



# SIERRA CLUB

FOUNDED 1892

## CAHABA GROUP GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA

What is your city doing to protect or damage our air, water and land?

Very Interesting Mtg  
TUE 8/17, 6:30 PM  
BIRMINGHAM ZOO AUDITORIUM

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

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### Don't Forget Your Local Elections...Lisa Harris

While you're working hard to elect a decent President in November, don't let this month's city elections sneak up on you! Every city in Jefferson County except Birmingham will vote on August 24 for mayors and council members. These are the folks who have an immediate and direct impact on clean air, clean water and sprawl. They need to hear from Sierrans during the campaigns, and on election day.

City Councils make zoning decisions, of course, influenced in great part by developers promising huge tax revenues from their often-speculative projects. A city's mayor, or city staff who report to the mayor, usually works with developers to assemble project proposals. Regional groups like the Metropolitan Planning Organization, which makes decisions on transportation project like a second Liberty Park interchange, includes local government officials. No matter what the environmental situation in our region, an elected city official will have some kind of influence on causing or solving a problem.

Protecting the Cahaba River watershed is arguably the most important environmental issue we are dealing with, since it provides drinking water to more than half a million people. These are some of the actions that city councils and mayors have taken that affect the watershed.

Vestavia Hills City Council approves commercial development on the Cahaba River, just upstream from the drinking water intake. The developer later abandoned the River Centre project due to lack of financing. The city is now considering purchasing some of the land to control development.

Trussville City Council approves rezoning 1,061 acres in the headwaters of the Cahaba River. The proposed 1,000-house development was scaled back to 774 homes, with about two-thirds of the land left undevel-

oped.

Homewood rejects a five-house development on Shades Mountain despite its compliance with city regulations. Erosion and drainage problems were cited as reasons for the rejection.

Hoover planning board approves a rezoning on the banks of the Cahaba for an 885-home development. The project stalled after the developer said the conditions imposed in the rezoning made the project too expensive.



Mountain Brook Mayor Terry Oden was taken off the Metropolitan Planning Organization in 1998 after voting against the Liberty Park interchange. Oden and Homewood Mayor Barry McCulley wrote a letter opposing the super sewer.

The Birmingham News (in a moment of environmental good sense) said in a March editorial: "...cities are approving major developments in the watershed without a picture of their accumulative effects on the

Cahaba. Vestavia Hills, Birmingham and, now, Trussville all have given the go-ahead to projects before the [watershed] study's recommendations are known. Frankly, this needs to stop. Each new development approved prior to the completion of the study limits the guiding benefits of the study. Plus, it sets precedents that other cities can use to justify subdivisions, shopping centers or office complexes in the watershed."

To find out who's running in your city, check the city's website or the local newspaper.

Please come to our August 17 general interest meeting (hey, that's my birthday, so show up!) where we will have a program on the environmental issues that are decided on a local level. Get involved and be sure to vote on August 24 in your city!

**Pool & Pot Luck Party**

SUN 8/1 \* CALL 205-982-1134

Virginia Cain and Ron Burkett have graciously volunteered to host our annual pool party and covered dish dinner this year. Bring a covered (or uncovered) dish to share with your fellow Sierrians. Please don't forget to put food in the dish. This is a good opportunity to socialize and exchange ideas with individuals who share a concern for our Natural World. NOTE: There are rest rooms, an outdoor shower, chairs and tables and a covered patio at the pool. The covered dish supper will be in the clubhouse. NO BATHING SUITS or WET TOWELS CAN BE WORN or TAKEN INTO THE CLUB HOUSE please bring a change of clothes. A donation for the cost of the clubhouse rental is requested.

**DIRECTIONS:** From the Flyover Exit # 13-A to Galleria BLVD; exit HWY 150 to the RIGHT. At second traffic light (PARADISE PARKWAY) turn right and go to 2nd brick building (Club house).

