



SIERRA
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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA CHAPTER

Alabama Sierran

NOVEMBER 2008

Nature

Notes

By John Ackerman
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TIME FOR CHANGE

The changes we have all seen in our natural environment over the years have not all been good. Many of the changes have left natural ecosystems on the brink of failure and some of the changes have completely eliminated some natural habitats. However, there are actions being taken and actions we can take that can reverse that trend and create "green change" we can all embrace.

We have only one planet and we all should work together to make the green changes, and we can start from the bottom-up!

Around the world innovative people are making good things happen. In Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus has pioneered a new way to loan money to the most needy with a system of microcredit. Yunus has extended small loans (usually less than \$100) to over 7 million poor people, most of them women. The loan recipients use the money to start small businesses and begin working for themselves. Many of the loans have supported green technologies like in-flow dams and solar power stations to recharge cell phones. In Israel and Denmark, entrepreneur Shai Agassi is investing in a nation-wide infrastructure that will support electric cars. All gasoline powered automobiles in these two countries would eventually

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FROM BIODIVERSITY, BOTANICALS & BIRDS TO HORSEBACK RIDING AND A SCAVENGER HUNT

Alabama Chapter Retreat: Nov. 14-16, 2008

This year's Sierra Club Retreat will be at the Alabama 4-H Center located on Lay Lake and near the town of Columbiana.

Speaker presentations have been organized around two concurrent themes: Alabama's Incredible Biodiversity and The Greening of Alabama. The former will emphasize Alabama's natural heritage of wildlife and our need to protect the natural habitats for these species, including both plants and animals. The latter will focus on our need to improve environmental

awareness and conservation efforts in Alabama. We are especially delighted to have Dr. Geoffrey E. Hill as our keynote speaker Saturday evening. Dr. Hill is Scharnagel Professor of ornithology in the Department of Biological Sciences, Auburn University, and leader of an effort to confirm the existence of ivory-billed woodpeckers in the Choctawhatchee River floodplain of northwest Florida. The last confirmed sighting was in Louisiana swamps in 1944, and the bird was thought to be extinct. But then in 2004, credible

sightings by several professional ornithologists in the Big Woods area of Arkansas sparked renewed interest in the bird and optimism that it has somehow survived its brush with extinction. And then in 2005, Dr. Hill and his research assistants found evidence of ivory-bills occurring in the swamps along the Choctawhatchee River in the Florida panhandle. The story of this remarkable discovery and subsequent attempts to obtain indisputable proof of the birds existence will be the subject of Dr. Hill's presentation.

Retreat continued on Page 2

Cahaba Group Paddles the Coosa River

By Trip Leader Jim Binnings

Despite being gouged by the oil companies at the gas pumps following hurricane Ike, a good group of paddlers showed up to paddle down the Coosa river below Jordan dam. I was excited about the upcoming paddle because the power company had announced they were releasing 4000 cubic feet of water per minute and we should have plenty of water to play in. I was really surprised when we arrived at the Coosa Outdoor Center and heard from one of the Coosa Outdoor Center's staff the release was actually going to be 6000 cubic feet per minute. Wow!

Once on the water we were greeted by a nice headwind which made the paddling a little more challenging on such a wide open body of water. But once we reached the rapids we forgot all about the headwinds. Because the release was 6000 a lot of the rocks were covered by water and we did not have as many rapids. However, the rapids we did have had a real bite and were fun. The boats we used ranged from single/tandem sit on top kayaks to sit in kayaks. John H. really had a chance to break in his new sit in kayak as he went over a few times. John was a great sport and kept going and got the Sierra "just can't keep dry" award for the day J. By the time we reached moccasin gap we were all a little tired and ready for some lunch.

Moccasin gap is an island marking the halfway point of the trip. The island is rocky and offers a great place to relax, eat lunch, play in water,



and watch boats shoot the rapids. There are class 2/3 rapids running river left and river right of the island. And today the river right rapid was a fun class 3. We all watched and talked about whether we would go right or left while eating lunch. After lunch I pulled out some trash bags and to my surprise did not have too much trash to pick up. You will always see me with a Wal-Mart bag handy for picking up the trash that people so carelessly leave behind. After lunch we all loaded up in our boats and took off. Part of the group (recognizing their limits this day) went left and enjoyed a smooth ride past moccasin

gap. The rest of us were feeling it and all went down the class 3 rapid on the right. I am happy to say no one went over and we all "high fived" with our paddles when we all came together afterwards.

From there we enjoyed the rest of the paddle. We talked, enjoyed seeing the spanish moss, and seeing the tupelo cedar trees. When we saw the bridge marking the end of the trip our only regret was the trip didn't last long enough. On the trip were Jim, Monica, Lois, Jeannine, Danny, Lee, John, Ruis, Kenny, Amy, and Keith.



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TENTATIVE RETREAT SPEAKER SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	BIODIVERSITY SPEAKERS	GREENING OF ALABAMA SPEAKERS
SATURDAY NOV. 15	9:00 AM	Introduction – Bob Hastings	Introduction – John Ackerman
	9:05	Paul Freeman – The Nature Conservancy “Alabama’s Aquatic Biodiversity”	John Wathen – Hurricane Creekkeeper “Coal Truth: The Dark Side of Light”
	10:00	Al Schotz – Alabama Natural Heritage Program “Alabama’s Remarkable Botanical Diversity”	Dr. Thomas Wilson – Judson College “Saving a Mixed Hardwood Floodplain Forest: The Fight for Perry Lakes Park”
	11:00	Dr. Lawrence J. Davenport – Samford University “Potential Effects of Climate Change on Alabama’s Plant Life”	Linda Casey – Alabama State Forester “Urban Development and Alabama Forests”
	7:00 PM	Keynote Speaker following Dinner: Dr. Geoff Hill – Auburn University “The Search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker”	
SUNDAY NOV. 15	9:00 AM	REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 8	Introduction – John Ackerman
	9:05		Jeremiah M. Hodges – Attorney at Law “Alabama’s Environmental Concerns: A Legal Perspective”
	10:00		Dr. Buzz Powell and Dr. John Hung – Auburn University “Auburn’s Solar House and ‘Green’ Pavements”
	11:00		Stephen Guesman GreenWorks Design/Build “The Energy Efficient Home”

