



SIERRA CLUB

FOUNDED 1892

CAHABA GROUP

GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA

Preservation of Alabama's Wild Watersheds

Meet Wendy Allen-Jackson who will speak @ the Birmingham Zoo Auditorium
6:30 pm, 10/21/03
Wild Water is good!

AN OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB, THE CAHABA GROUP, GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA, ALABAMA

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Proposed River Centre Threatens Cahaba River

On October 6, the Vestavia City Council will be asked to decide whether to approve a \$100 million commercial development which has been proposed along a two-mile stretch of the Cahaba River near Cahaba Heights...The proposal calls for 460,000 square feet of retail and office space to be constructed on a 120-acre site located west of I-459. The proposed River Centre would be located on a particularly sensitive section of the Cahaba. The site is just 300 feet upstream of the Birmingham Waterworks Pumping Station, a primary source of drinking water for the Birmingham metropolitan area. Any mishaps during or after construction could affect the quality of the region's drinking water.

The Cahaba River is already considered an impaired waterway under the Clean Water Act. Any further pollution of its waters would break the law and threaten its numerous endangered species. Opponents of the plan have asked the City to explore alternatives, such as re-zoning the property to prevent future development or facilitating its acquisition by conservation groups. On September 11, the Vestavia Planning and Zoning Board unanimously recommended that the City Council re-zone the property to allow the development, subject to the Council's finding that stated conditions have been met. At the Board meeting, local environmental groups and citizens opposed this decision, pointing out that proposed covenants and restrictions to protect water quality were not yet available for the Board's or the public's review, and many questions presented to the Council had not been answered. Although the developer claims he will use "green" building principles, opponents questioned whether the project would sufficiently control the risk of further impairment to the fragile river ecosystem. Local environmental attorney Ned Mudd pointed out that it was not clear how the builder proposed to control the risk of mud and sediment runoff during the construction process. Many developers have found this problem difficult to control, and any such runoff would violate the regulations to the Clean Water Act. Beth Stewart, Executive Director of the Cahaba River Society, questioned whether the City would have the legal ability to enforce water quality protection measures. Moreover, she stated that such a development would set a dangerous precedent for further develop-

ment along the river. Opponents of the project also urged that the City postpone development along the river until the completion of the Upper Cahaba Watershed study. Public comments regarding the proposed River Centre may be directed as follows:

Mr. Greg Canfield, President
Vestavia Hills City Council
Vestavia Hills City Hall
513 Montgomery Hwy.
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

fax 205-978-0132 or phone the Mayor's office 205-978-0130

HARVEST CONNECTION

SAT 10/25, 10 AM * CALL 256-538-3885

Mt. Laurel Organic Farm — The Alabama Sierra Club has led a three-year campaign to support Alabama's small family farms. Some of the initiatives have included family farm tours in Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Mobile; a postcard campaign asking the Commissioner of Agriculture to focus state programs on bringing support to our small family farms; and a "We Can Do Better, We Can Protect Alabama's Small Family Farms" yard-

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They are Here!!! *The 2004 Sierra Club Wilderness Calendars and Engagement Books are on sale now for \$10. Order yours today by contacting Danny Dorroh at 205-620-3299 or DD60@charter.net.*

See page 3 for Directions to Meeting Places regarding specific outings.

New Cahaba Group Record For Participation on an Outing...Joe Copeland

Would you believe we had a record number of 58 individuals on our trip to Jackson County August 17th? The enthusiasm for our trip to Neversink, Stephens Gap, and Blowing Wind Bat Cave on such a warm day surprised everyone involved. The size of our group made it necessary for us to split into two groups to make the trip more pleasing for everyone. Both groups returned with the same number that began the trip, and no one being sacrificed to the "pit gods". Words can't describe the uniqueness of these three locations in Jackson County. Neversink is a giant sinkhole that is 172 feet deep, and is owned by the Southeastern Cave Conservancy. Vertical cavers go there to repel to the bottom. Stephens Gap is a sinkhole that is located on private property and has a small creek running into it. It has foot access to the bottom of the pit, and it is an awesome sight to look up at the hole at the top and the waterfalls cascading into the pit. On our trip, 74 year old Elzira Drake went to the bottom of the pit and back without any assistance. Access to the property is by special permit only. Blowing Wind Cave is a National Wildlife Refuge, administered by the staff of Wheeler Wildlife Refuge. Access is blocked by bars (the steel type) on both entrances. From Spring to early fall the cave is inhabited by hundred of thousands of female Gray Bats and their young. At dusk, the mother bats emerging from the cave to feed on the mosquitoes on Gunter'sville Lake. Thanks to all who participated, especially Carl Craig and Carroll Wilson for leading one of the groups and Freddie DiPlacido for helping me with the other group.

