

TPW: Beware Giant Salvinia; E-Bay auction: Tractors/mowers
By JOHN SPARKS

Meeting in regular session Friday, November 14, Wood County Commissioners and a contingent of Lake Hawkins property owners heard a warning from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department concerning the water plant-Giant Salvinia. Commissioners also approved the sale of three tractors and mowers from the Precinct 3 inventory.

Kevin Storey of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPW) told commissioners and a gathering of property owners from Lake Hawkins that Giant Salvinia poses a real threat to the county's four precinct lakes, to Lake Fork and to other large bodies of water in Wood County. "Already several East Texas Lakes have been invaded by this plant which can double its size in just a week," Storey said. "Toledo Bend, Conroe, Caddo, Palestine, Sam Rayburn and Lake of the Pines have all experienced the invasive plant that forms floating mats of dense foliage over the surface of lakes." Storey's powerpoint presentation helped illustrate how to identify the plant and the common methods of spreading it from one lake to another on boats and boat trailers.

Giant Salvinia has oblong floating leaves $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. Young plants have smaller leaves that lie flat on the water surface. As plants mature and aggregate into mats, leaves are folded out and compressed into upright chains. The plant is also known as "kariby weed," "aquarium water moss" and "koi kandi." In all its forms it is prohibited in the United States by federal law.

Storey said the sooner an infestation is reported to TPW, the easier it is to deal with it. He advised boaters and anglers to prevent the spread by removing all aquatic plants from propellers, intakes, trailers and gear before leaving a launch area. "Always blow out jet ski intakes and wash boats, trailers and other equipment land side before traveling to a new waterway," the agent concluded.

Commissioner Roger Pace, Precinct-3 recommended the county sell three ten-year old tractors and mowers on E-Bay from his Road & Bridge department. Pace explained that it has been the practice to replace such equipment every ten years saying that each has about 4,500-hours of service in cutting the roadside weeds and grass along the nearly 200 miles of county

maintained roadway in Precinct-3. Placement of the equipment on E-Bay auction is expected to be in December.

Commissioners canvassed and approved the results of the General Election held November 4 (the complete Wood County election results can be found elsewhere in this issue of the Gazette).

David Hudson, of the tax collection law firm of Perdue Brandon, Felder, Collins & Mott LLP, sought court approval to sell a half acre lot in the White Oak Shores addition. "While all taxing entities will not be made whole on the sale of this property," Hudson said, "if approved, it will place the property back on the tax rolls." The bid was \$600 and costs were \$629.70. Commissioners approved the sale as has Yantis Independent School District. The bid on a second tax foreclosed property was withdrawn.

In other action the court approved:

- payroll of \$268,768.02.
- employee/dependent health claims of \$25,818.48.
- claims of \$592,845.49.
- general interlocal agreement with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.
- revised lake house rental policy.
- reserve deputy hours for quarter ending September 30, 2008 and encompassing 394 hours and eight reserve deputys.
- Willie H. Vawter, Hawkins and James Wheeler, Quitman as appointments to the Wood County Airport Board replacing Jim Harty and Tod Roddy.
- adding property coverage for airport terminal, aircraft hanger, antenna and beacon pole to Wood County's property insurance coverage.
- October civil process logs of Constable Bowser (Pct.-1) and Constable Shadboldt (Pct.-3).
- Order of Assignment of Judge Paul Banner to 402nd Distirct Court.
- insurance rates for retirees, dependents and COBRA.
- advertising for bids on information technology infrastructure upgrade.
- 2009 holiday and payroll dates.
- set date of December 12 for public hearing regarding revision of subdivision regulations.

Personnel actions taken at the meeting included:

- Charles Coffrey, temporary elections worker, Elections Administrators Office, \$9.00/hour.
- Stacy Dueson, deputy tax collector, Office of Tax Assessor/Collector, pay increase, from \$12.16/hour to \$13.79/hour.
- Dee Tackett & Paula Bailey new hires, part-time temporary, Office of Tax Assessor/Collector, \$9.00/hour.
- Sharon Going, new hire, temporary seasonal employee, Office of County Judge, \$9.00/hour.
- Chelsey Leann Clemmons, from part-time to full-time, deputy district clerk, from \$9.00/hour to

\$13.79/hour.

- Christopher D. Bettis, new hire, Deputy Sheriff, WCSO, \$16.96/hour.

The next regular meeting of the Wood County Commissioners Court will be Wednesday, November 26 at 10 a.m. A special meeting of the court can be called with 72-hour public notice.