



SIERRA CLUB

FOUNDED 1892

CAHABA GROUP GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA

AN OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB, THE CAHABA



April General Interest Meeting Las Vegas, Naturally

Lisa Harris will present on her recent trip to "Sin City" and some pretty amazing natural areas and wildflowers!!!

April 19th, 2005 @ 6:30 pm, Birmingham

Cahaba Group Executive Committee And Other Contacts

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Vacant

Vice Chair
Vacant

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Beth Johns

Conservation Chair
Vacant

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Lisa Harris

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Hopefully, A Victory for Forever Wild...Joe Copeland

On Wednesday, March 9th, Carroll Wilson, Julia Mortenson, Valya Mobley, Lisa Harris, Ken Wills, Jim Shaddox and I carpooled to Montgomery for a hearing on SB255, a bill written by Senator Gearald Dial that would cut funding for the Forever Wild Land Trust by one third.

The meeting room overflowed with those of us who were opposed to the bill, and about twenty-five individuals had to watch the proceedings from another room through closed circuit tv. While only two individuals spoke in favor of the bill, some 30 plus were on the list to speak in opposition to it. I did not count the number who spoke against the bill, but time dictated that only eight or ten had the opportunity. While there was not a vote taken by the Committee regarding the bill, Senator Pat Lindsey, the Chair of the Committee declared the bill dead after the hearing. However, Saturday's Birmingham Post Herald quoted Senator Dial as stating that the bill was not dead. I don't know what tactics he might use to give new life to the bill, but we must be forever vigilant to insure it stays dead.

Another positive occurrence at the hearing was that the Committee passed a clean bill that will forbid the Pac to Pac transfer of funds that go to political candidates. If this bill becomes law, it will very helpful in making the political process more transparent.

We need to send letters and calls to

Senator Pat Lindsey at the address below and thank him for holding the hearings on SB255 and for the Pac to Pac funds legislation that, due to his efforts, closed all the loopholes of a House version of the bill.

Sen. Pat Lindsey Chairman, Economic Expansion and Trade Committee
Alabama State House—Room 726
11 South Union Street
Montgomery, Al., 36130
Ph. 334-242-7843

Also, contact your local State Senator and tell them that you oppose any attempt to reduce Forever Wild Funding.

Homo Pollutis...Del Kelso

In a shocking discovery, scientist announced today the emergence of a new species!!! In the most rapid example of evolution ever known, the "new" biped, named Homo Pollutis by anthropologists, has displayed the ability to breath air filled with post industrial particulates, drink water contaminated with chemicals and seems to actually thrive on food "laced" with pesticides, antibiotics and growth hormones. Mercury apparently effects them like an aphrodisiac!!! One scientist was quoted, **"just like Neanderthals, H. Sapiens doesn't have a chance. The only real difference between the two is that Neanderthals didn't have the knowledge to change while 51% of the Homo sapiens apparently just don't care."** April Fools???



Dear Friend of the Environment,

With the support of Birmingham, Bessemer, Hoover, and dozens of volunteers, the Jefferson County Commission sponsored its first county-wide **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Day** in April of 2003. In the last two years, we've collected almost **450,000 pounds** of HHW. We are writing to ask for your active support of this year's event.

Jefferson County will hold its **Annual HHW Day on April 23 from 8 AM until noon**. Our plan calls for four drop-off locations manned by a mixture of contract HHW professionals, municipal workers, and lots of volunteers. **Our sites are the Hoover Met, the Bessemer Civic Center, the Center Point Courthouse, and the Alabama State Fairgrounds in Birmingham.**

HHW is waste routinely found in the home that can catch fire, react, or explode under certain circumstances, or that may be corrosive or toxic. Some of the more common varieties include certain kinds of paints, paint thinners, car batteries, old pesticides or herbicides, unusable gasoline or kerosene contaminated with water, and used motor oil, to name just a few. As you might suspect, **most basements and storage sheds boast an ample amount of these products** which can not be introduced into the traditional waste stream.

Because of the significant expense associated with disposing of this kind of waste in an environmentally responsible way, we are once again relying on a low cost outreach strategy of grassroots networks, media attention as the event approaches, and word of mouth to generate participation. **We are asking for your active support in telling friends, neighbors, and colleagues about this chance to properly dispose of these troubling items.**

If you would like to volunteer for this half-day event, we can always use another hand. Please call us at 205/325-8712.

