Strategic Plan
for
Caddo Lake Institute, Inc.

Publication Date: 1/1/2022
From the Executive Director

The story of Caddo Lake, a Southern jewel set within 32,000 acres of wetland bayous, seasonally flooded swamps, bottomland, and upland forests, and divided by the state line of Texas and Louisiana, begins earlier than history books can remember, with a rich Native American significance and tales of the early American frontier. It is an adventure that includes 400-year-old cypress trees, prehistoric paddlefish, almost 300 species of birds and 77 fish varieties.

This is the story of Caddo Lake, an internationally recognized wetland of importance, the largest bald cypress swamp in the world, and the only naturally formed lake found in Texas. Caddo Lake is also a home to community members and returning visitors from all over the world, a vibrant niche for reptiles, wildlife, and plants to thrive. Caddo Lake is a space for a father to teach his growing daughter to fish and as well as one that has spawned stories about communities coming together, heroes fighting for what they believe in, and children learning to protect a legacy.

It is the birthplace of a partnership that is now 30 years old. A relationship with communities, agencies, non-profits, and governmental entities to support the Caddo Lake watershed beyond the stewardship of natural resources. Through the fierce protection of this unique habitat, Caddo Lake Institute and its partners were able to establish a unique foundation built by history and preservation. This baseline is used to apply the best available science and push boundaries in innovative conservation and restoration measures. As the world scrambles to address the problems inherited from a global misuse of resources, the data published from Caddo Lake is able to uniquely address many rising questions. As environmental policy develops, Caddo Lake is suddenly perceived as more than a beautiful place, it is an international model for streamflow regulation, water quality restoration, species re-establishment and the dynamic balance between humans and their environment.

From the first day of its establishment, the goal of Caddo Lake Institute has been to ensure a healthy ecosystem capable of sustaining a high diversity of plant and animal species for present and future generations. This is Landscape Level conservation, across thousands of acres, to protect and improve the health and connectivity of a diverse wetland, river, lake, and forest system that supports hundreds of species of plants and animals and 13 species of concern. This strategic plan details at a high level the goals necessary to address complex, multifaceted, and evolving threats and opportunities facing the entirety of Caddo Lake as well and the values and disciplines that will guide the Institute towards delivery of those goals.

Laura-Ashley Overdyke
Executive Director
Caddo Lake Institute, Inc.
Institute Core Values
- Perseverant focus on the health of Caddo
- Passionate protection and stewardship of nature
- Transparency and integrity in all operations
- Scientific excellence
- Respect for the community and stakeholders

Strategic Focus and Discipline
- Landscape Level Conservation
- Restorative impact
- Growth of endowment, staff, and dedicated conservation acreage
- Generation, assembly, and sharing of data valuable to public, government, and other non-profits
- Stability and nimbleness to address future threats to Caddo

Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endowment established</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corps of Engineers Dam Flow Rate Change</td>
<td>2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile and publish data of use to public/other entities</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish and publish the blueprint for this process that other entities can utilize</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire or arrange dedication of 1,500 acres private land to conservation</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand RAMSAR to Louisiana side of lake</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Projects and Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Manager hired</td>
<td>4/1/22</td>
<td>7/1/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Team Established</td>
<td>7/1/22</td>
<td>9/1/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish KPIs and Build Dashboards</td>
<td>9/1/22</td>
<td>11/1/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile and Publish project overviews and calendars</td>
<td>2/1/22</td>
<td>2/28/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy/Lobbying for Corps of Engineers changes</td>
<td>1/1/22</td>
<td>12/31/22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key Performance Indicators**

- **Environmental Health**
  - **Water Quantity**
    - Timing
    - Duration
    - Flow rate
    - Frequency
  - **Water quality**
    - 18 key indicators
- **Forest Regeneration**
  - 1. Growth/productivity: Basal area (m²/ha) within the overstory layer.
  - 2. Recruitment: Basal area of tree species (m²/ha) within the understory layer, and canopy cover of these species (m²/ha) in the shrub-sapling layer.
  - 3. Reproduction: Density (#/m²) and canopy cover (m²/ha) of tree species within the herb-seedling layer.
  - 4. Mortality: Basal area (m²/ha) within the overstory layer.
- **Fish health**
  - Return of riverine specific fish
  - Quantity of Paddlefish reintroduced
- **Stewardship**
  - Acres of invasive species removed
  - Number of native plant species planted
- **Engagement**
  - Community Meetings Held
  - Partnerships with educational organizations/museums/aquariums
  - Local economic impact numbers
- **Expenses and Cash Flow**
  - Balance sheet
  - Quarterly and annual projections and comparisons
- **Endowment**
  - Size
  - Allocation
  - Growth
- **Property**
  - Total acreage under conservation management