

September 2007

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

Huntsville Utilities Talks About the Green Power Switch Program

Wednesday, September 19

Tuesday Night Hikes

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

Make the Green Power Switch

Like any revolutionary idea, the idea behind Green Power Switch® is simple: harness the natural power of the wind, the sun and the earth to create an energy source that's useable in our everyday lives. TVA and Huntsville Utilities, working in cooperation with the environmental community, developed the Green Power Switch program as a way to bring clean, green power to the Tennessee Valley. But participation is strictly voluntary. Support for the Green Power Switch comes directly from people like you. People who believe renewable energy has the power to change the world.

Come to the September meeting of the North Alabama Sierra Club to find out how you can participate in this program. Linda R. Bowen, Community Relations Specialist for Huntsville Utilities will talk about Green Power Switch® and tell you how you can get involved. Now more than ever, we all need to do everything we can to help reduce carbon emissions and participating in a program that supplies cleaner power is an easy way to help.

The North Alabama Sierra Club meets at 6:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month at the Huntsville Public Library auditorium at 915 Monroe St. in downtown Huntsville. Everyone is invited to attend.

- The Editor

Still Time to Register

The Mississippi and Alabama Chapters of the Sierra Club will hold a retreat October 19-21, 2007, at Plymouth Bluff Environmental Center on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway just outside Columbus. Located in a secluded area on a high bluff overlooking the waterway, there are four miles of walking trails on site as well as nearby parks which offer more hiking, boating, biking, fishing, golfing and birding opportunities.

In addition to a number of outings, confirmed speakers include Mississippi State Professor and architect specializing in ecological design, Michael Berk; Dr John Ikerd, a well-known expert on sustainable agriculture; and the host of the television show "Mississippi Roads," Walt Grayson.

For more information, contact Kevin at 251-928-6231 or wildforest@hotmail.com. The registration form can be downloaded at...

<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/07registration.pdf>.

Tuesday Night Hikes Go Downtown in October

Starting October 2, the Tuesday night hikes will move downtown as the nights get shorter. Downtown Huntsville is a great area for walking and you can still get in your regular 2-3 mile walks on Tuesday nights. We meet at 6:00pm at the Land Trust parking lot on 907 Franklin St.

For more information, call Nancy at 882-9408.

We Need You to Get Involved

The local Sierra group is a completely volunteer-run organization. The members of the executive committee put on the monthly meetings, find speakers for the meetings, organize all of the outings each month, keep abreast of local environmental issues to keep you informed and coordinate with the national organization. The executive committee meets once a month on Thursday nights to take care of business for the month. We meet for about an hour and a half, usually over dinner. Outside of the monthly meetings, the officers have a couple of hours of work to do each month.

Being on the executive committee is not a difficult or time-consuming task, but it is important to help keep the local chapter going. As Huntsville continues to grow, particularly in advance of the BRAC influx, it is vital that we

all do our part to protect the rich environment we have been blessed with here in North Alabama.

If you are interested in helping direct the activities of the North Alabama Sierra Club, please consider joining the executive committee. There are many capacities in which you can serve and your input is important to the committee no matter what you do. Elections for executive committee offices are held in December and we ask that officers serve at least one year. For more information or to volunteer your time and talents, please contact one of the following members of the 2008 Excom Nominating Committee: Linda Griffin (772-8653), Judy Burley (883-4267), or Liz Poleretzky (461-5819).

Thanks – the editor

In Praise of Tap Water

On the streets of New York or Denver or San Mateo this summer, it seems the telltale cap of a water bottle is sticking out of every other satchel. Americans are increasingly thirsty for what is billed as the healthiest, and often most expensive, water on the grocery shelf. But this country has some of the best public water supplies in the world. Instead of consuming four billion gallons of water a year in individual-sized bottles, we need to start thinking about what all those bottles are doing to the planet's health.

Here are the hard, dry facts: Yes, drinking water is a good thing, far better than buying soft drinks, or liquid candy, as nutritionists like to call it. And almost all municipal water in America is so good that nobody needs to import a single bottle from Italy or France or the Fiji Islands. Meanwhile, if you choose to get your recommended eight glasses a day from bottled water, you could spend up to \$1,400 annually. The same amount of tap water would cost about 49 cents.

Next, there's the environment. Water bottles, like other containers, are made from natural gas and petroleum. The Earth Policy Institute in Washington has estimated that it takes about 1.5 million barrels of oil to make the water bottles Americans use each year. That could fuel 100,000 cars a year instead. And, only about 23 percent of those bottles are recycled, in part because water bottles are often not included in local redemption plans that accept beer and soda cans. Add in the substantial amount of fuel used in transporting water, which is extremely heavy, and the impact on the environment is anything but refreshing. Tap water may now be the equal of bottled water, but that could change. The more the wealthy opt out of drinking tap water, the less political support there will be for investing in maintaining America's public water supply. That would be a serious loss. Access to cheap, clean water is basic to the nation's health.

