

Benefit concert set to aid salvinia weevil production greenhouse

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Rocking all night Benefit concert set to aid salvinia weevil production greenhouse

Terry Echols and Ken Shaw, members of Greater Caddo Lake Association, work on putting in liners in the tank vat Tuesday at the newly constructed salvinia weevil production greenhouse in Uncertain. The greenhouse is being built to grow and maintain weevils that will be used to control invasive giant salvinia on the lake.

If you go...

What: Benefit concert to support the Caddo Lake Salvinia Weevil Greenhouse project

Who: Hosted by the Greater Caddo Lake Association

Where: Johnson's Ranch Marina in Uncertain

When: Today from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Greater Caddo Lake Association invites the public to "rock on the river" today as it presents a benefit concert to support the Caddo Lake Salvinia Weevil Greenhouse project.

"The GCLA salvinia weevil production greenhouse, which is now under construction, is thought to be the first community supported and managed salvinia weevil facility in the U.S.," said Jack Canson, a member. "Weevils will be grown year around in greenhouses and distributed on the Texas side of Caddo Lake where giant salvinia infestations are heaviest and, in many cases, unreachable by spray boats or mechanical harvesters."

He noted that the Salvinia Action Committee's objective is to operate a salvinia weevil control program based on research done at Caddo Lake by Texas A&M's Center for Invasive Species Eradication. "The A&M project, which is winding down this summer, has demonstrated in trial sites on the lake that salvinia weevils can thrive and reproduce at Caddo and have the potential to control the invasive plant that last year covered as much as 7,000 acres of the Texas side of the lake," he said.

Saturday's benefit will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Johnson's Ranch Marina in Uncertain. The line-up of bands for the evening include: Bayou Boogie, Tildon Gillum Band and Captain Joe. Admission is \$10 and

all proceeds will benefit the facility, which is located at Shady Glade Resort in Uncertain and managed by GCLA's action committee.

"The GCLA weevil production facility is supported by volunteer efforts and financial contributions from individuals and organizations dedicated to protecting the environmental, ecological and economic vitality of Caddo Lake," said Canson. "We encourage everyone to come to Johnson's Ranch Saturday at 4 p.m. to enjoy great entertainment and help support this important and worthwhile project," he said.

On Monday, Ted Barrow, a GCLA member who volunteered to oversee the construction, reported to the Cypress Valley Navigation District an update on the project, advising that the greenhouse, which is 75-foot long and 56-foot wide, is expected to be operational in mid-June.

Barrow along with several volunteers were at the location this week, bolting the stakes to brace the weevil tanks and test a liner in the tank vat to make sure the water it will hold doesn't leak out. "I want to put water on it and let it sit about a week" Barrow said, noting the greenhouse boasts a total of 10 vats. "We want to make sure we do it right," he said of testing the liner in the vat to check for leakages. Barrow reported that the greenhouse itself is complete, including all of the electrical work, fan installations and lighting. It's also heated and equipped with thermostat-controlled vents.

Gutters were donated by Godwin Gutters. "He gave me a bid for \$400 for the gutters then he sent an email back and said we're going to donate it," said Barrow. A 2,000-gallon tank is also in place to gather rainwater to assist in the project.

"We'll pick up weevils from a couple of sources," Barrow said, noting Parks and Wildlife is one of the sources. "They're going to share with GCLA and the greenhouse some weevils to get that started and get it off the ground," he said, advising that they might also receive some weevils from Red River Authority. Barrow said the project started with just laying the foundation of the dirt — 57 loads — donated by Nash Trucking. "The dirt was hauled in here and they grazed it out," he said.

The GCLA said a budget for all start-up and first-year operations has been completed for the project. To date, the following funds have been raised: \$11,000 from the GCLA Labor Day weekend barbecue; \$10,000 from Cypress Valley Navigation District; \$12,000 from Harrison County; and \$35,000 from Caddo Lake Institute and Coco Hudson. The organization hopes to raise more at today's weevil greenhouse benefit concert.

