



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

**CAHABA GROUP
GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA**

The Sierra Club makes your holiday shopping easy! Give everyone on your gift list a Sierra Club Wilderness Wall Calendar or Engagement Book. (\$10 each) yours today contact Danny Dorroh at 205-620-3299 or DD60@charter.net

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

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Silly me, I was worried about Chemical Weapons in Iraq...Paul Perret

Since August, the people of Anniston have been breathing Mustard Gas, Sarin and other toxic agents...courtesy of the US Army, which is burning these lethal chemical weapons. To prepare residents for potential leaks or accidents at the incinerator, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) distributed 12,000 plastic hoods and home security kits (?) which consist of plastic sheeting and duct tape.

While the Army burns these relics of the Cold War for at least the next decade, it's no wonder that the people of Anniston are making some tough decisions and asking some terrifying questions. Should families move away? Will a gas mask help if there is an accident at the chemical weapons incineration plant? Will the schools be prepared to protect their children in case poisonous gas escapes into Anniston's air? These are not questions that residents of Alabama should have to ask. The Bush Administration should not impose such choices on its own citizens.

It's true that we need to eliminate our chemical weapons stockpile; in fact, we're under treaty obligation to do so. But there's a better way to destroy chemical weapons than burning them. The Army and the Bush Administration know that. That's why they've opted to use a safer method called neutralization in Kentucky, Colorado, Maryland and Indiana. Not only is this method safer, but it's also cleaner, faster, and cheaper.

Why would the Administration put Alabamians at risk? Of the various chemical weapons stockpiles around the country, Anniston is the most highly populated. Wouldn't it make more sense to use the safest technology at such a site? Yet as is often the case when safeguards are ignored, the community that is closest to the Anniston incinerator is low-income. It begs the question -- are their lives worth less than the lives of those who can afford to fight with money?

Unfortunately, Anniston isn't the only place where Americans are at risk.

Last month, money from polluting corporations for Superfund cleanup of abandoned toxic sites ran out - the Bush Administration was the first presidency in the history of the Superfund program not to renew polluter funding. Now, dozens of communities will be

"In contrast to the frontal assault on the environmental laws and regulations waged by anti-environmental predecessors such as President Reagan, President George W. Bush and his administration have waged a subtler, broader and more ominous campaign using deceptive rhetoric, arcane procedural methods and funding cuts to carry out an anti-environment, pro corporate agenda."

Lou Bayard, et al, 2003 Presidential Report Card, League of Conservation Voters, Jan 2003.

while clean up is delayed indefinitely. Instead of holding polluters accountable, the Administration is sticking taxpayers with the bill for clean up.

The Bush Administration wants to weaken the Clean Air Act through a program ironically called "Clear Skies." The program would, over the next several decades, allow more asthma and lung disease-causing pollution into Alabama's air.

Right here in Birmingham, air quality fails to meet standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency, yet powerful industry lobbyists are working with the Bush Administration to get out of their responsibility for cleaning up the air and the dangerous ozone.

Higher levels of mercury, another pollutant from power plants, would end up in our water if the Bush Administration's "Clear Skies" initiative passes. Mercury is especially dangerous for pregnant women and their babies, causing a variety of neurological problems during development.

It doesn't have to be this way -- a recent study from the White House Office of Management and Budget shows that the health and safety costs of pollution far outweigh the cost of implementing and enforcing laws that are meant to protect us. Through innovative use of technology and by enforcing existing environmental laws we can save money and ensure our communities' health and safety.

We're calling on the President to protect communities that are at risk from weapons of mass destruction right here in Alabama.

See page 3 for Directions to Meeting Places regarding specific outings.

Dayhike Sipsey Wilderness (Big Tree)
SAT 12/6 * CALL 205-647-6961

Moderately Strenuous, scenic hike to the largest tree in the state. The 1st part of the hike will be off trail, but, barring any recent downfall of trees, will not involve any "bushwhacking". The "big tree" is located in the East Fork of Bee Branch in a steep, scenic, canyon with large bluffs and rock formations. It requires 5 adults to reach around ("to hug") the tree. There is a waterfall at the top rim, and the floor of the canyon has many large Hemlock Trees. We will return to the vehicles with a scenic walk along Bee Branch to its confluence with the Sipsey River, then along the river and to our cars. Optional dinner afterward. Meet at 8:00 am at the Hayden Corner Park and Ride (I-65 exit 284) or 9:15 am at Jacks in Double Springs. Leader, Vicky Wilson 205-647-6961

ICO Fund-Raiser & Gift Wrap
SAT 12/6 * CALL 205-970-6500

We will be selling ornaments and bookmarks made by the ICO youth, baked goods, dip and spice mixes, homemade dog biscuits and other great gifts for teachers, neighbors and fellow employees. Please come by and help support the Inner City Outings program. Alabama Outdoors in Homewood from 9:30 am to 7:30 pm (or until the food runs out!) contact Margo Rebar at 205-970-6500 or e-mail.

mrebar@earthlink.net

Wildlife Center Christmas Craft & Bake Sale
SAT 12/6 * 205-663-7930

The Wildlife Center is having its annual Christmas Craft & Bake Sale on Saturday, December 6th, 9 am to 4 pm. It will be held at The Wildlife Center headquarters in beautiful Oak Mtn State Park. Visitors can purchase unique handcrafted items and baked goods while viewing wildlife and learning about the rehabilitation process. All proceeds from the Craft & Bake Sale will help The Wildlife Center accomplish its mission of caring for Alabama's injured and orphaned native wildlife. Contact: Cindy Lowery 205-663-7930.

