



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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Alabama Legislative Update...

Several important measures are presently being considered by state and local governments.

Hog Bill — ALFA is currently sponsoring Senate Bill 261, a bill in the Alabama state legislature which threatens small family farmers. Deceptively named the "Family Farm Preservation Act," the bill would protect large factory farms from nuisance lawsuits and would make Alabama vulnerable to invasion by these corporate giants. In April the Senate Judiciary held a public hearing on the bill, at which Sierra Club members and other environmentalists spoke out in opposition. No vote has yet been taken. Even if the bill is buried or defeated this year, ALFA has promised to push even harder next year for passage.

Factory farms are quickly taking over the livestock industry and forcing family farms out of business. Factory farms are also known as confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) or intensive livestock operations (ILOs). These industrial facilities typically have hundreds to thousands of animals confined tightly together and provide little or no access to sunlight, fresh air, or room for natural movement.

CAFOs are associated with numerous environmental problems. Massive quantities of manure are stored in holes, or "lagoons," dug in the earth and then spread onto cropland. These manure pits can leak or overflow, releasing toxic bacteria and harmful nutrients into groundwater, lakes, rivers and/or streams. Spreading waste on the ground also causes water pollution when more manure is applied than the surrounding land can absorb. Decomposing manure emits hazardous, odoriferous gases that degrade air quality and decrease neighboring property values. Such facilities also cause public health problems due to the overuse of antibiotics and food borne illness.

ADEM Reform — The Sierra Club is a member of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management Reform Coalition, which seeks to overhaul the state agency responsible for enforcing

environmental laws. ADEM has done a poor job, and the Coalition has introduced measures in the Alabama state legislature which seek to make ADEM more accountable to the public. (See "ADEM Reform" article from the April newsletter.)

The Coalition backs House Joint Resolution 23, which would allow the legislature to create a joint interim committee to study all facets of ADEM. However, the resolution is currently stuck in the Senate Rules Committee. Members who wish to communicate support for the resolution may contact Senator Jim Preuitt, P.O. Box 1063 Talladega, AL 35161, telephone number (334) 242-7898.

Liberty Park — Despite strong opposition from local, state, and southeast regional groups, Vestavia Hills is pushing for second Liberty Park I-459 interchange and has drawn the interchange into the city's long-range plan. Al Folcher, the city's director of development, said he expects the plan to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission in May and the City Council in June. The Cahaba Group opposes the interchange, as do area residents and a coalition of other environmental groups from as far away as Atlanta and Washington DC.

The proposed interchange threatens to further pollute the Cahaba River with habitat-degrading sediment and post-construction parking lot runoff. Construction of such an interchange could send hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of rock and dirt from the mountainside into the river. Further, the interchange would facilitate the construction of 15-20 million sq. ft. of additional commercial buildings and parking space within Liberty Park, on the banks of the Cahaba River. The interchange would also add to noise and light pollution.

We are alarmed that an Alabama Department of Transportation official reports that the developer of Liberty Park has offered to pay the agency to produce a "justification study" for the interchange and that the agency is undertaking the study.

NORTH ALABAMA GROUP SPONSORS FAMILY FARM TOUR MAY 15... By Peggie Griffin, Alabama Chapter Conservation Organizer

For the fourth year, the Alabama Chapter Sierra Club will sponsor a Family Farm Tour — this year, co-sponsored by the North

(Continued on page 3)

Wildflower Hike Bucks Pocket & 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. The hike is relatively easy, but the first 1/2 mile will be a fairly steep descent. We will have lunch on the banks of South Sauty Creek. 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.

Pinhoti Trail Day Hike
SAT 5/8 * CALL 205-345-3460

Come hike the Pinhoiti Trail on Section 3 in the Choccolocco Watershed Lake area. It begins on Co. Rd. 55 and continues to the Coleman Trailhead near Coleman Lake. The trail is in a beautiful area that goes past a lake and along a stream. Total distance 8.2 miles. Bring water and lunch. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Office Max in the Village East Shopping Center. Leader: Tammy Cooper 205-345-3460 or 205-792-3847 (cell).

