

Barbecue to benefit Caddo Lake salvinia fight

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Giant salvinia continues to be a problem on Caddo Lake. The Greater Caddo Lake Association will hold a barbecue on Saturday to raise funds to fight the invasive species. Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times

The Greater Caddo Lake Association is fighting giant salvinia on Caddo with barbecue.

The organization's annual cookout of brisket, sausage, barbecue beans with all the fixings will raise money to battle the invasive plant on one of the area's most majestic fisheries.

The event is slated for Saturday at Crip's Camp in Uncertain, Texas, with the food up for sale beginning at 11 a.m. Most of the food is being donated by the GCLA, area restaurants and businesses in the Uncertain area, where the barbecue has been held for decades.

Attendees will be directed to the barbecue by signs around Uncertain. The plates are \$10, including a cold drink. Tents will be set up for the visitors to eat on site, while take-

out plates will be available. The food will be prepared by volunteer chefs in the Caddo Lake area.

"We'll begin serving at 11 a.m., and will continue until we are sold out," said GCLA board member Daren Horton in a release. "We anticipate this will be our biggest attendance ever, so it's a good idea to get there early. We've got some of the best barbeque cookers in the world at Caddo Lake. The great food is a bargain, and knowing that you're helping save Caddo Lake is priceless."

In addition to enjoying some tasty food and hearing some tall tales, information about the fight against salvinia will be distributed.

“We will have experts available to answer questions and audiovisual presentations that do a really good job of explaining the seriousness of this problem, and what it is going to take to win this fight,” said GCLA board member Robert Speight.

Included will be educational information about methods used to control similar vegetation throughout the world.

According to organizers, 100 percent of the money derived from sales of barbecue plates, T-shirts and other items will be deposited in a GCLA fund for the exclusive fight against salvinia on the only naturally-formed lake in Texas.

Lakes, such as Caddo and Bistineau, which offer shallow, cypress tree covered areas, are more susceptible to the effects of salvinia than other more open fisheries. Among the control methods in place are herbicide spraying, mechanical removal, biological controls and drawdowns, which aren’t feasible for Caddo Lake.

According to a GCLA release, bio-control is the process of introducing a natural predator, like the salvinia weevil, which will eat the plant and help keep it in check. The weevil allegedly devours salvinia, without harming other plants. Proceeds from the barbecue will be donated to the National Wildlife Refuge in Karnack, Texas, to raise more weevils. Prior to this year’s decision to make the GCLA event a total donation, the barbecue was catered and was operated on a break-even basis.