

June 2008

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

**Picnic and Tour - Huntsville
Botanical Gardens, Thursday,
June 19, 6:00pm**

Tuesday Night Hikes

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

Join Us at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens

For the June 19th general meeting we will meet at 6:00 pm at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens for a brown bag picnic followed by a guided tour of the gardens at 6:30 pm. The tour will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. Members of the Botanical Gardens are admitted free but there is an admission charge of \$10 for non-members.

Come join the Sierra Club for some fellowship and to enjoy the Botanical Gardens while they are at their peak.

In July and August we will meet on Monte Sano for a picnic and hiking and our annual pool party. Meetings will move back indoors in September, so come join us Thursday, June 19 and enjoy some time outdoors.

- Judy Burley

Volunteers Needed for Invasive Species Control

The Purple Loosestrife, a European invasive plant, has been a big problem along the Flint River and its tributaries. Purple loosestrife displaces native wetland vegetation and degrades wildlife habitat. As native vegetation is displaced, rare plants are often the first species to disappear. Eventually, purple loosestrife can overrun wetlands thousands of acres in size, and almost entirely eliminate the open water habitat. The plant can also be detrimental to recreation by choking waterways. The Flint River Conservation Association began a control program for Loosestrife last summer which was very successful. Volunteers eradicated thousands of individual plants in Gurley, on a small tributary of Hurricane Creek, a tributary of the Flint River.

FRCA is organizing volunteers to spray the new young seedlings from the seed bank of this determined invasive species on Saturday, June 21, and on days in July and August. If you would like to volunteer for 1.5 hours FRCA will reimburse you \$15 for gas each time you come out. This eradication program is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation under the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Invasive species are just as serious a threat to our ecosystems as uncontrolled development and pollution. It is important that control measures are used before species like Loosestrife take over large areas. The Fish and Wildlife Service is funding the local control program because of the extensive damage Loosestrife has already caused in other areas of the country. Please take a few hours of your time and volunteer to help with this program. Alabama has some beautiful rivers and streams and by acting early we can help prevent them being overrun.

Call Soos Weber at 427-5116 or 509-1219 to sign up or for information.

- Soos Weber

The Bane of Summer Hiking

This spring was wetter than last year so the woods are lush and inviting, and the poison ivy is everywhere and it has benefitted from the extra rain like everything else. So here is a little refresher for everyone getting out into the woods.

The rash some people get from exposure to poison ivy is caused by a chemical in the sap called urushiol. This is a powerful chemical which is why just brushing against poison ivy leaves can cause a serious rash. A quarter ounce of urushiol would be enough to inflame the entire world's population. Only one nanogram of urushiol is enough to cause an outbreak. Centuries--old samples of urushiol have been known to cause a reaction.

So what can you do? After contact, washing with soap and water within the first 30 minutes may prevent an outbreak. Some people have found that packaged towelettes are useful on the trail since you can wipe the

exposed area of skin immediately and the faster you clean the skin the better chance you have of avoiding a reaction. Make sure the towelettes have soap in them as urushiol is oil-based and water alone will not remove it.

If you do not get the sap washed off quickly and you are susceptible, a red, bumpy rash is likely to appear in a few hours or as much as 10 days later, depending upon your history of exposure. Inflammation is usually more severe where the skin is thin, such as the face or arms. The reaction peaks after about five days and normally resolves within two to three weeks. Although poison ivy doesn't usually produce a life-threatening anaphylactic emergency as bee stings can, people should seek medical attention if their eyelids swell shut, they blister rapidly or they develop persistent infections.

If you encounter poison ivy in the wild, don't panic. It often grows next to its natural antidote, jewelweed or "touch-me-not." Look for trumpet-shaped flowers that are yellow or orange with red dots and which hang "like jewels" from their stems. In fact, deer frequently follow a meal of poison ivy with a chaser of jewelweed. Some people recommend chewing a jewelweed leaf, spitting it out and rubbing the saliva on skin exposed to poison ivy. You can also buy jewelweed products at health food stores.

Of course the best plan is to avoid poison ivy, so if you do have a reaction to it, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when you go hiking, and learn what poison ivy looks like.

- Reprinted with permission from Atlanta magazine, August 2002, by Betsy Riley.

TVA Sets New Environmental and Energy Goals

In celebration of TVA's 75th Anniversary, through the adoption of a new broad environmental policy, the federal utility's board of directors pledged to reduce its carbon footprint while meeting the region's growing electricity demand.

The new policy calls for TVA to generate half of the agency's power needs from renewable and clean energy sources by 2020, up from 35% today. The agency also plans to spend as much as \$1 billion over the next several years on energy conservation and efficiency programs. TVA's goal is to reduce growth in peak demand by up to 1,400 megawatts by the end of 2012. That would exceed the output of one new nuclear reactor.

According to the Associated Press, TVA also expects to complete a seventh nuclear reactor in Tennessee by 2012, and is studying whether to build a next generation twin-reactor plant in Alabama.

