

August 2008

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

No monthly meeting for August

Tuesday Night Hikes

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

No Monthly Meeting for August

The annual pool party scheduled for August 21 has been cancelled.

The September meeting will be Thursday, September 18 at 6:30. Michael Stewart will talk and show pictures of his trip to Tanzania and climb up Mount Kilimanjaro. This should be a fascinating presentation so make sure to put it on your calendar.

The North Alabama Sierra Club meets monthly at the Huntsville Madison County Public Library in the main auditorium. Everyone is invited to attend.

- the Editor

Conservation and Politics in Alabama

Come join a public town hall forum that will focus on ideas and ways to help create a cleaner, greener Alabama. There will be a rousing and informative panel featuring John Ehinger of the *Huntsville Times*, Adam Snyder of the lobbying group Conservation Alabama and Roger Reid, the writer and producer for *Discovering Alabama*. The panel will discuss the intersection of local politics, the conservation movement and a greener Alabama. The panel will answer & discuss questions from the audience during the program.

Date: Wednesday, August 27

Time: 6:00 PM

Place: Roberts Recital Hall on the UAH campus, Ben Graves Dr. north of Holmes Ave.

Refreshments will be served.

This forum is sponsored by the Flint River Conservation Association, the UAH Political Science Department, the Sierra Club and Conservation Alabama.

Please make plans to attend this event and be a part of the discussion.

- the Editor

Public hearing on State Trail Plan

As a part of the Alabama Trail Plan and the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, a series of four public meetings was held across Alabama in July to present information and to obtain citizen comments and suggestions regarding existing and future trails and recreation facilities. Topics of the meeting included the Trail Plan Process, Trail Inventory, Trail Resources, Trail Trends, Trail Benefits, State Recreation Needs and State Recreation Goals.

The trail and recreation meetings were conducted by the South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC) under a contract with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and provides funding assistance to federal agencies, states, and local governments for development and improvement of recreational areas such as walking, jogging, cycling, skating, backpacking, and horseback riding trails.

If you were unable to attend a meeting or were unaware of them, you may review the meeting material and submit written comments or suggestions regarding the recreation and trail plans. To review the meeting material, go to <http://www.trails.alabama.gov/SCORP.htm>

Send any comments or suggestions you may have to Trail Plan, SCADC, 5900 Carmichael Place, Montgomery, AL 36117.

If you are interested in the current state and future development of trails in Alabama, please take some time to look at the meeting materials and send in your comments. This is your opportunity to help develop a long range plan for Alabama trails.

- the Editor

Endangered Species Act Needs Support

The Bush administration wants federal agencies to decide for themselves whether highways, dams, mines and other construction projects might harm endangered animals and plants. New regulations, which do not require the approval of Congress, would reduce the mandatory, independent reviews government scientists have been performing for 35 years. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne said late Monday the changes were needed to ensure that the Endangered Species Act would not be used as a "back door" to regulate the gases blamed for global warming. In May, the polar bear became the first species declared as threatened because of climate change. Warming temperatures are expected to melt the sea ice the bear depends on for survival. The draft rules would bar federal agencies from assessing the emissions from projects that contribute to global warming and its effect on species and habitats.

If approved, the changes would represent the biggest overhaul of the Endangered Species Act since 1986. The changes would apply to any project a federal agency would fund, build or authorize that might harm endangered wildlife and their habitat. Government wildlife experts currently perform tens of thousands of reviews each year.

Under current law, federal agencies must consult with experts at the Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service to determine whether a project is likely to jeopardize any endangered species or to damage habitat, even if no harm seems likely. The Interior Department said such consultations are no longer necessary because federal agencies have developed expertise to review their own construction and development projects.

The new rules will be formally proposed immediately and will be subject to a 60-day public comment period before being finalized by the Interior Department, giving the administration enough time to impose them before November's presidential election.

Sierra Club Funds Outward Bound Wilderness Excursions for Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans

Outward Bound, an international non-profit outdoor education program, is offering fully funded outdoor adventure excursions to all OEF/OIF veterans, whether active, inactive, discharged or retired.

These five-day excursions offer adventure activities such as backpacking, rock climbing, canyoneering, canoeing, and dog sledding in beautiful wilderness areas in Maine, Texas, Colorado, California, and Minnesota. Scheduled courses run from September 2008-February 2009 and future courses will be scheduled soon. All expedition costs for lodging, equipment, food, and instruction are completely funded by a multi-million dollar Sierra Club grant, including the participants' round-trip transportation between home and the wilderness site. The excursion is offered at no cost to the participant.

