



# CADDO LAKE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CADDO LAKE ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

August, 2018

On the web: [www.gclaofTX.com](http://www.gclaofTX.com)



[Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas](#)

Donna McCann, Editor

## 40<sup>th</sup> Annual GCLA Barbecue Saturday, September 1st

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 1st! Crip's Camp is the place to be for brisket and sausage and all the trimmings, as well as homemade desserts. Plates are \$15 for adults, \$5 for kids; serving starts at 11 AM and goes until the food runs out. GCLA memberships, tee shirts and raffle tickets will be available. Bring the family and enjoy great company and great food!



Raffle grand prize is a new Ascend fishing kayak from Bass Pro Shop  
Raffle tickets are \$10 each / 3 for \$25



Stealth technology add-on included!

Other prizes include:  
Stihl chain saw  
Jumbo sized Roundup® weed killer  
Etc.



To craft the fully updated Ascend® 12T Sit-On-Top Kayak, our designers took our most-popular sit-on-top kayak and refined it to be even more stable, more functional, and more comfortable. The advanced tunnel design with a wide transom and flared bow sections brings a fishing kayak so stable, you can stand up and cast from it. The same design also produces outstanding tracking and couldn't-be-easier paddling. While you're standing, you'll stay comfortable thanks to the non-skid foam deck mat. Port and starboard accessory-mounting rails and a recessed bow storage area with flush-mounted bungees allow endless accessorizing for true customization. Port flush-mounted paddle holders ensure easy-reach paddling, and the midship deep-molded drink holder/storage and watertight storage areas deliver reliable containment for your vital gear. Further improving this Kayak directly from customer feedback, our designers improved durability in the dual flush-mounted rod holders with rod leash eyelets; large stern tankwell with D-rings; recessed stern storage area with flush-mounted bungees; 6 scupper drains with plugs; and the deluxe, adjustable seating system with 3-position seat landings, adjustable foot braces, and removable design to go from on-water to onshore in seconds. The Ascend 12T Sit-On-Top Kayak is a high-performance kayak, the perfect option for duck hunting in addition to all your angling and adventuring demands. There's simply no kayak better than an Ascend. Size: 12'. Approximate Weight: 77 lbs. Maximum weight capacity: 350 lbs.

**Made in USA**

# Summer Happenings on Caddo

By Donna McCann

It has been a nice summer for enjoying Caddo Lake so far, thanks to the severe dieback of *Salvinia* plants during the winter. But one thing you can count on in the swamp is that if one aquatic plant is in decline, another will take its place.

This year, crested floating heart has made a big show in some parts of the lake. The plant is resistant to the herbicides used for *Salvinia*, so the TPWD has sought and found more specific agents. They plan to try these out later in the summer, after getting all the approvals needed to purchase and use the new chemicals.

Hydrilla, a rooted aquatic plant, is also growing well in shallow places since there is plenty of sunlight for it this year, an annoyance for power boaters. The two main types of water lilies and the fragrant water lotus are abundant again, like they were in years before the *Salvinia* came to dominate the lake.

The CVND has been making progress replacing missing boat road marker poles and signs in many areas (a never ending job). They are also planning to award a contract for scooping away the sand that has made passage for heavy boats through the Cathedral (boat road U) and the western entrance into Carter Lake (boat road C) very difficult.

