

February 2008

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

**North AL Mushrooms, Downtown
Huntsville Library, Wednesday,
February 20 at 6:30**

Tuesday Night Hikes

Hikes are downtown until March 11
when hikes return to Monte Sano

Mushrooms of North Alabama

Have you ever come across a brightly colored mushroom on a hike and wondered what it was? Or seen some interesting fungi growing on a stump and wanted to know why they grow like that? Come to the February meeting of the North Alabama Sierra Club for an informative presentation on the mushrooms and fungi that are found in north Alabama and middle Tennessee. The presenter will be Bob Stack, who taught Mycology and Plant Pathology at North Dakota State University from 1976 until he retired in 2006.

The program will present the basics of mushroom identification and slides of mushrooms found in our local area. Please join us for what promises to be an interesting and informative program on the benefits of mushrooms and their role in the ecosystem.

The North Alabama Sierra Club meets monthly at the Huntsville Madison County Public Library in the main auditorium. The February meeting will be Wednesday, February 20th at 6:30 pm. Everyone is invited to attend.

- Judy Burley

Sierra Club Hikes Need You!

In case you have not noticed, the local Sierra group leads a lot of hikes and other types of outings each month. We are able to do this because we have people who are willing to volunteer to plan and lead the outings. Look at the outings schedule and you will notice it is mostly the same small group of outings leaders each month. We could use some new people to step up and volunteer to plan and lead some outings, either on the weekends or on the Tuesday night hikes. If you would like to get more involved in the local Sierra group or would like to see more canoe trips or outings to some of your favorite spots, this is your chance. You can help introduce others to hiking and to the great wilderness areas we have available to us in the North Alabama area. And the more people who experience the beauty of our natural areas, the more people who will be willing to speak up to help preserve it.

The National Sierra organization does require that hike leaders be certified. We will be holding a class for outings certification on Saturday, March 1. This will certify new hike leaders to lead day hikes and car camps. It will also recertify current hike leaders that need to renew their certification. Basic first aid will be covered in the morning; hike leaders whose certification is current and would like to refresh their first aid skills may attend this portion. Hike leadership, hike planning, and hiking etiquette will be covered during the remainder of the day. There is no charge for this class. Lunch will be provided. If you are interested, please contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

- Tom Burley

Care for Creation Retreat

The Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center of the Methodist Church is offering the Third Annual Caring For Creation experience April 3-6, 2008. Each of the previous experiences has dealt with a variety of concerns that need to be considered as we look at the many issues related to climate change and how this affects our Earth and its inhabitants. The major presentations by John Hill from the General Board of Church and Society, information by Glenda Strauss-Keyes on the work of Fr. Thomas Berry, as well as the story of how we get our food by Maren Symonds and Jeff Barrie's presentation of the new "Kilowatt Ours" video on energy efficiency along with the closing worship with the sermon by Bishop Ken Carder will inspire and challenge us to move forward in helping our faith communities work on care of the Earth.

To register or for more information including a list of the 14 workshops available during the retreat, visit <http://www.sejumc.org/events.aspx> and find the event date on the calendar. Registration discounts are available through March 1. Several display tables by various southeastern environmental groups including the Sierra Club will be featured.

- Steven Baty

Beginner's Backpacking Class to be Held

Learn how to select tents, backpacks, stoves, sleeping bags, water purification, and clothing. The class will be from 9:00-5:00 on Saturday, February 23. You do not have to have your equipment to take the class.

The class will include a backpack in Savage Gulf on March 8th to test your new skills. Savage Gulf is a beautiful canyon that is part of the South Cumberland Wilderness area in Tennessee near Monteagle and Sewanee. It will be a wonderful spot to try out your new backpacking skills.

There is a \$20 fee for the backpacking class payable to the North Alabama Sierra Club. Pre-register with Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net. This has been a very popular class when it has been held in the past so sign up now to secure your spot.

- Tom Burley

Tennessee Moves to Protect More Wilderness

Tennessee has recently approved grant funding of \$7.1 million for nine conservation projects protecting more than 14,455 acres of wilderness, much of this in southern, central Tennessee. The grant funding was awarded through the Heritage Conservation Trust Fund Board, which since 2005 has approved more than \$28 million in grant funding to protect 37,000 acres across Tennessee.

