

Caddo Lake Regatta features five trails

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Written by

[Jimmy Watson](#)



The upcoming Caddo Lake Regatta will offer canoe and kayak paddlers some picturesque views. / Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times

Outdoor enthusiasts who want to experience the beauty and pageantry of Caddo Lake can participate in the third annual Caddo Lake Earth Day Paddling Regatta on Saturday.

Participants will launch out of BackWater Jack's RV Park in Karnack, Texas, after registering at 7:30 a.m. and paying a \$15 per participant fee. The event will include the opportunity to paddle on one of five new paddling trails on Big Cypress Bayou, consume some refreshments and possibly win a raffle prize.

Attendees can canoe or kayak out of the park, located just upstream from the Hwy. 43 bridge on the shores of the bayou.

According to the Caddo Lake Institute, each trail has unique features and all of them offer excellent birding and photography opportunities. Here are the five available trails and a description provided by the institute:

1. Benton Lake Trail – 2.4-mile loop upstream from the launch. “Leave the river and enter into the sunken forest of Benton Lake.”
2. Clear Lake Trail – 2.9-mile round trip. Just a stroke or two off the bayou, the charm of this trail is the seclusion. “It is like you have floated back through time.”
3. Haggerty Creek Trail – 5-mile loop just downstream from the launch. “Float through flooded bottomland hardwood forest with no fear of getting lost. There’s only one way in and one way out.”
4. Mill Pond Trail – 7.2-mile round trip, or only 3.6 if you would like to take out at Mill Pond. “That’s right. This trail connects to the Caddo Lake State Park.”
5. Old River II Trail – 3-mile loop upstream from the launch. “Float into an old shallow oxbow left behind when the bayou changed its course.”

The drawings for the door prizes will begin at 1 p.m. and you must be present to win. Prizes include a kayak, a hand-painted canoe paddle by local artist and T-shirts. A T-shirt and two raffle tickets are provided with the registration.

Paddlers 13 years old and younger can participate for free. BackWater Jack’s RV Park is located at 621 Long's Camp Road.

All proceeds will fund the maintenance of the paddling trails on Caddo Lake and the Big Cypress Bayou.

For more information, email 2014earthdayregatta@gmail.com or call (903) 672-5524, (903) 679-9817 or (512) 482-9345.

Twitter: @JimmyWatson6