

December 2008

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

Holiday Dinner and Party, Public Library Auditorium, Thursday, Dec 18 at 6:30pm

Tuesday Night Hikes

Meet at 6:00pm at the Land Trust parking lot, 907 Franklin St.

Christmas Party Time!

It's time once again for the annual North Alabama Sierra Club Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Solstice and all around general Holiday party. (Did I miss anyone?) Bring your best side dish or dessert (a few vegetable dishes are always needed) to share and your best nature photos for the Annual Photo Contest. North Alabama Sierra will furnish ham, turkey, drinks, plates, cups, etc. If you would like to help set up for the party, come at 5:30.

For the photo contest, photos should have been taken in 2008 and there is a limit of three entries per category. The categories are 1) People on Outings, 2) Animals in the Wild, 3) Mother Nature (plant life) and 4) Awe-inspiring Views of Natural Areas. There will be prizes for the best photographs.

Come to the downtown library auditorium on December 18 at 6:30 and share the season with other Sierra Club members. The downtown public library is located at 915 Monroe St, just off Governors Drive near Memorial parkway. The auditorium is to the right just inside the entrance. If you have not mailed in your ballot for the Executive committee elections you may bring it to the party. See everyone there!

- the Editor

Have a Green Holiday

Below is a wonderful Holiday Green "listing" produced by Brantley Fry (adafry@aol.com) and Joyce Lanning (jalanning@bellsouth.net)

Greening Giving and Receiving – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Greeting Cards – According to Go Green, Live Rich, by David Bach, almost 300,000 trees are harvested annually to produce holiday cards sold in the U.S. Americans purchase and send enough holiday cards to fill a 10-story football field. There are a couple of options to help reduce the environmental impact of holiday cards:

- Send e-cards – Hallmark, American Greetings, and Blue Mountain websites allow you to send free e-cards.
- Order cards from Cards for Causes or Good Cause Greetings for recycled paper cards with a portion of proceeds going to the charity of your choice.

Gift Ideas – According to IdealBite.com, if 10,000 people have to return one less gift to a nearby store, we'll avert the CO₂ caused by driving from NYC to North Pole, AK, and back again six times.

- To prevent gift returns, exchange Christmas wish lists. Doing so will prevent us from buying and receiving more stuff we will never use. Free gift registry services include TheThingsIWant.com and Amazon.com's wish list.
- Check out New American Dream's Alternative Gift Registry, which emphasizes eco-friendly gift-giving.

The Gift of Giving:

Reduce consumption, eliminate gift wrap, and support work to better Alabama's environment by giving gifts in honor of friends and family to local non-profits

- Alabama Rivers Alliance
- Alabama Wildlife Federation
- Hays Nature Preserve
- Green Resource Center for Alabama
- Heifer International
- The Nature Conservancy
- Southern Environmental Center
- Sierra Club
- The Land Trust of Huntsville and North Alabama
- World Wildlife Fund

These are just a few of the many non-profits, and the same idea can be applied to any philanthropic organization. To

find out more information about local non-profits, contact the Non-Profit Resource Center of Alabama. By giving honoraria, your gift is multiplied beyond the individual(s) to whom you give.

Wrapping Paper - According to Go Green, Live Rich, by David Bach, Americans spend \$2.7 billion dollars annually on gift wrap – more than the GDP of some countries in Africa and Asia – on GIFT WRAP!

- Use gift wrap made from recycled paper or better yet use items from around your home such as the funny pages, pages from old magazines, old maps, excess fabric.
- Cut the pictures from your holiday cards and re-use them as gift tags.

Consumable Gifts:

- Baked goods – For those who like to cook, homemade baked goods are always an eco-friendly option.
- Give the gift of plants – Local nurseries and flower shops can help you choose native plants that can be given and planted for a long-lasting gift.
- For coffee lovers, buy locally roasted and organic and fair trade certified, Higher Ground Coffee. Higher Ground comes in flavors that support non-profit organizations.
- Support a local independent book store and purchase a book about sustainability (Don't forget to skip the gift wrap and simply add a ribbon and personal inscription instead.):
- According to IdealBite.com, Americans throw away 165,000 tons of non-rechargeable batteries annually. Instead of the single-use variety, opt for re-chargeable batteries to save money and improve health and the environment.
- Check out the Natural Resources Defense Council's Great Green Gift Giving web site.

