

June 2006

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

General Meeting and Picnic Thursday, June 15, 5:30 p.m.

Bring your picnic supper to the Monte Sano picnic area near the Overlook.

Tuesday Night Hikes

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

Picnic and Hike on Monte Sano for June Meeting

As we do every summer, the monthly meetings of the North Alabama Sierra Club will move to the great outdoors. Please come join us Thursday evening, June 15 for a picnic and camaraderie up on Monte Sano. We will start around 5:30 and leave at dusk. Come to the State Park picnic area near the overlook and bring your supper, something to drink and maybe a lawn chair. There will be a hike after supper for anyone who wants to join.

- the Editor

Cumberland Plateau National Heritage Corridor

Katherine Medlock plans to speak at the Grundy County Commission meeting on Monday, June 26 at 6:30 pm at the Courthouse in Altamont, TN. The talk will be a short presentation on the proposed Cumberland Plateau National Heritage Corridor and its potential benefits to the region. The hope is that the Commissioners will pass a resolution in support of the proposal.

A feasibility study has been done to highlight the Cumberland Plateau's natural and cultural resources as well as the potential economic benefits that designation as a National Heritage Corridor could bring to Plateau communities. The study is a required part of the process of trying to obtain National Heritage Corridor designation.

The heritage corridor project is a regional enterprise of state and local governments, business and tourism interests, conservation and historic preservation organizations, and Plateau residents. Its purpose is to promote economic development throughout the region through increased tourism and to protect the Plateau's natural, historical, and cultural resources.

Cumberland County Mayor Brock Hill said, "Our home is one of the most biologically diverse temperate forests in the world and the most diverse freshwater ecosystem on the planet. In addition to this, the Plateau has many historic and natural attractions that make the place we call home inviting to tourists, bringing in business and tax revenues that directly benefit the region's residents. I believe that once the Cumberland Plateau is designated a National Heritage Corridor, we will see this trend continue to develop in our favor."

Once public comment is received, the draft Feasibility Study will be finalized and sent to Congress. Congress will vote on whether to designate the Cumberland Plateau as a National Heritage Corridor. If the Plateau does receive the designation, the federal government would contribute funds for its preservation, but would not own the land.

- State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

Public Lands Day Set for September 30

National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. In 2005, nearly 90,000 volunteers built trails and bridges, planted trees and plants, and removed trash and invasive plants. Join us Saturday, September 30, 2006 for the 13th annual National Public Lands Day and help us care for our land.

In the North Alabama area, the Flint River Conservation Association sponsors a cleanup of a stretch of the Flint River, both on the banks and in the water with canoes. The group always brings in huge amounts of trash and has a good time doing it. The FRCA effort is nationally registered on the NPLD website www.npld.com. Click "Get Involved" and then click the state of AL to see what is going on in our area.

Do you know of other areas that could use some volunteer muscle and care? Please consider organizing a

group to do some hands-on environmental work that day. Possible projects include building bridges and trails, improving habitat for wildlife, planting trees, removing invasive plants that threaten fragile natives, protecting natural, historic and cultural resources...and much more. Volunteers work in parks and forests, at rivers, lakes, and wetlands, and in their own neighborhoods.

Please consider making a commitment to do something to help on National Public Lands Day. For more information about the Flint River effort, call Soos Weber, Director of the Hayes Nature Preserve for the city of Huntsville, at 427-5116 or 509-1219.

- the Editor

It's time to get rid of Strife

Purple Loosestrife that is. The Flint River Conservation Association has received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fight purple loosestrife in the Flint River Watershed. Purple loosestrife is a tall, perennial forb that can grow up to 10 feet in height. It is easily distinguished by the abundant, showy spikes of purple flowers that occur at the tops of the plants. The opposite or whorled leaves are dark-green and lance-shaped. Purple loosestrife is a serious invader of many types of wetlands, including wet meadows, prairie potholes, river and stream banks, lake shores, tidal and non-tidal marshes, and ditches. It can quickly form dense stands that displace native vegetation. Purple loosestrife can spread very rapidly due to its prolific seed production; one plant can produce as many as 2-3 million seeds per year. Purple loosestrife is native to Europe and Asia. It was first introduced into America in the early 1800s for ornamental and medicinal purposes.

On Sunday, June 25th, Soos Weber will be conducting a training about identifying loosestrife, how to eliminate it, and why. The Fish and Wildlife Service grant will cover the cost of equipment and even provide volunteers with gas money for their efforts. Volunteers are encouraged to attend the training and work for 2-3 hours late in the afternoon. The group will meet at the Hardee's restaurant in Gurley at 3:00 pm on June 25th. For more information or to sign-up to volunteer, call Soos at 427-5116.

For more about invasive plants in this area, go to <http://www.invasive.org/>

- the Editor

New Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center -

Alabama Governor Bob Riley and Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley recently announced the opening of the new \$2 million Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center located in Marion, Alabama. The Biodiversity Center will be home to the largest state aquatic wildlife restoration program in the United States.