Solar Home Tour

SAT 10/4 * CALL 205-429-4120

Sponsored nationally by the American Solar Energy Society, the tour showcases homes that are both energy efficient and employ solar technologies that are clean and renewable. The Alabama Solar Energy Co-op will sponsor a local tour in rural Blount county. The 3 hour walking tour starts at 9:00 am and will visit 5 sites, including straw bale and underground homes. You will see passive solar designs that heat in the winter and cool in the summer. The active solar technologies that you will see are photovoltaic electricity and solar hot water.

After the tour, anyone wishing to learn more about solar design, energy-efficiency, or community living is invited to join us for an optional brown bag lunch. We will provide the porch and drinks. Wear walking shoes and dress for the weather. Meet at

information contact Stephen & leave e-mail or postal address: 205-429-4120 or greenworks@juno.com (be sure to say "home tour" in the subject line).

Foothills Trail Hike @ Oak Mtn State Park SUN 10/12 * CALL 205-345-3460

This will be a good chance to get reacquainted with Oak Mtn. State Park, if you haven't been there in a while. This will be an 8 mile, moderate to strenuous hike. Pack a lunch and plenty of water. We'll start at the North Trailhead and take the Foothills Trail (Yellow) to Lake Tranquility. From there, we'll climb to the top of Double Oak Mountain and then head back on the Shackelford Trail (White). Meet at the North Trailhead at 9:00 am. For more information, contact Tammy Cooper, 205-345-3460 or e-mail tlcmkbeauty@juno.com

ExCom Meeting

MON 10/13 * CALL 205-795-2043

Executive Committee meeting at the Sierra Club SE Office at 6:30 pm. All members welcome and encouraged to attend and participate. Paul Perret 205-795-2043.

ICO Team Meeting

TUE 10/14 * CALL 205-970-6500

We will be planning our outings schedule for inner city youth groups for next year, discuss fund-raising, and lay the groundwork for a youth leadership program. Anyone interested in working with youngsters in outdoor settings or in supporting this program is welcome to join us at Alabama Outdoors at 6:30 pm. No expertise needed! Contact Margo Rebar at 205-970-6500 or e-mail mrebar@earthlink.net

Backpack Trip Appalachian Trail

FRI 10/17 THRU SUN 10/19 * CALL 205-680-9263

Join us for a trip to north Georgia on one of the most scenic areas on the Appalachian Trail. We will start our trip Friday afternoon, through tunnels of Rhododendron and lush greenery along Stover Creek; a beautiful part of the trail spotted with waterfalls, and we will exit at Gooch Gap on Sunday before lunch. The hike is 14 miles long. Due to the elevation changes and the distance covered on Saturday, leader approval is necessary. Audrey Alverson 205-680-9263 or e-mail

audreya@aol.com

Mt. Cheaha Fall Color Hike

SAT 10/18 * CALL 256-520-6659

Hike 8 miles total, from Cheaha trailhead (parking lot) along ridge on the Pinhoti Trail to Caney Head. Beautiful panoramic views of the mountains and valleys. Then we will descend on the Chinnabee Trail to Turnipseed campsite where we will have left a shuttle vehicle. Combined outing with North Alabama Group. Bring water, lunch, sturdy boots and strong ankles. Meet at Office Max, Village East at 8:00 am or at Shoneys at Oxford at 9:30am. Lee Hollingsworth, (work) 256-461-3036 (hm) 256-520-6659

General Interest Meeting

TUE 10/21, 6:30 PM

CALL 205-795-2043

Our speaker this month is Wendy Allen-Jackson, Exec. Director, Black Warrior & Cahaba Rivers Land Trust. Wendy has been recognized across the state for her business like approach to conservation and her unique ability to bring diverse partners together for the benefit of conservation. During her 8 years with Nature Conservancy, (AL Chapter's Director of Land Protection & Govt. Relations), she negotiated land acquisitions and partnerships helping to effect large scale conservation projects such as the 14,000 acre Mountain Longleaf Pine National Wildlife Refuge, the Bibb County Glades Nature Preserve, the state's 48,000 acre Forever Wild Mobile-Tensaw Delta purchase and the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge. Wendy decided to join the Black Warrior-Cahaba Rivers Land Trust in June 2001 to focus her full attention on the protection of these two remarkable watersheds. She served first as Land Acquisition Director and was promoted to her current position of Executive Director in January, 2002. Wendy has worked to establish projects such as the Turkey Creek Watershed conservation project, (#1 on the Forever Wild Land Trust's list for nature preserve acquisition in Central Alabama, thanks to Wendy), and the Five Mile Creek Greenways project.

