

September 2009

Sierra

North Alabama Group



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<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/na.html>

Beekeeping and the Lives of Bees, Thursday, Sept 17, Library Auditorium 6:30pm

Tuesday Night Hikes

Move back to downtown beginning October 6.

Beekeeping and the Lives of Bees

For the September monthly meeting, Bob Fanning, a local beekeeper, will talk about bees, focusing on the lives of bees and the social organization of hives. This should be an interesting topic given the attention in the media on colony collapse.

Bob will give a brief history of beekeeping and cover bee hives and hive parts, who lives inside the beehive (Queen, Drones & Workers – how the bees decide who's queen and each group's duties, how honeybees communicate, why smoke calms bees, harvesting honey, honey colors – and why, basic honeybee body parts, stings (how to avoid and how to react), swarms (how they happen and how a surprised homeowner should react), Africanized bees (Hollywood name – Killer Bees), CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder), removing bees from homes and other structures and pollination.

Bob Fanning is a retired engineer from Motorola who now runs Almer's Apiary in Huntsville. He keeps around 100 colonies of bees in the area and sells their honey locally. He is past president of both the Madison County and Alabama Beekeeper's Associations and was Alabama State Beekeeper of the Year in 1999. The website for the local organization is www.alabees.com

For the October meeting, Bill McCaul, from the Global Hydrology and Climate Center, will talk about the behavior of storms in the local area.

The North Alabama Sierra Club meets at 6:30 the third Thursday of every month at the Huntsville Madison County Public Library in the main auditorium. The library is in downtown Huntsville on Monroe St. just off Governor's Drive. Everyone is invited.

- The Editor

Flint River Cleanup Set for September 19

Come out for a fun day on the beautiful Flint River and join a team of volunteers for the annual river cleanup sponsored by the Flint River Conservation Association.

The team will pick up trash from the river and along the banks at bridges. Those that have their own canoes should bring them. Everyone should bring sunscreen, hats, and water, and wear clothes and shoes that you don't mind getting wet and a little dirty. FRCA will supply more water, snacks, and trash bags to volunteers.

Pre-registration is required for this cleanup so we can match up experienced paddlers with those who are less experienced. To register, send an email to flintriverconservation@gmail.com that includes the following information: your name, your email address, your phone number, the number of people in your group (include their names too), and if you need a canoe. If there are any kids under the age of 18, please note that in your email. Also include your experience level: beginner, some experience, very experienced, expert, expert with rescue training. Alternately, you can call 256-509-1219.

Meet at 9:00am at the Publix Parking lot in Hampton Cove. For more information, call Soos at 427-5116. We should be off the river by 2:00pm.

- Soos Weber, Director of the Hayes Nature Preserve for the city of Huntsville

Tuesday Night Hikes Go Downtown in October

Starting October 6, the Tuesday night hikes will move back downtown as the nights get shorter. Downtown Huntsville is a great area for walking and you can still get in your regular 2-3 mile walks on Tuesday nights. We meet at 6:00pm at the Land Trust parking lot on 907 Franklin St. For more information, call Michael at 656-5836.

Last Paper Newsletter

This will be the last paper newsletter mailed out by the North Alabama Sierra Group. Due to economic pressures and the move to electronic media, this newsletter will go electronic only starting in October. The cost of paper continues to go up as does postage, and donations to the Sierra Club have dropped dramatically in the past year. The newsletter is already posted on the web at <http://alabama.sierraclub.org/na.html> and many people already receive an email copy. If you wish to continue to get the newsletter, please send your email address to Jack Drost at drostj@bellsouth.net.

- the Editor

Bears in the South Cumberland

South Cumberland Recreation Area Park Manager John Christof reports that a local property owner's game feeding stand photographed a black bear not too far from the Collins Gulf entrance to the park. Ranger George Shinn advised that he and other rangers have seen bear scat, tracks and other signs in Collins Gulf, along the Connector Trail and in the vicinity of Hobbs Cabin within the past week.

