

June 2009

# Sierra

North Alabama Group



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

**Picnic and Tour of Botanical Garden, Thursday, June 18, 5:30pm**

**Tuesday Night Hikes**

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

## Picnic at the Botanical Garden

For the June 18 general meeting we will meet at 5:30pm at the Huntsville Botanical Garden 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.

The Huntsville Botanical Garden is a beautiful 110-acre site with stunning floral collections, inviting woodland paths and broad grassy meadows. The 5-acre Central Corridor Garden, features aquatic, perennial, and annual displays ablaze with color from early spring through fall. The Butterfly House is now open and has over 50 species of native butterflies

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 18 and enjoy some time outdoors.

- The Editor

## Local Bats Threatened

Bats are dying by the hundreds of thousands across eastern North America, and the disease that's killing them - white-nose syndrome - shows no sign of slowing down. It's likely that this fatal, fast-spreading sickness will soon be killing bats in the Midwest and the South, home to some of the most significant bat hibernation sites in the world. Left unchecked, white-nose syndrome could spread even further to populations in the western United States and to bats in other countries.

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and the three other refuges it oversees contain 4 priority-1 caves, the highest priority, for conservation and recovery of the gray bat. One local cave has the largest number of hibernating gray bats and one has the largest number of gray bats during the summer. The gray bat is an endangered species. White-nose syndrome could easily wipe out these colonies should it reach this far south. These along with a cave in Arkansas are the only ones on refuges in the southeastern U.S. containing rare bats.

In April, the Fish and Wildlife Service asked that people refrain from visiting caves in all of the affected states, and all adjacent states (Tennessee falls into this category because WNS has been found in Virginia). If you have visited caves in these areas, you should stay out of the local caves to avoid spreading the disease to local bat populations.

Despite the bad rap they sometimes get, bats are vital to ecosystem health, and therefore to our own survival. Many bats are voracious insect-eaters and have been shown to curb populations of insects harmful to agriculture and forestry, while other species are crucial plant pollinators. Bats consume plenty of mosquitoes and may prevent spread of human diseases. Losing bats would be devastating for other wildlife, ecosystems, and humans.

Please, take a moment now to send a message to your members of Congress and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to urge immediate action on white-nose syndrome. Lack of funding and an inability to deal with fast-moving ecological emergencies have stalled an appropriate response to this very real crisis. We must act now to save bats -- before it's too late. Visit

[http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2167/t/5243/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=27148](http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2167/t/5243/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=27148) to take action.

- Bill Gates, Wildlife Biologist, Wheeler Wildlife Refuge

## 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](mailto: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.



## Quarry Bills Triumph in 2009

In May, Governor Bob Riley signed four bills that could have a ripple effect on the quarry industry in Alabama.

Senators Tom Butler and Arthur Orr guided local legislation that would limit where quarries can locate in Limestone County. The bills would limit quarries near schools, Calhoun Community College, a TVA industrial megasite, and TVA's Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. This has been a two year effort by the senators, citizens, and other local officials to stop a proposed quarry near Tanner, Ala.

Additionally, for the first time in six tries, a Conservation Alabama-drafted bill HB804 got out of committee. This bill would give local governments say-so on where and how quarries operate anywhere in Alabama.

- Adam Snyder, Conservation Alabama  
[www.conservationalabama.org](http://www.conservationalabama.org)

## New Trails Opening in the Walls of Jericho

At the May meeting of the new Huntsville chapter of the Alabama Hiking Trail Society, Chris Smith talked about the history of Forever Wild and how the program works to acquire land such as the Walls of Jericho. He also shared Forever Wild's trail plans in the Walls of Jericho for the near future. There is a new 4.5 mile loop trail leaving from the north end of the hiker parking lot that only needs to have signage put up and it will be ready to hike. Chris and his crew from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources are also in the development stages of an 11.5 mile trail that will begin construction early next year. The Huntsville AHTS chapter has set up a work weekend July 11-12 to do general trail repair and possibly more step building on the original Walls of Jericho trail.

The next meeting of the local AHTS will be on Tuesday, June 23 at 7:00pm in the meeting room at Gander Mountain on North Parkway. The group moved their meetings to Tuesday night in order to avoid conflicts with the regular Sierra meetings. If you hike on local trails, keep in mind that there is maintenance work that needs to be done to removed brush, halt erosion, repair bridges, etc. There is a very small crew of men with the state department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and they are responsible for trails all over Alabama. Please consider giving some of your time to help keep the trails we use in good shape.

