

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 81

BY REPRESENTATIVE MORRIS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to begin the process to designate Caddo Lake as a National Heritage Area.

WHEREAS, National Heritage Areas are designated by the United States Congress and are an attempt to ". . . expand on the traditional approaches to resource stewardship by supporting large-scale, community based initiatives that connect local citizens to the preservation and planning process"; and

WHEREAS, the National Heritage Areas are not actually owned by nor are they under the management of the National Park Service in the Department of Interior; however, the National Park Service does provide technical, planning, and possibly limited financial assistance to the local people and organizations; and

WHEREAS, development and maintenance of a National Heritage Area benefits the local area through development and public recognition of the community's pride in its history and traditions and allows communities to collaborate on conservation of their area's history and uniqueness while maintaining local control over and use of the landscape; and

WHEREAS, the four critical steps outlined by the National Park Service that need to be taken prior to congressional designation of a National Heritage Area are: (1) completion of a suitability/feasibility study; (2) public involvement in the suitability/feasibility study; (3) demonstration of widespread public support among the area's residents; and (4) commitment to the proposal from key constituents including governments, industry, private organizations, and residents; and

WHEREAS, the residents and agencies of the Caddo Lake area were so eager to have Caddo Lake designated a National Heritage Area that they embarked on the suitability/feasibility study prior to ever contacting the National Park Service to request their assistance or funding; and

WHEREAS, the feasibility study examined whether Caddo Lake is nationally distinctive and evaluated alternatives for management, preservation, and interpretation of nationally important cultural and historic landscapes, sites, and structures in and around the Caddo Lake area, including its tributaries of Cypress Bayou and James Bayou in Texas and Louisiana and Black Bayou and Red Bayou along with Soda, Shifftail, and Clear Lakes in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the feasibility study was coordinated with Harrison and Marion counties in Texas and Caddo Parish in Louisiana along with the Caddo Lake Clearing House (which consisted of the Village of Uncertain, Texas, the Greater Caddo Lake Association of Texas, the Caddo Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, the Friends of the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and the Caddo Lake Institute) and the Greater Caddo Lake Association of Louisiana, the Jeffersonian Institute, the Louisiana Caddo Lake Watershed Commission, the Collins Academy and Education Center, the Shreveport Bossier Tourism and Convention Bureau, and the towns of Jefferson, Texas, and Mooringsport, Oil City, and Vivian, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the feasibility study found that Caddo Lake, at twenty-seven thousand surface acres, is the largest natural lake in the southern United States and was home to the Caddo Native Americans at the time the Europeans and Americans discovered the area; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Lake area spent forty years after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase as the southwestern border of the United States and is an area whose cultural and natural identity were defined and impacted by the sequential economic forces of steam boats, followed by railroads, and then later petroleum; and

WHEREAS, the feasibility study examined interpretive themes and historic resources such as migration patterns, Native American villages, folklore, ports, land trails, water trails, military activities, manipulation of the environment and resources and found that the Caddo Lake area presently conforms with approximately seventy percent of the interim criteria established by the National Park Service for heritage site designation; and

WHEREAS, although there is a great deal of work still to be done before Caddo Lake can actually become a National Heritage Area, the people working toward such an accomplishment feel that enough work has been done and enough documentation has been gathered to now request that the process for congressional designation begin.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to begin the process to designate Caddo Lake as a National Heritage Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE