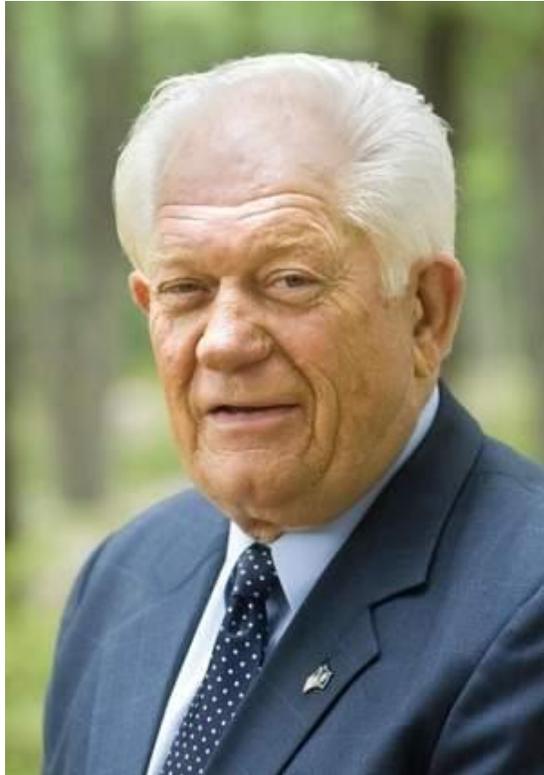


Salvinia weevil facility sought for Lake Bistineau

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Billy Montgomery / File photo

The Lake Bistineau Task Force would like to secure 20 percent of the mineral rights from the lake to fund a giant salvinia weevil production facility in north Louisiana to help keep the invasive species out of the lake long term.

According to Bistineau Task Force chairman Billy Montgomery, Bistineau looks good right now, due to a drawdown, the effects of cold weather and salvinia weevils. But the cold weather this past winter also killed off many of the weevils that are shipped here from warmer climates in south Louisiana and Texas.

“It will cost about \$250,000-plus to dig the pits to raise the weevils where we can just transfer them over to Bistineau,” Montgomery said. “There will also be the ongoing cost of managing the pits.”

Land acquisition for the pits will not be a problem, Montgomery said, because a land owner has already offered use of their land.

“Weevils released on the lake surviving the winter can then be collected and used to rear more

‘batches’ of weevils that will in turn be even more cold tolerant and more likely to survive future winters and so forth and so on,” a BST release said.

Montgomery said currently a number of the weevils are lost during transport. He wants to make sure that enough survive to keep the lake looking as it does today.

“To be fair, even during drawdowns, we have still been able to use the lake with a couple of launches,” he said. “Some people are thinking it’s cured, because cold weather is the best thing for salvinia.”

In conjunction with Trailblazer Resource Conservation & Development, Bistineau landowners and businesses, a committee was formed to involve property owners with development of the facility.

The hope is to enhance the work of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologists.

The control of giant salvinia on Bistineau will require billions of weevils over the next 4-5 years, according to Trailblazer RC&D.

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