Retreat continued from Page 1

RETREAT ACTIVITIES

All the organized outings are planned for Saturday afternoon from 1-5 PM. They are divided between activities at the 4-H Center and Oak Mountain State Park. Each is limited to the first 20 people who sign up on their registration form. Oak Mountain State Park is about 33 miles from the 4-H Center and takes about 50 minutes to travel there one way. To get there you have to backtrack to I-65 and get off at Exit 246 and follow the signs. At the gate they charge an entry fee of \$3 per person (\$1 for children and seniors).

The following activities are planned for the 4-H Center:

CANOE LAY LAKE. Enjoy the fall colors. Canoes, paddles and life jackets will be available at the lakeshore. You are also welcome to bring your own canoe or kayak if you wish. Rated easy.

25-FOOT CLIMBING WALL. Test your climbing skills. Instructors will supervise this event and provide all equipment. Rated moderately strenuous.

GPS GREAT RACE/SCAVENGER HUNT. Learn to use a GPS as you hunt for items hidden in the park. Two teams will compete to see who can complete

the course first. Each team will have a GPS, digital camera, and instructor. The goal will be to find all the hidden items and photograph them before the other team can. Rated easy.

The following activities are planned for Oak Mountain State Park:

HIKING: Enjoy the fall colors on this hike to Peavine Falls. You can do a round trip on the Green Trail (4 miles) or a shuttle from the falls to the bottom of the mountain (2 miles). Rated easy to moderate depending on if you climb down to the base of the falls.

HORSEBACK RIDING: Enjoy a 45-minute ride along scenic trails for \$25 per person. No experience required. Rated easy.

ALABAMA WILDLIFE CENTER: This is the largest wildlife rehabilitation center in Alabama. See injured or abandoned animals being rehabilitated for ultimate release back into the wild. Rated easy.

Numerous additional activities are available at Oak Mountain State Park including camping, biking, mountain biking, boating, fishing, golf, 50 miles of trails, Treetop Nature Trail, and Nature Center. Trail maps are available

at the visitor center for a small fee. You are welcome to plan your own outing if the organized outings do not appeal to you. Just be back at 5 PM.

On Saturday night, we plan to have a campfire and folk dancing instruction for those interested.

On Sunday you are free to visit local attractions or see things you might have missed on Saturday. Some additional area attractions include DeSoto Caverns Park, Kymulga Covered Bridge and Gristmill, Flagg Mountain, Ruffner Mountain Nature Center, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham Zoo, and Birmingham IMAX Theater at the McWane Science Center.

GETTING THERE:

To get there from Birmingham/I-65, travel south to Exit 238 (Alabaster-Columbiana). Turn left onto Hwy 31. Go 6.3 miles and turn left onto Hwy 70. Follow Hwy 70 to Columbiana. Go through two traffic lights. Travel 0.3 miles past the second light and take the right fork by Shelby County High School onto County Road 28. Follow CR 28 for 4.8 miles to Hwy 145. Cross it and continue 1.7 miles and turn left at the 4-H sign. Follow this road to the lodge.

To get there from Birmingham/Hwy 280, take Hwy 280 south to Chelsea turning right onto County Road 47. Go 12.8 miles to Columbiana. Go through the traffic light into downtown Columbiana. At the next traffic light in the center of town, turn left. Travel 0.3 miles and take the right fork by Shelby County High School onto County Road 28. Follow CR 28 for 4.8 miles to Hwy 145. Cross it and continue 1.7 miles and turn left at the 4-H sign. Follow this road to the lodge.

To get there from Montgomery/I-65, travel north to Exit 212 (Clanton-Lay Dam) and turn right onto Hwy 145. Go 20.6 miles and turn right onto County Road 28. Go 1.7 miles and turn left at the 4-H sign. Follow this road to the lodge.

To get there from Auburn, take Hwy 280 to Childersburg. Go over the river bridge outside of Childersburg and turn left onto Hwy 76. Go 5 miles and turn left onto Hwy 25. Go 4.4 miles to Wilsonville. In Wilsonville turn left at the traffic light onto County Road 61 south. Travel 2.7 miles and fork left onto Hwy 145. Go 3.1 miles and turn left onto CR 28. Go 1.7 miles and turn left at the 4-H sign. Follow this road to the lodge.

Sierra Insider

ENERGY AND WATER UPDATE

Subcommittees of the Joint Legislative Committee on Energy have met in recent weeks. David Newton, a Conservation Alabama board member and legislative leader for the Alabama Sierra Club, has been pushing several bills at the committee level, including one regarding solar-powered water heaters.

The efforts of the committee couldn't come at a better time. The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy ranked Alabama 49th in the U.S. for helping consumers save energy during these times of high energy prices.

Additionally, the Joint Legislative Committee on Water Management and Policy reconvened September 23 at Guntersville State Park. Pat Byington represented environmental interests. Former ADEM Water Division Director Charles Horn gave an insightful review of water policy issues in Alabama and surrounding states. *from Conservation Alabama*

RATE INCREASES FOR MORE COAL

Recently, the Public Service Commission voted 3-0 to increase the amount you pay Alabama Power for electricity. In August, TVA raised rates by 20 percent.

Why do both companies claim that rates need to be raised? Because of increased fuel costs. The fuel of choice, at nearly 70 percent for TVA and Alabama Power, is coal, which has surged in price during the last year.