ExCom Meeting
MON 5/10 * 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 5/11 * CALL 205-970-6500

ICO Team Meeting 6:30 p.m. at Alabama Outdoors in Homewood. We will be discussing our May service projects and our overnight trips in June and July. 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 e-mail, no expertise required.

mrebar@earthlink.net

Terrapin Creek Canoe Trip
SAT 5/15 * CALL 205-854-7090

This section of Terrapin Creek is an easy, leisurely 8-mile canoe/kayak paddle. Terrapin Creek has a good flow all year due to the source of the creek beginning in the nearby mountains. We will travel to the Terrapin Creek Outdoor Center, just north of Piedmont, to begin our trip. The Outdoor Center is our take out, and Center owners and employees will shuttle us to the put in for \$10.00 per boat. Canoe and Kayak rentals are also available at the Center. Canoe rental is \$30.00 per boat and kayak rental is \$20.00 per boat. Rentals include life jacket, paddles, and the shuttle. If you wish to rent a boat from the Center, call 256-447-6666 any day except Monday. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at McDonalds in Trussville. Trip leader, Jim Temple 205-854-7090

Huntsville Family Farm Tour
SAT * MAY 15, 8:30 AM TILL 4:15 PM

Take a chartered bus tour to see beautiful North Alabama family farms and learn why we need to support our family farms. Enjoy a delicious locally-grown eco feast for lunch - as well as good food shopping opportunities! Cost - \$10. Call Nat Berry (in Madison) at 256-461-8107 or Peggie Griffin (in Attalla) at 256-538-3885 to register. See the article in this newsletter for more information.

General Interest Meeting
SICILY, WILD HORSES & MT ETNA
TUE 5/18, 6:30PM * 205-795-2043

May program will be me, Lisa Harris, "About my trip to Sicily". In March, I visited a nature reserve where the last wild horses on the island live and hiked Mt. Etna. Come share the adventure! Call 205-795-2043.

Cahaba Lilies Day Hike
SAT 5/22 * CALL 256-287-1652

This will be an easy hike of 5 to 6 miles total to see the endangered Cahaba Lilies in Bibb County. Although the lilies are endangered, we will see sections of the Cahaba River where literally thousands of them will be blooming. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Cracker Barrel Parking Lot at exit 108 (Academy Drive) off I-59/20 just south of Bessemer. Call Joe Copeland 256-287-1652.

Newsletter Mailing Party & Potluck
THU 5/27, 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.

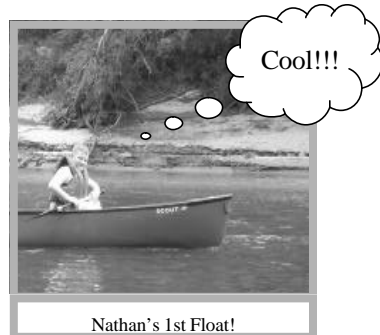
Parking Note: Please park on Glencoe Drive across Montevallo Road from Dick's house. Please do not park in Dick's driveway. This will avoid "driveway accidents."

Cornelius Falls & Common Grounds Tour and Day Hike
SAT 5/29 * CALL 256-287-1652

This our annual joint hike with Friends of the Locust Fork from the Common Grounds Community, in Blount County, to beautiful Cornelius Falls on the Locust Fork River. The total distance of the hike is less than 4-miles with some off trail sections. At the falls, we will have a leisurely lunch and just lie on the rocks and sun, or sun and swim. After lunch, we will return to Common Grounds for a tour of some of the environmentally friendly dwellings there including a yurt that has solar power. Our host for the hike and tour is Stephen Guesman, who with his wife Martha Hunter, own the solar yurt. This is a no dog outing. Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79 (near Jefferson State College) at 9:00 a.m. Trip leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652 or Stephen Guesman 205-429-4120

Pinhoti Trail Day Hike
SAT 6/5 * CALL 205-221-6196

Come and join us for a moderate to strenuous hike on a section of the Pinhoti Trail near Cheaha State Park. This will be a joint outing with the Alabama Trails Association. Optional dinner after hike. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Office Max at Village East. For more info contact Carroll Wilson at 205-221-6196.



From the Chair...Paul Perret

"Sierra Club Safe from takeover but we still need your help!"

As you all know, the Sierra Club faces one of its most challenging times in protecting our environment. Change can be made but it will take a lot of hard work by a large number of dedicated volunteers and staff. I am confident that the membership of the Sierra Club, Alabama Chapter, and the Cahaba Group will pull together and do great things. Case in point is the outcome of the National Sierra Club Board of Directors election. This year more than 22% of members responded, almost 300% more than last year's election, and the Sierra Club is safe from outside takeover once again. (1) Whew!!!

Now that this distraction has been laid to rest, we can turn our attention to other issues. Which one do we address first? By reading the front page of this newsletter you can see that the Cahaba Group has been quite busy over the last year. This year will present even greater challenges requiring increased efforts and resources—both of which are, unfortunately, in short supply. We do need your help to continue our efforts.

