

March 2007

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

**General Meeting Wednesday,
March 21, 6:30 p.m.**

Cindy Lowry will talk about efforts to protect Alabama rivers.

Tuesday Night Hikes

6:00pm – Thru March at the Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Starting April 3, meet at Monte Sano hiker's parking lot.

Protecting Alabama's Rivers

Over the past decade, the Alabama Rivers Alliance has worked to develop, enhance, and connect a strong network of local watershed organizations and citizens across Alabama. Working with this network and the many environmental issues that the network is trying to address across the state has led to the development of the Alabama Water Agenda.

The Alabama Water Agenda is a proactive, citizen-driven campaign for improving water policy in Alabama. The Agenda targets the biggest threats to our waters by ensuring lasting protections through improved state policy. At our March meeting, Cindy Lowry, the Watershed Leadership Coordinator for the Alabama Rivers Alliance will present more details about the Alabama Water Agenda and how Sierra Club members can get more involved and support this important campaign. For more information, please visit www.alabamawateragenda.com.

The North Alabama Sierra Group meets at 6:30pm the third Wednesday night of the month, in the auditorium of the Huntsville Madison County Public Library at 901 Monroe St. in downtown Huntsville. Everyone is welcome to attend.

- the Editor

Tuesday Nights Back on the Mountain in April!

Tuesday night hikes will return to Monte Sano Mountain starting Tuesday, April 3. The first mountain evening hike of the spring is always a bit exciting after spending the winter walking around downtown, so come and celebrate the "Return to the Mountain Annual Spring Rite" at O'Shaughnessey Point. Refreshments served. A tradition sponsored by Bruce Martin. We will meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot at 6:00pm – remember to bring your \$3 fee to enter the park.

- the Editor

Sierra Election Reminder

Remember to fill out your ballot and vote this month! 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>

- the Editor

Dinner Celebration for John Muir and Earth Day

Come join us for dinner at 6:30pm, Thursday, April 19 at WildFlour Bistro to celebrate Earth Day and John Muir's birthday. John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club and our inspiration for the preservation and enjoyment of America's great wilderness areas, was born on April 21, 1838, and Earth Day is April 22. All Sierra Club members and friends are welcome.

WildFlour Bistro is located at 501 Jordan Lane in the old Fratelli's location, just south of Holmes Ave. Upscale dining without the attitude is what owner Kathy Bilitz aims for, with an emphasis on fresh, locally grown ingredients and innovative dishes. For our celebration dinner, \$25 provides your choice of entrée, dessert and beverage. Alcoholic beverages are extra.

This dinner celebration will take the place of the regular monthly meeting for April. All Sierra Club members, guests and friends are welcome for this celebration of Spring, Earth Day and the birthday of our founder, John Muir. For more information, call Helga Sowa, 534-5656.

A Cold Backpack on Mt. Rogers, Feb 2007.

Attendance was slim - only 2 backpackers braved the bitter cold of Mt Rogers for this trip. Kristy Newton and Lee Hollingsworth departed Huntsville midmorning just as freezing rain was falling. With roads closing behind us, we headed north to Virginia. After a leisurely drive including

some good meals, we arrived after dark at the park HQ and hiked the short walk to the Partnership shelter on the AT. With only a quarter moon and a blanket of snow on the forest floor, it was quite easy to see in the night. We met a couple backpacking the AT who had set up their tent in the shelter for some added protection. We had no tents, but the air was still so we were OK. It got quite cold during the night; after sunrise the thermometer registered 10 degrees. We broke camp quickly, went back into town for a hot breakfast, then headed back to Massie Gap, our trailhead for the backpack. Along the way we stopped at the ranger station for weather updates, for which the ranger was quite helpful.

The coming night was to be somewhat colder at Thomas Knob than we experienced at Partnership, so we decided to abort the overnight and to day hike. However due to the severity of the weather conditions and the likelihood of sudden changes, we opted to take our full backpacks just to be better prepared for whatever might develop.