One of the new center's stated goals is to protect and restore snail and mussel species that are threatened with extinction. According to the Alabama Department of Conservation 67 mollusk species have become extinct over the past 80 years. The Center, which is located in Perry County, sits on 36 acres near the Cahaba River and is adjacent to the Marion State Fish Hatchery, Perry Lakes Park, and The Nature Conservancy's Barton Beach Preserve. Along with protecting and restoring snails and mussels, the center will also function as a research center, according to Paul Johnson, the program supervisor, who is the former director of the Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute.

Bama Environmental News, May 10 2006, #262

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

June - July 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 June 15, 5:30pm. Monte Sano Picnic area at the Overlook.

Bring your own food and drink –optional hike afterwards.

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.

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

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.

Sunday, June 18 - Bike Ride in the Coves of Madison County. Moderate. Bring your road bike for a 30-mile ride through our beautiful local version of Cades Cove: hills, trees, cows i.e., lots of pastoral scenery. Pace: 10-15 mph. Meet at Madison County Lake at 2:00pm. Sam Denham 539-1033(h) 961-0436(w).

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.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, June 22 - Outings 5:15, Excom 5:45.

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

Sunday, June 25 - Wade Mountain Hike. Easy. Meet at the Wade Mountain Trail Head at 2:00pm. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Tuesday, June 27, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park fee. Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 256-539-0348.

Saturday, July 1 - Fiery Gizzard to Foster Falls hike. Strenuous. Approx 13 miles. For experienced hikers who enjoy a scenic but challenging trail. We'll leave the Old Winn Dixie (1338 Winchester Road, Huntsville) parking area at 7:30am sharp and leave a car in

the Foster Falls parking lot for a shuttle. Bring lots of water, food and good hiking shoes. Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com or 256/ 571-5870.

Tuesday, July 4 – No evening hike.

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.

Sunday, July 9 - Little River Canyon Rockhop/Swim/Dayhike. Strenuous. This time we'll do two separate hikes: Wolf Creek and the mile below Hwy 35 bridge. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen, hat and be ready to get wet. See the famous spot where the helicopter rescued Carl Craig! Meet at Garden Cove downtown 8:00am. Sam Denham 539-1033(h) 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, July 11, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park fee. Leader: Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.

Newsletter Labeling

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

Saturday, July 15 - Guntersville State Park hike. Strenuous. Hike 13.5 miles around the park's perimeter trails. Lots of canopy and scenery. Bring plenty of water, food and good hiking shoes. Meet 7:20am by the Wal-Mart gas station (11610 Memorial Pkwy SW, Huntsville). Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com or 256/571-5870.

Tuesday, July 18, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park fee. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, July 22 - Elk River Float trip. Easy. RSVP by July 19. Bring your own canoe or call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 to arrange for a canoe rental. We will put in above Elk River canoe rental, stop there for lunch and take out below the canoe rental. Call Doug Horacek 772-6788 for more information, and no alcohol on this trip please.

Tuesday, July 25, 00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot. State Park fee. Leader: Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819.

Saturday, July 29 - Greeter Gulf Creekwalk and Swim. Strenuous. Walk through Tennessee's Garden of Eden. Rated strenuous because of slick rocks

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar June - July 2006

and walking through water up to waist deep. Must wear boots or shoes in the water for ankle support--river sandals are NOT okay. Bring water and lunch, hat and sunscreen. Meet 8:30am at Garden Cove, Pratt Ave/Meridian St. For more information, Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

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 Assoc

Saturday, July 29 - 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. Meet at Burritt on the Mountain for an introduction about the importance of watersheds and stream ecosystems. The group will then head to 3 Forks of the Flint at Winchester Road and spend the day exploring the river 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 you 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 July 22nd.

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.

Sunday, June 11 - Keel Mountain hike.

Enjoy a short hike to Falling Springs Sink, near Bethel on Keel Mountain. There is the ruin of an old grist mill there, and John Ed Butler will be there to tell us about its history. We will meet at AmSouth Bank parking lot at Hampton Cove at 3:30 p.m. and drive to John Ed's

and Cornelia's homeplace—one of the oldest standing farmhouses in Madison County. Wear hiking boots and bring water for the trek, and of course a camera.

The sink is a very primeval place, unlike any in Madison County. If we have time afterward, we will tour Bethel Cemetery, one of the oldest and most beautiful in Madison County. Call Soos for information at 427-5116.

Saturday, June 24 - Enjoy a hike in the Goldsmith Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary. This sanctuary will be part of the Watershed Education Center to be developed at Hays Nature Preserve. Help Soos locate some new nature trails on the property to be opened this fall. We will meet at the parking lot at the Hays Nature Preserve at 10 a.m. Bring snack and water. Call Soos for more information at 427-5116.