ExCom Meeting
SAT 12/8 * 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 12/9 * CALL 205-970-6500

Anyone interested in going on outings with selected inner city youth groups is welcome to join us. Please contact Margo Rebar at 205-970-6500 or e-mail.

mrebar@earthlink.net

Indian Mtn. Pinhoti Trail Day Hike
SAT 12/13 * CALL 256-287-1652

This hike will be a moderately strenuous 8+ mile hike on the last section of the Pinhoti Trail in Alabama. We will hike up to the crest of Indian Mountain to the Georgia State Line. The trail has several nice overlooks, and is one of the more scenic sections of the Pinhoti. This section of the trail was completed in 2002 by the Alabama Trails Association. Come out and witness the results of many years of very difficult work by this dedicated group of volunteers. Meet at 8:00 am at McDonalds in Trussville or 10:00 am at Hardies in Piedmont. Optional dinner after hike. Leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

Cahaba Group Holiday Celebration
TUE 12/16 * CALL 205-795-2043

Potluck supper and Holiday Celebration. Meet at 6:30 pm at the Birmingham Zoo Auditorium. Lets get together one more time in '2003 to "catch up" with old friends and make new ones!

Newsletter Mailing Party & Potluck
THU 12/18, 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."

Pinhoti Trail Day Hike
Sat 12/20 * Call 205-345-3460

This is the Pinhoti Trail north of Cheaha State Park on parts of sec-

tions 6 and 7. It begins on a 2.5 mile stretch of CCC road and then ascends Blue Mountain and travels south past Bald Rock into Cheaha State Park. It concludes at the Cave Creek intersection and parking. There 1000 feet of elevation change (uphill) for a moderate to strenuous 7 miles through the hollows of Talladega National Forest. Bring water, lunch, sturdy boots. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Office Max in the Village East Shopping Center. Leader Tammy Cooper 205-345-3460

Annual Little River Canyon Day Hike
FRI 12/26 * CALL 205-221-6196

This year we will descend Chiquapin Creek in the southwest part of the Preserve between Eberhardt Point and Johnny's Creek. We will start at the rim road, and when we reach the floor of the main canyon, we'll upstream and end at Eberhardt Point. The total distance is only two to two and a half miles, but it's a tough two + miles. The descent along Chiquapin is particularly challenging. The requirements are agility, tenacity, and a willingness to cross the creek several times (even get wet) rather than stamina. Boots or sprain-resistant ankles recommended. **Rated STRENUOUS. Limit: 10 hikers. Optional dinner afterwards. Leader, Carroll Wilson 205-221-6196**

Guntersville St. Pk Day Hike & Eagle Watch
SUN 1/4 * CALL 256-287-1652

This 8 mile moderate hike will include both the Tom Bevill and the Cutchenmine Trails. The Tom Bevill Trail is a 3-mile loop around Ellenburg Mtn. through a pristine hardwood forest with the largest sassafras trees you'll ever see. Cutchenmine Trail is a 5-mile walk along the lake to a nice waterfall on a creek flowing into the lake. We may shorten the hike to have more time to do some "eagle watching". Meet at the Golden Rule BBQ on Hwy 79 at 8:00 am or McDonalds in Guntersville at 9:30 am. Optional dinner after hike. Leader Joe Copeland 256-287-1652

Miss a Newsletter?

Bookmark this link and catch it online at:
<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba.html>

Newsletter on the Web approximately the same time printed copies are received.



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.

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.

Alabama Sierra Club Annual Retreat WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 11TH NEWS FLASH FROM THE EDITOR, HOLD THE PRESS!!!

What a Great Weekend! I just got home from the Annual Retreat in Week's Bay, AL and I am BEAT! Great Speakers including Bradley Byrne, (Senator Baldwin Cnty.), Kate Smolski, Peggie Griffin, Tom Hodges, David Yaeger, Larry McDuff, Pat Byington, Rev. Mark Johnston, Dave Newton, Neil Milligan...the credentials of these folks would fill the entire newsletter! Every one of these individuals has stepped up to the plate and they are "swinging the environmental bat". If you want to know about the environment in AL, Camp Beckwith was the place to be! Activities included canoeing on Week's Bay with Jennifer Taylor, tours of Biophilia Nature Center, Bon Secour Natl. Wildlife Refuge and a trip to Blakely State Historic Site including a boat tour of the TennSaw Delta. Meals in Camp Beckwith's lodge hall were excellent providing the setting and opportunity to meet Sierran's from other chapters, discuss critical environmental issues and just "catch up". Unfortunately there is not enough room here to list all the award recipients, but our chair, Paul Perret, got some well deserved recognition. Special thanks to John Ackerman, Montgomery Chapter, for an excellent event!
Note: Cahaba Group is host for '04!

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.

Outings Note

Anyone is welcome on outings, but if you make repeated trips, please join the Club. (See details in this newsletter.) Carpool whenever possible. Join us for optional dinner if you'd like. Check difficulty rating and children/age requirements. Questions? Contact trip leader.

Note for 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.

At a Glance – Sierra Club Events – December 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
11/30	1	2	3	4	5	6 Day Hike Sipsey Wilderness ICO Sale & Gift- wrap
7	8 ExComm Mtg.	9 ICO Team Mtg.	10	11	12	13 Day Hike Pinhoti Trail
14	15	16 Cahaba Group Holiday Pot Luck	17	18 Newsletter Mail- out	19	20 Day Hike Pinhoti Trail
21	22	23	24	25	26 Day Hike Little River Canyon	27
28	29	30	31	1/1	1/2	1/3

See event details and directions to meeting places inside.

Visit us online for newsletters, issues, contacts and more!!

<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba.html>



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

SIERRA CLUB/CAHABA GROUP
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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.)