



SIERRA CLUB

FOUNDED 1892

CAHABA GROUP GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA

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

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ADEM Reform Coalition Holds 2004 Summit

by Jen Howard

On March 12-14, the ADEM Reform Coalition held its second membership conference at the Joe Wheeler State Park in Rogersville, Alabama. The coalition is comprised of about 30 grassroots, public health, environmental justice, and environmental organizations in the state. The coalition seeks to reform the Alabama Department of Environmental Management ("ADEM") to ensure that it better protects the environment and public health, as well as ensuring environmental justice and public participation in its activities. In ADEM's 22-year history, it has done a poor job of enforcing environmental laws. Too often, it has furthered the interests of industry and land developers rather than protecting Alabama's citizens. ADEM's leniency in the Birmingham area has contributed to problems such as increased sedimentation of the Cahaba River and its tributaries due to construction site runoff, increased sewer rates due to lax enforcement of leaking septic tanks, and continued toxic discharges by some industrial facilities.

The coalition seeks reform in four main areas: (1) leadership, (2) enforcement, (3) resources, and (4) public participation. Goals include reforming the structure of ADEM leadership to improve accountability to the public, creating new policies to swiftly and effectively halt violations of environmental laws and to deter future violations, increasing ADEM funding to provide the necessary resources to fulfill its mission, and improving the public involvement process to ensure that citizens have the right to provide input into the decision-making process and to receive information about agency actions.

The Environmental Management Commission ("EMC"), the seven-member committee with oversight of ADEM, is beginning to respond. The EMC recently released a proposed strategic plan, which included recommendations for developing a more defined enforcement and penalty policy, expanding pollution prevention programs, and increasing funding. Several important pieces of legislation related to ADEM reform are currently being considered in the Alabama legislature. House Bill 351

Very Interesting Meeting
Tue 4/20, 6:30pm
Birmingham Zoo Auditorium

Ken Wills, President of Friends of Moss Rock Preserve, will talk about this natural area in Hoover.

Bring Your Friend!!!

would establish a list of permit violators which would be publicly available on ADEM's website. House Joint Resolution 23 would establish a joint interim legislative committee to study ADEM's effectiveness. Senate Bill 289 would change the makeup of the EMC by including a licensed geologist and imposing term limits. The Sierra Club supports each of these proposals. To review the latest draft of the ADEM Reform Coalition's blueprint for reform, go to the Alabama River Alliance website at

www.alabamarivers.org

For more information about the status of pending legislation, see the Alabama League of Environmental Action Voters' website at

www.alaleavs.org

Do You Have an ADEM "Horror Story"? If you have personal experience with a particular example of ADEM's failure to stop a polluter from harming our air, waterways, or land, please call Jen Howard at 205-877-3555. Your stories can help to further the important movement to reform ADEM.

**Sierra Club National Election
March 2004**

don't forget to vote!

this year, it is very IMPORTANT!

Need more information?

www.groundswellsierra.org

Day Hike, Ruffner Mountain Nature Center SUN 4/4 * CALL 205-680-9263

Spring has sprung, and it's time to get those winter cobwebs out of your head. Join us for this lovely day hike and enjoy the spring greenery. This will be a somewhat strenuous to moderate 6.4 mile hike with 1,000-ft elevation gain. The trails we will hike are the Five Mile Trail, which is only 3.8 miles long, the Quarry Loop (1.2 miles), and the Ridge Trail (1.4 miles). Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the gate to the center on 84th Street. Leader, Audrey Alverson 205-680-9263

Canoe the Flint River SATURDAY 4/10 * CALL 256-287-1652

Ospreys, Wood Ducks, Kingfishers, and abundant other wildlife as well as an old mill make this a very interesting and scenic 10 mile paddle. The Flint is located east of Huntsville, and empties into the Tennessee River. All participants are responsible for bringing their own boat or finding a partner to paddle with. Meet at the Hayden/Corner Park and Ride (exit 285 on I65) at 8:00 a.m. Leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

ExCom Meeting MON 4/12 * 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 4/13 * CALL 205-970-6500

We will be discussing our March ICO outing to the Environmental Center at Birmingham Southern and a retreat for new and old ICO volunteers to be held March 20, Saturday. We welcome all volunteers to join us and learn about our program to expose inner city youth to the natural landscape. Please contact Margo Rebar at 205-970-6500 or

mrebar@earthlink.net

Wildflower Hike to Cane Creek Preserve SUN 4/18 * CALL 256-287-1652

We will travel to Colbert County for this extraordinary trip. Cane Creek Preserve is a 500-acre nature preserve owned by Jim and Faye Lacefield. Some of you may recognize

Jim from the book he published, *Lost Worlds in Alabama Rocks*. Jim has spent many hours and dollars building a 10-mile trail system, complete with concrete creek crossings in the Preserve. What's even more amazing is that he has opened it to the public at no charge. We should see many wildflowers including, hopefully, Yellow Lady's Slippers and the very rare French's Shooting Star. French's Shooting Star grows only under sandstone bluff shelters, and in Alabama, only in the Cane Creek drainage. This is the only population east of Arkansas. This will be a joint outing with the North Alabama Group. Leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

General Interest Meeting MOSS ROCK PRESERVE TUE 4/20, 6:30PM * 205-795-2043

Ken Wills, President of Friends of Moss Rock Preserve, will talk about Moss Creek Preserve in Hoover. We have built several new trails in this 200-acre nature park. You would be amazed at some of the gorgeous spots hidden away in this area. We'll have info. on what Sierrans can do to help (Hint: it involves fire rakes and ratchet pruners). Call 205-795-2043.