Some local governments have begun to fight back. Earlier this summer, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom prohibited his city's departments and agencies from buying bottled water, noting that San Francisco water is "some of the most pristine on the planet." Salt Lake City has issued a similar decree, and New York City recently began an advertising campaign that touted its water as "clean," "zero sugar" and even "stain free."

The real change, though, will come when millions of ordinary consumers realize that they can save money, and save the planet, by turning in their water bottles and turning on the tap.

- Reprinted with permission from The New York Times, August 1, 2007

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

September - October 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	498-1023
Programs	Judy Burley	883-4267
Secretary	Linda Griffin	772-8653
Tuesday Hikes	Nancy Dudley	882-9408
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

Huntsville Utilities Green Power Switch program at September meeting

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.

Saturday, September 15 – Stonedoor hike. Strenuous. 8-10 mile hike. Bring lunch and water. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at 8:00am at Publix on Winchester Road. Tom Burley, 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, September 18, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

Saturday, September 22 - Collins Gulf hike. Strenuous. This 13 mile loop in the South Cumberland descends into the Collins River Gorge and has many beautiful geological features including waterfalls, overlooks, and rock formations. We will descend into the gorge and climb out by way of the Stagecoach Historic trail and return along the Collins Gulf rim. Bring lunch and water and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet 8:00am at Publix

on Winchester Road. Tom Burley, 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net
Saturday, September 22 - Elkmont rails to trails. Moderate. Meet 1:00pm at Southern Family Market, Hwy 72 West and Wall Triana. We will walk the 5 miles from Elkmont to Tennessee, leaving cars at one end for a shuttle. Optional dinner afterwards. Please bring plenty of water! Liz @ 461-5819 or hiker@knology.net

Sunday, September 23 - Crazy Shoe hike. Easy and Fun! Meet at 2:00pm at Monte Sano's Hiker's parking lot. We will hike a level, easy 2-3 miles. There will be three prizes awarded to the "Craziest Shoes". Let your imagination run wild - do you want to hike in heels, cowboy boots, slippers - what is your choice?? We will hike in our crazy shoes, so remember to think of your safety. For further information contact Judy Burley at 883-4267 or jbuburley@knology.net.

Tuesday, September 25, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Different location each week. Meet at Monte Sano Hiker's Parking lot. Leader: Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, September 27, 5:30. Liz, 461-5819

Saturday, September 29 - Fiery Gizzard hike. Strenuous. We will hike the trail end to end, 13 miles. For information, contact Sandy Kiplinger at sandykip@juno.com.

Sunday, September 30 – Spragins Hollow Fall Wildflower hike. Easy. Meet at 1:00pm at Wade Mountain at Spragins Hollow parking lot. Bring water, sturdy hiking boots and bug spray call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Tuesday, October 2, 6:00pm – Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Fri-Sun, October 5-7 - Frozen Head State Park car camp. Strenuous. Part the Cumberland Plateau, this park has dramatic cliffs, waterfalls, and climbs. The park is called Frozen Head because its peaks often contain snow in the winter while the surrounding valleys remain without. Frozen Head Peak is 3,324 ft high and one of the tallest peaks in Tennessee west of the Smokies. Its fire tower gives a panoramic view of the Tennessee ridge and valley, the Cumberland Plateau, and the Great Smoky Mountains. We will hike 8 miles on Saturday climbing 2,000 ft. Depart at noon Friday staying at the campground Friday and Saturday and return on Sunday. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, October 9, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, October 10, 5:30pm. Down South Condominiums clubhouse. South Mem Parkway. Entrance on right between Big Ten Tires and Schlotzsky's. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, October 13 - Monte Sano History Hike. Moderate. Join us for our annual trip around Monte Sano visiting the historic Lily Pond, O'Shaughnessy home site, Chalybeate Spring, The Stone Cuts, Tollgate Road, Cold Spring, The Railroad Bed and Three Caves. 8 miles of moderate downhill hiking. Meet at the hiker's parking lot at 8:00am. Bring lunch and water. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

Saturday, October 13 - Cloudland Canyon hike. Moderate. Located on the western edge of Lookout Mountain, this park straddles a deep gorge cut into the mountain by Sitton Gulch Creek with an elevation change from 800 to 1980 feet. We will hike to the bottom of the gorge where there are two waterfalls cascading into pools below and then hike the rim trail that should provide spectacular vistas. Bring lunch; we will have dinner (optional) at a local restaurant. Meet at the Publix in Hampton Cove at 9:00am. Tom Burley, 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Tuesday, October 16, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Sunday, October 21 - Wade Mountain Wildflower hike. Easy. Meet at 1:00pm at Wade Mountain at Spragins Hollow parking lot. We will be looking for Great Plains Ladies Tresses. Bring water, sturdy hiking boots and bug spray. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Tuesday, October 23, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Sat-Sun, October 27-28 – Sipsey Backpack. Easy. Call Liz for more information, 461-5819.

