



MarshallNewsMessenger.com

50 CENTS

THE MARSHALL NEWS MESSENGER

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2010

MARSHALL, TEXAS

Contamination delays transfer of land to refuge

Remediation methods discussed at meeting by state, local officials

TERRI RICHARDSON

TRICHARDSON@MARSHALLNEWSMESSENGER.COM

Contamination of remaining U.S. Army property within the boundaries of the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge was central to a meeting Thursday night at the Karnack Community Center.

"Now the harder, hard work will happen," said Paul Bruckwicki, a biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Only 7,200 of the 8,400 acres at the former Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant have been transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for management, with the remaining land's transfer in question. The transfer of the majority of the former plant was considered the "easy" part due to it already being deemed clean and safe for public use.

Bruckwicki explained maps to the 65 people in attendance as to which areas of the refuge have been claimed and which are still in need of remediation for contaminants with most of those areas described as being affected more in the groundwater than on the surface. Contaminates include some metals, chlorinates and volatile organics. Several methods for cleanup were also described during the meeting.

"It's been several years since anything was transferred out here," said Bruckwicki, who noted that the last major transfer was in 2005 of 5,500 acres. He further outlined who the players are including the U.S. Department of Defense (Army), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Bruckwicki outlined the process established for cleaning up "Superfund" sites and explained the Memorandum of Agreement between the DOD and the FWS as having several stages of negotiation after the land is considered suitable for transfer by the Army.

Representatives from TCEQ and the EPA attended, but Army officials were not in attendance. However, there were county, state and local representatives in addition to the meeting's sponsors.

Once the remedies for each parcel is established, many of them will require long-term Land Use Controls, which may include mowing, fence maintenance and other application.

"The Army is legally responsible for the cleanup of the contamination of the surface areas and groundwater

See **CONTAMINATION**, Page 3A

Contamination delays transfer of land to refuge

Continued from Page 1A

that resulted from its operations at the LHAAP. In 1990, LHAAP was added to the list of "Superfund" sites because of contamination with toxic chemicals," according to a position paper from the Caddo Lake Institute about the cleanup and transfer of the remaining LHAAP lands to CLNWR that was issued during the meeting.

It is the position of the Caddo Lake Institute that "public access and resource protection are limited by the failure of the Army to perform timely remediation and transfer of property to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

With a minimum of two years testing required for each of the remaining sites, it will still be some time before the FWS will be able to accept entire control of the land.

"After collecting eight quarterly (samples) of data monitoring we will know if the remedies to each site is operating," said Mark Williams, manager of the CLNWR. "Our problem is we ... are obligated by law to not accept (polluted) property into the Fish and Wildlife Service."

Williams later suggested it might be possible to accept surface land for management without taking possession of the polluted groundwater beneath.

Primary concerns noted by Gary Endsley with the

Friends of CLNWR were pointed to the restricted public use of the refuge and the desire of the Friends group to see its entirety made available for recreation.

Meeting sponsors were Caddo Lake Water Supply Company, Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas, Louisiana Greater Caddo

Lake Association, City of Uncertain, Friends of Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Caddo Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and Caddo Lake Institute.

For more information on the institute's efforts visit, www.caddolakeinstitute.us.