All members should have received a packet from the Alabama Chapter asking for donations. This annual appeal is a major source of revenue for the state chapter and consequently for the Cahaba Group. Please take a few minutes to review the information and be as generous as possible. All of the battles we face for the environment require investments of time and money. Last year, fewer than 1% of Cahaba Sierrans contributed at a guardian level (\$100 or more). I sincerely hope that number will be higher this year. If you cannot help at that level, please give what you can because every bit counts.

One thing that never ceases to amaze me is how effective a few dedicated individuals can be. Imagine what could be done with more help. The Executive Committee of the Cahaba Group is a truly amazing group of people. Their dedicated service and passion for protecting the environment is inspiring. These are regular people just like you and me and they are acting heroically. Although they may seem to be "SUPERHUMAN" at times, please know that "burn out" besets even the most dedicated volunteer. Please help them continue the fight to preserve the environment. Whatever level of participation you can afford to volunteer will be greatly appreciated.

I look for great things to happen this year, and I expect that the Cahaba Group will be a large part of it. I hope all of you will find time in your busy schedule to help make that happen.

For all of you who are doing so much more than your share, THANK YOU from all of us. Explore, Enjoy, and Protect

(1) Sierra Club National Election Results are available on the national website at

www.sierraclub.org

Thank you all for taking time to vote, and to protect the organization that we all care so much about. Let's hope that the election we face in November will go as well for the environment.

(Continued from page 1)

Alabama Group. The popular tour has taken place in three Alabama cities thus far: Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Mobile. Each year, the bus was filled – with a waiting list of folks who wanted to go! So be sure to register early for this fun trip! On Saturday, May 15, the tour will begin at the CASA Community Garden (next door to the Huntsville Botanical Gardens), where volunteers grow a beautiful garden and provide produce to the homebound or elderly. The tour will then proceed to Hartselle to Goose Pond Farm, owned and operated by Charles and Laura Ritch and their daughters. Goose Pond Farm supplies grass-fed chicken, eggs, beef, pork, turkey, and lamb to many people in North Alabama. Tour participants will have the opportunity to meet the Ritches and hear their philosophy about why they do what they do - as well as to see their beautiful farm. The third stop will be in Moulton at Fruit Classics, a near-200 acre fruit farm owned and operated by Frannie Adair and her adult children. Tour participants will first enjoy a locally-grown eco-feast picnic, and then see the beautiful orchards, featuring heirloom varieties. Strawberries will be in season – and tour participants will have the opportunity to purchase their delicious strawberries!

The Family Farm tour is a part of the Alabama Chapter Campaign to stop factory farming in Alabama – and to support small family farms. We believe that our family farms can provide healthy food that is fresher and grown with fewer (or no) chemicals. We also believe that small family farms are better for rural community economies and the environment. By sponsoring the family farm tour, we are getting the word out to local citizens about the availability of good, fresh locally-grown produce.

Come and enjoy this fun day on family farms – and meet other folks with similar interests! Register early to ensure that you have a place! Send \$10 and your name, address, phone and email address to: Alabama Sierra Club, P.O. Box 27, Attalla AL 35954. For more information, call Nat Berry (in Madison) at 256-461-8107 or Peggie Griffin (in Attalla) at 256-538-3885.



Dick Echols and Valya Mobley... good energy policy is good environmental policy... are you listening George?



Wanted!!! Presenters for General Interest Meetings

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 with those of us who had to stay at home and work!

Contact Lisa Harris

harrisalisa@charter.net

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.

Newsletter Mailing...Come & Join Us!



At a Glance – Sierra Club Events – May 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5/2 Wildflowers & Waterfalls Day Hike	5/3	5/4	5/5	5/6	5/7	5/8 Pinhoti Trail Day Hike
5/9	5/10 Excom Mtg	5/11 ICO Mtg	5/12	5/13	5/14	5/15 Terrapin Creek Canoe Trip
5/16	5/17	5/18 General Interest Mtg.	5/19	5/20	5/21	5/22 *Cahaba Lilies Day Hike *Family Farm Tour
5/23	5/24	5/25	5/26	5/27 Newsletter Mailing Party	5/28	5/29 Cornelius Falls & Common Grounds Day Hike
5/30	5/31	6/1	6/2	6/3	6/4	6/5 Pinhoti Trail Day Hike
6/6	6/7	6/8	6/9	6/11	6/12	6/13

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You know, I could
volunteer!!!

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