**DIRECTIONS:** FROM I 459: Take EXIT 10: EAST on HWY 150 for approximately 1.7 miles; LEFT at PARADISE PARKWAY; 2nd building on the right.

**Hosts:** Virginia Cain—205-982-1134 or 903-1152 & Ron Burkett—205-967-6639.

**ExCom Meeting**

MON 8/9 \* 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 8/10 \* CALL 205-970-6500

ICO Team Meeting 6:30 p.m. at Alabama Outdoors in Homewood. Everyone welcome! If you are interested in working with inner city youths on occasional Saturdays, please join us at our meeting or contact Margo Rebar at 205-970-6500 or e-mail [mrebar@earthlink.net](mailto:mrebar@earthlink.net)

**Three Short Hikes To Three Of The Most Spectacular Places In Aabama**

SAT 8/14 CALL 256-287-1652

We will travel to the Scottsboro area in Jackson County to two spectacular sink holes; Neversink and Stephens Gap, then proceed to Blowing Wind Cave to witness hundreds of thousands of Gray Bats emerge from the cave to feed at dusk. Neversink is a 172ft. deep, large diameter sinkhole that is owned by the Southeastern Cave Conservancy. Stephens Gap is a beautiful sinkhole with access to the bottom through a hole in one side. Stephens Gap is on private property, and access is by

owner permission only. To enter the sinkhole and look up at the waterfalls pouring down from the top is a sight to behold. From Stephens Gap we will travel a short distance to Blowing Wind Cave, which is a maternity cave for the endangered Gray Bat, and is protected as a National Wildlife Preserve. This is a great outing for children with the ability to hike steep inclines for short distances. Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79 at 10:30 a.m. For more info call Joe Copeland at 256-287-1652

**Very Interesting Meeting**

TUE 8/17, 6:30 PM @ BIRMINGHAM

ZOO AUDITORIUM CALL 205-795-2043

**Environmental Issues Decided on a Local Level** — What is your city doing to protect or damage our air, water and land? Municipal elections are August 24 in every city but Birmingham. Our program will present some of the local planning decisions that affect our environment. You'll see the good, the bad and the ugly of local governments. Be sure to vote on August 24!

**Calypso Party at the Lake!**

SUN, 8/22 1:00pm until.?

Call 680-9263 or 838-1100

Hey mon! Come celebrate the islands and beat the heat at a lakeside Calypso Party at the home of Audrey Alverson. Emerald Lake, located in Clay, is crystal clear and perfect for swimming, fishing or small boating. You bring along a dish to share and beverage of choice and we'll provide the island music and fun! Ice and disposables will also be provided. "Jamaica" yourself comfortable and bring along floats, lawn chair or blanket:

**Directions:**

1. I-59 N. exit #143 — Deerfoot Pkwy
2. Top of the exit, turn right
3. At the end of Deerfoot, turn right at BP Station onto Old Springville Rd.
4. Travel 0.3 of a mile, turn left onto Clay-Palmerdale Rd.
5. Travel approx. 2 miles, turn right onto Cedar Mtn. Rd.
6. Travel 2 miles, turn left onto Emerald Lake Rd. EAST (this is the 2nd Emerald Lake entrance)
7. 9th House on the left, next to Clubhouse.
8. **8418 Emerald Lake Drive EAST Pinson, Al, 35126**

**Please park on the street and NOT in the Club House parking lot.**

For more info call Audrey Alverson at 680-9263 or 838-1100

**Newsletter Mailing Party & Potluck**

THU 8/26, 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."