Christmas Decorations:

- Opt for LED Lights - LED is short for Light-Emitting Diode and these lights produce more light with less energy - LED bulbs use 90% less electricity than traditional Christmas bulbs, and with their 20-year lifetimes, you don't have to replace LED light-strings as often as conventional ones.
- Buy a live tree – some local nurseries carry live Christmas trees that can be replanted after Christmas.
- Recycle your Christmas tree – Ask your public works department about recycling and look for announcements regarding local partnerships for tree recycling.

New Members Wanted!

Checks (\$25.00) should be mailed to:
David Kostowny
116 Pebblebrook Circle, Madison, AL 35758.
Phone: 325-2296. E-mail: daverave@knology.net

Join the Sierra Club or Renew your Membership for \$25

Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to:
David Kostowny
116 Pebblebrook Circle
Madison, AL 35758.



North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

December 2008 – January 2009

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 Dudley	882-9408
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

Thursday, December 18 - Holiday Dinner and Party Downtown Library, 6:30pm

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, Dec 13 – Fagan Spring hike.

Easy. Meet at 9:00am at Cleermont trail head for Fagan Spring hike. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for information.

Tuesday, Dec 16, 6:00pm - Downtown

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

Thursday, Dec 18 – Annual Holiday

party. Easy and Filling! Sierra Club will provide turkey, ham and beverages. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Saturday, Dec 20 - Mtn Bicycle Ride,

Blackwell Swamp area. Moderate. 17 miles. This ride offers a good sampling of the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge area and is worth carrying a camera. Meet at Cracker Barrel, 120 Cleghorn Blvd, Madison at 10:30am. Bring a helmet (required), water, snacks and lunch.

Rain cancels. For more info, contact Sandy Kiplinger, sandykip@juno.com

Saturday, Dec 20 - Little River Canyon

Rockhop. Strenuous. This 5-6 mile canyon hike will start at the Powell trail, go to the Eberhart trail and exit there. Joining us will be Larry Beane, the interpretive park ranger for Little River Canyon Preserve. This will not only be a fun and challenging hike, but Larry will share with us his knowledge of the history, geology, and plant/animal life of the canyon. The trail will include nice wooded sections, working through a boulder field, and crossing some ankle popping river rock. Rated strenuous - all participants have to be leader approved before the day of the hike. Optional dinner afterwards. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Sunday, Dec 21 - Winter Solstice hike

and campfire. Moderate. Meet at Sam Denham's house 4333 Chickasaw Dr. at 12:00 noon for a 4-hour hike in the State Park and rock-hop along the pretty part of Big Cove Creek, followed by sitting around the campfire. (Bring a lawn chair.) Bring a snack. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

Tuesday, Dec 23, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Alan Greene, 534-7849.

Sat-Sun, Dec 27-28 - Savage Gulf (TN)

Backpack. Moderate. Take a scenic hike along the rim of Savage Gulf as you make your way to Dinky Line Campsite. Dinky Line Campsite is located in a remote area and offers a primitive toilet (privy). Keep your eyes open for turkey and deer along the way. Be prepared for cold weather and pack your gear for an overnight stay. Saturday, we'll hike six miles to camp, and then Sunday we'll hike a different four mile route back to where we started. If interested in this hike then please contact Michael Stewart for more details at 256-656-5836 or athikerstew@yahoo.com

Tuesday, Dec 30, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Gerdi Keyser, 922-2261.

Thursday, Jan 1 - Get Rid of the

Hangover hike. Moderate. Meet at Sam Denham's house, 4333 Chickasaw Dr, at 1:00pm for an afternoon hike in Monte Sano State Park. May include some off-trail hiking and a brief rock hop. Hot cider and (more) beer by the fireplace after the hike. 539-1033(h).

Saturday, Jan 3- Little River Canyon

Rock Hop/hike. Strenuous. Little River Canyon should have some water in it by this time. Hike the section between the Powell Trail and Eberhard Point, a

perennial favorite. Even though this is the easiest section of Little River Canyon, it is rated strenuous, because of some bush whacking and rock hopping, and one creek crossing. Meet at the Publix at Hampton Cove. 8:30am. Sam Denham 539-1033(h).

Tuesday, Jan 6, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Newsletter Labeling

Wednesday, January 7, 5:30pm.

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

Thursday, Jan 8 – Excom meeting

5:30pm. Mirko Rakigijja, 772-8548.

