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Caddo Lake Institute Awarded Grant for Giant Salvinia Control

The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced this week that the Caddo Lake Institute (CLI) will receive one of 24 new grants given to organizations nationwide to support efforts to control infestations of invasive or noxious weeds.

CLI was awarded a \$100,000 “Pulling Together Initiative” grant to help “control giant salvinia and other aquatic invasive species via a public-private partnership to protect lakes and wetlands using websites, trained volunteers, and public education.”

The CLI project supported by the grant will likely include:

- Development of GIS map tracking applications to provide chemical and biological control managers tools for coordination of herbicide treatments and release of salvinia weevils;
- A “Weed Warden” program for specially-trained volunteers to monitor and report on infested areas; and
- A public education and awareness program with internet access to information posted on the map tracking sites and with a shoreline owners watch program.

The focus of CLI’s work on invasives to date has been limited to the Louisiana and Texas sides of Caddo Lake. The NFWF grant will make it possible for CLI to take a regional approach and assist with work on several other lakes in Louisiana and Texas including Caddo Lake and Lake Bistineau.

Lowerre praised U.S. Senators Hutchison and Cornyn in Texas, Senators Landrieu and Vitter in Louisiana, Texas Congressman Gohmert, and Louisiana Congressman Fleming for their support of CLI’s grant application. Congressman Fleming held a Congressional hearing on the issues in the summer of 2011 that led to this strong regional approach.

From Senator **Kay Bailey Hutchison** of Texas - “I am pleased the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has awarded this important grant to the Caddo Lake Institute. The good work being done by my friends at the Caddo Lake Institute is pivotal to understanding and controlling invasive species that threaten our ecosystems and the viability of our lakes to support fish and wildlife, not only in Caddo Lake, but in bodies of water throughout the country.”

From Senator **Mary Landrieu** of Louisiana - “Caddo Lake is one of the region’s most diverse freshwater ecosystems and the second largest body of water in the South. But the lake is currently threatened by the Giant Salvinia, an invasive aquatic fern. If left untreated, the Giant Salvinia can double in size every five to seven days, and has the potential to completely overtake Caddo Lake. I applaud the Caddo Lake Institute for their hard work fighting the Giant Salvinia and protecting Caddo Lake – this funding will provide important support for this ongoing effort.”

From Senator **John Cornyn** of Texas - “Caddo Lake is a Texas treasure, and I applaud the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for stepping up to the plate to help fight invasive species there.”

From Senator **David Vitter** of Louisiana - “This grant is good news for Northwest Louisiana and for all of the residents who benefit from Lake Bistineau and Caddo Lake, as well as the surrounding ecosystems,” said Vitter. “I’ve been involved first hand with this issue for several months and have been working with local officials to find the best way to address the problems caused by giant salvinia. This grant is a big step forward that will allow us to enlist concerned volunteers and work with local communities to fight back and keep these beautiful lakes healthy for a long time to come.”

From Representative **Louie Gohmert** of Texas - “For the past six years, saving Caddo Lake has been a critical priority for us in east Texas and should be for Texas and the nation because it is such a treasure. I am pleased to see that the Caddo Lake Institute was awarded this competitive grant, which will enable the organization to continue its fight to combat the

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invasive weed, Giant Salvinia. This grant will assist local communities in their efforts to control infestations, while also trying to find uses such as the recent encouragement for cancer treatments. Breakthroughs in protecting Caddo Lake from foreign invasive species can also provide the template for saving America's freshwater lakes."

From Congressman **John Fleming** of Louisiana - "NFWF's grant is another affirmation of the important work Caddo Lake Institute is doing to keep Caddo Lake and Lake Bistineau as superior locations in northwest Louisiana for wildlife, recreation and tourism."

"The grant requires CLI to raise an equal amount of matching funds for the project and gives CLI the opportunity to work with partners in Texas and Louisiana on this regional problem," said Richard Lowerre, CLI President. "With the NFWF grant and the other funds we will raise, the total value of the projects we will undertake with our partners will exceed \$200,000."

A total of \$1.1 million in federal funds was awarded in grants by NFWF as part of their 2011 Pulling Together Initiative. Competition for the grants is strong. In 2010, only one out of 5 applying organizations was funded.

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