Camping and cooking in bear country, and storing a food cache, requires different safety precautions than normal backpacking and camping. The most common close encounters between bears and people in the wilderness almost all relate to the presence of food. The National Park Service has an excellent guide related to bears and bear behavior in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

<http://www.nps.gov/grsm/naturescience/black-bears.htm>

If you see a bear at South Cumberland during your visit, please report the time and location to a Ranger.

Ranger George Shinn is presently talking with other Tennessee state parks which have bears and South Cumberland will have some written guidelines and recommendations in the very near future.

In the meantime, do not feed bears or leave food scraps in the area when you are hiking or camping. Bears learn quickly and bears that become fond of human food usually end up being shot to protect park visitors and area landowners. Don't end up being responsible for getting a bear killed because you want to take its picture.

- the Editor

Green U at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens

Come celebrate our environment at Green U - a one-day event to be held on Saturday, September 26 from 10am to 4pm at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. This festival for the environment is the first of its kind in Alabama.

The keynote speaker will be Sophie Uliano, author of "Gorgeously Green: 8 Simple Steps to an Earth Friendly Life." Sophie and her earth-friendly ideas have been on the Oprah Winfrey show. Sophie's book will be on sale in The Garden gift shop and she will be available for a book signing after her presentation.

In addition to speakers, there will be food, entertainment and activities for the whole family including bike trail rides, rock wall climbing, solar car races, recycling games and activity stations from Sci-Quest.

Approximately forty local businesses and a farmer's market will also be on-site that day to share their environmentally friendly products and services with the community. Admission is just 5 recyclable items (water bottles, aluminum cans, Capri Sun pouches, household batteries or cell phones) or \$5.

For more information, visit www.greenualabama.com

North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

September – October 2009

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	Michael Stewart	656-5836
Political chair	Joe Imhof	858-3626
Publicity	Sandy Kiplinger	498-1023
Secretary	Linda Griffin	772-8653
Tues Hikes		
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

Bob Fanning on Honeybees, Library auditorium, Thursday, September 17, 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 - any event where the leader has not experienced the event, may fit any class above.

Sunday, Sept 13 - Monte Sano hike.

Strenuous. An approximately 10-12 mile loop across Monte Sano Mountain. Rough trail and significant elevation changes can be expected. Meet 8:30am at the Hiker's parking lot on Monte Sano Blvd, near the turnoff for Burritt Museum. Bring plenty of water, lunch and hiking shoes. Contact Michael Stewart, 656-5836 or athikerstew@yahoo.com

Tuesday, Sept 15, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Ken Shrider, 772-9442.

Saturday, Sep 19 - Pigeon Mountain hike. Strenuous. Pigeon Mountain is a spur off the eastern side of Lookout Mountain and is part of the Cumberland Plateau. We will hike the Pocket Trail which includes a picturesque waterfall, wildflowers and a wide range of geological formations. Bring lunch and water. The hike is 8 miles and rated strenuous due to the 1200 ft elevation gain. We will eat at a local restaurant on the way back. Meet at the Publix in Hampton Cove at 8:15am. For more information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburley@bellsouth.net

Sunday, Sept 20 - Honeysuckle elimination. Meet Across from Fagan Spring Apartments at 1:00pm. Bring loppers and gloves to help remove invasive honeysuckle shrubs from forest floor on the Landtrust property. I will provide water, 2 sets of loppers, extra gloves and a popper. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for more information.

Sunday, Sep 20 - Monte Sano hike. Strenuous. An approximately 10-12 mile loop across Monte Sano Mountain. Rough trail and significant elevation changes can be expected. Meet at

8:30am at the Hiker's parking lot in Monte Sano State Park near the campground. Bring plenty of water, lunch, and hiking shoes. Contact Michael Stewart at 656-5836 or athikerstew@yahoo.com

Tuesday, Sept 22, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Alan Greene, 534-7849.

