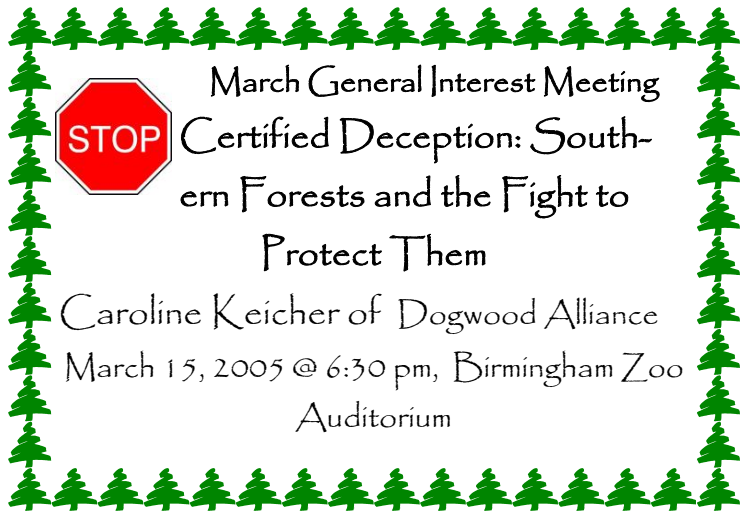




SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

CAHABA GROUP
GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA

AN OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB, THE CAHABA



March General Interest Meeting
Certified Deception: Southern Forests and the Fight to Protect Them

Caroline Keicher of Dogwood Alliance
March 15, 2005 @ 6:30 pm, Birmingham Zoo Auditorium

Cahaba Group Executive Committee And Other Contacts

Chair
Vacant

Vice Chair
Vacant

Secretary
Beth Johns

Conservation Chair
Vacant

Conservation Cmte. Rep.
Vacant

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ICO Chair
Margo Rebar
205-970-6500

Education Coordinator
Andy Freeland

Webmaster
Joe Watts

*Voting members

From the League of Conservation Voters "LCV Insider 2/09/05" ...we couldn't have said it better.

"The Bush Administration wielded its budget-cutting axe on environmental programs across several agencies..."

EPA

The nation's top environmental agency sees its budget chopped by \$450 million -- nearly 6 percent. Among the programs to suffer the most is a federal program funding clean water projects. EPA's own estimates for cleaning up the nation's water puts the tab in the hundreds of billions. But the Bush Administration opted to turn its back on the issue by slashing the program by nearly half since 2004. The President's budget also shirks the Superfund, opting to continue to shift the burden of toxic cleanups to taxpayers instead of having polluters foot the bill.

Energy

Just days after a State of the Union speech touting a budget with "strong funding" for renewables, the President promptly offered a plan that cuts -- yes, cuts -- renewable energy and energy efficiency programs by 4 percent.

Oceans

Late last year, President Bush offered a glimmer of hope for the nation's oceans by announcing an action plan to combat problems facing our seas. But environmentalists were wary, saying follow-through and funding was key. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Bush Administration's budget requests a nearly 40 percent cut to the National Ocean Service and slashes funding for the National Marine Fisheries Service by 12 percent. So much for helping our oceans...

Arctic Drilling

The President's budget once again assumes revenues from drilling leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Perhaps nobody told the President that there are no revenues from drilling in the Refuge, since Congress has time and time again, rejected opening the sensitive habitat to oil and gas exploration. Didn't this kind of clever accounting get companies such as Enron in trouble?

(Continued on page 2)

**Letter to the Editor
Birmingham News...**

This letter is a response to the "liberals just don't understand" letter in the Wednesday, February 2nd opinions section.

The writer looks forward to "many terms for conservative presidents in the future". I hope the writer is referring to some future administration and not the Bush Administration. A conservative administration would have a balanced budget, and would not tolerate the huge budget deficits we now have. A true conservative would shun foreign entanglements, and would not wage a war to gain access to another nation's oil. Conservatives respect the rights of the individual, and would defend, not try to eliminate the right to choose. A conservative president would not cater to the wishes of businesses for cheap labor, and would advocate the enforcement of all our laws, including immigration laws. Any law such as that which is included in the Homeland Security Legislation that allows a citizen to be arrested and held indefinitely without council would not be tolerated, much less advocated by a conservative. Finally, a conservative should conserve and not try to undermine the Endangered Species Act or open our public natural treasures to their supporters in the energy and timber industries. I fear that so long as we have a shallow, spoon fed electorate that listens to the Bushes of the world and allows them to define the issues, we will never have a true conservative in the White House. To the voters of our country I would like to admonish you to think, it's patriotic.

