

# Group to discuss transfer of former ammo plant land

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Backers of the transfer of former U.S. Army land to the Caddo Lake Natural Wildlife Refuge have been summoned by their leaders to a meeting Thursday to discuss what they see as a federal deal change regarding the final 1,000 acres.

About 7,000 acres of the shuttered Longhorn Army Ammunitions Plant, a World War II and Korean War munitions plant at Karnack, have been cleaned under Superfund Act supervision and transferred to the newly created wildlife refuge.

The piece-by-piece transfer of land and water rights to the nonprofit refuge has taken place under auspices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as each parcel has been deemed clean by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The plant's operations, and subsequent decades of disuse, left perchlorates and other heavy-metal pollutants in the region. The poisons caused the area to be designated a Superfund Act pollution cleanup site. "The remaining 1,000 acres has pollution issues, and the Army is trying to get it off their books as fast as possible," Friends of the Caddo Lake Natural Wildlife Refuge leader Tom Walker wrote his membership in an e-mail sent Tuesday evening.

The Friends group is a coalition of residents and other stakeholders in the ecological and eco-tourism health of the region.

"The Army and Wildlife Service are in a disagreement over what 'clean' means," Walker wrote. "Army then is threatening to transfer the remaining 1,000 acres and the accompanying 10,000 acre feet (3.25 billion gallons) of water rights to a third party." Walker did not name that third party in his note. The e-mail goes on to call a special meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday at the Karnack Community Center, and cancels a regular monthly meeting set for Saturday.

Further information was not immediately available Tuesday night.