To sign up for one of the prescheduled courses, please contact Doug Hayward at 1-866-669-2362, ext. 8387, or e-mail at obvets@outwardbound.org. More information about the program and a current schedule of outings is at www.outwardboundwilderness.org/veterans.html. You can also contact two of our retired Judge Advocates, Joe and Amy Frisk, who are working for Outward Bound on this program at vetsor@outwardbound.org, or at (303) 968-4420.

If you know of any veterans who may be eligible for these programs, please pass along the information. It is small thanks for what they have done for us and our country.

- the Editor

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Huntsville, AL 35807

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North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar August – September 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, August 21 - Monte Sano Pool annual party 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, August 16 - Pinhoti Trail Work. Easy-Moderate. We'll travel to a point between Piedmont, Ala. and the Georgia state line to help the Alabama Trails Association with the construction of a trail shelter on the Pinhoti Trail, the trail that connects Alabama to Georgia and the Appalachian Trail. Bring lunch and work gloves. On the way back to Huntsville, the North Ala. Sierra club will treat all participants to supper. Meet at 7:00am at Publix in Hampton Cove. Call Sam Denham for more details 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Sunday, August 17 - Spider Lily Walk. Easy. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot at 2:00pm. Bring water, a snack, and sturdy hiking boots. We will hike for 3 hours at most. \$3.00 donation for park entrance. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 256 772-6788.

Tuesday, August 19, 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, August 23 - Monte Sano hike. Moderate. This will be an

afternoon hike on the East Side of Monte Sano Mountain. Meet at 1:30pm at the Trough Springs trailhead on Monte Sano Blvd near Burritt Museum. Four-hour moderate hike will go down Trough Springs trail into Hale Hollow, then off-trail to join Arrowhead Trail, then McKay Hollow Trail to end up eventually back at Sam's house. Rated moderate because of some off trail. Bring water and snacks. Optional dinner afterwards at Thai Garden. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, August 26, 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.

Thursday, Aug 28 - Excom meeting 5:30pm. Mirko Rakigijja, 772-8548.

Sat-Mon, Aug 30-Sept 1 - South Cumberland backpack, Strenuous. We will depart at 9:00am on Saturday, backpacking 8 ½ miles to Hobbs Cabin where we will spend the first night. On Sunday will backpack 6.3 miles via the connector trail to the Stage Road camp area. The connector trail is the most strenuous trail in the Savage Gulf area. On Monday we backpack 7 miles via the South Rim trail back to the Savage Gulf Ranger station. We will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Contact Judy Burley at 883-4267 or jcburley@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, Sept 2, 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.

Sunday, Sept 7 - Little River Canyon Rockhop/Swim/Dayhike. Moderate. We will descend down Wolf Creek to Little River, then south beyond Bear Creek, then ascend back up to Eberhard Point. This will be your last chance to swim in 2008 at the second and fourth best swimming holes in Alabama! This hike is a good introduction to moderate rockhopping. Early supper after hike at the new Asian Palace Restaurant in Ft. Payne. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen, change of clothes, and a towel. Meet at Publix Hampton Cove at 8:30am. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, Sept 9, 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.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, September 10, 5:30pm. Stanlieo's Sub Villa, corner of Monroe St. and Governor's Dr. Liz, 461-5819.

Tuesday, Sept 16, 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, Sept 20 - 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 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 which has spectacular vistas. Bring lunch and we will have dinner (optional) at a local restaurant. Meet at the Publix in Hampton Cove at 9:00am. For information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, Sept 23, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Different location each week. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Michael Stewart, 656-5836.

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.

Tennessee Sierra Club

Outings Leader 101/201 Training September 26-28, 2008

Laurel Fork Lodge
Hampton, Tennessee
\$45/person
Register online at
<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training>
or contact Outdoor Activities Training
Manager at 1-415-977-5711 or email
outings.training@sierraclub.org

Wilderness First Aid Training October 17-19, 2008

\$225/participant (non-refundable)
Fees include course, lodging, meals
(Friday supper-Sunday lunch)
Training provided by NOLS Wilderness
Medicine
Register with Katherine Pendleton at
Katherine.pendleton@sierraclub.org or
615-943-6877