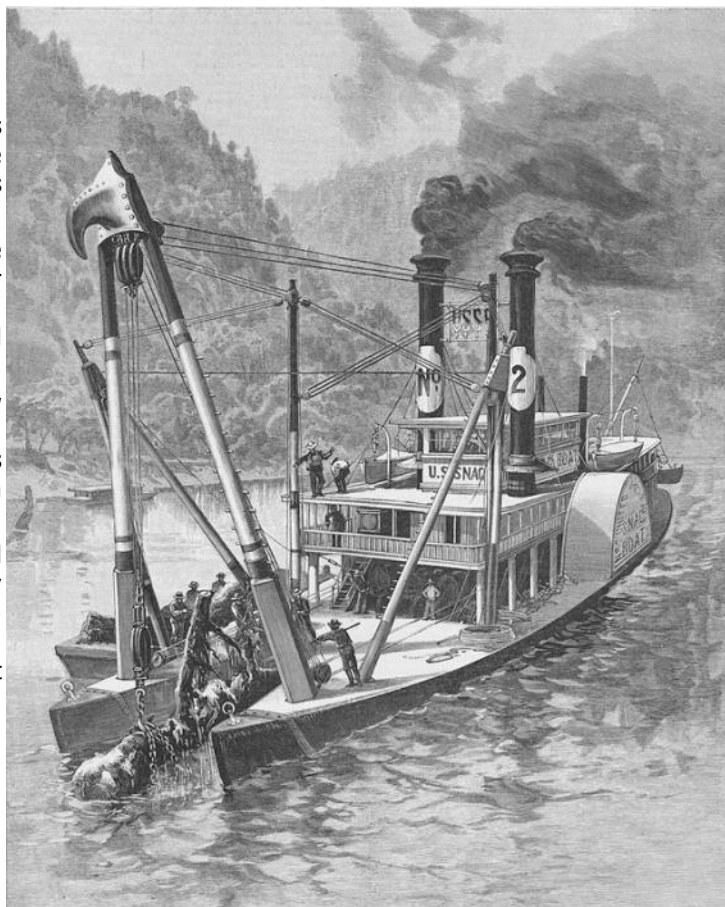
## Salvinia Weevil Update

By Laura Speight

The Caddo Bio-control Alliance board and I want to first say a big "Thank You!" to all the people who so graciously volunteer their time at the greenhouse. This army of volunteers, who clocked over 41 hours in July alone, is one more reason why the weevil effort is so successful.

Three Wiley College interns logged 52 hours in July, helping with various chores as well as testing if other water sources can be used to fill tanks or if lake water is truly our only option.

This year our first release was mid-May - our earliest release ever. In 2018 we have released a total of 123,748 adult weevils. TPWD tracks releases by fiscal year (Sept1-Aug 31) so our fiscal year release number is 175,395 adult weevils. We anticipate a release before August 31, allowing us to reach our goal of 200,000 adult weevils. Reaching the 200,000 mark is another first for this facility and is maximizing the space to the fullest.



The first truly practicable snagboat was conceived by veteran riverman Captain Henry Miller Shreve. Christened the *Heliopolis*, it was a twin-hulled steam-powered craft with an iron-sheathed beam, called a butting beam, connecting the hulls. To remove a snag, the vessel rammed it with the butting beam, dislodging the snag and allowing the crew to lift it onto the boat with a windlass. There it was cut up, the pieces to be used as fuel or thrown into the water to float harmlessly downstream.



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# Caddo History - The Great Raft and Caddo Lake

By Donna McCann

Many people who are regular visitors to Caddo Lake eventually ask how a natural lake like Caddo formed on the border of what is now Texas and Louisiana. After all, if you look around for hundreds of miles in any direction, you can see that the land is fairly flat, mostly composed of sediment that would be easily eroded down by running water over many thousands of years, with any low spots filled in by the silt washed downstream. The formation of Caddo Lake was in fact consistent with that geological history, but it required an unusual event that occurred as much as a thousand years ago. That event was the gradual buildup of a massive blockage of fallen trees in the Red River, which we know as the Great Raft.

Soon after President Thomas Jefferson negotiated a sweet deal with France for the Louisiana Purchase to add to the territory of the United States, exploring parties were sent out to assess the new lands. In school, we all learned about Lewis and Clark, who from 1804 to 1806 made their way from the edge of civilization in St Louis, Missouri all the way to the Pacific Coast where Astoria, Oregon is today. But another expedition, led by Thomas Freeman, was commissioned in 1806 to travel north and west up the Red River to Santa Fe, a settlement in Nuevo Mexico, a region of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Of course, the Red River doesn't go to Santa Fe; the headwaters are in Palo Duro Canyon south of present day Amarillo. But these people didn't have Google Maps, so off they went, even knowing the Spanish government was opposed to the idea.

The Freeman expedition started in Natchez, Mississippi, heading south on the Mississippi River to its confluence with the Red, where their boats turned upstream. They made it as far as the settlement of Natchitoches, the last outpost of American traders in US territory. In June of 1806, when the fully outfitted party of 50 explorers continued their journey upstream from there, they didn't get far at all. They ran into a massive log jam that extended for over 100 miles upstream. Of course the water that would normally have been flowing in the river bed still had to reach the sea somehow, and it did so by flooding the lowlands surrounding the river to create the Great Swamp. By early July, 1806, the expedition had slowly hacked their way north through that swamp to finally get above the Raft.

The expedition leaders made friendly overtures to the Alabama Coushatta and Caddo Indians who had villages along the river, and they were told that a Spanish army contingent was tracking them. The explorers continued on up the river anyway, but on July 29, 1806, at a spot a few miles west of present day Texarkana, the Spanish army forces, numbering 200 men, told the Americans to turn back and go home, as they weren't welcome in Spanish territory. And so they did, and the expedition ended.

There were several bodies of water in the Great Swamp, and present day Caddo Lake was on the northern end of the log jam, extending to the west well up the basin drained by the Big Cypress Bayou. All of the redirected water of the Red River watershed formed new channels and new deposits of silt, capturing at least temporarily the waters of Caddo Lake behind them. Settlers flooded into the new Republic, later the State of Texas, and Red River navigation became a goal, since boat travel was far easier than overland. By 1835, Captain Henry Miller Shreve and the U S Army Corps of Engineers cleared the log jam below Twelve Mile Bayou in Shreveport using his new invention, the snagboat. He finished clearing away the raft in 1838, but it reformed above Shreveport, extending to the Arkansas state line eventually. Thus the diversion of the river's flow into the Big Cypress bottom kept the swamp full enough for steamboat navigation and freight hauling all the way west to Jefferson until 1873, when the entire raft was completely removed by Lieutenant Eugene Woodruff and the USACE.