We ascended the mountain on the trails we intended to take on our return route - the Wilburn Ridge and Rhododendron Trails. These trails proved to be somewhat tougher than the AT, and were not blazed. With 10 inches of snow on the ground in most places, the only distinction of the trail was to follow other's footprints. The wild ponies knew their way, and were foraging for what little dead grass there was.

As we ascended a high pinnacle, a couple hiked up behind us. The man asked if we would be his witnesses. Not knowing quite what to expect, we followed him to the highest rock, where he proposed to his girlfriend. I named the place "proposal point"!

We continued upward to a trail junction and took the Crest Trail, mistaking it for the AT. We followed footprints in the snow until they disappeared, as did any indication of a trail, just drifts of snow. So we turned around and headed back to the trail junction, where we continued to climb some more, finally passing over the ridgeline and coming to the AT. Winds were bitter on these barren ridges, and any exposed skin was feeling the pain. We continued along the AT toward the Thomas Knob shelter, but due to diminishing daylight hours and threatening skies we decided to turn around and head back down the mountain. This time we took the AT down the mountain, which proved to be a somewhat easier hike.

- Lee Hollingsworth

New Members Wanted!

Mail checks for \$25.00 to:
David Kostowny
116 Pebblebrook Circle, Madison, AL 35758.
Phone: 325-2296. E-mail: daverave@knology.net

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.



North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

March - April 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 Dudney	882-9408
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

General Meeting

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

Cindy Lowry from the Alabama Rivers Alliance on efforts to improve state policies regarding our rivers.

Hike Ratings

General Notes: 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.

Saturday, March 17 - Big Tree hike.

Strenuous. Hike begins at the Borden Creek Bridge, then we will hike up the old logging road and down to the Big Tree. We will continue along the Sipsey River to 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.

Come 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.

No Excom Meeting for March

Saturday, March 31 - Buck's Pocket

hike and car camp. Easy. Meet at 8:00am at the Franklin Building, 2006 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.

Tuesday, April 3, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Saturday, April 7 - Return to Guntersville State Park: the Interior trails. Strenuous. 14 miles of springtime action. Meet at the gas station in front of Wal-Mart, 11610 South Memorial Pkwy, at 7:20am. Bring plenty of food, water and good hiking shoes. Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com.

Saturday, April 7 - Cloudland Canyon

hike. Moderate. Located on the western edge of Lookout Mountain, this is one of the most scenic parks in Georgia. The park straddles a deep gorge cut into the mountain by Sitton Gulch Creek and has an elevation change of 800 to 1980 feet. We will hike to the bottom of the gorge past two waterfalls cascading into pools below and then hike the rim trail which has spectacular vistas. Bring lunch and we have dinner at a local restaurant.

Meet at the Publix in Hampton Cove at 9:00am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, April 10, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, April 11, 5:30pm. Down South Condominiums clubhouse. South Mem Parkway. Entrance on right between Big Ten Tires and Schlotzsky's. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, April 14 - Wade Mtn hike.

Easy. Meet at the trail head on Spraggins Hollow Road at 9:00am. Bring plenty of water, bug repellent and sturdy hiking boots. We will be looking at spring glade wildflowers. For more information Doug Horacek at 772-6788.

Saturday, April 14 - Walls of Jericho

hike. Strenuous. The Walls of Jericho is a large natural amphitheater that shoots water out of holes and cracks in the canyon wall during times of high water flow. This is a unique area that consists of more than 21,000 acres of rivers, forested uplands and caves spreading across the Alabama and Tennessee state line. This beautiful tract, once the hunting grounds of Davy Crockett, contains a diverse array of plants and animals. The hike is approximately 7 miles and has a 1000 ft 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

Tuesday, April 17, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Liz Poleretzky, (wk) 461-5819.

Saturday, April 21 - Earth Day at the Hayes Nature Preserve.