With Alabama's hunger for power, and about 15 percent of the power produced in the state sent out to other states, we must diversify our energy portfolio to include efficiency and renewables.

from Conservation Alabama

WATERCRESS DARTER FISH KILL IN BIRMINGHAM

In September, city of Birmingham employees removed a dam in a Roebuck Springs pond that resulted in killing or stranding 11,760 endangered watercress darters. The removal of the dam, at the edge of the pond, was done without consultation with federal agencies, according to the *Birmingham News*.

Until the dam was breached, the park's 50 to 60 foot wide pond was home to the largest population of the federally protected watercress darter, which lives in only four known locations, all in Jefferson County. The dam was removed because the pond occasionally flooded adjacent tennis courts.

In coordination with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, a team of biologists have made recommendations in an effort to restore the darter's habitat. *from bamanews.com*

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be replaced by electric cars, clearing the air and eliminating dependency on polluting fossil fuels for transportation. This effort will help the Danes reach their goal of becoming the first carbon-neutral country and they are well on their way to the goal with over 30% of their energy coming from clean energy sources. In China, US corporations Duke Energy and Gridpoint are developing a smart-grid system on a massive scale. The smart-grid will increase energy efficiency reducing the number of heavily polluting coal-fired plants the Chinese would build in the future. The oil-rich countries in the Middle East are not standing still and relying on their petro-dollars for their future. In Abu Dhabi, entrepreneurs are building the world's first city (60,000 people) totally powered by renewable energy (mostly solar) and the Saudis are also investing in solar power plants for future energy needs. Innovators here in the US have also been change agents.

A Denver billionaire is investing \$3 billion to build new electricity transmission lines that will connect wind farms in southern Wyoming to the energy

hungry cities of Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. Internet star Google is investing cash in solar, geothermal, and other clean technologies in a plan to make clean, green energy less expensive than dirty polluting coal. Two progressive firms from the Pacific Northwest, Clean Edge and Climate Solutions have released a plan that will make the states of Oregon and Washington carbon-free by 2025 using clean, green technologies. In addition, mayors of cities around the US are working with the Apollo Alliance to create green-collar jobs, green transportation options, and greener city buildings. **Finally, oil billionaire T. Boone Pickens has been pushing hard for more wind energy coupled with using natural gas for transportation as a bridge to the next generation of alternative clean energy.** The green transformation is gaining momentum and could be a perfect cure for the economic woes that we are currently suffering from in the US. However, a few challenges stand in the way.

People need to balance anthropocentric, human-centered views of the world with more eco-centric, nature centered views of our planet. We as a people need to view the world less as

good or evil, black or white, and see the shades of grays, yellows, and blues in all of life and nature. Also, our over reliance on technology to solve problems sometimes hides the enormous power of individuals who can accomplish much by consuming less and saving more. Last, we have a very dysfunctional political system that is crippled by greed, cronyism, special interests, gerrymandering, corruption, partisanship, and a lack of inspired leadership. We, in the Alabama Sierra Club, can start at the grass-roots level and take on the special interests, the crooks, and the partisanship. We have only one planet and we all should work together to make the green changes, and we can start from the bottom-up!

Sources:

Clint Wilder, *"Perilous Times Call for Transformational Thinking, and Action,"* <http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/realnews/recolumnists/story?id=53771>

Anthony A. Leiserowitz and Lisa O. Fernandez, *"Towards a New Consciousness: Values to Sustain Human and Natural Communities,"* *Environment, Vol. 50, no 5, (Sept/Oct) 2008.*

Wild and Rural Art Show Continues

By Peggie Griffin

A beautiful fall day set the stage for a crowd of more than 200 hundred people who showed up to participate in the Wild and Rural Art Show opening at Blackwood Gallery Saturday, October 11, at Blackwood Gallery in Springville.

The art show is in celebration of the wild diversity of rural Alabama and focused on the important role small family farms have played in conserving wild places, diversity, and habitat in rural Alabama. The paintings, photographs, and sculptures depict beautiful scenic, wild places and farm scenes, as well as hunting and fishing. There are also baskets, pottery, fine furniture, rustic furniture, blown glass, metal work, and gourdwork that depict nature or are made from natural items. All the work comes together in a magnificent show honoring Alabama's natural heritage and will be on display through Nov. 8 (10 am – 5 pm Thurs. through Sat.)

The show also included craft demonstrations. Dean Black demonstrated gun stock building, while Maggie Johnston demonstrated the use of a pottery wheel. Beekeeper David Fincher was there with a live demonstration hive – and the honey he had to sell was very popular. Laura Reichert provided a group weaving experience that resulted in a beautiful work of art that was a very popular item in the silent auction. Many of the artists had donated very special pieces of art work (omit "work") to benefit the Sierra Club Sustainable Agriculture Campaign, and the active silent auction proceeded throughout the day.

Another highlight of the show was the locally produced refreshments: cheese

from Sweet Home Farm in Elberta and locally made organic crackers, volunteer-made cookies – and ice cream cones from Wright Dairy in Alexandria. Next to the refreshments, Sierra Club had an educational booth showing the important relationship between Alabama's small family farms and the biodiversity of wild, rural areas.

All of these things were happening to a background of live music by the Oxy Morons. The lead vocalist for the group is Stephen Guesman, who is the project director for the Green Rebuilding Project in Coden, Alabama.

Nathan Glick, 96 year old retired Progressive Farmer artist was honored at the show. He talked to the art patrons about his years as an artist. He still paints and has 3 farm paintings hanging in the gallery!

The work of outstanding Alabama outdoor artists is on display at the gallery: Debbie Ballog, Dean Black, Sharon Black, Sue Blackshear, Nada Boner, David Fincher, Tracey Garrison,

Nathan Glick, Gwendolyn Griffin, Peggie Griffin, Marilyn Huey, Eric Johnson, Maggie Johnston, Anderson Luster, Larry Martin, B.J. Morgan, Ethel Owen, Tena Payne, Mary Ann Pope Laura Reichert, Charlie Seifried, Robert Taylor, Kenny Walters, Beth Maynor Young, and Keen Zero.