With the Red River now able to flow through its original course, the channel deepened, the level of water in Caddo Lake began to drop rapidly, and the lake shrank. Fairly quickly, boat navigation from the Red River was no longer possible. Eventually, the desire of oil speculators to use boats and over the water drilling platforms would convince politicians to finance an earthen dam to raise the lake level in 1914, but no locks to allow continuous navigation were ever built.

To the right is an article from the *Vicksburg Whig* of July 19, 1837. In addition to timely commentary on the clearing of the Great Raft, the author has some strong opinions concerning relations between the normally peaceful Caddo Indians and the representatives of the U S government.

from The Vicksburg Whig, July 19 1837

From the Bulletin.  
LETTER FROM RED RIVER.  
SHREVEPORT, June 14, 1837.

DEAR SIR:—

Since my letter to you from this place, I have made a visit to the raft, crossing the river into the parish of Claiborne, proceeded about fifteen miles, having to swim my horse over some half dozen bayous, which are outlets from the river into lake Bisteneau. The country on this side the river to a considerable extent is overflowed at an ordinary high stage of water; this however will be obviated as soon as the timber from the raft can be floated in the bayous, so as to create dams, thereby force the current of the river into its old channel. Some extensive plantations here present themselves, opened recently by South Carolinians, who give to the Red River swamp, a preference to uplands of equal quality.—Planters accustomed to river lands will not be convinced of advantages attending upland cultivation.

The raft presents a body of timber wedged and piled together in a singular chaotic state; trees of the largest stature stand erect, buried in a great depth in the alluvial; in many places masses of timber for thirty and forty feet deep, the accumulation of ages, with large trees grown up, firmly rooted in the decomposing mass. The enormous quantity of timber cut out in the distance of five miles exceeds credibility. The body of logs floated, hauled and piled to form a dam over one outlet only, would have required, without the aid of steam, the labor of an army for years; dead trees of solid timber ten to fifteen feet in circumference, are torn out of the beds in which they have been resting for ages sawed up and disposed of as though they were but walking sticks. It is supposed that the raft will be sufficiently cleared out to admit small steamboats through, a few weeks after the work is engaged in next fall. This however I much doubt, the great freshet of 1833 will be found to have knit the accumulation of the last ten or twenty years into an exceeding compact body.

The removal of the raft was a prodigious undertaking, it extended for a distance of nearly one hundred and fifty miles. Some years previous to capt. Shreve's report on the practicability of making Red River navigable through the raft, the government made efforts to open a large navigation, and expended considerable sums of money. A canal was cut connecting two bayous in the Caddo nation, by which means a large body of water from the river above the raft, found free access into Caddo lake; this lake being surrounded by low lands was greatly increased in extent, it may now be two hundred miles and more in circumference, it is divided under different names, for instance Black, Soda, Cassa and Ferry lake, all connected by inconsiderable straits; they empty into the river through two large bayous immediately above Shreveport. The land surrounding these bodies of water, is of the first order. The surveyors of the government are running the section lines in the north part of Louisiana; they have reached the 23d degree of north latitude on the Sabine river; a north line from that point touches the western extremity of Ferry lake, and in continuation will run to Pecan Point.

For some time past apprehensions have existed on the part of the settlers in Texas, near the line, that the Caddo Indians were unfriendly, and from the circumstances of the late Indian agent, having in a payment on account of the U. States, passed on them, instead of ten thousand dollars in cash, some fifteen hundred dollars worth of goods, such as guns, powder and lead; they may have reason for apprehension. The Indians sold their land in good faith, and when informed that half dozen boxes of goods was their pay, and all they would get, supposed themselves compelled to take them or get nothing. A gentleman informs me that the whole transaction has been brought to the notice of the proper department at Washington; if it has not it should be, and see what this may produce; Indians incensed wronged they know they have been; they cannot understand that the individual, the agent, is the only one in fault; they charge it to the white men, and will probably wreak on the frontier settlers their vengeance; and, we forsooth, must then turn out and exterminate them. It was bad enough to take from them their country, but the man who would deprive them of the paltry sum which was called payment, and give them instead, a few guns, powder and lead, must be unfit for a government agent. It is not astonishing that the Texas executive should express surprise at the United States giving munitions of war to a tribe of Indians proverbially hostile!

Yours, &c.

# KEEP CADDO LAKE NATURAL!

## Join GCLA

Dues are only \$10.00 per person per year. This includes membership in The Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas, plus you will receive our newsletters which are printed on a semi-regular basis; more often if needed. There is no better way to keep up with the issues that concern the lake.

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**Please check the date printed above your name and address - it shows when your membership expires. If you are past due, this may be your last newsletter!**

\*Your email address is voluntary. It will only be used to keep you informed of developments on the lake. It will not be given or sold to anyone. We will send one newsletter per address, unless otherwise instructed. This allows us to mail copies to our politicians and government entities to let them know how we feel on the issues!

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