Joe Copeland

(Continued from page 1)

National Parks

A modest increase to address a backlog in maintenance in the National Park system comes up woefully short of what is needed. President Bush has fallen \$4 billion short of his 2000 campaign pledge of \$5 billion to take care of the problem.

Find out more at:

www.lcv.org

www.sierraclub.org

Forever Wild Funding Under Attack...Joe Copeland

A group of powerful Democratic State Senators, led by Senator Gerald Dial of Lineville, has drafted SB255 that would slash Funding for The Forever Wild Land Trust by **5 million dollars per year**. The Forever Wild Land Trust has bought over 106,000-acres since its inception in 1992 that has been set aside for conservation and recreation, and these acres will remain Forever Wild. While this is a large number of acres, the average is less than 10,000-acres per year. Having attended every Forever Wild Board meeting over the past six years, I can assure you that if every state agency was as frugal with their monies as Forever Wild we would not face the budget crises we now face. I urge you to call or write the state senator that represents your district and urge them to oppose SB255.
Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

joec@powernet.org

You can make a difference by writing! Thanks to everyone for your help.

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

The American Chestnut Foundation "Bringing the American Chestnut Tree Back To Alabama"

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) invites you to learn about the re-toration of the American Chestnut Tree.

What: Slide Show, Q & A, and refreshments

When: Saturday, March 12, 9 am till 1 pm

Welcome: Kathryn Wallace, Chair Alabama Chapter

Where: Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Garden Center — Linn-Henley Lecture Hall

TACF's goal is to restore blight resistant chestnut trees to their original habitat. American chestnut trees were once common in eastern forests, and provided nuts for people and wildlife; lumber for furniture and construction; poles for telephone wire supports and electric power distribution; home heating and charcoal for iron production. The American chestnut was almost completely destroyed by a blight imported from Asia around 1904. The blight spread rapidly and by mid-century had virtually eliminated this important tree from the eastern forest ecosystem. A government effort to breed a blight resistant tree was attempted in the middle of the twentieth century, but failed to produce a timber quality tree that could compete in the forest. Fortunately, the American chestnut is not yet extinct. Specimen trees can still be found here in Alabama. Root systems of blight killed trees still are producing saplings and genetic materials for our scientists who work on the TACF crossbreeding program with the Chinese chestnut to develop a hybrid, blight resistant chestnut tree.

The objective is to produce an American chestnut tree which retains no Chinese characteristics other than blight resistance. TACF expects to have the very first seeds of such trees ready for scientific field trials by 2007 and to determine which trees have the characteristics necessary for restoration within the native range a few years after that. This is a remarkable achievement for the science of plant biology within the relatively short span of just over 25 years. Please come to this meeting and find out directly from TACF staff about the progress and plans regarding the restoration program, and how Alabama is important to the development of a regionally adapted, blight resistant American chestnut tree, and what you can do to help.

The Alabama chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation also would like to partner with other nature-oriented organizations in the state to help us identify wild-growing pure American chestnuts which are producing either flowers or seeds to assist in growing regionally-adapted hybrids.

For more information, contact Les Tate (256) 764-56-8 or email

LRTATE@COMCAST.NET

For information about the American Chestnut Foundation, please visit their website a

www.acf.org

Or contact Daphne C. Van Schaick, (daphne@acf.org)
The American Chestnut Foundation (802) 447-0110

"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!

In Peril, The Duck River, AL

By April Hall, Alabama Rivers Alliance

In 1996, the Cullman-Morgan Water District applied to the Army Corps of Engineers for a permit to construct a dam across Duck River in Cullman County. The proposed dam is located just north of Highway 278, between Cullman and Holly Pond. The proposed dam will create a 640-acre water supply reservoir and inundate over 5 miles of the Duck River. The Duck River is a scenic river, with excellent white water recreation opportunities, and provides significant flows to the upper portion of the Mulberry Fork.

In 2000, American Canoe Association (ACA), Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA), Friends of Mulberry Fork, and Wildlaw filed suit against the Army Corps of Engineers upon issuance of a permit for a proposed dam. In 2003, the federal judge in the case ruled for the plaintiffs and agreed that the Corps did not take a hard look at several issues associated with the proposed dam and ordered the permit to be vacated. The Cullman-Morgan Water District and its environmental consulting firm, has submitted a supplement to the previous Environmental Assessment (EA) to the Corps for their review. The supplement will then be reviewed by the state and federal agencies involved in the project, as well as by the former plaintiffs. Following the review period, the Corps will decide if an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary. Upon completion of the environmental requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Corps will develop a permit for the project and release the permit for public review. We anticipate the permit could be available for review as early as April, 2005.