I have attached in a Word format a copy of a "sample" newsletter article being provided to local municipalities and other organizations that have newsletters that outlines the specifics of the event itself as well as a flyer for distribution or posting (PDF). A more "colorful" brochure will be available closer to the event. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this exciting multi-jurisdictional project.

Thanks again,

Mike Higginbotham

Project Coordinator, Jefferson County Household Hazardous Waste Day

Jefferson County - Environmental Protection Division

205/325-8712

COFFEEN LAND TRUST BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING UPDATE

Good News! Jim Price of the Sierra Club called to inform me the on Saturday, February 12, the Coffeen Land Trust Board of Trustees voted unanimously to authorize the Coffeen Nature Preserve Managers and the CLT Land Management Committee to contact the Walton County Health Department to determine what improvements need to be made at the campground to allow a camping permit to be issued. The CLT Board also authorized the Managers and Land Mgt Committee to contact appropriate firms and to make improvements leading to the issuance of a permit allowing the reuse of the campground by authorized individuals and groups seeking to provide service projects at the Coffeen Nature Preserve. The Letter Writing Campaign made a positive impact, and opened the door to us working together in the future with the CLT Board Members.

We have established a positive momentum with the new Board. To keep it going, Jim Price suggested all of us write a thank letter or E-mail to the CLT Board Members. They still have to vote on our access to the beach, repairs on the Castle, and other issues at future meetings.

All in all, your letters made a difference. This is a good first step toward regaining our ability to continue to provide service projects while camping and enjoying the natural beauty of the Coffeen Nature Preserve.

Sincerely,

Bill Baty

**JACKSONVILLE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

***JSU offers all expense paid
Environmental Education
graduate class for teachers***

Camp McDowell Environmental Center, Jacksonville State University and Alabama Chapter of Sierra Club are joining in partnership to offer *Topics in Environmental Education: Watersheds*. This graduate level class is designed especially for teachers who want to incorporate more environmental education that correlates to the Alabama Course of Study into their classrooms. The class will be taught on the 900 acre "classroom" at the Camp McDowell Environmental Center, north of Jasper, AL. Dr. David Steffy, from JSU will be the instructor for the class.

The dates of the class are June 19-24, 2005. Along with time spent in the classroom, there will also be opportunities to explore an actual watershed on the camp property. You will do research via the Internet on topics related to the class and be provided with hands-on materials to take back to the classroom for your students.

How are we able to offer this opportunity to you free of charge? Through a generous grant, the Alabama Chapter of Sierra Club is funding the class. Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. Inspired by nature, Sierra Club works to protect our communities and the planet. They believe that education is the key to this long-term protection.

The Sierra Club grant covers tuition, books, fees, lodging and meals. This offer is available to the first 12 teachers who apply and qualify for the class. There will be a small stipend to cover travel expenses. Preference will be given to teachers who teach science.

For information or to register for this class, contact Maggie Wade Johnston at Camp McDowell Environmental Center. The phone number is 205-387-1806 or email

maggie@campmcdowell.com



McDowell

National Sierra Club—Elections for Directors and Immigration Limits...Balloting begins mid March!!!

Another potentially contentious Sierra Club election is upon us. This year, not only are 15 candidates running for the board of directors, there are three ballot measures, two of which would alter rules for future elections, and a third about whether the Club should adopt a policy on limiting immigration into the United States.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization that depends on members to make important decisions about its governance. "Democracy works," says Club President Larry Fahn, "but only if everyone participates." Voting in elections at all levels of the Club is both a privilege and a responsibility of membership, he says, and the Club requires a free flow of views on policy and priorities in order to function effectively. Members will elect five representatives to serve three-year terms on the 15-member board, which oversees staff and volunteer activities, sets conservation priorities, and approves the annual budget.

The Population Ballot Question asks members: "Shall the Sierra Club policy on immigration, adopted by the Board of Directors in 1999 and revised in 2003, be changed to recognize the need to adopt lower limits on migration to the United States?" The Club board of directors recommends a "no" vote on this question.

The two other ballot measures propose changes to the by-laws that affect the election. Bylaws Change #1 would remove the requirement to provide space for write-in candidates on the ballot. Bylaws Change #2 requires one year of continuous membership in the Sierra Club in order to run for the board. (Currently, members can file a petition to run for office on the same day they become a member.) The board recommends a "yes" vote on the two bylaws changes.

For much more information on the National Sierra Club Elections visit

www.sierraclub.org/bod/2005election/about/

Vote! Vote! Vote! Vote!