Many thanks go to Dean and Sharon Black for hosting this wonderful show at their gallery, Blackwood Gallery – and to other members of the art show team, including Lee Isaacs and Kenny Walters, Birmingham photographers; B.J. Morgan, Cullman potter, Maggie Johnston, Nauvoo potter, David Fincher, Attalla rustic furniture builder, and Peggie Griffin, organizer and rustic furniture builder.

Directions to the gallery: From I-59, take EXIT 154 (AL 174), and go north about .5 mile. Turn left onto US 11 (South) and go .4 mi. Blackwood Gallery will be on the right.

Art show organizer Peggie Griffin introduces 96-year-old Nathan Glick, retired Progressive Farmer artist, while gallery owner Sharon Black shows some of his WW II sketches. (photographer Kinney Walters)



Cahaba Events—November 2008



Sat. 11/1. Join us for a beautiful Fall hike at Cloudland Canyon State Park in Georgia. Located on the western edge of Lookout Mountain, this is one of the most scenic parks in Georgia. There will be breathtaking views from the canyon's ridge where Autumn should be abloom with spectacular and majestic colors. It will be a 4-5 hour hike, mostly flat terrain (rating easy-moderate). You will need to bring water and a lunch. Optional dinner to follow. If you're a photo enthusiast I recommend you bring your camera. We will meet at 1401 20th Street South at 8:30. We can carpool from there. Contact Lois lois.gail@gmail.com or at 205-873-4075.

Sun. 11/ 2. Moss Rock Festival. Celebrating Nature, Open Spaces and Eco-ideas through Art and design. There will be Green Companies and art on exhibit at this event. There will also be a hike through the preserve, led by a naturalist from the Friends of Moss Rock. This should be a wonderful event. Meet at the parking lot on the Preserve Pkwy at 10am. Check out their website www.mossrockfestival.com for additional info. Contact Lois lois.gail@gmail.com or at 205-873-4075.

Sat. 11/08. Hike to the Big Tree in the Sipsey Wilderness. Come hike to see one of the largest trees in Alabama. This will be about a ten mile round trip hike to see the Big Tree. We will hike in by the Borden Creek Bridge and the trail has a slight uphill at first and goes through a pine forest of short pines. The trail is pretty flat but we hike down into the box canyon when we arrive at the Big Tree. If we have some rain we will have nice water falls to see and many large boulders and cliffs. Bring a lunch, water and rain gear and dress for the weather. We will have an optional dinner after the hike. Meet at the park and ride on I65 at exit 284 Hayden/Corner at 08:00 am. Rated Moderate due to distance and having to hike down into the canyon. For more information contact Ken Hyche at 205-540-3930 or kennethhyche@yahoo.com.

Sat. 11/15. Mt. Cheaha Fall Color Hike, Pinhoti Trail. Joint hike with North AL Group. Hike 8 miles total, from Cheaha trailhead (parking lot) along the ridgeline on the Pinhoti trail to Caney Head. Beautiful panoramic views of the mountains and valleys in their autumn splendor. Then descend on the Chinnabee trail to Turnipseed campsite where we will have left a shuttle vehicle. Bring water, lunch,

sturdy boots or strong ankles. Optional dinner afterwards at State Lodge. Meet 7:00a Hampton Cove Publix parking lot, or 9:30a Oxford Shoneys. Strenuous. Sonja in Kmart parking lot at Crestwood Blvd at 8:15 or at Oxford Shoney's at 9:30. Contact Sonja at (205)556-3330 or smath2casa@aol.com.

Sat. 11/22. Hike at Buck's Pocket. This 2,000-acre park in northeast Alabama is secluded in a natural pocket of the Appalachian Mountains. We will hike the Point Rock Trail, which leads from the floor of the canyon to the park overlook and a beautiful view of the canyon. Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79 at 9 a.m. Bring water, lunch, and sturdy hiking shoes. Rated moderate/strenuous. Optional dinner after the hike at Top of the River in Guntersville. Contact Monica Crews at 205-999-3885 or mcrews@bellsouth.net.

Tues. 11/25. Robin White with the United States Green Building Council of Alabama will be speaking/presenting on the benefits of Green Building. He will address the environmental and financial benefits of Green Building in both residential and commercial applications. Time: 7pm. Location: Birmingham Zoo auditorium.

Notes and News

CAHABA GROUP NOTES

Check us out on the web:
Visit alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba/

Pinhoti Challenge

Are you up to Alabama's best hiking challenge? Over the next 2 years, the Cahaba Group will be leading a series of dayhikes covering the entire Pinhoti Trail of east Alabama. With one hike per month, we'll take 26 months to complete the trail which currently runs from Flagg Mountain in Coosa County, near Weogufka, to the Alabama/Georgia border northeast of Piedmont – some 170+ miles! Make up days will be included for those who miss a day or two. For those who complete the challenge there will be parades, keys to the city of Anniston, memorials erected.... not really. How about a Pinhoti patch for your pack, certificate of completion, maybe a picture in the paper, and the personal satisfaction that you have done something not alot of people have done. Don't think you can make the whole trail; come out and hike with us when you can. You might surprise yourself! The hiking will be great. You'll see Flagg Mountain, Rebecca Mountain, Horn Mountain, Scott Lake, Mt. Cheaha, Pine Glen, Sweetwater Lake, Coleman Lake, Choccolocco Lake, Duggar Mountain, Oakey Mountain, Augusta Mine Ridge, Indian Mountain, and Flagpole Mountain. You'll see wildflowers and flowering shrubs in the spring. You will see the trees show their colors in the fall. You will hike in quiet woods in the middle of winter. You will huff, puff, fight bugs, and sweat in the summer. And, you will make some pretty good friends along the way. Watch the newsletter for details of our first hike starting in December. Are you ready for the Pinhoti challenge?

