



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Honorable Joe R. Reeder
Under Secretary of the Army
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

SEP - 6 1996

Dear Mr. Reeder:

I am writing to you to express the strong support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for your efforts to facilitate the lease of a portion of the Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant to the Caddo Lake Institute for use as a center for wetlands conservation.

Recommendation 6.3, adopted at the Ramsar Conference of the Parties, in Australia, earlier this year, specifically recognized the Caddo Lake Institute as having unique qualifications to undertake this enterprise. With these leased facilities, the Caddo Lake Institute would establish a national center for wetlands conservation which would make a major contribution to conservation efforts in the United States and would also greatly enhance the U.S. contribution to global conservation in fulfillment of our commitments under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

In addition, it would establish an outstanding prototype for public-private conservation partnerships. It would allow the local community to pursue, at the community level, priorities that parallel our global commitments. The training academy established on the site would support this partnership, providing a center for study and research which would also serve as a depository for baseline and trends data on Ramsar sites throughout the United States. The center would serve as the focal point for national and international meetings about wetland conservation at the community level.

We anticipate that this regional Ramsar center would become a global model which will be of interest to the entire Ramsar Convention community of 92 nations and would undoubtedly be replicated in other places in the future.

For all of these reasons, we very much appreciate your efforts to work with the Caddo Lake Institute in this historic project. If you need any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me or Assistant Director, Marshall Jones at (202) 208-6393.

Sincerely,


DIRECTOR

Caddo Lake Institute leases 1,400 acres from Longhorn

Singer, songwriter Henley, institute founder, says area "ecological prize"

By John Gordon

Longview News-Journal Correspondent

Nearly 1,400 acres of property at Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant at Karnack are being leased to the Caddo Lake Institute for wetlands research — the first lease to be negotiated since the plant began scaling down because of defense budget cuts.

Musician and environmentalist Don Henley, who founded the

Caddo Lake Institute, announced the signing of the 30-year lease Saturday in Longview. Henley said negotiations with the U. S. Army and the plant's operating contractor, Thiokol Corp, took two years.

"What it amounts to is a 1,400-acre laboratory," said Henley.

Part of the property lies along the shores of Caddo Lake and

includes the Harrison Bayou area and the Starr Ranch recreational area. The plant covers 8,500 acres.

The Caddo Lake Institute will pay \$10,000 per year for limited use of the property. The organization will also have first option to purchase the property.

Henley said the program will bring "world-class scientists" to study the Caddo Lake ecosystem.

The Caddo Lake Institute also hopes to build a regional wetlands research center within the

See Caddo, 2A



Leslie Phillips Jr./O'Neil Photo

Musician and environmentalist Don Henley announce today a conservation education lease for 1,400 acres former Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant at Caddo Lake. Henley is the principal underwriter.

next five years.

Caddo is one of 14 U.S. sites included in the Ramsar listing of the world's most important wetland areas.

The Army offered parts of the Longhorn plant for lease when the layoff of nearly 1,000 employees began. The plant, nearly idle because of defense cuts, now has about 45 employees.

"We'd like to see this become an important place again, but for different reasons," said Dwight Shellman, president of the Caddo Lake Institute. Shellman negotiated the lease agreement.

Other ideas for using the Longhorn property have ranged from a prison to a chicken-processing plant. The Caddo Lake Institute is the first to successfully complete a lease, but officials said the agreement would not preclude commercial use of other parts of the property.

"We're inviting everybody who is interested in our mission to join us," said Henley. "People from the local area, people from all over the state, people from other colleges."

Henley, a native of Linden, became involved in efforts to preserve the lake when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was studying the feasibility of building a barge canal from the Red River through Caddo Lake. The Daingerfield Reach project was dropped when the Corps concluded it would cause too much environmental damage to the swampy Caddo Lake area.

"We're only just beginning to understand the importance of wetlands, how important they are as far as flood control, water absorption and purification of water," said Henley.

He called a virgin bottomland forest covering more than 700 acres on the Longhorn property an "absolute ecological prize."

Portions of the Longhorn property which are federal Superfund cleanup sites are not included in the lease agreement. The Army is spending millions of dollars to clean up waste dumps on the property which are contaminated with toxic chemicals.

Henley said hunting will still be allowed on the property leased to the Caddo Lake Institute, and will remain under control of the Army.

Harold Culver, a Caddo Lake

Longhorn 42
"I'm for it, 100 percent," said Culver. "This area reminds me a lot of the Everglades, with the moss, the cypress trees, the pristine beauty of the whole lake."