Hello fellow kayak and canoers,

The Dixie Division of the American Canoe Association is co-hosting an Adaptive Paddling Workshop (APW) in Birmingham, AL from April 7-10.

We are looking for both ACA certified instructors as well as paddlers who are interested in learning how to teach folks with various disabilities (aka an assistant instructor).

Gordon Black, Janet Zeller, and Jamie Jackson are three of the top ACA Instructor Trainers in the country and they will be facilitating the APW. It doesn't get much better than them!

You can also find more information at:

**www.dixiedivision.com
www.acanet.org**

Please let me know if you are interested or have any questions. Thanks for your time,

Chris Stec
Chair-Dixie Division, ACA
chstec@yahoo.com

**Rueben Creek Hike/
Wildflower Outing**

SAT 4/2 * CALL 256-287-1652

This will be a 6-mile moderate hike/wildflower walk near Sherwood Tennessee, just a few miles north of the Alabama State Line. It will be a joint outing with the North Alabama (Huntsville) Group and will be led by Joette Carter of the NA Group on part of her extensive holdings in Tennessee. For those familiar with this area, it is near the Carter Mountain/Buggy Top Park and the South Cumberland Recreation Area. There will be wildflowers galore, and, for those who want a good workout, one group will make a loop up the mountain and back. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Trussville McDonalds . Optional dinner after hike. Leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

Wildflower Hike Bucks Pocket & High Falls

SAT 4/9 * CALL 256-287-1652

This is an annual trip for our group, and there is usually a good variety of wildflowers in Bucks Pocket State Park and at nearby High Falls. This is an easy hike, but the first 1/2 mile will be a fairly steep descent. We will have lunch along South Sauty Creek at the Park Headquarters before exploring some interesting rock formations along the creek. We will then drive to nearby High Falls. Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79 at 9:00 a.m. Optional dinner after hike. Trip Leader Sonja Mathis 205-556-3330

Earth Day Celebration

SUN 4/10 FROM 1 PM TILL 4 PM @ BIRMINGHAM BOTANNICAL GARDEN

Hey, we will be there for a day the whole family can enjoy!

cations Meeting

MON 4/11 * 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. Call 205-795-2043.

ICO Team Meeting

TUE 4/12 * CALL 205-970-6500

The ICO team will meet at 6:30 p.m. at Alabama Outdoors. Anyone who is interested in working in natural areas with young people is welcome to attend. We are also (*always*) looking for people interested in helping raise funds for our program, even if they do not wish to go on outings. Please join us at our meeting or contact Margo Rebar at 205-970-6500 or e-mail

mrebar@earthlink.net

Day Hike Section 3 Pinhoti Trail

SAT 4/16 * CALL 205-854-7090

This will be an eight mile trail hike on the northern part of section 3 on the Pinhoti trail. Sites include an earthen dam, lake, and wildflowers. Hike will have a shuttle between Rabbittown road and Coleman FS 500 trailhead. Meet at 8 am at the Kmart parking lot on Crestwood Blvd. Contact Jim Temple at 205-854-7090 for more info.

TUE 4/19 @ 6:30 PM

BIRMINGHAM ZOO AUDITORIUM

The unexpected Las Vegas - naturally! Lisa Harris will speak at the April meeting on her trip to Las Vegas, Nevada. The winter's torrential rains have resulted in amazing wildflowers in desert areas - we'll have pictures! There is a bird preserve and wetlands at a water treatment plant, and a water-preserving bio-treatment facility at Ethel M's Chocolate factory (I'll bring samples.) Sierrans find nature wherever they are - even in Glitter Gulch!

Canoe Locust Fork, Section VI

SAT 4/23 * CALL 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 4/28, 6:30 PM