Details of the projects recently approved for Heritage Conservation Trust Fund grants include:

- 2,987 acres that will connect the Franklin/Marion State Forest, the University of the South Domain and Carter State Natural Area.
- 1,011 acres of native hardwood forest on the southern Cumberland Plateau. This site lies just south of the David Carter tracts that were purchased by The Nature Conservancy and subsequently gifted to TWRA in 2005.
- acquisition and protection of a forest and watershed that is critical for aquatic biodiversity. The tract encompasses more than a mile of Estill Fork watershed, and it is adjacent to the Walls of Jericho, also known as the Bear Hollow Mountain Wildlife Management Area. This area also lies near the David Carter tracts.
- 643 acres that will continue efforts to create a 60,000-acre wilderness area connecting the Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness Area and Fall Creek Falls State Park. The tract is critical to protecting the scenic beauty of Scott's Gulf, boasting three miles of bluff line.
- Savage Gulf Project, Grundy County to protect the view sheds of Savage Gulf, an established state natural area. The 4,400-acre project will permanently preserve scenic vistas of the Big Creek Gulf and protect the Collins State Scenic River, which The Nature Conservancy has listed among the U.S. watershed hot spots with 10 or more at-risk imperiled aquatic species and 11 at-risk fish and mussel species, including four listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The stage road in Savage Gulf is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the virgin timber tract has been described as the best and largest virgin forest left in the mixed mesophytic region of the Eastern deciduous forest.

We in Alabama and Tennessee both are blessed with some remarkable and abundant wilderness areas and it is encouraging to see such robust efforts to preserve so much of it for future generations.

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

February - March 2008

2008 ExCom Members

Chair	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Vice-Chair	Mirko Rakigijija	772-8548
Treasurer	Sam Denham	539-1033
Conservation	Doug Horacek	772-6788
Fundraising	Judy Burley	883-4207
Membership	Dave Kostowny	325-2296
Outings	Tom Burley	883-4267
Political chair	Joe Imhof	
Publicity	Sandy Kiplinger	498-1023
Secretary	Linda Griffin	772-8653
Tuesday Hikes	Nancy Dudney	882-9408
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

Wed, February 20 Meeting - Mushrooms of North AL Downtown Library 6:30

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, Feb 16 - Pigeon Mt hike,

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 past a picturesque waterfall, wildflowers, and a wide range of geological formations. Bring lunch and water. The hike is 8 miles with a 1200 ft elevation gain. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at Publix in Hampton Cove at 8:15am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Sunday, Feb 17 - Rainbow Mt hike.

Moderate. Rainbow Mountain is the home of Balance Rock and is in the heart of city of Madison. Directions - go south on Hughes road off Hwy 72 to Thomas Dr, go up Thomas to Concorde, turn left, make right at Stoneridge and go up to top of hill and turn right. Go to the water

tower on Stoneridge. Meet at 1:30pm at parking lot near water tower. Contact Dave Kostowny at 682-1233 or daverave@knology.net

Sunday, Feb 17 - Honeysuckle

Elimination. Meet at 1:00pm at Land Trust property across from Fagan Spring Apartments. Bring clippers, loppers and gloves. Doug Horacek 772-6788.

Tuesday, Feb 19, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Judy Burley, 883-4207.

Saturday, Feb 23 - Beginners

Backpacking Class. Introduction to backpacking basics. Learn how to select tents, backpacks, stoves, sleeping bags, water purification, and clothing. Class will run eight hours beginning at 9:00am. You do not have to have your equipment to take the class. The class includes a backpack on March 8th to test your new skills. There is a \$20 fee payable to the North Alabama Sierra Club. Pre-register with Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Saturday, Feb 23 - Carter Mt hike.

Strenuous. 8 mile exploratory hike in the Carter Mt area in Tennessee near Walls of Jericho. Bring lunch, water. Meet at 8:30am at Winchester Rd Publix (by McDonalds). Joette Carter 776-3551.

Saturday, Feb 23 - Flat Rock hike.

Moderate. Meet at 8:00am at the Monte Sano Hikers' parking lot. Hike is 8 miles and will take about 8 hours. Bring lunch and water. Doug Horacek 772-6788.

Tuesday, Feb 26, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, Feb 28, 5:30. Liz, 461-5819.

Saturday, March 1 - Hike Leader

Training. This will certify new hike leaders to lead day hikes and car camps. It will also recertify current hike leaders that need to renew their certification. Basic first aid will be covered in the morning (hike leaders whose certification is current and would like to refresh their first aid skills may attend this). Hike leadership, hike planning, and hiking etiquette will be covered during the remainder of the day. Lunch will be provided. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, March 4, 6:00pm -

Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

Sat-Sun, March 8-9 - Savage Gulf

Backpack. Moderate. Although this is the backpack for the backpacking class everyone is welcome. We will follow the

Big Creek Gulf rim trail that promises 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@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, March 11, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Join Bruce Martin for the annual Tuesday Evening Return to the Mountain celebratory hike to O'Shaughnessy Point. Refreshments provided. Bruce Martin, 256-725-2168.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, March 12, 5:30pm.

Stanlieo's Sub Villa, corner of Monroe St. and Governor's Dr. Liz, 461-5819.

Saturday, March 15 - Monte Sano

hike. Strenuous. We will hike 11 miles and pass Flat Rock, Super Cuts, Stone Cuts and a Big Hole. Get your heart pumping with the ups, downs and distance. Meet at the Monte Sano State Park Hiker's parking lot at 8:00am. Bring food, water, good hiking shoes and a few bucks for the entrance. Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com.

Tuesday, March 18, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.

