Local environmental groups file suit against proposed Texas muni

LAKE JACKSON, Texas — A long-expected lawsuit aimed at stopping Lake Jackson's golf course project has been filed against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the city.

The lawsuit was filed in federal district court in Galveston by a local environmentalist, Sharon Stewart, the Houston Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. The defendants named include the Corps' Galveston district, the city of Lake Jackson and Mayor Jim Martin.

The lawsuit was filed after the Corps issued Lake Jackson a wetlands permit last February for its long-awaited 18-hole course on land containing wetlands. The permit allows Lake Jackson to fill wetlands with a forested area known as the Columbia Bottomlands.

The suit seeks to suspend or revoke the permit and to halt any construction or awarding of contracts.

The city's proposed course is part of a contiguous 1,600-acre forest that is one of the largest mature hardwood tracts remaining in Texas, according to the suit. The suit also states direct losses through wetlands filling and clearing forests will adversely affect birds as well as numerous native amphibian, reptile and mammal species.

It further states that additional development will take place around the course.

The lawsuit also claims that U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay wrongly tried to influence the outcome of the permit process. DeLay inserted a provision into a recently-signed appropriations bill that prohibited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from delaying or impeding the issuance of the wetlands permit to Lake Jackson.

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Irrigation experts to hold conclave in mid-September


On Sept. 13, a series of educational presentations will explore working relationships between irrigation systems, contractors and other industry members. The all-day program for Sept. 14 will focus on technical topics. A reception and banquet will be held the evening of Sept. 14 at a historic Livermore Valley winery.

For more information on the program and registration forms, contact Wanda Sarsfield of the ASIC at P.O. Box 426, Byron, CA 94514, or by phone at 510-516-1124, or by fax at 510-516-1301.