

May 2007

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

No monthly meeting for May

Tuesday Night Hikes

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

No Meeting for May

Please note that there will be no monthly meeting for May. The meetings for June, July and August are traditionally held outside somewhere such as at Monte Sano State Park, so be sure to check the newsletter for information on those meetings.

- The Editor

Recent Land Purchases

The Land Trust of Huntsville and North Alabama recently purchased the Narrows on Green Mountain. This is the section just north and south of the Channel 54 TV tower near the south end of the Spacewalk Trail. It is just south of the Certain property. Plans are to extend the trail eventually all the way to Ditto Landing.

The State of Tennessee also recently purchased the land containing the Fiery Gizzard and the Fiery Gizzard Trail. Fiery Gizzard Cove is one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and a favorite hiking spot for many in our area.

Our area is blessed with a great amount of undeveloped land and many individuals and organizations have been working hard to preserve much of it. The Land Trust of Huntsville and North Alabama, the Sierra Club, the City of Huntsville and the Flint River Conservation Association are some of the groups that have helped purchase and preserve areas around Monte Sano Mountain, Green Mountain, Wade and Rainbow Mountains and the Hays Nature Preserve. Over 35,000 acres have been purchased around the Walls of Jericho by Forever Wild and The Nature Conservancy, preserving the headwaters of the Paint Rock River, which hosts more species of fish than any river of comparable size in the United States, and providing a spectacular place for us to hike. When a bill was introduced in the Alabama Legislature to reduce funding for Forever Wild, dozens of Alabama citizens showed up to protest and the bill was dropped.

It takes many people and various organizations to protect the special lands we have surrounding us in North Alabama and the news of recent preservation acquisitions shows that our continuing efforts are well worth it. Thanks to all of you and keep up the good work!

The Editor

Flint River Cleanup Slated for June 2

Once again, the Flint River Conservation Association is teaming up with the Sierra Club to help clean up a section of the Flint River. We are going to do this as part of National American Rivers Clean Up week. You don't have to be a canoeist to help as we also need groups of landlubbers cleaning up around bridge crossings, where a lot of stuff gets tossed.

The cleanup is always fun and teams in canoes compete to see who can haul out the most tires or the biggest or most unusual piece of junk. The winner one year was a canoe piled high with garbage bags and topped with a rocking horse that was rescued from the river.

We ask that each person that needs a seat in a canoe pay for a small part of the rental by contributing \$10. Reservations must be made with Soos Weber by May 25th and you can call her at 427-5116 to make a reservation or get more information. You can also go to the following website. www.nationalrivercleanup.org/sites/index

- Soos Weber

Wild South to Sue US Forest Service

The Bankhead National Forest is facing its greatest threat since the Forest Plan of 1985 which allowed the forest to be clear cut and converted to loblolly pine plantations. The Bush Administration has opened the Bankhead and all other National Forests in Alabama to drilling for oil and gas. For the Bankhead, this means

drilling to tap methane gas from the coal seams that lie deep under the sandstone rocks of the Black Warrior Basin. At risk are those public lands that lie within Winston and Lawrence Counties. The citizens of Alabama stand to lose wildlife, hunting, camping, rare and endangered species, old growth forests and 400 miles of pristine canyons that make up the Bankhead.

In recent years, Tuscaloosa County has experienced the effects of these methane wells. Many residents are fighting the industry, claiming their water wells and their homes are being damaged by blasting and fracturing of the underground coal seams. The industry uses a hydraulic pressurizing system that injects nitrogen into the coal seams in order to fracture them. Along with the methane gas is an enormous quantity of contaminated water and slurry that must be either re-injected into the underground water aquifers or contained, treated and released into whatever stream happens to be nearby. There is no escaping the toxic aftermath of this practice.