COOSA VALLEY GROUP NOTES

Our September meeting featured John Wathen, Hurricane Creek Keeper, and former president of the United Mine Workers of America. John is from Tuscaloosa and gave a presentation titled "Coal Truth – the Darker Side of Coal" John pointed out that the electricity we use comes at a high price, and not just in your wallet. Coal mining is devastating to the environment and to coal mining communities. There is no such thing as clean coal. There are 2 methods of extracting coals: Mountain top removal destroys entire mountains. Waste in the form of runoff sludge fills up streams and sometimes causes "sludge floods" that wipe out entire communities. People often lose their homes when the mining starts. They find that the property belongs to the coal companies they only own the house. The second method, Longwall mining, creates tunnels underground several miles long. A coal extraction machine

Coosa Valley Events—November 2008



Sat. 10/25. Bankhead Waterfall Hike and Nature Photography. Moderate to strenuous. Bring camera (if desired), water, lunch, snacks, insect repellent, hiking stick, good lightweight hiking boots and extra pair of socks. Meet at Joe Ford Center parking lot at 8 am – will leave no later than 8:15. Drive 2 – 2½ hours. This will be an all day event. Avid hiker Hank Byrnes, who lives near Bankhead Forest will help lead. Call leader David Fincher, 256-538-9444 or 256-393-6820 to sign up for trip.

Sat. 11/8. Scat Outing at Lake Sumatanga. If you missed this outing

last year, you don't want to miss it this time – as everyone agreed it was a fun and informative outing! It is always interesting to be able to identify which animals reside in the wood you are visiting. Helena Uber Wamble, Environmental Education Director for Camp Sumatanga and the Coosa Valley Outings Chair will lead this fun scat identification hike at this beautiful lake. To join the outing, contact Peggie at 256-538-3885 or peggie.griffin@sierraclub.org. Wear hiking books, bring water and lunch in your backpack. Meet at the Camp Sumatanga office at 10:00 am, Saturday, Nov. 8. For directions, go to www.sumatanga.org or ask when you register for the hike.

Thurs. 11/20. Terre Lee will talk about ways to live "green" without radically changing your lifestyle. Do you want to reduce your impact on damage to the planet but don't want to give up luxuries like indoor plumbing and electricity? This talk is for you. Terre, who has a degree in Finance from the University of the State of New York, will offer some Earth friendly insight on spending your money wisely at 6:30 pm at the Joe M. Ford Center, Room 210 - 405 Korner Street in Gadsden. For more info call David Fincher at 256-538-9444. The group usually meets on the fourth Thursday. Since that date is Thanksgiving holiday they will be meeting on the third Thursday for November.

Mobile Bay Events—November 2008



Fri. - Sun. 10/24-10/26. Coden Hurricane Home Rebuilding Project. Two years ago Sierrans gathered to rebuild a Katrina-wrecked house on the coast south of Mobile. We wanted to show that a modest home could be revived at modest expense with environmentally friendly materials and methods. And we somewhat succeeded—until septic and bureaucratic snarls stopped the work. Those have finally been resolved and the work will resume and hopefully conclude this weekend. All skills are needed. Also no skills—just sweaty per-

sistence. Meals and lodging will be provided. For more info or to sign up call David at 251-599-8699 or email drunderhill@yahoo.com.

Sat. 11/15. Backpack Cooking Workshop. Cooking on the trail doesn't have to be a chore but can still be delicious. Join AHTS for this FREE one hour workshop at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort. Registration is not required. Contact Joe at 251-533-1812. Sponsored by the Alabama Hiking Trail Society.

Tues. 11/18. Sierra Club Meeting. Mobile Botanical Gardens, 7pm. Members and the public are invited

for a discussion of current, local environmental issues and a program to be determined. For more info, contact David at 251-599-8699 or email drunderhill@yahoo.com.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Send an email to our newsletter coordinator, David Newton @ newton3117@bellsouth.net.

**Deadline for
December Issue:
Nov. 8, 2008**

Notes and News

moves along the tunnel and extracts the coal. As the machine passes through, the tunnel collapses behind the machine causing great disturbances to the homes and communities. Coal companies own the mineral rights beneath homes and communities, who are powerless to defend themselves against the coal companies rape of their land. About 100,000 people died in American coal mines in the 20th century, and "black lung" is thought to be responsible for an estimated 200,000 more deaths. Use of coal won't stop in the near future, but we have to start using alternative forms of energy such as wind and solar.

Still looking for volunteers!!

We still need help in the Coosa Valley Group. We are looking for just the right folks to serve as vice-chair and secretary. Call David at 256-538-9444 if you can help.

MOBILE BAY GROUP NOTES

alabama.sierraclub.org/mobevents.html for the latest information on speakers, outings, special events and notices.

NORTH ALABAMA GROUP NOTES

Check us out on the web:
Visit alabama.sierraclub.org/na.html

WEST ALABAMA GROUP NOTES

Check us out on the web:
Visit alabama.sierraclub.org/west-al.html

GREEN TIPS

Let's do some spring cleaning during this fabulous fall weather. Our homes accumulate about 40 pounds of dust each year. It consists of some pretty nasty things. So let's be as conscientious about getting rid of it as possible. Several companies manufacture washable microfiber dust cloths and mop pads which trap many more particles than old T-shirts or feather dusters.

While you're at it, throw two or three of the pillows from your bed into a warm, gentle wash cycle. Finish in a dryer set on low. They can accumulate particles from dust mites just like the sheets and mattress cover.

If the kids aren't doing anything, get them started vacuuming. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter or the Rainbow vacuum that traps all particles in water. Start vacuuming from the top of the curtains, run it over the furniture, mattresses, and the outside of your computer, then get the floor. It's a good idea to have your carpets and upholstery steam cleaned yearly for a deeper cleaning.

