

May 2006

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

General Meeting Thursday, May 18, 6:30 p.m.

Charlie Thorpe will talk about the Leave No Trace program.

Tuesday Night Hikes

Meet at 6:00pm at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot.

Leave No Trace

The Leave No Trace educational program strives to educate all those who enjoy the outdoors about the nature of their recreational impacts as well as techniques to prevent and minimize these impacts.

The US Forest Service worked with the National Outdoor Leadership School to gather together the many approaches to minimum-impact outdoor recreation into one comprehensive educational program. Leave No Trace became USA's national minimum-impact educational message in '94 when jointly adopted by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Charlie Thorpe, a distance-hiking enthusiast, will present a program about Leave No Trace at the May meeting of the North Alabama Sierra group at the Huntsville Public Library auditorium on Thursday, May 18 at 6:30pm. Mr. Thorpe has enjoyed almost forty years of youth and adult Scouting around the US. He has been active in conducting LNT Trainer courses around the country for both Scouting and non-Scouting audiences, presenting the LNT message to over 60,000 Scouting youth and adults at large Scouting gatherings in the US. Mr. Thorpe has thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 1993, the Pacific Crest Trail in 1995, and has been section-hiking the Continental Divide Trail since 1998.

- the Editor

Local Group Forms to Combat Invasive Plants

Andy Prewitt of the Land Trust gathered several people to discuss forming a North Alabama chapter of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council. The first meeting included people from the Sierra Club, Wildflower Society, Alabama A&M, Alabama Dept of Transportation, Huntsville Land Trust, Huntsville Botanical Garden, and Soos Weber, the city ecologist. The attendees agreed that the most important thing to do is to begin educating the public. The group will work to get bush honeysuckle listed in the state's top-ten list of invasive plants. Another idea the group will work on is to start a regular column in the Huntsville Times aimed at gardeners and landscapers.

The new Invasive Plant chapter will be coordinating work days, and is considering putting on an educational festival in the Fall.

If you would like to be a part of this group, or would like more information or get on the mailing list, call Andy Prewitt at the Land Trust 534-5263, andy@landtrust-hsv.org; or Sam Denham of the Sierra Club 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w), sam.denham@mindspring.com.

- Sam Denham

Looking For a Few Good Members

The North Alabama Sierra Club is looking for some members to get involved and serve on the executive committee. We need a political chair and a fundraising chair. The political chair will work with the National office to coordinate local support for National initiatives and will work with local political officials to continue to focus attention on conservation, water quality and green space initiatives. The fundraising chair will work with the National group on projects to help raise more funds for the local chapter. Both positions get occasional training trips out to the National office in San Francisco.

If you have wondered what you can do to help out, please consider one of these positions. The political and fundraising chairs meet monthly with the executive committee on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5:30 and generally attend the monthly membership meetings to

report on their activities. For more information, call the group chair, Liz Poleretzky at 461-5819.

Remember that the motto for the Sierra Club is to explore, enjoy and protect the planet. We protect by getting involved and working to make a difference. Think about volunteering for one of these positions in order to help make a difference.

- the Editor

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.



Why Kill a Tree to Grow a Flower

In the beginning of April the Waterkeeper Alliance, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, and Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper started a campaign against the use of cypress mulch. Illegal logging is destroying Louisiana's coastal wetlands at a time when they are much needed for hurricane protection. 70-80% of the cypress trees being cut will never regenerate. Cypress mulch is NOT a superior product. Alternatives are cheaper, less environmentally harmful and may even be better for your garden. Once the loggers have cut all the cypress in Louisiana, they will surely turn to other supplies throughout the southeast.

The lower Black Warrior River basin and much of southern Alabama are home to cypress wetlands. Please help support this effort to end the practice of cutting priceless old growth trees for mulch by boycotting the use of cypress mulch, and by taking action on the Waterkeeper Alliance website below.

For more information, go to www.WATERKEEPER.org

- the Editor

Taking the Dog Along for a Hike

Many of us who hike have dogs that enjoy going along for the fun. Usually that's okay but there are times and places where dogs are not appropriate, and following a few guidelines will help avoid any problems.

First, if you are not familiar with the location for the hike, call the hike leader. Some areas such as wildlife preserves do not allow dogs. And if you do not know the hike leader, call them to get their okay as a courtesy.

Second, make sure you can control your dog on the trail. Not everyone likes dogs and may not appreciate your dog jumping up on them. Hikers not part of your group may even be afraid of your dog if it is not under control. Always bring a leash along and use when necessary to keep your dog under control.

-the Editor

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

May – June 2006

2006 ExCom Members

Chair	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Vice-Chair and Treasurer	Sam Denham	539-1033
Conservation chairs		
	Brenda Cummings	881-7447
	Doug Horacek	772-6788
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 May 18, 6:30pm.

Downtown Library auditorium.

Charlie Thorpe will talk about the Leave No Trace program.