Friday, Sept 25 - Quarter Moon Walk on Wade Mountain. Easy. Easy walk to the glades on top of Wade Mountain, first glade on Wade Mountain Trail, then Devils Racetrack. Once on top we will not use flashlights. Bring insect repellent, flashlight, sturdy boots, water and binoculars. Enjoy some binocular astronomy, owls, and a moonlit trail. This is also part of the Landtrust outings. Meet at the trail head on Spragins Hollow Road at 7:00pm, or meet at Olive Garden at 4:00pm for dinner before the hike. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

Saturday, Sep 26 - Tims Ford State Park hike. Strenuous. This 10-11 mile hike is rated strenuous due to distance. Tims Ford is an often overlooked Tennessee state park which offers an in/out scenic trail along its reservoir. If you don't catch the action one direction, you probably will coming back! We will leave at 8:30am from the parking lot behind McDonald's at 2234 Winchester Road, HSV, near Publix. Bring snacks, food, water, bug spray and good hiking shoes. An optional snack/dine out afterward for those who leave the trail with an appetite. For more info, contact Sandy Kiplinger at sandykip@juno.com.

Tuesday, Sept 29, 6:00pm - Mountain Evening Hike. Easy. 3-4 mile hike. Meet at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot. Judy Burley, 883-4267.

Saturday, Oct 3 - Stonedoor hike.

Strenuous. This ten mile rugged hike is in the South Cumberland. The Great Stone Door is a 150-foot deep crevice at the crest of the plateau by which we will enter Big Creek 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

Sunday, Oct 4 - Wade Mountain hike.

Easy. Join us on a long but easy outing on Wade Mountain on a crisp fall afternoon. There will be fall wild flowers on Devil's Racetrack and butterflies on the glades. Bring water, a camera and sturdy hiking boots. Meet at 2:00pm at the Wade Mountain trailhead on Spragins Hollow Road. Contact Doug Horacek at 772-6788.

Tuesday Hikes Move Downtown

Tuesday, Oct 6, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

Sat-Sun, Oct 10-11 -Sandy & Michael's Awesome River Adventure! Moderate.

Let your woes fly, breath the tranquility, take Facebook worthy photos, and enjoy the ride as we paddle down 13 miles of the scenic Elk River in Tennessee. After a day on the water, we'll park our tents under the trees and share fish tales and gossip by the campfire. Contact Sandy Kiplinger sandykip@juno.com or Michael Stewart athikerstew@yahoo.com for more information on canoe/kayak/shuttle fee, camping fee, what to bring, etc.

Reserve your spot by October 1. Non-refundable deposit of \$15.00 required.

Saturday, Oct 10 - 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 Tennessee state line. This beautiful tract, once the hunting grounds of Davy Crockett, has an extraordinarily diverse array of plants and animals. We will enter at the Tennessee trailhead and exit on the Alabama side with a side trip to the Mill Creek blowhole. The hike is approximately 10 miles with a 1000 feet elevation gain. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:30am at the Publix in Hampton Cove. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, Oct 13, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Michael Stewart, 656-5836.

Tuesday, Oct 20, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Nancy Dudney, 882-9408.

Saturday, Oct 24 - Signal Point hike. Moderate. Signal Point is the highest point on Signal Mountain. The hike from Signal Point to Edwards Point is part of the Cumberland Trail with striking overlooks of the Tennessee River. The hike follows the top of the Tennessee River Gorge and covers some rocky terrain and requires some climbing. The area includes the Julia Falls Overlook, Edwards Point, a view of Rainbow Falls on the trail to Middle Creek across the suspension bridge and Lockhart's Arch. The hike is about seven miles. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:00am at the Publix in Hampton Cove. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or tdburleyhiker@bellsouth.net

Tuesday, Oct 27, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy. Meet at the Land Trust parking lot at 907 Franklin St. Ken Shrider, 772-9442.