

## **Identification and Involvement of Experts:**

One key to the success of the environmental flows process for the Cypress Basin has been the identification and inclusion of the scientists and others with the needed expertise in hydrology and hydraulics, water quality, fluvial geomorphology and aquatic biology. Those experts, with input from stakeholders, developed the recommendations for the environmental flow regimes.

For the Cypress Basin, identifying experts was a three step process. The first was to identify institutions or individuals with a history of working in the watershed. This included people who have studied the ecology of the system as well as those who had conducted studies to support water development projects.

Next, other institutions that are likely to have an interest in this process were identified. This included, but was not limited to, local, state and federal agencies, university researchers and private consultants. The potential sources of funding for their involvement were considered.

Finally, those experts identified were asked to identify others who might be needed or otherwise should be invited to participate.

The Cypress Basin project had some advantages. Caddo Lake had attracted scientific studies for many years. As Texas' only naturally formed lake, and one with more species of fish than any other watershed in Texas, it has been of interest to many. Thus, for example, the National Wetland Resource Center in Lafayette, Louisiana had worked on regeneration of cypress trees in the basin.

There have been numerous studies associated with the water projects in the basin. These include studies for existing projects such as Lake O' the Pines and Bob Sandlin Lake, and for projects that were not completed, such as the proposal for a reservoir on Little Sandy Creek and a proposal for a barge canal across Caddo Lake. A few of these studies included instream flow studies for parts of the basin. They were done by Federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers. The studies, and importantly, the scientists that participated in those studies were available to assist with the new flows work.

A number of scientists at universities in Texas and out of state who have done work in the basin were also available and interested. There were, for example, university professors working on mussels, mercury contamination, and water quality. Additional university experts, such as those at Texas A&M who prepared the initial survey of work that had been done in the basin, were encouraged to participate because funding was available and could be used to compensate them for some of their work and expenses.

The experts available from state, regional and local agencies were also identified and asked to participate. Many did, including some from Louisiana. There were also a number of private consultants and experts in live the basin who or who had worked there, some retired, and many interested in participating.

At the initial meeting of the project, which included experts and stakeholders, the participants were asked to identify other experts who might assist. A number of experts were added as a result. Moreover, as work progressed, additional experts were identified and asked to join the work.

Finally, there are experts who are also stakeholders. They brought information to the process about fish, wildlife, stream conditions, etc., that would otherwise not have been available.