Saturday, Jan 10 - 3rd Annual

Mountain Mist half marathon hike,

Part 1. Strenuous. Follow the trails of the runners but at a hiker's pace. The Monte Sano side is 14 miles and the Land Trust 15. Weather dictates which side we hike first. Meet at the Monte Sano State Park Hikers' parking lot at 7:30am sharp (we don't want to finish this in the dark!). Bring lunch, water, good hiking boots and a few bucks for the entrance fee. Charlie Cohen, 837-3622 (home), 961-7901 (office)

Tuesday, Jan 13, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

Thursday, January 15 – North AL

Sierra club meeting. 6:30pm at the Huntsville Public Library downtown. Jim Yeager speaks about biofuels.

Saturday, Jan 17 - 3rd Annual

Mountain Mist half marathon hike.

Part II. Strenuous. More of the above! See Jan 10 entry for details. Meet at the Monte Sano State Park Hikers' parking lot at 7:30am sharp (we don't want to finish this in the dark!). Bring lunch, water, good hiking boots and a few bucks for the entrance fee. Charlie Cohen, 837-3622 (home), 961-7901 (office)

Tuesday, Jan 20, 6:00pm - Downtown

Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

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.

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

December 2008 – January 2009

Cahaba Group

Sat. 12/13. Pinhoti Trail dayhike

(challenge hike). We'll enjoy the section of trail between the CCC road just north of Mt Cheaha and County Road 24 (Abel Road). We'll start at the Cheaha Scenic Drive and proceed down the CCC road (the original way into Cheaha State Park) passing rock retaining walls and over an amazing arched bridge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s, before wading Hillabee Creek on the trail. The total distance of this hike is approximately 10 miles, gaining a rating of strenuous. Hiking boots a necessity. Bring plenty of water and a picnic lunch. Optional dinner afterwards. Trip Leader: Jay Hudson, 907-6879. Call for meeting place and time, or e-mail jay_hudson@bellsouth.net.

Sat. 12/20. Hike the Little River

Canyon. This is a 5 to 6 mile deep canyon hike. We will start at Powell trail and hike to Eberhart trail and exit there. Joining us will be Larry Beane. Larry is the interpretive park ranger for the Little River Canyon Preserve. This will not only be a fun and challenging hike, but Larry will share with us his knowledge of the history, geology, and plant/animal life of the canyon. The trail will include nice wooded sections, working through a boulder field, and crossing some ankle popping river rock. And of course the star of the show is the high walls of the Little River Canyon and the quiet river running through it. This hike is rated strenuous and all participants have to be leader approved before the day of the hike and must wear hiking boots. Meet at Cracker Barrel in Trussville at 7:30am. This is exit 141 off on N I-59. Optional dinner afterwards. Leader is Jim Binnings @ 205-746-3266 or jbinnings@bellsouth.net.

South Cumberland State Recreation Area

Saturday, December 13, 2008

11:00 A.M.

Cave Program

Discover the strange but beautiful world below the surface of the park. This program includes some scrambling over rocks and possibly wading through underground streams. Come to the Carter State Natural Area parking lot for this strenuous five-mile round trip hike. Bring two sources of light, long pants,

boots, water, and a snack. Ranger Brent will be your guide for this cave trip.

Sunday, December 14, 2008

7:30 A.M.

Frosty Meadow Hike

The flowers have faded and the leaves have dropped, but it is still beautiful along the South Cumberland Meadow. Meet Ranger Jason at the Visitor Center for this cool, crunchy hike.

2:00 P.M.

Stone Door Hike

Join Ranger Jamie at the Stone Door Ranger Station for this beautiful 2-mile round trip hike to the Great Stone Door while learning about Savage Gulf and the Stone Door area.

Sunday, December 21, 2008

1:00 P.M.

First Day of Winter Hike

Come celebrate the first day of winter hike with a hike out to Small Wild camping area. This will be a moderate 5-mile round trip hike with some beautiful overlooks into the gulf below. Meet Ranger Brent at the Foster Falls parking lot. Bring sturdy shoes, water and a snack.

2:00 P.M.

Winter Tree Hike

Join Ranger Jamie at the Stone Door Ranger Station on this first day of winter to learn about the plateau forest and enjoy the beauty of Savage Gulf State Natural Area in the wintertime. This is a short one-third mile hike.