This dam will greatly impact flows in the Duck River as well as in the Mulberry Fork, not to mention water quality and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. ARA is helping coordinate many parties interested in preventing the construction of this dam and is requesting help from any groups or volunteers. There are many tasks that need to be completed prior to the release of the permit, ranging from simple phone calls to more complex tasks such as file reviews. Once the supplemental EA has been issued, many people will be needed to review the document and submit comments to the Corps. If you are interested in becoming involved in this project or for more information, please contact April Hall with the Alabama Rivers Alliance at 322-6395 or

ahall@alabamarivers.org

A fact sheet about the impacts this dam will cause to the Duck River, as well as several photographs taken by Black Warrior Riverkeeper, can be found on ARA's website at

www.alabamarivers.org

Newsletter Editor's Note...

Paul Perret and I floated the Duck River on Sunday, 2/13/05 — Well, maybe I should say "it was a canoe assisted water hike".

*The plan was to float a section of the **Duck River** in preparation for an outing the following weekend. It was cloudy when we left Birmingham and drizzling as we crossed through Cullman. After "checking out" the bridges south of Hwy 278, we decided to launch 2 bridges upstream, an easy 6 mile float back to Hwy 278...after all, we were getting a late start. The USGS "gauge" was reading just a little below recommended minimum water level for a float, but frankly, the river looked so damn good from the "launch bridge" that I just couldn't resist, (even sober). So we "suited up" and dragged the "solo's" down the hill to the river. There was no soundtrack in the background, but if any, the most appropriate would have been the ever famous anthem by "Queen...We will, we will, rock you!".*

Now Hollywood could not have "planned the mood" any better as the rain began to fall a little harder and mist barely disclosed the first bend in the river. The "quietness" included two birds and the theme for the rest of the day, the ever present sound of rushing water. The feeling was that crazy "I wouldn't resist it if I could".

So the "cowboy's" paddled into where angels might have known better than to have tread. Of course, Paul, ever the stronger and better paddler was always ahead while I was stuck on the rocks at least 28 times!

Many of the rapids could not be "floated", but a few could be "scraped" and all the rest were "walkers". Still, this river has an allure and a mystery. Not just the waterfalls on the west side and not just the lack of development, this watershed still holds the a secret and suspense that would surprise the jaded and delight the children among us.

How can you describe clear water flowing through rocks on a cloudy day? What do they call the green color of damp moss and leafless trees on steep canyon walls when grey mist encloses your entire world?

Five hours later, we had descended 100 plus feet in six miles, a pace that a heavenly laden backpacker could have easily have hiked. But winding thru the rapids left me with a longing for the day when the water was a little "deeper" and a strong incentive to "watch the USGS gauge" longing for a second chance at one hell of a ride!

PS: Aren't there are enough dam'd rivers in Alabama? Why shouldn't a few of them just be "catch and release"? I nominate the Duck to be left just as it is!



Mulberry Fork River

with no real hazards; suitable for beginners. If the water should be high, a couple of the rapids will approach class two. You must have your own canoe, and trip is limited to eight boats. In his book ALABAMA CANOE RIDES AND FLOAT TRIPS, John Foshee compares the scenery and terrain along section two of BWC to the wild-and-scenic Sipsey Fork. Contact Carroll Wilson at 205-221-6196 for more info or to sign-up. Optional dinner after trip.

American Chestnut Foundation Sat 3/12 @ 9 am. See page 2 for Details!!!

General Interest Meeting Tue 3/15 @ 6:30 pm Birmingham Zoo Auditorium

Some of our country's most beautiful and biologically rich forests are in the Southern Appalachians and Cumberland Plateau. They are under attack by corporate pulpwood companies who have converted large swaths of native forest to sterile tree farms. The Dogwood Alliance has a new initiative to force the largest company, Bowater, Inc., to stop the destruction and practice sustainable forestry. Our speaker will show us the beauty of this region, the devastating results of the paper industry and what we can do to help. See

www.dogwoodalliance.org

Service Trip Pinhoti Trail Sat 3/19 * Call 256-287-1652

We will join the Alabama Trails Association for a service trip on the north part of the

Whitewater Action Canoe / Kayak Races Mulberry River 3/5 & 6

If you haven't attended an event like this before, here is your chance. **SPECTATOR? NO WAY! GET INTO THE ACTION BY VOLUNTEERING TO BE A JUDGE! THIS IS A GREAT EVENT AND A LOT OF FUN.** Check it out

birminghamcanooclub.org

ExCom Meeting

MON 3/7 * 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 3/8 * 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