Sunday, October 28 – Honeysuckle Elimination project. Meet at 1:00pm at the trail across from Fagan Spring Apartments. Bring tools and gloves. Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for more information.

Tuesday, October 30, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

September - October 2007

Saturday, November 3 - Walls of

Jericho. Strenuous. 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 unique area consists of over 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 7 miles but rated strenuous due to the 1000 ft elevation gain. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 10:00am at the Publix in Hampton Cove. Tom Burley, 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@knology.net

Nov 9-11 Cold Mtn Backpack.

Strenuous. Join us on this strenuous trip to a great campsite at 6,000 feet in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Ten backpacking miles on Saturday with significant elevation gain. Departure at noon Friday. Campground stay Friday night. Contact Steven Baty, 489-0990.

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.

Land Trust of Huntsville, North AL

On September 29th, in recognition of National Public Lands Day, we will participate with a work event at our picnic pavilion at our Bankhead parking lot and trailhead. We are going to be cleaning out the invasive honeysuckle, tree of heaven, and other invaders around the perimeter of our picnic area.

We will be meeting at 9:00am at the pavilion and go until 1:00pm. We will provide all of the tools. Bring gloves and closed toe shoes.

We will provide plenty of cold water and a snack. For any questions or additional information email Andy Prewett at andy@landtrust-hsv.org.

Nature Wanderers

Saturday, September 22- Henry Horton State Park

There are three easy-rated hiking trails at Henry Horton. The Hickory Ridge Loop is located near the campground and

traverses habitats ranging from oak-hickory forest to unusual cedar glades. The Wilhoite Mill Trail follows the Duck River among second growth woods covering an early mill community. The Turkey Trail winds through rich woods and old fields.

Trails are 1, 1.5 and 2.5 miles long. Wilhoite trail has a new extension, not on map, that may be taken, and ties back into Hickory ridge for a little more mileage if desired. Trail maps at park office and hotel. Park restaurant has buffet, \$6.75 + drink. Meet Captain D's on Madison Blvd [Hwy 20] in Madison at 8:00 am. Call Lee Hollingsworth 256-461-3060.

Saturday, September 29 - 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 9:00am. Ted Kuzma 256-974-7771.

Sunday, October 14 - Sipsey Wilderness/Bankhead Forest

Ted will be taking us to one of his favorite places in the Sipsey or Bankhead. Destination to be determined. Remember to bring lunch, snacks, plenty of water, and bug repellent. Meet at Trading Post in Wren at 9:00am. Ted Kuzma 256-974-7771.

Saturday, October 20 - Fall Picnic

Join Teresa and fellow Wanderers for the annual fall picnic on the Wilson Dam Reservation in Muscle Shoals. We'll bring the barbecue – you bring your appetite and hiking shoes. Lunch will be followed by an easy/moderate hike along the Rock Pile Trail adjacent to the Tennessee River. Call Teresa Young 256-773-1945 to reserve your spot!

Saturday, October 27 - Sipsey Wilderness/Bankhead Forest Hike

Join Ted and our friends from Wild South on an easy-to-moderate hike in the Sipsey Wilderness and/or Bankhead Forest. Remember to bring your lunch and water. This hike is a great opportunity to meet some new hiking buddies as it is always well attended. Meet at the Trading Post in Wren at 9:00 am. Call Ted Kuzma 256-974-7771.

Monday, October 29 - Nature Wanderers Meeting.

We will meet at Gibson's Barbecue on Sixth Avenue in Decatur at 6:00 p.m. for the quarterly meeting of Natures Wanderers. Friends and family welcome!

Call Teresa Young 256-773-1945.

Sierra Middle Tennessee Group

October 6-7 Jack & Back Bike Ride -

The TN Chapter is participating as a team riding in the Jack Daniel's "Bike to Jack & Back" October 6-7. The ride starts in Franklin, TN at Page High School and finishes at Motlow State Community College in Lynchburg, TN. This is a beautiful, scenic ride through Tennessee's countryside just on the brink of fall. Enjoy a tour of the incredible Jack Daniel's Distillery, and feast on all of the Jack Daniel's fixin's that you can eat, as well as some Lynchburg Lemonade during the program and party on the hill! The National MS Society and local sponsors will provide rest stops every 10-12 miles, supplied with refreshments to support you along the route. SAG trucks, Bike Mechanics and Medical staff are also there to help you throughout the weekend. To register, visit <http://www.msidsouth.org> and sign up under TN Chapter Sierra Club. You can also contact Katherine Pendleton for more information at 615-943-6877 or Katibug1959@aol.com. Come on out and join Sierra Club in this ride to help our community and let our community see who we are.