DeSota State Park Day Hike

SAT 10/25 * CALL 256-287-1652

We will hike about 5 miles in the park and also visit both Little River Falls and DeSota Falls. Hopefully, the maples and hickories will be showing some color by that time. The hike will be leisurely, but the footing will be rocky at times. Both falls are among the most spectacular in the state when the water levels are good. Rated moderate. Optional dinner after hike.

Meet at McDonalds Trussville at 9:00 am Contact Joe Copeland 256-287-1652 or email joec@power.net

Newsletter Mailing Party & Potluck

THU 10/30, 6:30 PM * CALL 205-871-1981

Potluck supper at Dick Echols' home, 4032 Montevallo Road. *(Bring a dish)*

More Events, Directions, Notes...

(Continued from page 2)

and plan to make new friends and visit old ones. 6:30 pm. Dick Echols, 205-871-1981.

Parking Note: Please park on Glencoe Drive across Montevallo Road from Dick's house. Please do not park in Dick's driveway. This will avoid "driveway accidents."

Cloudland Canyon Day Hike

SAT 11/1 * CALL 205-680-9263

We will hike to the bottom of the canyon via stairs to get a view of the 2 waterfalls there. We will then climb out of the canyon by the stairs, and hike along the rim with great overlooks of the gorge below. Cloudland Canyon is one of the most scenic trips we make each year. The hike is relatively easy except for the climb out of the canyon at the beginning of the hike. Although the distance is only about 5 miles, the hike is rated moderate +. Optional dinner after hike. Meet at McDonalds in Trussville at 8:00 am. Leader, Audrey Alverson 205-680-9263

Dayhike Tennessee Gorge

SAT 11/8 * CALL 205-221-6196

Hike will be a shuttled eight and a half miles on the Cumberland Trail around the rim of the "Grand Canyon of the Tennessee River". Optional dinner afterwards: Even those who elect to skip dinner with us should plan on returning to Birmingham pretty late.

Meet at 7:30 at McRaes at Roebucks Shopping Center or 10 am at the Tennessee Welcome Center south of Chattanooga.

Leader, Carroll Wilson 205-221-6196

Upcoming Events

ALABAMA CHAPTER ANNUAL RE-TREAT FRI 11/14 THRU SUN 11/16

Camp Beckwith, Weeks Bay.

Call John Ackerman 334-361-4732.

Miss a Newsletter?

Bookmark this link and catch it online at:

<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba.html>

Our newsletters are usually on the Web approximately the same time printed copies are received.

Forever Wild Tags will be available in all the county courthouses and annexes Sept. 1st. The proceeds from these tags will be used exclusively to purchase public lands for conservation. Remember, you can personalize your tag with up to 6 letters at no additional cost. If you would like to get your tag before your normal renewal date, you may do so by paying an additional \$1.25. For more info, call Joe Copeland at 256-287-1652 or

[Joec@power.net.org](mailto:Joec@power.net)

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sign event. We have been working to connect our buying habits, as consumers, with the need for support for our small family farmers. Our fall outreach event, the Alabama Sierra club and Alabama Sustainable Agri Network (ASAN) are combining forces to sponsor a farm day that will bring together growers and consumers at Mt. Laurel Organic Gardens, 1185 Shelby Co. Rd. 41. It will include a locally-grown gourmet lunch, a cooking demonstration, farm tours, and a small-arm advocate who will speak on the important role of small family farms to our food supply.

To participate in "THE HARVEST CONNECTION", reserve your space now! The cost is \$5 (\$2 for children who must be accompanied by parents) for a wonderful farm event morning, a locally-grown gourmet meal, and local produce shopping opportunities. You can send your name, address, phone # and email address, along with your check to:

The Harvest Connection c/o AL Sierra Club,
1330 21st Way South, Suite 100
Birmingham AL 35205

For more information, you can call the SE Office of the Sierra Club at 205-933-9111 or the AL Sierra Club Office at 256-538-3885 or email

Peggie.griffin@sierraclub.org

We also need volunteers to help carry out this very important event. Please call 205-933-9111 or 256-538-3885 or email to volunteer ASAP!

Non-Sierra Club Outings & Events

Day Hike, Oak Mtn State Park

SUN 10/12 * CALL 205-945-8052

Grab your Gatorade and favorite Power Bar and meet at 1:00 pm at the North Trail Head for a Sunday walk. No dogs Please! Les Miller, 205-945-8052.

