

March 2006

Sierra

North Alabama Group



Visit our website
<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/na.html>

**General Meeting Thursday,
March 16, 6:30 p.m.**

Bruce Martin will talk to us about biking the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Tuesday Night Hikes

Meet at 6 pm at 907 Franklin St. during March and at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot starting April 4.

Bicycling the Natchez Trace

The program this month will be on the Sierra Club's bicycle trip from Nashville, TN to Natchez, MS. The Natchez Trace Parkway connects the two cities by way of a beautiful rolling 444 mile two lane highway. We will talk about the history of the Trace, how it came to be, its demise, the resurrection of it as a National Park, and the features it now offers the user. We will also discuss current and future environmental issues affecting the park.

Last year our crew of seven riders traveled the distance camping, hiking, and touring the historic sites along the way. We will narrate the slide show of last year's trip and answer any questions. This years trip will be May 20 - 28.

- Bruce Martin

Back to Monte Sano Tuesdays Nights in April

With the days getting longer, we will move the Tuesday night hikes back up to Monte Sano starting Tuesday, April 4. We meet at the Hiker's Parking lot at 6:00pm and we usually walk 3-4 miles. The hikes rated Easy unless otherwise noted. There will soon be a fee required for entrance into the State Park, so come with a few dollars.

- the Editor

Sierra Club Newsletters

The Alabama State Executive Committee voted last year to provide Alabama Sierra Club members with a state newsletter to replace the current local (group) newsletters. The purpose for this combined newsletter was to help the State Chapter to save money, as well as to help provide newsletters to other AL club members that belonged to groups that didn't have their own newsletter. It does not appear that there will be substantial (if any) cost savings to having a combined newsletter. The executive committee of your local group, the North AL Sierra Club, has decided that it would be in the best interest of our local group to continue sending out our own newsletter, and we currently do have the resources in place to continue doing this. We would appreciate the input of the group members on this subject.

- Group Chair

Earth Day at the Hays Nature Preserve

The Sierra Club will be participating in the annual celebration of our environment. We'll man a booth with greeters and Sierra Club information, plus we'll lead a series of short hikes along the Flint River with wildflowers, wildlife, and mildtimes. Bring a lunch or buy from the hot dog stand.

We do need volunteers to help staff the booth and lead some hikes. To volunteer or for more information, call Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

- Bruce Martin

Smokies Releases Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Elkmont Historic District

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials have announced the release of the Elkmont Historic District Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of the planning initiative is to develop a plan for the long-term management of 74 vacant buildings in the Elkmont Historic District, which is about eight miles from Gatlinburg in the Sevier County, Tenn., portion of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The draft document identifies the National Park Service's preferred alternative along with six other alternatives for the management and use of the district. These alternatives range from full removal of all buildings as described in the Park's 1982 Management Plan to incrementally greater preservation and reuse of the buildings for a variety of recreational purposes.

Upcoming public hearings will give interested persons

an opportunity to provide comments on the draft document. Hearings will be held on Saturday, March 25, 1:30 p.m. at the River Terrace Resort in Gatlinburg, Tenn. and on Monday, March 27, at 4:30 p.m. at the University of Tennessee Conference Center Building in Knoxville, Tenn.

The DEIS are available for viewing on line at <http://www.elkmont-gmpa-ea.com>

Comments may be submitted through May 7, either electronically through the above website or by email to ElkmontComments@tnainc.com or in writing to Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 107 Park Headquarters Road, Gatlinburg, TN 37738.

- Courtesy of Bob Miller, National Parks Service

New Members Wanted!

The new member contest is still under way! Remember, the club member who signs up the most new recruits will receive a cash prize of \$100.00.

All new checks (\$25.00) should be mailed to:

David Kostowny
116 Pebblebrook Circle, Madison, AL 35758.
Phone: 325-2296. E-mail: divadlk@msn.com

Join the Sierra Club or Renew your Membership for \$25

Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Contributions, gifts and dues to the 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 \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to:
David Kostowny
116 Pebblebrook Circle
Madison, AL 35758.



Administration Proposes Selling Public Lands

The Bush administration has proposed to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 for five years by selling more than 300,000 acres of land to offset the Act's \$800 million cost, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

On February 10, the U.S. Forest Service issued a list of lands it administers to go on the auction block ostensibly to help pay for the reauthorization offset. A total of 306,628 acres of national forestland, mainly in less than 100-acre parcels, are proposed for sale to private developers.

Senators from Idaho and Oregon are working on identifying an alternative method to re-fund the act while saving public lands for public use.

Aware of the irony that the federal government sends more than \$400 million a year to other countries for their education programs, conservationists are disappointed with what is seen as another ploy, under the guise of national need and shortfall, to turn portions of the public landscape over to the wealthy.

For a list of forest lands proposed for sale go to http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/rural_schools.shtml.