Before we start the next cycle of lawn chemicals, be aware that the average lawn uses six times more chemicals per acre than conventional farming. If just 10% of us switched to natural lawn care, more than half a billion pounds of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides would be prevented from entering the environment and our kids' and pets' bodies. *By Jean Henderson*

North Alabama Events—November 2008

N

Tues. 10/28. Downtown Evening Hike. 6:00pm. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Gerdi Keyser, 922-2251.

Tues. 11/4. Downtown Evening Hike. 6:00pm - Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Charlotte Buening, 772-7348.

Sat. 11/08. Keith Trail hike. Moderate. Meet at 10:00am at the Hiker's parking lot on Monte Sano, will do Mountain Mist, Sinks, Stone Cuts, Super Cuts and the Keith then Sinks again and back. 5 to 6 mile hike. Bring water, snack, sturdy hiking boots, ¾ of a day. Call Doug Horacek at 256 772-6788 for more information.

Tues. 11/11. Downtown Evening Hike. 6:00pm - Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Randy May, 687-7558.

Wed. 11/12, Newsletter Labeling. 5:30pm. Stanlio's Sub Villa, corner of Monroe St. and Governor's Dr. Liz, 461-5819.

Sat. 11/15. Mt. Cheaha Fall Color hike. Strenuous. We will hike 8 miles on the Pinhoti Trail, from Cheaha

trailhead (parking lot) along the ridge-line on the Pinhoti Trail to Caney Head. We should see beautiful panoramic views of the mountains and valleys in their autumn splendor. Then we will descend on the Chinnabee Trail to the Turnipseed campsite and a shuttle vehicle. Bring water, lunch, sturdy boots or strong ankles. Optional dinner afterwards at the State Lodge. Meet 7:00am Hampton Cove Publix parking lot, or 9:30am at Oxford Shoney's. Lee Hollingsworth, 256.520.6659.

Sun. 11/16. Honeysuckle Clearing. Easy. Meet 1:00pm at the Land Trust trail across from Fagan Spring Apartments. Bring loppers and gloves. Doug Horacek 256 772-6788.

Tues. 11/18. Downtown Evening Hike. 6:00pm - Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Thurs. 11/20. North AL Sierra club meeting. 6:30pm at the Huntsville Public Library downtown. Dr. Bob Hasting's Traveling Snake Show. Don't miss it!

Sat-Sun. 11/21-23. Fort Mountain Carcamp. Strenuous. Fort Mountain derives its name from an ancient 855-foot-long rock wall which stands on the highest point of the mountain. The

mysterious wall is thought to have been built by Native Americans as fortification against other more hostile tribes or for ancient ceremonies or even perhaps by the legendary mooneye people. The Gahuti Trail travels around the edge of the park. Ever changing, the trail is both beautiful and challenging in all seasons providing spectacular vistas. We will leave around 1:00pm on Friday and hike 10-11 miles on Saturday. Judy Burley 883-4267 or jcburley@bellsouth.net.

Fri-Sun, Dec 5-7. Christmas on the Mountain at Fall Creek Falls. Easy. Come enjoy Tennessee's Fall Creek Falls Winter Festival of Yuletide fun, featuring Handmade Christmas Crafts, Songs, Tea Parties, and more at Fall Creek Falls Inn. The cost is \$108 plus tax and includes two nights lodging and breakfast for two people each morning in the dining room (beverage included). Package price is based on double occupancy. For those interested, we will be hiking Friday and Saturday. Hikes will be moderate. You are responsible for making your own reservations at 423-881-5241, but if you wish to hike with us let me know that you are coming and when you plan to arrive. Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net.

West Alabama Events—November 2008

W

Sun. 11/2. Sipsey River Recreation Area Hike. Meet at 9:00 AM in the public parking area off Sipsey Valley Road in Buhl. If water level is low we will hike approximately 4 miles, one way, to an area that has some very

mature bottomland hardwoods. Bring lunch, water, good shoes, binoculars, cameras. The trails are gravel single lane roads and open trails with no hills. Sipsey Swamp is a very unique natural area so close to Tuscaloosa. Come join us and experience this natural treasure. Call Dexter Duren at (205) 393-0927 for further details.

Thurs. 11/20. An Overview of the City of Tuscaloosa's Proposed Landscape Ordinance. 7:00 p.m. Eric Thompson, City of Tuscaloosa, Office of Planning and Economic Development. University Lutheran Church, 911 5th Ave., Tuscaloosa, just across the parking lot west of Sheraton Four Points.

Montgomery Group Outing to Cold Water Creek Near Milton, Florida: September 20, 2008

By John Ackerman

Seven intrepid adventurers explored the flora and fauna of Cold Water Creek. The weather was perfect, the water crystal clear, the critters abundant, and the company excellent! The baby soft shell turtle was amazing!



November On the Farm

Making a difference for the environment – with our eating habits!

By Peggie Griffin



Fall – my favorite time of year! What is more nostalgic than those fall drives in the country to see Alabama's rolling countryside ablaze with color – or those cool fall hikes in the woods where you can't even see the trail and you crunch in the leaves as you walk? Then you come home to a delicious hot meal of sweet potatoes, turnip greens, and cornbread. And – you're preparing for that wonderful Thanksgiving get-together with your family and friends.

I'm giving more room to the farm story this month, so instead of a recipe, I'm going to recommend a cookbook. A new one I have on my kitchen shelf is *Vegetables* by the Culinary Institute of America. I can't wait until I have time to try out more of the recipes. The ones I have tried were yummy!

FARM OF THE MONTH

Mahone Creek Farm, Notasulga AL
Located halfway between Auburn and Montgomery, Mahone Creek Farm is located on the creek it is named for. It is on the fall line and has Piedmont soil as well as Coastal Plain soil – giving a diversity of growing environments. They

are fortunate to have 2 creeks on the property to irrigate.