For more information and updates on efforts to protect the Bankhead Forest, go to <http://www.wildsouth.org/newsletter.html>

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Organization Building Workshop

Does your organization rely on the same small group of leaders for each issue and activity? Do you use the same approach for each campaign or project, no matter what the goal? Do you find that even when you reach your goals, your organization hasn't grown? The Alabama Rivers Alliance, Flint River Conservation Association, and the Institute for Conservation Leadership are sponsoring a workshop to provide training in planning and execution skills and to help organizations learn how to mobilize new volunteers and nurture them into leaders the organization needs for the future. The workshop will be held Saturday, June 23 from 9:30am-4:00pm in the Public Service Building in downtown Huntsville.

Objectives of the workshop are to help organizations set goals for recruiting new volunteers and developing new leaders; plan the first phases of a campaign or project; and develop a calendar for a campaign or project.

The cost is \$110 for the first person and \$70 for each additional person from the same organization. This fee includes the one-day workshop, all materials, and lunch. This workshop is made possible by generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. For more information contact Courtney Carlson at ICL at courtney@icl.org or 301-270-2900 x7.

- The Editor

TVA Developing Strategic Plan for Energy

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) hosted a series of public hearings to get input on their forthcoming strategic plan and accepted public comments until May 9. The meeting in Huntsville was held April 30 but unfortunately did not get much local publicity. Although the period for public comments has officially ended, your comments can still have an impact. For a draft of the plan, go to www.tva.com/stratplan/ The documents posted by the TVA give a good overview of what the agency believes its mission to be and outline their strategy for the next decade. Since the TVA has a huge impact on everyone in this area, it would be wise to be informed about their plans.

- The Editor

River Action Day in Montgomery

Come down to Montgomery on May 15 to help promote the Alabama Water Agenda and lobby for current environmental legislation. For more information contact April Hall at Alabama Rivers Alliance, 877-862-5260 or ahall@alabamarivers.org

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

May – June 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	Linda Griffin	
Tuesday Hikes	Nancy Dudney	882-9408
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

No May meeting

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, May 12 - Tribute to Mother's Day Hike at DeSoto State Park. Strenuous. Ample April Showers bring abundant May wildflowers and flowing waterfalls on this 8-1/2 mile hike. We'll lunch in a camera worthy spot and then continue our moderate pace by Little River. Afterward, we will hike in another

location, scramble over (and back up) a cliff to see caves of questionable origin. Not for the fair of foot. We'll end it with a Kodak moment and optional dinner at Western Sizzlin, Ft. Payne. We will leave the gas station at Wal-Mart (11610 S. Memorial Pkwy, Hsv) at 7:15 sharp. Bring snacks, lunch, water, good hiking boots and bug spray. Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com.

Tuesday, May 15, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Liz Poleretzky, (wk) 461-5819.

Saturday, May 19 - Rainbow Mtn. Hike. Moderate. Meet at Rainbow Mountain Trail Head at 9:00am. Bring water, bug spray, and sturdy hiking Boots. Call Doug Horacek for information 772-6788.

Sunday, May 20 – Keel Mtn afternoon hike. Moderate. Hike the Nature Conservancy Trail up Keel Mt. Rated moderate because we may go all the way to the top (1000ft). Meet at 2:00pm at the Hampton Cove Publix. Optional restaurant supper afterwards. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, May 22, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, May 24, 5:30. Helga Sowa, 534-5656.

Saturday, May 26 - Elk River canoe or kayak. Moderate. 8 to 10 miles. Must have own canoe or kayak. If interested, please call Joette for more information by Thursday, May 24 at 776-3551.

Saturday, May 26 – 14th Annual Pisgah Gorge Rockhop. Strenuous. Waterfalls, swimming, boulders as big as houses, spiders as big as dinner plates, ticks, snakes, poison ivy, everything! The most beautiful scenery in Alabama is worth it! This year, we will also do an unexplored side canyon. Leader approval required. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Sunday, May 27 - Monte Sano Hike, Moderate. Meet at 1:00pm at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Liz Poleretzky, hiker@knology.net.

Monday, May 28 - Lake party/picnic in Tennessee. Come any time after 11:00am and stay as long as you like. Small lake with paddleboats and canoe, hiking trails, picnic pavilion; 5 mile optional hike at 1:30 pm. Bring whatever food, ice, drinks, etc. plus swim suit.