- Outdoor News Bulletin, v60, no2 Feb 16, 2006

Remember to Vote!

Elections for National Sierra Club officers is coming up soon, so watch your mailbox fro materials from the National office about the elections. You can also go the the Sierra Club website for more information about the candidates and the issues on which the National Club is focusing its efforts.

Your vote is important. If National does not hear from us, they are right to think we are not interested.

-the Editor

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

March – April 2006

2006 ExCom Members

Chair	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Treasurer	Sam Denham	539-1033
Fund Raising	Judy Jones	852-6179
	and Freddie DiPlacido	533-0651
Membership	Dave Kostowny	325-2296
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Outings	Lee Hollingsworth	461-3060
Publicity	Sandy Kiplinger	256/498-1023
Programs	Tom Burley	883-4267
Prgm Logistics Coordinator		
	Doug Horacek	772-6788
Secretary	Judy Burley	883-4267
Tuesday Hikes	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

General Meeting

Thursday March 16, 6:30pm.

Downtown Library auditorium.

Bruce Martin will talk about biking the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Hike Ratings

General Note: Most Saturday outings take all day and last into early evening. Please allow for this in your schedule

Easy-Less than 5 miles, no serious elevation changes, no trail obstacles.

Moderate-5 to 10 miles, some elevation changes or rough trail (rock hopping), or trail obstacles such as creek crossings.

Strenuous- Over 10 miles, substantial elevation change (1000 ft or more), trail may be rocky, obstructed or nonexistent.

Exploratory- event the leader has not experienced before, may fit any class.

Saturday, March 11 – SpaceWalk Trail hike. Strenuous.

Walk the old boy-scout trail that was built in the late 60's and early 70's from Green Mt. to Monte Sano. Sequential elevation profile: up 900ft, dn 300, up 300, dn 300, up 400, dn 700 up 700ft over 13 miles. The trail goes through the Certain property on the north end of Green Mountain, recently acquired by Forever Wild and the Land Trust. Bring lunch and water; rain date Sun, March 12. Note: this hike will last into the early evening. Meet at the grocery store at Bailey Cove Rd and Weatherly (formerly Bruno's). Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, Mar 14, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Helga, 534-5656.

Saturday, Mar 18 – Carter Mt hike. Strenuous. Meet at 9:00am in the old

Winn/Dixie parking lot on Winchester Rd. We will hike 8-10 miles off trail. Fast hike. Cave cove, Wolf Cove, waterfalls, views. Bring lunch and water. Joette 776-3551.

Sat-Sun, March 18-19 - Sipsey Wilderness backpack. Easy/Moderate Hike in about 5 miles, set up camp with additional dayhiking optional. 5 miles out next day. For more information contact Liz Poleretzky @461-5819 or hiker@knology.net.

Tuesday, Mar 21, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, March 23 - Outings 5:15, Excom 5:45. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, March 25 - Where's Waldo? Exploratory hike. Strenuous. Strong hikers with a sense of adventure, humor and direction are invited to join me in the search for prehistoric shelters with pictographs in the Sipsey Wilderness. Group size limited. Contact Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com or 256/498-1023 for details.

Tuesday, Mar 28, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

Saturday, April 1, Pigeon Mountain Dayhike. Strenuous. Pigeon Mountain is a spur off the east side of Lookout Mountain and is part of the Cumberland Plateau. We will hike the Pocket Trail which includes a picturesque waterfall, wildflowers, and a wide range of geological formations. Bring lunch and water. The hike is 8 miles and rated strenuous due to the 1200 ft elevation gain. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at the Publix in Hampton Cove at 8:15 am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburley@knology.net

Saturday, April 1 - Buck's Pocket Hike. Easy. Optional car camp with Wild Flower Society Saturday night. Meet at 9:00am at the Franklin Building. Bring lunch, water and camping gear if you plan to camp. We will stop at High Falls and the slide rapid. Call Doug Horacek 772-6788 for more information.

Tuesday, April 4, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Bruce Martin, 256-725-2168.

Saturday, April 8 - Monte Sano History Hike. Moderate. Meet at the hikers parking lot at Monte Sano State Park at 8:00am. Hike will be 8.5 miles. We'll tour the historic sites of O'Shaughnessy Point, Chalybeate Spring, Lily Pond,

O'Shaughnessy house site, Cold Springs, The Railroad Bed, Fagan Springs and end at the Three Caves quarry. Lots of stops for history and photos. Wildflowers galore. Downhill hike! Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Tuesday, April 11, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Virgil DeStefano 539-0348.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, April 12th, 5:30pm. Down South Condominiums clubhouse. South Mem Parkway. Entrance on right between Big Ten Tires and Schlotzsky's. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Fri-Sun, April 14-16 - Talladega Triad Hike and Carcamp. Strenuous.