- reprinted with permission, Bama Environmental News, May 27, 2008 #304

New Form of Land Trust Protects Watersheds

There are a growing number of new land trust organizations which acquire property to help protect watersheds and the streams and rivers within them. Greenways along rivers and streams act like filters. When water runs off of a parking lot, construction site, or a residential neighborhood it picks up silt, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and toxins such as oil and antifreeze. The trees and undergrowth along the riverbank filter these pollutants before they can reach the water. The greenways also protect long stretches of pristine nature which helps to protect biological diversity within stream corridors.

The Freshwater Land Trust of Jefferson County is a successful local example of this new trend. Find out more about this organization and how it operates at <http://freshwaterlandtrust.org/index.html>

- the Editor

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

June - July 2008

2008 ExCom Members

Chair	Mirko Rakigijja	772-8548
Vice-Chair	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Treasurer	Sam Denham	539-1033
Conservation	Doug Horacek	772-6788
Fundraising	Judy Burley	883-4207
Membership	Dave Kostowny	682-1233
Outings	Tom Burley	883-4267
Political chair	Joe Imhof	858-3626
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

Thursday, June 19 - Picnic and tour Huntsville Botanical Garden, 6:00pm

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, June 14 - Fifteenth 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).

Tuesday, June 17, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike.

Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Alan Greene, 534-7849.

Saturday, June 21 - 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 a spectacular overlook and return via the Doghole Trail. The hike is about ten miles and definitely strenuous. Bring lunch and water and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:00am at the Publix on Winchester Road. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net
Tuesday, June 24, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Gerdi Keyser, 922-2251.

Excom Meeting

Thursday, June 26, 5:30. Mirko, 772-8548.

Sunday, June 29- Wade Mountain hike.

Easy. Wade Mountain and Rattlesnake Master. Bring water and sturdy hiking boots. Meet at Spragins Hollow trail head at 2:00pm. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Tuesday, July 1, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike.

Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Charlotte Buening, 772-7348.

Tuesday, July 8, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike.

Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Randy May, 682-7558.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, July 9, 5:30pm. Stanlieo's Sub Villa, corner of Monroe St. and Governor's Dr. Liz, 461-5819.

Sat-Sun, July 12-13 - Elk River Canoe and Car Camp. Easy.

Drive up to Kelso, TN Saturday morning and spend the day canoeing the beautiful Elk River. Optional car camping Saturday night in the riverside campground at Elk River Canoe Rentals. Or you can spend the morning canoeing and swim in the river or play volleyball after lunch. To reserve a spot and a canoe, call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 by Thursday evening, July 3. Or make your own arrangements by calling Elk River Canoe Rentals at 931-937-6886. Canoe rental, transport and camping fee all for \$20. Rain date will be July 19-20. Meet at the Franklin Building at 8:00am or at Elk River Canoe Rental at 9:00am. Doug Horacek, 772-6788.

Tuesday, July 15, 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.

Tuesday, July 22, 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.

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.

South Cumberland Recreation Area

Friday, June 20 - 2:00 PM Sport Climbing How-To-Clinic - Are you ready to move from the world of top-roping to sport climbing? Meet Ranger Jason at the Foster Falls parking lot for a beginner's course on this different style of rock climbing. Basic skills of climbing and rope work required. Due to limited equipment, call South Cumberland's Park Office to reserve your spot. (931) 924-2980.

Saturday, June 21 - 9:00am Hike

Mountain Oak Loop - Meet at Savage Ranger Station and join Ranger John Miller on a long 10-mile moderate hike to look at big trees and beautiful vistas of Savage Gulf. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water and a snack. Bring bug repellent. Ticks of here.

Sunday, June 22 - 10:00am Cave Program

- Discover the strange but beautiful world below the surface of the park. Come to the Carter State Natural Area parking lot for this strenuous 5-mile roundtrip hike. Bring two sources of light, water, and a light snack.

Saturday, June 28 - 9:00am Hike

Savage Day Loop - Meet at Savage Ranger Station and join Ranger John Miller on an almost 5-mile moderate hike to see a waterfall and wonderful overlook of Savage Gulf. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water and a snack. Bring bug repellent, ticks are here!!

Saturday, June 28 2:00pm - Historic

Stage Road - Meet Ranger John Miller at Savage Ranger Station if you have wondered how people traveled these hills and hollers way back when. Informative talk on the old stage road that is still intact inside the park, although the stagecoach doesn't run anymore...you'll have to hike to see it!

Saturday, June 28 2:00 pm - Greeter

Falls Hike - Meet at the Greeter Falls Parking Area for this difficult 1 and 1/2-mile hike to some beautiful waterfalls and hemlock forests.

7:30 PM Small Wilds Sunset Hike

- See a beautiful sunset on a beautiful trail. Meet the Naturalist at the Foster Falls parking lot for a 4-mile easy hike. Bring a flashlight.