for musician Don Henley when his Caddo Lake Institute signed a contract to lease 1,400 East Texas acres from the U.S. Army.

The land, known as Harrison Bayou, was part of the Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant near Karnack, 155 miles east of Dallas. The site is "the perfect outdoor classroom," Mr. Henley said.

Under the contract, it will be used for natural science and education research by local students and educators.

Army officials could not be reached for comment late Friday.

The signing "was a big hurdle," he said, in his efforts to protect and

cultivate an appreciation for the lake.

As a boy Mr. Henley thought Caddo Lake, a swamp full of massive bald cypress trees, which is home to a variety of wildlife, was simply a pretty piece of scenery and a good place to fish.

After years of living in California, however, where he became known as a member of the Eagles band, he came to appreciate its ecological value.

Now Mr. Henley is working to help the next generation appreciate it sooner than he did. "We'd like to show some local young people that they have a unique and valuable resource in their own back yard," he said.

"I'm an education advocate and I want to give something back to the

area where I came from," said Mr. Henley, who now lives in Dallas.

The 30-year lease costs \$10,000 a year, and eventually should include a laboratory and classrooms.

The lake is "my Walden pond," Mr. Henley said, and his efforts to protect and cultivate it have cost him "well into the six figures."

Since founding the institute a couple of years ago, the organization has given monetary awards to students and teachers, financed school computer systems, and paid for research trips abroad, Mr. Henley said.

The signing of the contract is not the end of his commitment, however. Mr. Henley plans to work for further recognition for the lake, including a possible international wetlands center.