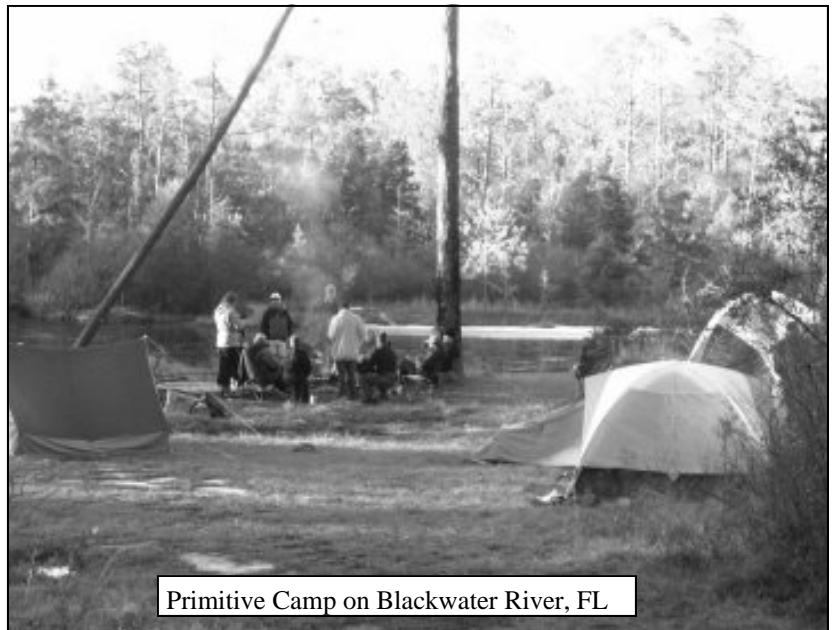
Day Hike Collier Creek Canyon Sun 3/6 * Call 256-287-1652

This is an off trail hike in Collier Creek Canyon in the Bankhead National Forest. We will see several large waterfalls and

deep canyon walls. Difficulties include some areas with thick vegetation on some parts of the hike as well as several creek crossings. If the water level is high or the temperature is too cold, we will change the hike to Sougahoagdee Falls on Brushy Creek. Great scenery is a given on either hike. Meet at the Hayden/Corner Park and Ride at 8:00 am. Possible dinner after hike. Trip Leader, Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

Canoe Sect. 2 Blackwater Crk Sat 3/12 * Call 205-221-6196

This will be a canoe trip on section two of Blackwater Creek, approximately seven miles, class one with a gradient of seven and a half feet a mile. Expect superb scenery and easy rapids and shoals



Primitive Camp on Blackwater River, FL

(Continued on page 5)

Thanks!!!

Got a call from a Cahaba Group Member bringing attention to the fact that the font on the outings was very difficult to read! Funny, I thought that too, and just never made the change, but now it is "done".

Anyway, just wanted to let all of you know that your input is not only valuable, but greatly appreciated.

Please don't ever hesitate to call or e-mail suggestions. Together, lets make this newsletter the best it can be!

Thanks for reading.

Del Kelso, Cahaba Group, Newsletter Guy

(Continued from page 4)

Pinhoti Trail. The ATA has built an extension of the trail, from US Highway 278 to the Georgia State Line. We will be doing maintenance work on this section of the trail. No experience necessary, and all tools will be furnished by the ATA. The ATA has built a bridge across Hurricane Creek, a trail shelter on Davis Mountain, and a camping platform on this section of the trail. This is an opportunity to see some of these projects as well as help the ATA's efforts. For more info call Joe Copeland at 256-287-1652

**Newsletter Mailing
Party & Potluck
THU 3/24, 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."

**Clifty Falls Hike
Sun 3/27 * Call 205-854-7090**

This will be a 6 mile moderate hike in the Sipsey Wilderness from the Bunyan Hill road trailhead to the falls. The hike will be an out and back. There is not a trail, but, it is fairly flat. There will be drainage crossings. Meet at Hayden/Corner Park and Ride at 8:00 am. Due to the Forest Service guidelines, there may not be more than 10 people in a group, so we may need to split into more than one group. Trip leader, Jim Temple 205-854-7090

**Day Hike/ Wildflower Rueben Creek
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

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 – March 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2/27	2/28	3/1	3/2	3/3	3/4	3/5 Canoe Races Mulberry Fork River
3/6 Day Hike Collier Creek Canyon Canoe Races Mulberry Fork River	3/7 Ex Com Mtg.	3/8 ICO Outings Mtg.	3/9	3/10	3/11	3/12 Canoe Blackwa- ter Creek American Chest- nut Foundation Presentation
3/13	3/14	3/15 General Interest Meeting	3/16	3/17	3/18	3/19 Service Trip Pinhoti Trail
3/20	3/21	3/22	3/23	3/24 Newsletter Mailout	3/25	3/26
3/27 Day Hike Clifty Falls	3/28	3/29	3/30	3/31	4/1	4/2 Wildflower Day Hike Reuben Creek
4/3	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	4/9	4/10



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CAHABA GROUP
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35205

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**

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.)

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