

February 2007

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

General Meeting Wednesday,
February 21, 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Wall will talk about hiking the entire length of the Appalachian Trail

Tuesday Night Downtown Hikes

Join us at 6 p.m. at the Land Trust Office Parking lot, 907 Franklin St. for a hike around downtown Huntsville.

Hiking the Length of the AT

The program for February will be a slideshow presentation by Dr. Jimmy Wall Jr. of his hikes on the Appalachian Trail, from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. For those of us who have hiked sections of the AT, Dr. Wall's pictures and stories of his hike will rekindle memories of past adventures. I am sure that many of us will have questions as trail fever takes over and we begin to dream that one day we will undertake this challenging endeavor. Come join fellow hiking enthusiasts as Dr. Wall shares his adventure with us. Dr. Wall served on the City Council, was influential in starting the Land Trust and has advocated preserving the Spacewalk Trail.

- Tom Burley

Sierra Elections Coming in March

The annual election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors is now underway and in March you should receive your national Sierra Club ballot.

The Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. The Board of Directors sets Club policy and budgets at the national level and works closely with the Executive Director and staff to operate the Club. Voting for candidates who express your views on how the Club should grow and change is both a privilege and responsibility of membership.

Use your own judgment by taking several minutes to read the ballot statement of each candidate. To find out more about the candidates and their views on a variety of issues facing the Club and the environment, please visit the election website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/bod/2007>

Please take the time to vote!

- the Editor

Downtown Evening Hikes

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier this year as part of a new US energy initiative. In early March the days will still be a bit short for a hike on the mountain, so the Mountain evening hikes will resume Tuesday, April 3.

- the Editor

Watershed Leadership Conference March 16-18

The Alabama Rivers Alliance will host its annual three-day conference at Camp McDowell March 16-18. There will be workshops on watershed science and policy, and organizational capacity building, all led by local, state, and national experts. The conference is an educational, strategy, and training event for grassroots leaders, citizens, agencies, businesses, and others interested in protecting and restoring our water resources. For more information, visit ARA's web page at www.alabamarivers.org or contact Cindy Lowry at 877-862-5260. Early registration ends February 16th, and student scholarships are available.

- the Editor

Green Mt Rezoning Under Consideration

At a recent hearing of the Huntsville Planning Commission, a room packed with local residents was against the rezoning of Green Mountain to allow for smaller tracts. The Planning Commission approved the change at the request of developers. The City Council will take up the request next. The rezoning request calls for a Planned Development with smaller lots than the current R-1 zoning allows. Many residents feel that smaller lots and more dense development would alter the character of Green Mountain and set a precedent for future development.

An article on page B1 of the January 24 edition of the Huntsville Times discussed the rezoning request.

- the Editor

AL Hiking Trail Soc Conference March 30-April 1

The Alabama Hiking Trail Society will hold its annual conference at Bald Rock Lodge in Cheaha State Park, March 30-April 1. The speaker Saturday night will be the host of the Emmy-nominated APT series "Discovering Alabama", Dr. Doug Phillips. Also joining us will be hiking legend MJ Eberhart, who has hiked the 5,500-mile long Eastern Continental Trail, the Lewis and Clark Trail, and many more. There will be workshops on orienteering, CCC history, Alabama geology, Leave No Trace practices and updates on the Pinhoti Trail.

Registration is \$20. All proceeds help AHTS continue the mission of protecting, maintaining, developing, and promoting hiking trails throughout the state for all to enjoy.

For more information and to register, visit the website at www.hikealabama.org/conference07/conference.htm or contact Joe Cuhaj, jcuahaj@bellsouth.net or 251-533-1812.

Note From the Chair

Thanks to all the folks that keep the North Alabama group going! The dedicated members of the Executive Committee spend several days a month attending the general meeting, local and state committee meetings, leading outings and helping out with the newsletter. Special thanks to the newsletter crew beginning with our editor, Jack Drost, Lee Hollingsworth who collects the outings information, the "labeling" crew who come each month to prepare the newsletters for mailing, and Margaret Evans, who has the challenging job of taking the boxes to the post office and hoping that everything meets their specifications!

The Sierra Club has a great organization here in North Alabama. We are involved with the North Alabama Invasive Plants Council with Sam Denham as our representative, Doug Horacek continues the Club's Honeysuckle elimination effort on Land Trust property, Jack organized our Sierra Club Energy Film Fest January 27, and in March Tom Burley will teach a backpacking class. We committed \$500 to the Land Trust to show our support for the purchase of the Terry Property adjacent to Monte Sano State Park, helping to preserve the land for us and for future generations.