Saturday, March 22 - Reuben Creek

hike. Moderate. We will hike 7-8 miles in a beautiful area near Sherwood, TN. Numerous creek crossings, wild flowers, small falls, interesting rocks. Meet at 9:00am at Publix on Winchester Rd. Bring lunch and water, possible early dinner afterward in Sewanee. Joette 776-3551

Tuesday, March 25, 6:00pm - Mountain

Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Ken Shrider, 772-9442.

Saturday, March 29 - Borden Creek -

Big Tree hike. Strenuous. This 14 mile hike is in the Sipsey Wilderness and we will begin at the Borden Creek bridge hiking up the old logging road and down to the Big Tree. We continue along the Sipsey River to the intersection with Borden Creek and return to the trailhead. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at the Cracker Barrel in Madison at 8:00am or at 7:00am if you want to join us for breakfast. Optional meeting place at the Warrior Mountain Trading Post in Wren at 9:00am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

February - March 2008

Saturday, March 29 - Buck's Pocket hike and Car Camp. Easy. Join us just for the day or come prepared to car camp at Buck's Pocket State Park. Bring a lunch since we will hike the trail and then visit High Falls and the slide rapid. Meet at the Franklin Building at 8:00am. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Sat-Sun, April 5-6 - All Ladies Backpack. Cane Creek Canyon Nature Preserve. Easy. Let's go girls! Dust off those packs and check out this hidden jewel that was featured in Alabama Living magazine. After setting up camp, relax with your favorite steamy romance or explore the canyon through a guided tour. For more info, contact Sandy Kiplinger (sandykip@juno.com) or Liz (hiker@knology.net).

Fri-Sun, Apr 11-13 - Smoky Mountains Backpack. Strenuous. This is a 26 mile backpack with a 3,100 ft of 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. We will depart early Friday and return on Sunday. Bring food for two days. Group size is limited to eight and leader approval is required. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Saturday, April 12 - Quarter moon outing on Wade Mountain. Easy. Eat at Olive Garden at 6:00pm and meet at the trail head on Spragins Hollow Drive at 8:00pm. Bring flash light, water and binoculars. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Saturday, April 19 - Stonedoor hike. Strenuous. 8 to 10 miles. The Great Stone Door is a 150-foot deep crevice at the crest of the plateau by which we will enter Savage Gulf. We will follow the Big Creek Gulf trail with a side trip to Ranger Falls and return by way of the Big Creek Rim trail that promises spectacular vistas. Bring lunch and water. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at the Publix on Winchester Road at 8:00am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Sat-Sun, April 19-20 - Canoe camp-over. Moderate. Canoe the Sipsey River

from the Cranal road recreation area put-in to the Mims take-out on hwy 33. Normally this is a day trip but we will venture into a side canyon, explore it and camp over. Canoe and camping gear required, class 1 water with one small rapid. Call ahead, leader approval required. Lee Hollingsworth, work 461-4613, or 520-6659.

Saturday, April 26 - Walls of Jericho hike. 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 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, which was once the hunting grounds of Davy Crockett, contains an extraordinarily diverse array of plants and animals. We enter at the Tennessee trailhead and hike to the Alabama trailhead. The hike is 10 miles with 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. Tom Burley, 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Saturday, May 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 a 500-year-old hemlock, Blue Hole Falls, Sycamore Falls, and the Fruit Bowl rock formation before beginning our arduous climb to Raven Point, a spectacular overlook, and return via the Doghole trail. The hike is about 10 miles and definitely strenuous. Bring lunch and water and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:00am at Publix on Winchester Road. Contact Tom Burley 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Sunday, May 25 - Carolina Larkspur hike. Moderate. We will hike Rainbow Mountain looking for Carolina Larkspur in bloom. Meet at 2:00pm at the Rainbow Mt trailhead. Bring water and sturdy hiking boots. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Thu-Sun, June 12-15 - Max Patch to Hot Springs Backpack. Strenuous. This is a 20-mile backpack with significant elevation changes over two days. We will depart on Thursday at 8:30am arriving in Hot Springs around 3:00pm and take a shuttle to Max 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 is approximately \$30 per person to cover shuttle, campsite, and hot tub. Group size will be limited to a maximum of 10 and participants must commit by June 1.

For further information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Fri-Sun, July 11-13 - Len Foote Hike Inn. Moderate to Strenuous. We will depart at 8:00am Friday to Amicalola State Park in GA and hike to the inn. On Saturday we will hike to Springer Mountain, the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail and back. We will hike out on Sunday via the AT approach trail and return. The Hike Inn has bunk beds and hot showers. Breakfast and dinner are provided each day with trail lunches available for purchase. Coffee, lemonade, and tea are provided. The cost is \$112 per person which covers both nights. If you want a room by yourself or if I cannot match you with a person the cost is \$153. Payment of \$52 guarantees you a room. After Feb this trip will be made available as a Sierra Club trip. Cancellations prior to two weeks will result in a \$10 cancellation fee. After this the deposit will be forfeited. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net