

Meeting on Longhorn plant land transfer is Thursday in Karnack

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A meeting will be 6 p.m. Thursday at the Karnack Community Center for Caddo Lake Area organizations regarding the clean-up and transfer of the remaining lands of the Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant to the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

■ "The cleanup and transfer of the remaining Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant lands to the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge is of utmost importance to the economic well being of the City of Marshall and all of Harrison County," said Marshall Mayor Buddy Power, in a release issued by the meeting's sponsors.

"The city of Marshall and the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge have forged a strong partnership, and we support the efforts of all who are endeavoring to complete the scheduled clean-up and transfer of the remaining LHAAP lands in a timely fashion," Power added.

The Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge has the potential to play a significant

part in the economic development of the area, as well as be a springboard for ecological, historic and cultural assets, according the release.

"While the Refuge officially opened in 2009, public access and resource protection are limited by the failure of the U.S. Army to perform timely remediation and transfer of property to the Fish and Wildlife Service," according to the release.

Caddo Lake area communities have serious concerns about the intentions of the Army, and the meeting is intended to open dialogues between the public, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army, the Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as affected communities and agencies, according to the release.

Two issues will be key during the meeting including community questions and concerns over:

■ Transition of remaining, former LHAAP, lands into U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for public use as part of the CLNWR.

■ Clean-up of groundwater contamination at the site.

"It is also crucial to the water supply companies in this area, that serve many residents, to know that every step to clean up and protect our groundwater has been taken by the Army and monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency," said Power.

A groundwater expert hired by Caddo Lake Institute will also make a presentation on significant short-falls he found in several of the Army's plans for groundwater clean-up, according to the release.

Sponsors of Thursday's meeting will be: Caddo Lake Water Supply company, Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas, Louisiana Greater Caddo Lake Association, City of Uncertain, Friends of Caddo Lake NWR, Caddo Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and Caddo Lake Institute.

Refreshments will be provided. The meeting is expected to last until 7:30 p.m.