Tuesday, April 24, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Fri-Sun, April 27-29 - Big Frog

Wilderness backpack. Strenuous. This is a 15-mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation changes over two days. Depart Friday at noon arriving at the Thunder Rock Campground around 4:00pm where we will stay Friday night. On Saturday we will ascend to the summit of Big Frog Mountain, the highest peak in the Ocoee Region, where we will camp Saturday night. The trip promises vistas and a variety of possible wildlife sightings. On Sunday we will descend back to the trailhead and return home. Group size will be limited to a maximum of ten. Contact Tom Burley 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Thu-Sun, June 14-17 - Max Patch to Hot Springs Backpack. Strenuous.

This is a 20-mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation changes over two days. We will depart on Thursday at 9:30 a.m. arriving in Hot Springs around 3:00 p.m. and take a shuttle to Max

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

March - April 2007

Patch. It a gentle climb across the southernmost bald on the AT and abounds with wildflowers that is 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 will depend on the number of participants but will be approximately \$25 per person to cover shuttle, campsite, and hot tub. Group size will be limited to a maximum of ten and participants must commit by May 27th. For further information 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.

Nature Wanderers

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. All you have to do is cook it and bring something to drink. Call 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. Destination to be announced at the time of the hike. Remember to bring lunch, snacks, and water. Meet at Trading Post in Wren at 9:00 am. Ted Kuzma 256-974-7771.

Saturday, April 14. Bike Ride Route and destination are to be determined. Plan to bring lunch and

water. Doug Felton at 256-830-2271.

Sunday, April 22. Shiloh Battlefield – Earth Day. Let's celebrate Earth Day by taking an easy bike ride around the civil war battleground at Shiloh. It is located near the Mississippi – Tennessee border above luka. The roads through the park are paved and mostly flat. Bring a snack and water. There is a small admission fee to see the video and tour the museum. Teresa Young 256-773-1945.

South Cumberland State Recreation Area

Sunday, March 25 - Spring Frolic. Swelling tree buds, peeping wildflowers, 60 degree-days.... Everyone likes a spring frolic through the woods! Meet Ranger Jason at the Collins West parking lot at 9:00am for a 4-mile hike to Horsepound Falls and back. This strenuous hike warrants plenty of water and a light snack.

Alabama Rivers Alliance

Saturday, March 24 - Locust Fork Whitewater Classic Canoe/Kayak Races. Details: Canoe/kayaking racing begins at 9:00am and usually last until 4:00pm or so. It's an event the entire family can enjoy. Bring a cushion or chair, sit on the banks of the Locust Fork River and enjoy the sunshine and paddling action. A local Boy Scout troop will be selling burgers, hotdogs and soft drinks. Admission is \$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. More info: www.fffr.org

Saturday, March 24 - Brookside Greenway Festival. Details: "Frenchie" Negron Classic Bicycle Ride 9:00am.
Russian Boar Scramble Mountain Bike Race 10:00am.
Wild Game "Dinner on the Ground" 11:00am – 2:00pm.
Five Mile Creek Arts and Crafts all day.
Greenway Fishing Tournament 7:00am to noon.
Regions Bank 5K Run and 1K fun run 8:00am -9:00am.
Introductory canoe rides, canoe excursions, historic cemeteries tour. Admission is free.
For more information, please contact: Francesca Gross – Five Mile Creek Partnership Facilitator
<http://www.cawaco.org/fivemilecreek/>
(205) 264-8464, fgross@rpcgb.org
Saturday, March 31 - 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

Saturday, April 7 - Easy Canoe Trip on the Locust Fork River
Contact: Vicky Wilson, 647-6961

Saturday, April 28 – 13th Annual Hurricane Creek Clean-up and Chili Cook-off.

Location: Hurricane Creek, Eastern Tuscaloosa County, Watson's Bend (the take-out) where Holt-Peterson Road, County Road 88 cross
Details: Clean up begins at 9:00am. Chili Cook-off at 1:00pm. There is a \$5 entry fee with all proceeds going directly to the Friends of Hurricane Creek. Other dishes such as side items and desserts are welcome!
Contact: Anna Keene
akeene@alabamarivers.org or call 205-239-5750