We had some great programs in 2006, including slide shows on hiking trips to Rocky Mt. National Park and Ireland, an update on Huntsville's Greenways program, a presentation on Mushrooms, and our most popular event – the annual Christmas Party. If you have suggestions for future programs please contact our Programs chair, Judy Burley. Thanks also to all of our hike leaders, especially the Tuesday night leaders: Helga Sowa, Bruce Martin, Virgil DeStefano, Nancy Dudney and Judy Burley for their faithful support week after week. Our outings continue to thrive and we have seen many new faces over the last few months. Membership is up 5% from last year and our group is the second largest in the state with a membership of 973. Thanks to Dave Kostowny for doing such a great job as membership chair and to Sandy Kiplinger for getting the word out about our events to our local media. And last but not least, Steven Baty for maintaining our Website!

There are many of you out there that we never see - we estimate that less than 10% of the membership is active in club activities. Maybe you will consider joining us on an outing soon or to volunteer if you have some free time. Please consider volunteering by leading outings, helping with the newsletter, or even joining the Executive Committee. It is our combined efforts that keep this group vibrant. When everyone pitches in, even just a little, a lot can be accomplished.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me or any of the other Excom members.

- Liz Poleretzky, North Alabama Group Chair
256-461-5819 or hiker@knology.net

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

February – March 2007

2007 ExCom Members

Chair	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Vice-Chair and Treasurer	Sam Denham	539-1033
Conservation chair	Doug Horacek	772-6788
Fund Raising	Helga Sowa	534-5656
Membership	Dave Kostowny	325-2296
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Outings	Lee Hollingsworth	461-3060
	And Tom Burley	883-4267
Publicity	Sandy Kiplinger	256/498-1023
Programs	Judy Burley	883-4267
Secretary	Judy Burley	883-4267
Tuesday Hikes	Nancy Dudley	882-9408
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

General Meeting

Wednesday, Feb 21, 6:30pm.
Downtown Library auditorium

Dr. Wall will talk about hiking the entire length of the Appalachian Trail.

Hike Ratings

General Note: Saturday outings may take all day and last into early evening. The Sierra Club encourages carpooling to save fuel, but you should be prepared to drive your own car on club outings.

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.

Sat-Sun, Feb 17-18 - Backpack to Hobbs Cabin. Moderate. Approximately 17 total miles. Call for meeting location & time. Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819 or hiker@knology.net.

Tuesday, Feb 20, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Leader: Helga Sowa, 534-5656.

Saturday, Feb 24 - Flat Rock hike. Moderate. Meet at Monte Sano Hikers parking lot at 8:00am. We will hike 8.4 miles to the Flat Rock. Bring lunch, water and \$3.00 for entrance to the park. Call Doug Horacek for details at 772-6788.

Tuesday, Feb 27, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, March 1, 5:30. Doug Horacek, 772-6788.

Saturday, March 3 - Fiery Gizzard hike. Strenuous. Perhaps one of the most diverse and beautiful trails in Tennessee the terrain is steep and extremely rocky. We will follow the Fiery Gizzard passing the 500-year-old hemlock, Blue Hole Falls, Sycamore Falls, and the Fruit Bowl rock formation before beginning our arduous climb to Raven Point and return via the Doghole Trail. The hike is about ten miles and definitely strenuous. Bring lunch and water and we will dine after at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:00am at the Winchester Road Publix. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, March 6, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet

at Land Trust parking lot, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Nancy Dudley 882-9408.

Saturday, March 10 - Beginners Backpacking Class. Introduction to backpacking basics. Learn how to select tents, backpacks, stoves, sleeping bags, water purification, and clothing. The class will start at 9:00am and run about eight hours. No equipment needed to take the class. The class includes a backpack on March 24 to test your new skills. \$20 fee payable to the North Alabama Sierra Club. Pre-register with Tom Burley - tdburleyhiker@knology.net or 883-4267; or Liz Poleretzky 461-5819 or hiker@knology.net

Sunday, March 11 - Wade Mt. Greenway hike. Moderate. Meet at 1:00pm at the Wade Mountain Greenway parking lot on Pulaski Pike. We will walk the length of the greenway and then hook up with the new trail (not paved) which joins up with the Wade Mountain trails. Plan on doing around 5 miles some of it uphill. Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819 or hiker@knology.net