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, May 13 - Bucks Pocket Day Hike. Moderate. Join us for a moderate 6-mile day hike through one of our most spectacular local state parks. Lots of wildflowers, great geology, waterfalls and majestic views. Bring lunch and water. Meet at the Publix on Hwy 431 near Hampton Cove at 8:00am for carpooling. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Sunday, May 14 - Monte Sano Hike and Rock Hop. Moderate-Strenuous. Hike the Arrowhead Trail to the bottom of McKay Hollow Creek, then rock hop for 1 mile, then climb back up to the top. Beer and peanuts in the backyard after the hike. Meet at 2 pm at Sam Denham's house, 4333 Chickasaw Drive, 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, May 16, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 256-539-0348.

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

Sunday, May 21 - Rainbow Mountain hike. Easy. Meet at 2:00pm. Bring water and sturdy hiking boots. Call Doug Horacek for information at 772-6788.

Tuesday, May 23, 6:00pm – Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park Fee. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, May 25 - Outings 5:15, Excom 5:45.

Monday, May 29 - Tennessee Lake Party. 11:00am until? Bring picnic lunch/supper (gas grill provided). 5 mile optional hike 1:30pm (easy). Directions: Winchester Rd to Tennessee, continue to Huntland, TN at stop sign, turn left and go about 2 miles to another stop sign and turn right onto hwy 64 (east), go to Winchester, TN UNDER an overpass and turn right (south) onto Hwy 16, continue about 10 miles up Keith Springs mountain and turn left at Jehovah Jireh Lane (between mile markers 22 and 23). Follow asphalt drive to lake. Canoe, paddle boats, kayaking, swimming, hiking available. More info: Joette 776-3551 BEFORE Sat, May 27 or (931) 968-0073 on the 29th.

Tuesday, May 30, 6:00pm – Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park Fee. Leader: Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.

Saturday, June 3. 13th Annual Pisgah Gorge Rock Hop. Strenuous.

Waterfalls, boulders big as houses, spiders big as dinner plates, swimming, ticks, snakes, poison ivy, everything! The most beautiful scenery in Alabama is worth it! Leader approval required.

Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, June 6, 6:00pm – Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park Fee. Leader: Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, June 7, 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, June 9-11 Coosa Backcountry Loop Hike. 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 side trip 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 the Hiker Hostel Friday and Saturday nights. The cost is \$30 per person for the two nights which includes breakfast. Bring lunch for each day but we will eat out Friday and Saturday nights. This hike is rated strenuous due to 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 tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Sunday, June 11, Elk River Canoe day trip. Easy. 9 mile float down the Elk River, \$23.50 per person, or \$15 for shuttling if you bring your own canoe. Bring a cooler and a picnic lunch, hat, and sunscreen. Please try to make your reservation by June 4. Meet at Winn Dixie on Winchester Road at 8:45am. Sam Denham 539-1033 hm 961-0436 wk

Tuesday, June 13, 6:00pm – Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park Fee. Leader: Helga Sowa, 534-5656.

Saturday, June 17 - Hike around Monte Sano. Strenuous. Join us for a 13-mile trek from the Land Trust Parking Lot to Three Caves, over to Burritt, down to Three Caves, out to O'Shaughnessy Point, through the Stone Cuts, by Three Caves and ending at the Land Trust. Meet at LandTrust parking lot at 8:00am.

Bring lunch and water. Lots of nature and miles. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Tuesday, June 20, 6:00pm – Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park Fee. Leader: Bruce Martin, 725-2168.

Thur-Sun, June 22-25 – Smokey Mountains Backpack. Strenuous. This is a 26 mile self sufficient backpack with 3,100 ft elevation changes over two days. We will begin on the Lakeshore Trail and traverse Jonas Creek, Welch Ridge, and Bear Creek Trails back to Lakeshore Trail with a side trip to High Rocks from which we will have an expansive view to the south of Fontana Lake. One trip report I read stated that the Welch Ridge area has become a haven for bears. We will depart on Thursday and stay at Deep Creek campground that night beginning the backpack on Friday and return on Sunday. Bring food for two days. Group size is limited to eight and leader approval is required. Contact Tom Burley 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Sat-Sun, July 8-9 – Sipseys Backpack. Strenuous. Meet at Hardee's on South Parkway at 8:00am or The Trading Post in Wren at 9:30am. We'll hike Trail 209 along the Sipseys, cross over to Hidden Falls for the night and visit the Big Tree on the way back. Eighteen miles over two days, rated strenuous. Some cross country. Day hikers are welcome but be prepared for an 11-mile day. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

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.

Flint River Conservation Association

Saturday, June 24 Creeks and Critters
The FRCA has planned a workshop on checking the health of a watershed by looking at the creatures you find in the water, or what is scientifically called "biological assessment."
The workshop will be held from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Come to the Flint's headwaters in New Market and spend the day learning cool facts about watersheds and seeing some cool critters, while cooling off from the summer heat. After an introduction about the importance of watersheds and stream ecosystems, we'll head to river to explore its shallow riffles for fish, crayfish, newts, and a variety of macroinvertebrates all while learning about what the presence (or absence) of these creatures can tell us about the health of the river environment.

You should plan to bring a lunch, water, shoes and clothes that can get wet in (although we DO suggest that your shoes have closed toes!), and possibly a towel, hat and sunscreen. The deadline for registering is June 17th

For more information or to reserve your spot in either of these programs, please contact Jeff Hughes at Burritt on the Mountain, (256) 512-0146 or jeff_turtlekeeper@yahoo.com.