For more information about the local AHTS chapter, contact Lucas Veverka at [liverv@yahoo.com](mailto:liverv@yahoo.com) or go to <http://www.hikealabama.org/>

- the Editor

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## North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar June – July 2009

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### 2009 ExCom Members

Chair	Mirko Rakigijja	772-8548
Vice-Chair	Judy Burley	883-4267
Treasurer	Sam Denham	539-1033
Conservation	Doug Horacek	772-6788
Fundraising	Charlotte Buening	772-7348
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
Tues Hikes	Michael Stewart	656-5836
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

### Picnic and Tour of Botanical Gardens, Thursday, June 18, 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.

#### Saturday, June 13 - Sharp Mt. hike.

**Strenuous.** Rain date June 14. Hike over Sharp Mountain from Sharp's Cove (the Cade's Cove of Madison County) to The Nature Conservancy's Calloway Sinks in Jackson County. We'll start at the home of Sierra Club members Steve and Beth Jackson at the foot of Sharp Mt. The Jacksons will cook breakfast for us before we start the climb. The hike will be 8-9 miles, 6 hours, 1000ft climb, then 700 ft descent, then 700ft ascent, then 1000ft descent, much off trail. Since the Preserve is a sensitive area for flora and fauna, dogs must be on leash. Leader approval required, limited to 12 people. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

#### Sunday, June 14 - Honeysuckle

**elimination** Meet at 2:00pm at the Land Trust across from Fagan Spring Apartments I will bring water loppers and gloves, I will provide two loppers, saw, and popper gloves and water. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 .

**Tuesday, June 16, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy.** 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Ken Shridner, 772-9442.

#### Thu, June 18 – Sun, June 21 - Max Patch to Hot Springs Backpack.

**Strenuous.** 20-mile backpack with significant elevation changes over two days. Depart on Thursday at 8:00am, arriving in Hot Springs around 3:00pm and shuttle to Max Patch. This gentle climb across the southernmost bald on the AT abounds with wildflowers and 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. \$30 per person to cover shuttle, campsite, and hot tub and must be paid in advance. Group size limited to ten. You must commit by June 1. For further information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or [tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net](mailto:tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net)

#### Saturday, June 20- Buggy Top Cave

**hike. Strenuous.** A tribute to Dad's Day. Approx 5 miles. Ever experience total darkness? Search for bats in their natural habitat? Join Ranger Brent and I as we hike down to and through this natural scenic wonder beneath the earth's surface. We'll cross underground streams, scramble up, down and around rocks. Bring water, snacks, two sources of light, boots, a change of clothes and wear long pants. We'll leave from the Huntsville area. After our adventure, we'll check out Sewanee for an optional dine out. For more information, contact Sandy Kiplinger, [sandykip@juno.com](mailto:sandykip@juno.com).

#### Sunday, June 21 - Wade Mountain

**Wildflower hike. Easy.** We will be in search of Rattlesnake Master and Fringed Loosestrife. Meet at 2:00pm at trail head on Spragins Hollow Drive. Bring water, insect repellent, and sturdy boots. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788.

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

**Thursday, June 25 – Excom meeting 5:30pm.** Mirko Rakigijja, 772-8548.

#### Saturday, June 27 - Land Trust hike.

**Moderate.** 7.5 miles. We will visit the area south of the Waterline Trail. Meet at Land Trust parking lot on Bankhead Parkway at 7:30am. Bring water and a snack. Call Charlie Cohen at 837-3622 (home) or 961-7901 (work).

**Tuesday, June 30, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy.** 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Charlotte, Buening, 772-7348.

**Tuesday, July 7, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy.** 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

#### Newsletter Labeling

**Wednesday, July 8, 5:30pm.** Stanlieo's Sub Villa, corner of Monroe St. Governors Dr. Contact Jack, [drostj@bellsouth.net](mailto:drostj@bellsouth.net).

**Saturday, July 11 - Keith Trail hike on Monte Sano. Moderate.** We will be going through the Sinks, the Stone Cuts, Logan's Point, and the Supercuts. We will see wildflowers and geologic formations. It should be a fun summer day on the trail. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's Parking Lot at 10:00am. Bring snacks, plenty of water and wear sturdy boots. For more information call Doug Horacek at 772-6788.

**Tuesday, July 14, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy.** 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Alan Greene, 534-7849.

#### Saturday, July 18 - Sewanee Dayhike.

**Strenuous.** 13 mile hike of the northwest and southwest sections of the 21 mile Perimeter Trail around the Sewanee Domain. The trail features beautiful overlooks and interesting geological formations. The southwest section features Elliot, Otey, Polk, and Armfield Bluff. This northwest section features Rutledge, Cherry, and Dotson points plus the forestry cabin. This is one of two hikes to complete the entire perimeter trail. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Optional dinner afterwards. Meet at the Publix on Winchester Road at 8:30am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or [tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net](mailto:tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net)

**Tuesday, July 21, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy.** 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Gerdi Keyser, 922-2251.

#### Saturday, July 25- Sewanee Dayhike.

**Strenuous.** This approximately 11 mile hike is the east section of the 21 mile Perimeter Trail which follows the perimeter of the Sewanee Domain. The perimeter trail features beautiful overlooks and interesting geological formations. This section features Morgan's Steep, the Memorial Cross, and Shakerag Hollow. This hike completes the entire Perimeter Trail. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Optional dinner afterwards. Meet at the Publix on Winchester Road at 8:30am. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or [tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net](mailto:tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net)

**Tuesday, July 28, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy.** 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.