Tuesday, March 13, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Land Trust parking lot, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Bruce Martin, 256-725-2168.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, March 14, 5:30pm. Down South Condominiums clubhouse. South Mem Parkway. Entrance on right between Big Ten Tires and Schlotzsky's. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, March 17 - Big Tree hike. Strenuous. We will begin this hike in the Sipsey Wilderness at the Borden Creek Bridge, hiking up the old logging road and down to the Big Tree. We will continue along the Sipsey River to the intersection with Borden Creek and return to the trailhead. Bring lunch and we will dine after at a local restaurant. Meet at the Cracker Barrel in Madison at 8:00am or at 7:00am for breakfast. Or meet us at the Warrior Mt Trading Post in Wren at 9:00am. Contact Tom Burley 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, March 20, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Land Trust parking lot, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, March 24 - Reuben Creek hike. Moderate. We will go to Sherwood TN for a 6-8 mile hike through a beautiful area; there will be some off trail with numerous creek crossings and water falls. Meet in the old Winn/Dixie parking lot on Winchester Rd. (1 mile north of Moores Mill and Winchester Rd intersection). Bring lunch and water. Joette 776-3551.

Sat-Sun, March 24-25 - Savage Gulf Backpack. Moderate. This is the backpack for the backpacking class, however everyone is welcome. We will follow the Big Creek Gulf rim trail with spectacular vistas to Alum Gap Campground. After setting up camp there will be an optional side trip to Greeter Falls. We return the next day by way of the Laurel trail. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back Sunday. Meet at the Publix on Winchester Road at 9:00am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, March 27, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Land Trust parking lot, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Helga Sowa, 534-5656.

Saturday, March 31 - Buck's Pocket hike and car camp. Easy. Meet at 8:00am in the Land Trust parking lot, 907 Franklin St. We will hike from the

overlook to Saute Creek, have lunch at Highfalls and walk along the slide rapid. Optional car camp Saturday night. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for info.

Saturday, April 14 - Walls of Jericho hike. Strenuous. The Walls of Jericho is a natural amphitheater that shoots water out of holes and cracks in the canyon wall during times of high water flow. This unique area consists of more than 21,000 acres of rivers, forested uplands and caves across the AL/TN state line. This beautiful tract, once the hunting grounds of Davy Crockett, contains a diverse array of plants and animals. The 7-mile hike is strenuous due to the 1000 feet elevation gain. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 9:00am at the Publix in Hampton Cove. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Fri-Sun, April 27-29 - Big Frog Wilderness backpack. Strenuous. 15-mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation changes. Leave Friday at noon, arrive at Thunder Rock Campground 4:00pm where we will camp Friday night. Saturday we will hike to the summit of Big Frog Mountain, the highest peak in the Ocoee Region, where we will camp Saturday night. Hike promises vistas and a variety of wildlife sightings. Sunday descend back to trailhead and return home. Group size limited to ten people. For further information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Thu-Sun, June 14-17- Max Patch to Hot Springs backpack. Strenuous. 20-mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation changes. Leave Thursday 9:30am, arrive at Hot Springs 3:00pm and take a shuttle to Max Patch. This hike will be a gentle climb across the southernmost bald on the AT and abounds with wildflowers reminiscent of the opening scene from the Sound of Music. We will spend Saturday night at the Hot Springs Campground on the French Broad River with a one-hour soak in the mineral hot springs. Cost approx \$25 per person for shuttle, campsite, and hot tub. Group size limited to ten and participants must commit by May 27th. For more info contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Other Outings / Events

The following are not sponsored or administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning 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 our readers.

Hays Nature Preserve

Saturday, Feb 24 - River Guardians Workshop. "Be the change you wish to see in the World." (Gandhi). Have you ever felt the urge to help the local environment, but you did not know where to start? Join us on Saturday, February 24, from 9:00am to 3:30pm to find out how you can be a River Guardian.

In this free workshop, participants will learn basic watershed ecology, identifying pollution threats and how to recognize and report environmental abuse. After the morning session, the workshop will continue with afternoon field trips to visit sites demonstrating good vs. poor development as well as how to identify wetlands.

Participants should come with a sack lunch, digital camera (if you have one), appropriate shoes and outerwear and

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar February – March 2007

enthusiasm! The deadline to register is February 17. This workshop will be held in the City Engineering Building across from the Bicentennial Children's Fountain on the corner of Williams and Fountain. For more information, contact Soos Weber at 427-5116.

Saturday, March 3 - Privet Round-Up, Bonfire and Weenie roast! We are really making a dent in the privet at the Hays Preserve, but we also have a lot of field borders that need whacking. Please join us from 1-4 pm for a Privet Roundup on March 3. Bring tools, gloves and chainsaws. The roundup will be followed by a bonfire and Weenie Roast with chili. Call Soos at 427-5116 for more information. Or go to www.huntsvillepreserves.com

Nature Wanderers

Saturday, Feb 24 - Sipsey Wilderness/ Bankhead Forest Hike. Start the morning off with a Pancake Breakfast at the American Legion Hall on Hwy. 33 between Wren and downtown Moulton. Followed by the opportunity to walk it off as you hike with Ted and friends from Wild South. Remember to bring lunch and water. Meet at Trading Post in Wren at 9:00am. Ted Kuzma 256-974-7771.