Located just south of Cheaha Mountain, this 17 mile loop highlights the best of the Talladega National Forest. The loop consists of three trails: the Pinhoti, the Chinnabee Silent, and the Skyway trails. We will pass through hardwood forests with excellent views of the surrounding mountains, Cheaha Falls a beautiful 50 ft waterfall, and with luck the azalea, rhododendrons, and dogwoods will be in bloom. We will camp at Turnipseed campground Friday and Saturday nights. This hike is rated strenuous due to the distance, steep climbs, and elevation gain. Bring food for both days but we will likely eat at the park lodge Saturday night. Return on Sunday. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburley@knology.net

Saturday, April 15 - Bike Chief Ladiga Trail. Moderate. Out and back 44 miles on smooth blacktop bike path on old railroad bed. Beautiful scenery, will take us from Piedmont thru JSU to Anniston and back. Bike at your own pace. Meet 7:00am at Hampton Cove McDonalds. Bike, helmet, lunch and water required. Make pre-arrangements to car pool due to bikes. Information: Lee Hollingsworth, 256-461-3060.

Saturday, April 15 - Reuben Creek hike. Moderate-Strenuous. Reuben Creek is a beautiful creek near Sewanee. The hike will have several creek crossings, wild flowers, with a possible longer hike to Cowan RR tunnel. Meet at Winchester Rd Winn/Dixie parking lot at 9:00am. Joette 256-776-3551

Tuesday, April 18, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Sat-Sun, April 22-23 - All Ladies Backpack. Moderate. Attn ladies! Dust off those packs and join us for a moderate backpack (total 10-11 miles) in the scenic Sipsey Wilderness. Sonnie, from Alabama Outdoors, will be available

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

March – April 2006

to answer your questions about equipment woes. Novices welcome. Group size limited. For information, call or email Sandy Kiplinger (256/498-1023 sandykip@juno.com or) or Liz Poleretzky (hiker@knology.net or 256/461-5819).

Saturday Apr 22 - Earth Day at the Hays Preserve. Easy. The Sierra Club will be participating in the annual celebration of our environment. We'll man a booth with greeters and Sierra information, plus we'll lead a series of short hikes along the Flint River with wildflowers, wildlife, and mild times. Bring a lunch or buy from the hot dog stand. Volunteers to help would be appreciated. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Saturday, May 6, Stonedoor Dayhike. Strenuous. The Great Stone Door is a 150-foot deep crevice at the crest of the plateau by which we will enter Savage Gulf. We will follow the Big Creek Gulf trail with a side trip to Ranger Falls and return by way of the Big Creek Rim trail which promises spectacular vistas. 10-11 mile hike. Bring lunch and water. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at old Winn Dixie on Winchester Road at 8:00 am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburley@knology.net

Sat-Sun, May 20-28 - Natchez Trace Bicycle Trip. Strenuous. We'll bike from Nashville, TN to Natchez, MS (444 miles). Sag wagon, all food en route and campgrounds provided. Fee \$150. Limited to 10 participants. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Fri-Sun, June 9-11 - Coosa Backcountry Loop Hike /Carcamp. Strenuous. This 12.5 mile hike offers a bit of everything: rugged summits, challenging trails, dense woodland, mountain streams, and solitude. Time permitting we will take a to the summit of Blood Mountain the highest point in GA on the AT which has grand views of the surrounding valleys and mountains. We will stay at Vogel State Park campground Friday and Saturday nights (yes there are showers). This hike is rated strenuous due the distance and elevation gain. Bring food for both days but we will probably eat at a local restaurant Saturday night. Return on Sunday. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburley@knology.net

Wed-Sun, June 21 -25 -Devils Fork Gap to Hot Springs Backpack. Strenuous. 35 mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation

changes over three days. We will depart on Wednesday at 7:30am arriving in Hot Springs around 2:30pm. We will spend Saturday night at the Hot Springs Campground. Cost will be about \$35 each. Group size is limited. For further information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburley@knology.net

Other Outings / Events

The following activities are not sponsored or administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of such activities. They are published only as a reader service because they might be of interest to the readers of our newsletter. for more info at 427-5116

March 24-26 Alabama Trails Convention at Cheaha State Park

Nature Wanderers

Saturday, April 8 - Shiloh Bicycle Ride. Easy. Meet at 8:00am at Captain D's on Madison Boulevard [old hwy 20] or the Chevron Station on Hwy 72 near Courtland at 8:45am. Easy bike ride on paved roads to tour the Shiloh Battlefield just north of luka, Mississippi in Tennessee. Bring lunch and water. Small admission fee to the museum and short film. Call Lee Hollingsworth, 461.3060 days or 520.6659 evening.

Saturday, April 22 - Earth Day celebration at Hayes Preserve. Soos Weber, 256-427-5116