Gas grill provided, and campfire for those who want to stay really late. Joint party with TN Trails Assn for information. Call Joette 776-3551 before May 28th.

Directions: Easy but longer: Take Hwy 72 East toward Scottsboro, turn left (north) onto Hwy 79 (Texaco station at intersection). Follow Hwy 79 30 miles to state line where it changes to Hwy 16. Go to mile marker 23 (about 8 miles into TN) and turn right on Jehovah Jireh Lane. Follow road to lake.

Shorter: Go north on Winchester Road to stop sign in Huntland, TN. Turn left and go 1 mile to another stop sign and turn right onto Hwy 64 East. Follow 64 to Winchester, go under overpass and turn right onto Hwy 16 South. Follow road up mountain about 10 miles and turn left on to Jehovah Jireh Lane (between mile markers 22 and 23) and follow to lake. If you get lost, call (931) 968-0073.

Tuesday, May 29, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday June 2 - Walls of Jericho, Strenuous. The Walls of Jericho is a large, bowl-shaped natural amphitheater that shoots water out of holes and cracks in the canyon wall during times of high water flow. This beautiful area consists of more than 21,000 acres of rivers, forested uplands and caves spreading across the Alabama and Tennessee state line and contains a diverse array of plants and animals. 7 mile hike with 1000 ft elevation gain. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 9:00 am at Publix in Hampton Cove. Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tburleyhiker@knology.net

Sunday, June 3 - Monte Sano dayhike. Moderate. Meet at 2:00pm at the Hiker's parking lot. Helga Sowa, 534-5656.

Tuesday, June 5, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

May – June 2007

at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot.
Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

Saturday, June 9th - 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. 8 mile hike with a 1200 ft elevation gain. Dinner at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at the Publix in Hampton Cove at 8:15am. Tom Burley 883-4267 or tdburley@knology.net

Tuesday, June 12, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot.
Leader: Bruce Martin, 256-725-2168.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, June 13, 5:30pm. Down South Condominiums clubhouse. South Mem Parkway. Entrance on right between Big Ten Tires and Schlotzsky's. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

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

20-mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation changes over two days. Depart Thursday 9:30am, arrive in Hot Springs 3:00pm and take a shuttle to Max Patch. Camp Saturday night at the Hot Springs Campground on the French Broad River with a one-hour soak in the mineral hot springs. Cost approximately \$25 per person. Group size limited to a maximum of ten and participants must commit by May 27th. For information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or

tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Saturday, June 16. Equal Opportunity for the Father's Day hike. Moderate. An approximately 9-mile loop from Monte Sano to the Land Trust and back. Meet at the Hiker's Parking lot (Monte Sano Blvd, near turn off for Burritt Museum) at 8:00am. Bring plenty of water, snacks, lunch, bug spray and good hiking shoes. Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com.

Tuesday, June 19, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot.
Leader: Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819.

Saturday, June 23 - Shiloh Battleground Bike Ride. Easy.

Pleasant ride on pavement and dirt - off-road bike recommended. We will start at the north end visitor center and visit monuments along the way as we work our way to south end where souvenirs and ice cream are sold and then return. Lunch along the way. Meet 7:30am at the Madison Cracker Barrel. Bring bike, helmet, lunch and water. A few dollars park fee. Prearrange your transportation to site. Lee Hollingsworth, 461-3060.

Saturday, June 30 – Monte Sano hike. Moderate. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot at 10:00am. 3/4 day hike to Sinks, Stone Cuts, Logans Point, Super Cuts then to the Keith Trail. Bring water, snack, sturdy hiking gear and bug spray. Call Doug Horacek 772-6788 for more information.

Sunday, July 1 -Summer Glade Wildflowers hike. Easy. Meet at Spragins Hollow Road Trail Head on Wade Mountain at 2:00pm. Bring water, bug spray and sturdy hiking. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Fri-Sun, Aug 17-19 - Big Hill Pond Car Camp. Easy. Liz Poleretzky, hiker@knology.net. More info to follow.