Saturday, March 10 - Rock Pile Trail. Wally takes us on his favorite hike on the Wilson Dam Reservation in Muscle Shoals. This is a moderate hike along the south side of the Tennessee River. Remember to bring lunch and water. Meet Wilson Dam parking area 9:00am. Wally Marynowski 256-974-8777.

Saturday, March 17 - St. Patrick's Day hike. "Faith and begora", if it isn't Brenda Cummings leadin' a hike! And she won't tolerate anyone forgettin' to wear the green. You'll need to be callin' and askin' Brenda where she's goin' and if you're comin' along for the fun! She may even come up with some green beer to celebrate the day. Call Brenda Cummings at 256-881-7447.

Saturday, March 24. Spring Fling! It's time for our annual cookout on the Sipsey River. The Club will bring lunch – hot dogs and s'mores - that day. All you have to do is cook it! Bring something to drink. Teresa Young 256-773-1945 for meeting time and place.

Saturday, March 31. Sipsey Wilderness/ Bankhead Forest hike. Join Ted and a group from Wild South as Ted leads them on an easy-to-moderate hike in the Sipsey Wilderness and/ or Bankhead Forest. Remember to bring lunch, snacks, and water. Meet at Trading Post in Wren at 9:00am. Call Ted Kuzma 256-974-7771.

Sierra Middle Tennessee Group

Saturday, Feb 24 - South Cumberland Recreation Area Greeter Falls hike. Join the group for a 5 mile hike to view multiple waterfalls and walk the rim of Savage Gulf for spectacular views of the gulf and sandstone cliffs. Trail is 3 miles easy, 2 mile medium difficulty. We will take the Greeter Falls loop and Greeter trail. Bring lunch, as we'll eat on the trail. Hiking boots recommended, as there is some boulder walking and slippery footing near the falls. Contact Diane Perschbacher at 615-895-1236 or Diane@Propson.com for information.

Alabama Rivers Alliance

Saturday, Feb 24 – Pinhoti Trail hike. Details: Contact Larry Warren at 256-835-0870. Sponsoring Group: Anniston Outdoor Association

Sat-Sun, March 3-4 - Mulberry Fork Races. Canoe/kayaking racing begins at 09:00 and usually last until 4:00 or so. It's an event the entire family can enjoy. Bring a cushion or chair for use while sitting on the banks of the Locust Fork River enjoying the sunshine and paddling action. A local Boy Scout troop will be selling burgers, hotdogs and soft drinks. More info: www.flfr.org

Get involved! If you want to get more involved in the action and fun, event volunteers are needed for a 4 hour shifts available in the AM or PM.

Admission \$2.00 per car load. Camping is allowed for \$5.00 if you want to stay on the river the entire weekend. Location: up river from the highway 79/231 bridge over the Locust at King's Bend north of Cleveland, AL. Contact: Sam Howell 205-681-4751 showell@brescoinc.com Sponsoring Group: Friends of the Locust Fork River and Alabama Outdoor

Saturday, March 10 – Pinhoti Trail Maintenance hike. Details: Contact Larry Warren at 256-835-0870.

Sponsoring Group: Anniston Outdoor Association

Fri-Sun, March 16-18 - Watershed Leadership Conference.

Location: Camp McDowell
Details: An educational, strategy, and training event for grassroots leaders, citizens, agencies, businesses, and others interested in protecting and restoring our water resources. Contact: Cindy Lowry 205-322-6395 or toll free 877-862-5260. Sponsoring Group: Alabama Rivers Alliance

Fri-Sun, March 16-18 – Pinhoti Trail backpack. Details: Contact Keith Hudson at 256-231-7675, 256-820-1895, or 256-452-3223. Sponsoring Group: Anniston Outdoor Association

Saturday, March 24 - Locust Fork Whitewater Classic Canoe/Kayak Races. Details: Canoe/kayaking racing begins at 09:00 and usually last until 4:00 or so. It's an event the entire family can enjoy. Bring a cushion or chair for use while sitting on the banks of the Locust Fork River enjoying the sunshine and paddling action. A local Boy Scout troop will be selling burgers, hotdogs and soft drinks. More info: www.flfr.org

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Saturday, March 31 – Talladega Forest hike. Joint Outing with the Little River Canyon Field School. Details: To view waterfalls in the Talladega National Forest. Contact: Joan Alexander at 256-238-8185. Sponsoring Group: Anniston Outdoor Association