**Day Hike and Swim Chinnabee Silent Trail**

SAT 8/28 CALL 205-556-3330

Hike one of our most popular and scenic trails near Cheaha Mountain. The trail winds through part of the Talladega National Forest and along Cheaha Creek. Enjoy a cooling dip at Devil's Den, a swimming hole and falls at the end of the 3-mile hike. For those who would like a longer hike, we can skip the swim/wade and hike back to the starting point making this a 6 mile hike. Bring lunch, water, some shoes and clothes for swimming if you wish to do so. Optional dinner after hike. Meet at the Office Max at Crestwood Blvd. At 9:00 a.m. For more info, contact Sonja Mathis at 205-556-3330

[smath2casa@aol.com](mailto:smath2casa@aol.com)

**Day Trip to Anniston Museum of Natural History**

SAT 9/4 CALL 256-287-1652

If you would enjoy an air-conditioned outing with little walking and loads of information about our natural world, this is your outing. The Anniston Museum of Natural History is an affiliate of the Smithsonian and is the premier natural history museum in the South. The exhibits are too numerous for me to list, but if you would like more info you can log onto their website at

[www.annistonmuseum.org](http://www.annistonmuseum.org)

The admission is \$4.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children 4 thru 17 with discounts for seniors and AAA members. We will have lunch at one of the picnic areas on the museum grounds. Meet at the Office Max at the Village East Shopping Center on Crestwood Blvd. At 9:00 a.m. For more info call Joe Copeland at 256-287-1652

## Forever Wild Success Story!!!

For the nine-month from September 1<sup>st</sup> of 2003 through May 31<sup>st</sup> 2004, the Forever Wild Land Trust received \$127,587.75 from the sale of the Forever Wild License Plates. While this figure is somewhat below the \$200,000.00 level that we had hoped the tag would generate at this point, it is a great start.



These results indicate the need to increase our efforts to “get the word out” about the virtues of the tag program. Unlike other special tag programs, we do not have funds for billboard and television ads. All the funds generated by Forever Wild Tag sales are used to buy public land for conservation throughout the state. Therefore, we have to rely on publications such as this and your members informing others to generate publicity for the tag. If you have access to other newsletters or publications that might print an article promoting the tag, please contact me at and I will write an article to be included in that publication. Forever Wild Tags can personalize with up to 6 letters at no additional cost. Forever Wild purchases land for (1) nature preserves, (2) additions to state parks, (3) wildlife management areas, and natural recreation areas.

Since its inception, Forever Wild has purchased over 100,000 acres, with several tract now being considered for purchase. Of particular interest to North Alabama is the recent 12,510-acre purchase of the Walls of Jericho.

If you can help with our effort to publicize the Forever Wild Tag, contact Joe Copeland: 256-287-1652

[joec@powernet.org](mailto:joec@powernet.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

- 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.

**Wanted!!! Presenters for General Interest Mtgs.** Hey, why not? You're an interesting person with a story to tell. Present your environmental story and rally other members to the cause or share your outdoor adventure! Contact Lisa Harris [harrisalisa@charter.net](mailto:harrisalisa@charter.net)

**Learn to Canoe with the BCC!** **The Birmingham Canoe Club** is offering a beginning whitewater canoe class that will have you experiencing the thrill of whitewater in no time. 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 canoeing. Your highly qualified instructors are certified by the American Canoe Association, the governing organization for all paddle sports. **Class includes “classroom”, lake and river instruction...All this for only \$85, and you'll 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](mailto:bshep@uab.edu). Or go to [www.birminghamcanoeclub.org](http://www.birminghamcanoeclub.org) for additional details.

## At a Glance – Sierra Club Events – August 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8/1 Pool Party & Pot Luck	8/2	8/3	8/4	8/5	8/6	8/7
8/8	8/9 ExCom Mtg	8/10 ICO Mtg	8/11	8/12	8/13	8/14 Dayhike 3 Spectacular Place!
8/15	8/16	8/17 Very Interesting Mtg @ B-Ham Zoo Auditorium	8/18	8/19	8/20	8/21
8/22 Calypso Party	8/23	8/24	8/25	8/26 Newsletter Mailout Party	8/27	8/28 Day Hike & Swim
8/29	8/30	8/31	9/1	9/2	9/3	9/4 Day Trip Anniston Museum Natural History
9/5	9/6	9/7	9/8	9/9	9/10	9/11



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

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

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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.)

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