Jayme Oats and Justin Taylor are the owners and farmers, who are dedicated to growing biodynamically. They think of their farm as an organism - a living thing - and work to create a balance of the plants, the animals, and the microbes. In growing the plants, they use the manures as well as last year's plant residue to make compost. They propagate the existing soil microbes and add that to the compost. Then they apply the compost to the fields. The compost feeds the microbes, and the microbes feed the plants.

Jayme has a science background and is Education Coordinator for Alabama Water Watch. She brings her science onto the farm and has been doing research on mushrooms and chickens. Mushrooms can cleanse chicken droppings. They feed the mushrooms to the chickens, cutting down on the cracked corn feed that has to be fed to the chickens. They also take the mushroom compost and feed it to the chickens. It is composed of straw and mycelium.

Mahone Creek Farm is a good example of a working sustainable farm. Jayme

and Justin bring in very little from the outside. Most of the things they use for fertilizers could actually be eaten (with the exception of the manure) – therefore their fertilizers are not going to be pollutants for the environment. They use water tests to make sure that their farm is not having an effect on the creek.

Jayme and Justin grow seasonal veggies - leafy greens in the fall and spring, four different varieties of garlic, several varieties of lettuce, and mushrooms. They also have chickens and sell eggs. In the summer time they grow five different heirloom varieties of tomatoes and one hybrid, also several rosemary varieties, oregano thyme, sage, basil.

Jayme and Justin are working with Save Our Saugahatchee and Friends of Chewacla/ Uphabee to organize the Dixieland Dining, Doodads & Destinations, which will be in May, 2009. Jayme described the event in this way: "We want to facilitate a network between local growers and consumers within the community. With that, we want to introduce community members to local recreation activities, as well as to bring about an awareness of issues that deal with the local economy and the environment. The take home message from festival will be to cut down on your carbon footprint and invest in your own community. It is our patriotic duty to start shopping at home."

To learn more about Mahone Creek Farm certifications, farming practices, and what they have available, go to localharvest.org, tells. Or call them at 334-703-5621 – and schedule for a visit and/or tour. You can buy directly from the farm – or at their local farmers market.

Sierra Insider

LAKE LURLEEN STATE PARK HIKE



L to R Dexter Duren, Sue Blacksheer, Brad Thomason, Katherine Roulaine, Ida Gleaton, Sonia Scherr, Steve Ginzburg, and Charles Gleaton.

On September 27 the 13 participants from the West Alabama Group went on a hike on the north end of Lake Lurleen State Park led by Dexter Duren. There are 14 species of oak found in the park: White Oak, Chestnut Oak, Swamp Chestnut Oak, Post Oak, Sand Post Oak, Southern Red Oak, Scarlet Oak, Black Oak, Blackjack Oak, Northern Red Oak, Water Oak, Darlington Oak, Willow Oak, and Turkey Oak. We saw many large green oblong Chestnut Oak acorns on the ground. We saw a clump of Indian Pipe in the Blueberry Family. The plants are white, lacking chlorophyll. Instead of making their own food from sunlight they are parasitic on fungi that in turn are symbiotic with certain trees. Ultimately the energy they use is from sunlight captured by the green leaves of trees. Other flowers seen were lobelia, skullcap, meadow beauty, and false foxglove. Back at the cars Brad Thomason treated us to a feast of watermelons from his garden.

By Steve Ginzburg

AMERICA'S FIRST BIOFUELS CORRIDOR OPENS IN MOBILE

The Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition and the ADECA-Energy Division, in partnership with Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee state governments and businesses, opened up the nation's first Biofuels Corridor on I-65 beginning in Mobile and ending in Gary, Indiana.

There will now be thirty-two (32) E85 ethanol and eight (8) B20 biodiesel pumps throughout the 886 mile I-65 corridor. Fifteen (15) of the E85/B20 pumps are located in Alabama. E85 (85% Ethanol and 15% Gasoline) can be used in any vehicle designated to use "Flex Fuels." A guide to determine if your vehicle is Flex-Fuel ready may be found at www.e85refueling.com. B20 (20% Biodiesel, 80% petroleum based diesel) may be used in any diesel engine.

Alabama has been moving forward on several fronts in the past 2-3 years promoting alternative energy/fuels.

To learn more about the I-65 Biofuels Corridor and other Alabama projects, visit www.AlabamaCleanFuels.org from bamanews.com

Cleaning Up after the Clean-Up

By Margo Rebar

After several hours of pulling out tires, parts of lawn mowers, wire fencing, and other trash from the Shades Creek, our ICO volunteers were muddy from top to bottom. Their next action? Have some fun in the water with the excuse that they needed to clean themselves.

The ICO participants set for themselves the task of pulling out the most difficult discarded pieces, such as tires and a water-logged foam mattress buried in smelly, mucky sediments. Forget the tattered plastic bags snagged on tree branches and plastic bottles, they seemed to be telling the ICO leaders; you can do those easy pickings, we will do the hard stuff! And work they did, as evidenced by the stack of seven tires and other debris in the photo.

Most of the outings that are taken through the Inner City Outings program are hikes into the woods,

caverns, streams or other outdoor settings as a way to introduce these youths to the wonders of nature and the role of humans in preserving natural areas. One way that is used to achieve these goals is joining the

Friends of Shades Creek for their annual clean-up of the stream that runs through the City of Homewood. Our thanks to the ICO participants for their contributions to the greater community.



The rewards of their labors stack up.

Sierra Insider

COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS REPORT – SEPTEMBER, 2008

I attended the National Sierra Club Board of Directors and Council of Club Leaders meetings in San Francisco September 17-21. The following is my report of major points affecting the Alabama Chapter. Major areas of discussion included the State of the Club, including Finances and the Chlorox agreement, Project Renewal, and the Presidential Campaign. To read my full report, visit alabama.sierraclub.org/report08.html.