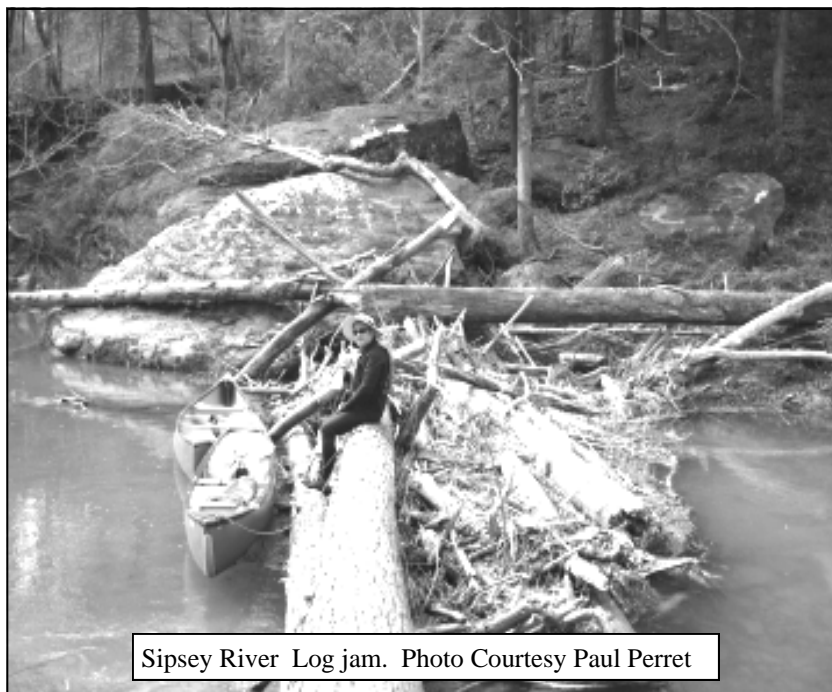
CALL 205-871-1981

Will be held at the Sierra Club SE Office at 6:30 pm. Call 205-795-2043.

Ruffner Mountain Hike

SAT 4/30 * CALL 205-854-7090

This will be a seven mile trail hike in the nature preserve. Sites include animals, a caved in mine, rock crusher, quarry, and overlooks. Meet at 9 am at the Ruffner Mountain parking lot. Contact Jim Temple at 205-854-7090 for more information.



Sipsey River Log jam. Photo Courtesy Paul Perret

Exec Communi-

General Interest Meeting

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Walls Of Jericho Day Hike

SAT 5/7 * CALL 256-287-1652

This will be the Cahaba Group's 2nd visit to "the Walls" in about 20 years. Our 1st trip there was in January when there was ice on the trees, and it was just a great scene. We can expect to see lots of Spring Wildflowers on our hike. In the 70's, the "Walls" was a premier destination for hikers and nature lovers throughout Alabama and the adjacent states. This changed when a timber company bought a large tract of land that included the "Walls" and restricted access to the area. About a year ago Forever Wild bought 12,510 acres of land for public use in North Jackson County that includes the "Walls". This will be a 6+ mile moderate hike on a trail built by Forever Wild. There will be 2 creek crossings, so bring some shoes for wading shoes if you want dry feet. This is one of the more unique areas that we have visited. There will be an optional dinner after the hike. Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79 at 8:00 am. Trip leader, Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

Cahaba Group's Website

Looking for information about the environment on the web?

Want to pass on a copy of the Cahaba Group newsletter to a friend?

At the office and can't remember when the next fun outing is?

Find it all on the Cahaba Group's website!!!

We make frequent updates as events impacting Alabama's environment unfold, post outings frequently, and post the newsletter online each month. Right now, we've got important information about a proposed study to transport chemical weapons--possibly to Alabama and information on how to thank Sen. Shelby for his support of local conservation efforts. To find out what's happening with the Sierra Club in the Birmingham area check out

www.alabama.sierraclub.org/

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

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

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.

Cracker Barrel, Trussville—I-59 North to exit # 141 (Chalkville Road exit). Turn right at end of exit ramp and look for Cracker Barrel Sign to left.

Cracker Barrel, Pelham—I-65 South, exit #248. (Cahaba Valley Rd) Turn right, Cracker Barrel on right.

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.


Kmart Parking Lot—corner of Crestwood Blvd and Montclair Road. From I-20 East exit 132B, cross Crestwood Blvd, see Kmart on right.

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 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3/27	3/28	3/29	3/30	3/31	4/1	4/2 Day Hike Rueben Creek
4/3	4/4	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	4/9 Wildflower Hike Bucks Creek & High Falls
4/10 Earth Day at Birmingham Botanical Garden 	4/11 Exec. Committee Meeting	4/12 Inner City Out- ings Meeting	4/13	4/14	4/15	4/16 Day Hike Pinhoti Trail
4/1	4/18	4/19 General Interest Meeting	4/20	4/21	Also on April 23rd <u>Household Hazardous Waste Day.</u> Your chance to "get wasted"	
4/24	4/25	4/26	4/27	4/28 Newsletter Mail- out	4/29	4/30 Day Hike Ruff- ner Mountain
5/1	5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5	5/6	5/7 Day Hike Walls of Jericho



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contacts and more!!
<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba.html>

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Ensley, Birmingham, AL 35208-2217 or call John at 786-0622.

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