

Weevil greenhouse begins production on Caddo Lake



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The Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas (GCLA) has started weevil production at the Morley Hudson Greenhouse in Uncertain, Texas. The opening brings the group a step closer to their goal of managing giant salvinia on Caddo Lake.

GCLA President, Daren Horton, says there were hurdles along the way but he always knew the facility would be built.

"It's about like having a baby, this has been a long journey, it's been a lot of hard work from a lot of people and seeing it open and seeing the green salvinia in the tanks is pretty wonderful," he says.

The greenhouse is the first high production weevil greenhouse in the world. Weevils are tiny beetles that diet on the invasive weed that has choked the waterways of Caddo Lake since 2006. The climate controlled facility will keep the vats where the weevils are reared warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Greenhouse Director, Lee Eisenberg described it as a weevil paradise. He hopes to achieve the goal of raising 160,000 weevils at the site annually.

"Being able to release them early in the spring just as the salvinia is getting going I think is going to be a really important factor," he says. Weevils will be released periodically and the results studied to determine the best management plan.

Organizers caution that results won't come overnight.

"It's not going to be immediate gratification like aquatic herbicides are, the boats go out and spray, the salvinia is gone, people are happy but it's short lived. These will be long term results that will take awhile to achieve," explains Horton.

A six year management plan for the greenhouse is in place. It will need to be run by volunteers for at least three years but Horton hopes a state run entity can manage the program in the future.

Funds to operate the greenhouse have been raised through community events and GCLA recently received a \$25,000 dollar grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife. Harrison County Commissioner, William Hatfield, says GCLA still needs help.

"The volunteers is the main thing, it looks like we've got enough funding for two years," he says.

GCLA posts volunteer opportunities through their facebook page (here (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greater-Caddo-Lake-Association-of-Texas/405647242881081?ref=ts&fref=ts>)).