

CVND gets extra help from state to fight invasive plants

The Marshall News Messenger

Posted: Friday, September 23, 2011 7:59 am

Robin Y. Richardson ryrichardson@marshallnewsmessenger.com

The Cypress Valley Navigation District was granted additional funds from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for fiscal year 2012, despite economic hardships state agencies have experienced.

“We’ve had a contract for two years — \$240,000 approved by the Legislature,” said CVND chairman Jeff Thompson. “It was ending at the end of the year. Fortunately, they’ve (TPWD officials) agreed to amend the contract to give an additional \$75,000 for next year.”

“We’re real excited for additional money to help,” he said. “With all the discussions that have been going on in Austin, I didn’t know if we were going to receive anything,” said Thompson. “There was a possibility we were not going to receive any additional funding.”

Thompson said the funds can assist with a broad range of things; however, its main purpose is for the management and control of giant salvinia, water hyacinth, hydrilla and other plant species on Caddo Lake.

In addition to this grant, a \$40,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service also assists with giant salvinia control.

Thompson said the navigation district’s Aquatic Vegetation Spraying Program primarily targets giant salvinia then water hyacinth.

He reported that to date, a total of 780 acres on Caddo Lake have been sprayed. This includes 630 acres of giant salvinia and 150 acres of water hyacinth.

“We are right on target,” said Thompson, explaining that on the CVND’s Herbicide Application Plan, spanning from April 2011 to August 2011, this is required by TPWD as well as spray cards that indicate the spray location, time and date.

“We had estimated to spray 600 acres of giant salvinia and 100 acres of water hyacinth at our March 2011 meeting,” said Thompson.

Thompson noted that more acreage has been sprayed this year than in years past. The contractor for the 2011 spraying program was Gecko Pest Control.

“Mr. Daren Horton has performed an excellent service,” Thompson said. “His crew works well together with our designated spraying program coordinator to effectively maximize our funds and perform a spraying program that was very target specific — all this being challenged by the record drought and low water conditions and very high temperatures of this summer.”

The Cypress Valley Navigation District is not only experiencing success with its spraying program, it is also doing well with its boat road clearing/tree removal project from the State Highway 43 Bridge in Caddo Lake to Jefferson.

“It included the removal of approximately 260 trees in this section of waterway,” reported Thompson. “This opened many of the troubled areas along the waterway that had become almost impassable to boaters, fishermen and sportsmen who were navigating from Caddo Lake to Jefferson.”

The contractor was Thurman Moore and the cost of this work was \$30,000, for an average cost of \$155 per tree.

“Mr. Moore did an excellent job on this project and the CVND board was very satisfied with his work and the completion of this necessary project,” said Thompson.

“I highly recommend our boaters to go check out this completed project and enjoy this scenic area of Big Cypress Bayou that has been difficult to safely travel in the past years, but I do encourage everyone to exercise caution due to the extremely present low water conditions,” Thompson added. “There are currently some areas that may be too shallow to navigate.”