Finances

In his State of the Club address, Carl Pope emphasized that both membership and donations to the Club are down and a budget deficit of \$5.9 million is anticipated for 2009. Consequently, Chapter funding will also decrease, especially unrestricted monies (C4). Chapters may have to depend more on restricted monies (including C3 funds from Foundation accounts) and develop programs eligible for restricted monies from the Climate Recovery Partnership (a joint effort by the Sierra Club and The Sierra Club Foundation with projected funding of \$41.9 million in 2008 and \$40.1 million in 2009. This financial situation is one reason that the Club entered into the agreement with Clorox, and is pursuing other "Corporate Opportunities and Cause-Related Marketing". However, we were assured that the Club "will not endorse products", and that the Clorox agreement does not include an endorsement of Green Works!!!

Project Renewal

The current status and implementation of Project Renewal was discussed at length. The main objectives of Project Renewal are to "minimize jurisdiction of one body over others" and to "bring volunteers and staff closer together".

Summary

Needless to say, there are a lot of changes occurring with the National Sierra Club organization and funding. There are a lot of challenges facing the Club, but also many accomplishments for which we can be proud. With the November elections, there should be a definite improvement in environmental attitudes in Washington. We need to be ready to take advantage of this new environmentalism that has been so lacking in the George W. administration. I hope to see you all at the Chapter Retreat in November.

To read the full report, visit alabama.sierraclub.org/report08.html.

by Robert W. Hastings, Alabama Chapter


Photo by Marco Saurer

GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

Help protect our animal friends; because once they're gone, they're gone. Join Sierra Club now.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
 Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Exp. Date ____/____/____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



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Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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ALABAMA SIERRA CLUB ANNUAL RETREAT

Alabama 4-H Center, Columbiana, AL

www.aces.edu/4hcenter

November 14-16, 2008

Outings

All Outings are scheduled for Saturday from 01:00-05:00p.m. Please indicate the number of participants for each selected outing.

Outings at the 4-H Center:

- Canoeing
 Climbing Wall
 Hiking
 GPS Challenge

The 4-H Center will provide experienced facilitators for the Climbing Wall and GPS Challenge. Participation on each outing will be limited to the first 20 people who register for each event. More information on each outing will be available in the monthly newsletter.

Outings at Oak Mountain State Park:

- Hiking
 Horseback Riding (Additional Fee/Reservations Required)
 Wildlife Rescue Center

Oak Mountain Day Use Fees:
 Weekdays: \$2 for Adults
 Weekends and Holidays: \$3 for Adults
 Children 6 to 11 years of age: \$1
 Senior Citizens 62 years of age and older: \$1

If you have any questions about the outings please contact Roger Wolczek: 334-361-7354 Or at rwolczek@knology.net

Name(s): _____
 E-mail: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Address: _____

Retreat Fees and Meals

Saturday Only: Student Rate (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner) \$15.00

Sunday Only: Student Rate* (Breakfast) \$5.00

Saturday and Sunday: Student Rate* \$20.00

Saturday Only: Non-Student Rate (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner) \$25.00

Sunday Only: Non-Student Rate (Breakfast) \$10.00

Saturday & Sunday: Non-Student Rate \$35.00

Lodging

Making My Own Arrangements \$0

Camping (per person): Each Night \$10.00

Single Room: \$25.00 Each Night

Shared Dble Room (per person): \$25.00 Each Night

Dorm Room (per person) \$20.00 Each Night

Total _____

***Student-Rate: Anyone attending high school or college is eligible for the reduced rate.**

Make checks payable to Montgomery Group, Alabama Sierra Club and mail them to:

David Norwood
 205 Lake Lane
 Matthews, AL, 36052
 334-281-9479

If you have any questions about lodging and meals please contact David Norwood at dn355@bellsouth.net

Environmental Education at Tannehill State Park

By Brenda Morrison & Maurice Jackson, AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries & David Tune, Sierra Club

Every week, as part of the Creek Kids program, Brenda Morrison and Maurice Jackson teach children of all ages about pollution and the environment. They are aquatic education instructors of the Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division at Tannehill Historical State Park in McCalla, Alabama. Using the hands-on Enviroscape model, Brenda and Maurice are able to teach the students about non-point source pollution so that the children can understand how pollutants enter the water system. The students also use nets to examine the various creatures in the creek, which can help them better understand the quality of the water.

Bryan Burgess, Alabama Sierra Club Water Sentinels coordinator, came in contact with Morrison through the Alabama Water Watch Living Streams

sessions and began to offer funding and equipment to her program. The Water Sentinels conduct similar watershed training activities and therefore were well equipped to aid the Creek Kids program in their parallel pursuit. The partnership involves Burgess supplying funds and equipment for the Creek Kids program students, while Morrison and Jackson have agreed to teach nearby school programs of grades five to eight. If the Creek Kids program continues to be a success, the Alabama State Parks may implement similar programs in other parks.

Even though Burgess has been able to supply some funding, Morrison and Jackson are seeking financial support through grants with other conservation groups as

well. This money would help the program reach more needy students by paying the park entrance fee for them. If Morrison and Jackson are successful in receiving grant money they hope to purchase a backpack shocker, which has two probes that create an electric field used to stun fish so that they can be studied and then released. Waterproof microscopes would also aid with instruction on how to evaluate water quality. The money could also allow for the expansion of the program as costs of transportation could potentially be covered. If they can get volunteers

and science teachers involved in this program it would be beneficial. Morrison and Jackson's goal is to work with science teachers within the Alabama school system and create an outdoor classroom atmosphere that will impact how the students view and interact with our states natural resources. For more information concerning this program please contact Morrison and Jackson at 205-477-6301 or e-mail them at Brenda.Morrison@dcnr.alabama.gov or Maurice.Jackson@dcnr.alabama.gov.

