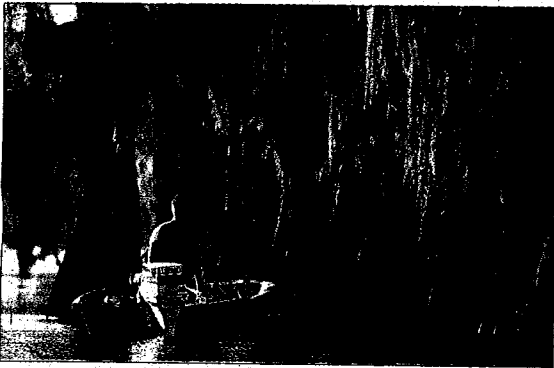


## LETTERS

### THE BATTLE FOR CADDO LAKE



VERNON BRYANT/Staff Photographer

#### TNRCC ran roughshod

Re: "Agencies mired in Caddo water fight," March 11.

I was heartened to see that *The Dallas Morning News* coverage of Caddo Lake's plight. My husband and I relocated to Dallas about four years ago, and found ourselves in perfect agreement (an event worthy of note) that Caddo Lake is one of the best things about Texas. Our stories about the beauty of Caddo Lake inspired 13 friends from Japan to travel here simply to experience it for themselves. All considered it well worth the 7,000-mile trip, and several began planning for a return visit.

With such a treasure at Marshall's doorstep, we were incredulous to learn that it wishes to siphon millions of gallons of water from this shallow wetland, thereby endangering the health of the lake, wildlife and livelihoods of those who work on the lake. However, the most distressing part for me, has been to witness the total lack of democracy in the process leading up to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's approval of Marshall's water permit.

It is my understanding that hundreds of citizens from the areas around Marshall and all over Texas requested that there be a contested hearing given to Marshall's permit change, so that both sides to the issue could be heard on equal footing. However, the TNRCC refused to give them the equal access afforded by a contested hearing, held instead a forum so people could "blow off steam" and then went right ahead and followed the wishes of Marshall. I am still in shock at the blatant disregard for ordinary citizens and their needs, over what a few Marshall politicians with energy-business connections desired. Even if the final decision had been the same, why would the TNRCC not give equal access to ordinary citizens with a vested interest in the lake?

Through it all the only bright point in this drama of democracy in action was the action of Lt. Gov.

Bill Ratliff who responded promptly to concerns of citizens by informing himself about the issue and requesting the TNRCC to hold a contested hearing and give adequate and equal consideration to citizens' needs. But even he was ignored.

Where does the TNRCC derive its power to act so unilaterally?

*Francesca Funk, Irving*

#### Wetlands threatened

Re: "Agencies mired in Caddo water fight," March 11.

I spent some of the most memorable days of my childhood roaming the shores of Caddo Lake. It is, to those of us who love it, a mystical place, a place of great beauty. And I think Entergy, the corporation that purportedly wishes to buy water from Caddo, should refresh its corporate memories regarding its own environmental policy and commitment, which reads, in part: "anywhere we do business we recognize our responsibility to protecting and enhancing the quality of air, water, land, wetlands and other habitats." Elsewhere in Entergy's own environmental policy, they have said, "And we know that we can't play a leadership role on the environment if we don't walk the talk."

Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission do not need to get crossways with each other nor do they need to quarrel with the city of Marshall that wishes to sell the water from Caddo. Entergy can call for an impact study of its own or simply walk away from the purchase. Without a buyer, Marshall would have no need to drain Caddo wetlands.

Entergy is a great corporation with a firmly stated policy to preserve, conserve and care for the local environments where it does business. Let's let Entergy make the right decision about whether it will buy water from Marshall, the source of which threatens one of the few remaining jewels in our dwindling wetlands system.

*Ellen Childress,  
Gun Barrel City*