

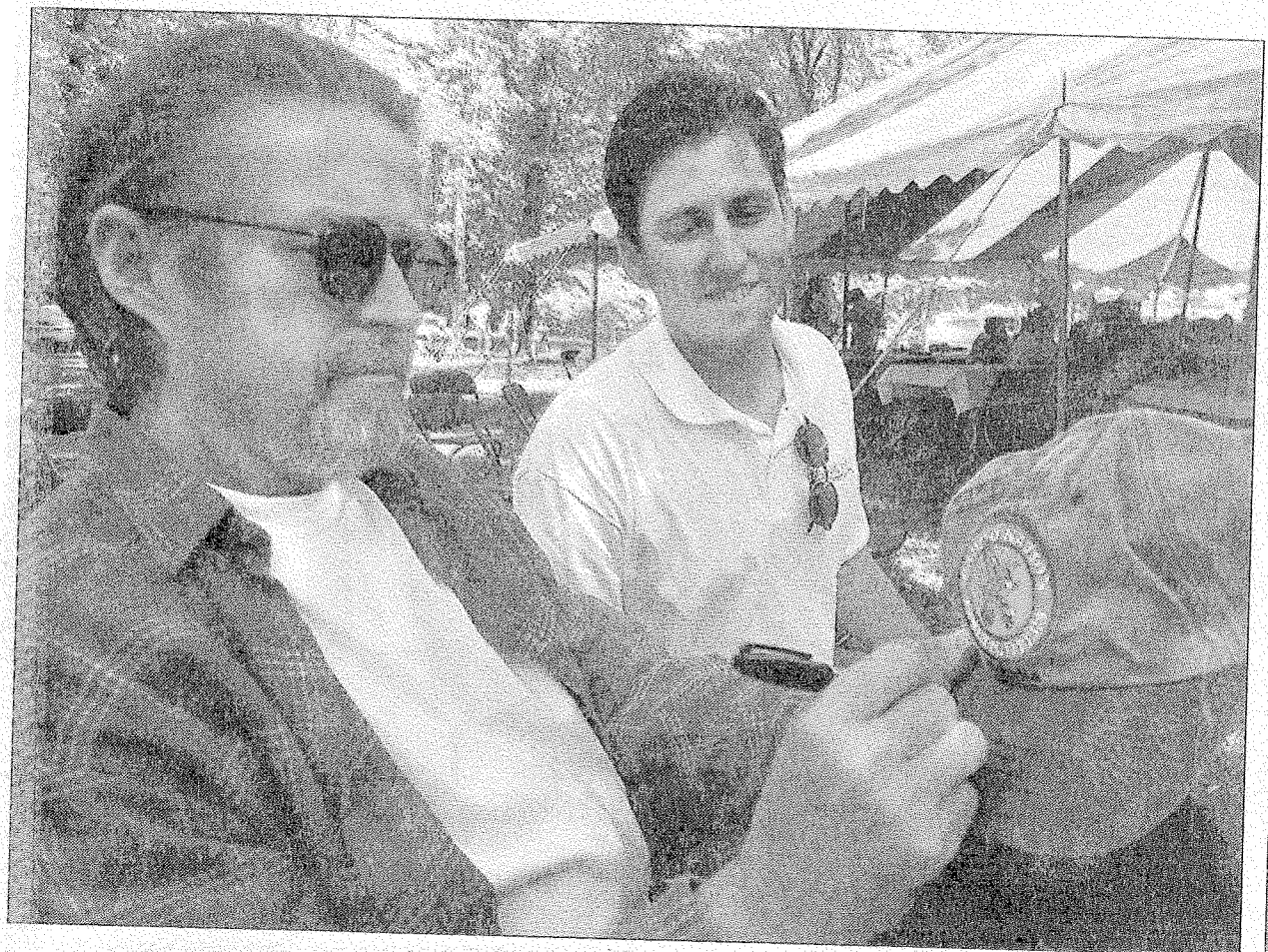
Sunday

May 3, 1998



East Texas

Rock legend Don Henley helps bring attention to the Caddo Lake area, 13A



Kevin Green/Staff Photographer

Don Henley, rock 'n' roll celebrity and founder of the Caddo Lake Institute, autographs a cap for Rich Hirneise, a representative with Ecology and Environment Inc., Saturday at Caddo State Park in Uncertain. Local, state and federal representatives of more than 40 agencies and companies, public and private, appraised a mock disaster drill conducted Friday.

'It's not if, it's when — definitely'

Glenn Evans

Staff Writer

UNCERTAIN — No train derailed at Caddo Lake this weekend, no toxic payload invaded the delicate wetlands and dozens of local, state and federal groups did not have to respond as one unit.

But that's how it would have been, if disaster had struck.

"It's not if, it's, when — definitely," Don Henley said of an inevitable ecological disaster at Texas' largest inland body of water. The founder of the Caddo Lake Institute and rock 'n' roll celebrity returned to his boyhood fishing hole Saturday to hear representatives of more than 40 agencies and companies, public and private, appraise the mock drill they conducted Friday.

The usually far-flung groups included both Texas and Louisiana oil spill response teams, Texas,

Henley, agencies appraise mock drill to plan for 'inevitable' ecological disaster

Louisiana and federal environmental protection agencies, the Caddo Nation, area colleges and universities, ambulance crews, Harrison County sheriff's deputies, game wardens and private companies.

"This is something long overdue, this drill," Henley said before ceremonies began at Caddo Lake State Park. "A lot of these people have talked to each other on the phone and have never met. And that's the wonderful thing about today, is people attaching faces to voices."

The day before, the group had coordinated in response to a mock disaster involving the derailment of a Kansas City Southern Railroad

train. A so-called tabletop drill, the exercise was designed to expose holes in both the store of information and in procedures.

"We each have our jobs and our way of doing it," said Myron Knudson, director of the five-state Region 6 of the Environmental Protection Agency. "What we have shown here is we can work together. Nobody, it turns out, can do the job by themselves."

Caddo Lake Institute Director Dwight Shellman Jr. said maps now exist to pinpoint critical areas such as Caddo Indian burial grounds, endangered habitats, oil wells and other areas most at risk.

"The hit of the drill, I believe, was the mapping," he said. "I'm proud I can come here to a meeting like this, that celebrates our ability to do a better job of protecting this ecosystem."

See Disaster, 15A

Disaster From 13A

Henley, who grew up in Linden and lives in Dallas, told the audience of about 120 the effort had produced a model for caretakers of inland waterways across the country.

"This is where I caught my first fish," he said earlier.

"My daddy brought me when I

was a kid, over on Potter's Point.

"I'm going to bring my kids down here when they're a little older, and tell them about this place.

"That's the whole point, is to preserve the quality of this lake for future generations, for a legacy to them."