Ruffner Mountain Aids Hike

SAT 11/1 * CALL 205-322-4197 X 25

Registration will open at 8:00 a.m. and the hike will begin at 9:00 a.m. For more information regarding the hike, contact Nikole Layton, Birmingham AIDS Outreach 205-322-4197 ext. 25, or via email at

nikole@birminghamaidsoutreach.org

National Sierra Club Liability Waiver

In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630.

In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing, or anything similar, is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

Directions to Meeting Places

Alabama Outdoors, Homewood—3054 Independence Drive on Hwy 31.

Birmingham Zoo Auditorium—2630 Cahaba Road, near Botanical Gardens.

Days Inn, Hoover—At the Intersection of Hwy 31 and Lorna Road, adjacent to I-65.

Golden Rule BBQ, Hwy 79—Right side of Alabama Hwy. 79 (as you're driving away from Birmingham). Past Tarrant City, just past traffic light at intersection of AL Hwy 79 and Sunhill Road. Before Carson Road intersection, near Jefferson State Community College.

Hayden/Corner Park and Ride—Hayden/Corner exit 284 off I-65 North. Turn right off exit ramp, then first right, then enter parking lot on right.

Jack's, Double Springs—On U.S. Hwy. 278 in Double Springs just east of stoplight at intersection of Hwys 278 and AL 33 and AL 195.

McDonald's, Trussville—I-59 North to exit # 141 (Chalkville Road exit). Turn right at end of exit ramp and see McDonald's on immediate left.

McRaes, Roebuck—9110 Parkway East, just off I-59 at 4th Avenue South exit.

Oak Mountain State Park—I-65 South from Birmingham to Hwy 119/Cahaba Valley Road exit.. Right off exit ramp, then left at first traffic light. Follow road 2 miles, then left at stop sign. Go 2 miles past the fee gate, then right onto Terrace Drive. Go to park office parking lot between boat parking and beach parking.

Office Max, Village East—7523 Crestwood Blvd. Across Crestwood Blvd. from Sears, Century Plaza.

Piccadilly, Palisades—Piccadilly Cafeteria parking lot in the Palisades Shopping Center on Palisades Pkwy, just off Greensprings Hwy.

Ruffner Mountain Nature Center—I-20 to Oporto-Madrid exit. Head away from mall area. Go 1.5 miles, then turn right on Rugby Avenue. Go 1 mile, then turn right on 81st Street South Follow signs to the Center.

Shoney's, Oxford—I-20 East to Oxford exit 185. Left at end of ramp on AL 21. Go under interstate and see Shoney's on right.

Sierra Club S.E. Office—1330 21st Way South, near Five Points South, one block south of Highland Police Station. Turn onto 21st Way S. at Temple Beth-El. Go to end of block to last building on right.

Outings Note

Anyone is welcome on outings, but if you make repeated trips, please join the Club. (See details in this newsletter.) Carpool whenever possible. Join us for optional dinner if you'd like. Check difficulty rating and children/age requirements. Questions? Contact trip leader.

Note for Canoe Trips

All canoe outings are suitable for beginner/novice canoeists unless otherwise noted in the trip description. Life jackets are required and must be worn. You are responsible for finding your own canoe. Borrow one, paddle with a friend, or rent from Alabama Outdoors, 870-1919, or another outfitter. Bring your picnic lunch and something to drink while on the water. If you have further questions, please call the trip leader.

At a Glance – Sierra Club Events – October, 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9/28	9/29	9/30	1	2	3	4 Solar Home Tour
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Day Hike Oak Mtn State Park
12	13 ExComm Mtg.	14 ICO Team Mtg.	15	16	17 Backpack Appalachian Trail (Fri thru Sun)	18 Day Hike Cheaha Falls
19	20	21 General Interest Meeting	22	23	24	25 -Day Hike DeSoto State Pk - Harvest Connection
26	27	28	29	30 Newsletter Mailing / Potluck	31	11/1 Day Hike Cloudland Canyon

See event details and directions to meeting places inside.

Visit us online for newsletters, issues, contacts and more!!
<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba.html>



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

SIERRA CLUB/CAHABA GROUP
1330 21ST WAY SOUTH, STE 110
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35205

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Join the Sierra Club and get a ball cap all for \$25 – Renewals Also Welcome!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone(____) _____ Email _____@_____

To join or renew your membership, send coupon with a check for \$25 made out to the Sierra Club. Mail to John Walker, 2833 21st Street, Ensley, Birmingham, AL 35208-2217 or call John at 786-0622. (Dues include a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and newsletter and are **not** tax deduct.)