Canoe the Locust Fork, Section VI SAT 4/24 * CALL 205-647-6961

Canoe an easy and scenic section of the river suitable for beginners. We have seen Osprey catch and eat fish on this trip in years past. Wildflowers will be blooming on the banks. Must provide your own canoe.

Meet at the Hayden Corner Park and Ride at 9am. For more info call Vicky Wilson (205) 647-6961 or

vickywilson58@hotmail.com

Newsletter Mailing Party & Potluck
THU 4/29, 6:30 PM * CALL 205-871-1981
Potluck supper at Dick Echols' home, 4032 Montevallo Road. Bring a dish 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."

Wildflower Hike Bucks Pocket SP and High Falls SUN 5/2 * CALL 256-287-1652

This easy hike will be a good opportunity to see some late spring wildflowers in Bucks Pocket State Park and to explore nearby High Falls. This is an annual trip for our group, and is the first time we have made a late spring trip there. This is an easy hike, but the first ½ mile will be a fairly steep descent. Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79 at 9:00 a.m. Optional dinner after hike. Trip Leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652.



Rock Climber at Sandrock, Alabama. (Photo taken by Del Kelso 3/18/04)

Learn to Kayak or Canoe with the BCC!

The **Birmingham Canoe Club** is offering beginning whitewater kayak and canoe classes that will have you experiencing the thrill of whitewater in no time. Whether you choose kayak or canoe, you'll start learning basic paddling skills on a flat water lake and then make two river trips to Class II rivers, including a weekend camping trip to the best training river in the Southeast, the beautiful Hiwassee River in Tennessee. You'll learn strokes, basic river skills, water reading and safety. It's a wonderful introduction to the thrilling sport of whitewater paddling. Your highly qualified instructors are certified by the American Canoe Association, the governing organization for all paddle sports.

Beginning whitewater kayak class:

First classroom session: Monday, April 19, 6-8 pm at the Southside Library.
Lake session: Saturday, April 24, 8am, near the swimming beach at Oak Mt. State Park.

First river trip: Sunday, April 25, 8am, Coosa River near Wetumpka.

Second classroom session: Wed. April 28, 6-8 pm, Southside Library

River weekend: May 1-2, Hiwassee River near Reliance, TN.

Beginning whitewater canoe class:

First classroom session: Wed., May 26, 6-8 pm at the Southside Library.

Second classroom session: Wed., June 2, 6-8, Southside Library

Lake session: Saturday, June 5, 8am, near the swimming beach at Oak Mt. State Park.

First river trip: Sunday, June 6, 8am, Coosa River near Wetumpka.

Third classroom session: Wed. June 9, 6-8 pm, Southside Library

River weekend: June 12-13, Hiwassee River near Reliance, TN.

Each class costs only \$85, and you'll also get a free one-year membership in the BCC. If you don't have your own equipment, we'll outfit you with top-of-the-line boats, paddles, PFD's and additional gear for an additional \$85.

Contact Bob Shepard for more information or to register for the class. Space is limited. 205-428-4061 or

bshep@uab.edu

"Tell Shep, the Sierra Club sent you".

Oak Mountain State Park, Surprise Road at Peavine Falls

If you want to visit Peavine Falls, you are going to have to walk. The road is closed for "renovation". In fact they are renovating the trail too. Remember that rutted out trail on the right side of the watershed above Peavine Falls? Well now, it is a gravel road, wide enough for vehicles. Tons of crushed limestone, switchbacking steeply down the hill, just ready for that first big rain to erode into what was a natural area.

What is next? A concrete sidewalk to the falls? Hey, I've got a great idea. Why not cut away the waterfall and create a gigantic waterslide? Better yet, put a fiberglass "chute" right down the middle! Hey and maybe a bungee jump off of the cliffs next to the falls.

Just now found myself humming the chorus to "Big Yellow Taxi" by Joni Mitchell...

"don't it always seem to go, you don't know what you've got till it's gone, they paved paradise and put up a parking lot"!



New road connects Peavine Falls Parking Lot to bottom of watershed, just above the falls. Can you say "erosion"? (Photo taken by Laurie Malone 3/21/04)

Outings Notes

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.

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

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. **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.

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.

At a Glance – Sierra Club Events – April 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3/28	3/29	3/30	3/31	4/1	4/2	4/3
4/4 Day Hike Ruffner Mtn	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	4/9	4/10 Canoe Flint River
4/11	4/12 ExCom Mtg	4/13 ICO Team Mtg	4/14	4/15	4/16	4/17
4/18 Wildflower Hike Cane Creek Pres.	4/19	4/20 General Interest Mtg.	4/21	4/22	4/23	4/24 Canoe Locust Fork, Section VI
4/25	4/26	4/27	4/28	4/29 Newsletter Mail- out Party!!!	4/30	5/1
5/2 Wildflower Hike Bucks Pocket SP	5/3	5/4	5/5	5/6	5/7	5/8

See event details and directions to meeting places inside.



SIERRA CLUB/
CAHABA GROUP
1330 21ST WAY

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

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all for \$25 – Renewals Also Welcome

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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.)