



the river's voice

The Official Publication of the Friends of the Locust Fork River Spring/Summer 2008

Our Mission

As Friends of the Locust Fork River, we join together to actively preserve the natural integrity of the river in its free-flowing state, and to that end, the lifestyle of the community that surrounds it.

OUTINGS & EVENTS

Sat. May 17

New!! A bird walk at King's Bend

Meet at Howard's Restaurant at 8 am for breakfast, if desired. Leaving Howard's for King's Bend at 9. Bring a snack or lunch if you want to linger at this gorgeous riverside spot. Bring binoculars and bird books. Howard's: replaces Pardue's next to the BP station 0.4 mi North of the merger of US 231 into AL 79 just North of Cleveland, AL. King's Bend is about 1 mile North of that intersection and about 0.1 mile South of the divergence of 231 and 79, just north of the new bridge.

Call Joe Still for info:
205-965-4565

(continued on page two)

Dean's Ferry Road Access to the Locust Fork River

By Sam Howell

Just the facts, m'am & sir:

County declines to close Dean's Ferry Road . County plans to erect fence

ISSUE

The issue began in 2007 when angry property owners on and around Dean's Ferry Road, located in the Hayden area of western Blount County, complained to their commissioner, David Cochran. They were desperately tired of the uncaring trespassers vandalizing their property. They sought to have the road closed.

BWWSB

After additional complaints of nuisance behavior by All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) riders, Commissioner Cochran asked for help from the Birmingham Water Works and Sewer Board (BWWSB), across whose property the vandals were entering. BWWSB posted "no trespassing" signs on the boundaries of its property. Unfortunately, the signs did little to resolve the problem.

HEARING

In March 2008 the property owners insisted once again that the Blount County Commission close the road, thereby denying all access. The commission duly held a public hearing March 7th to consider closing the road and "vacating" the property. Vacating the property would terminate the road right-of-way and cause ownership of the land to transfer to the adjacent property owner, BWWSB. The road has been virtually abandoned by the county road maintenance department, but continued to be public, owned by the taxpayers.

Only through a concerned citizen did FLFR become aware of the scheduled public hearing, as listed in official notices in *The Blount Countian*.

At the March 7 hearing, a few FLFR board and members, Birmingham Canoe Club members, and several property owners (for and against the closing) made comments. At the regular commission meeting March 10 the commission postponed a decision until the April meeting.

SEEKING ALTERNATIVES

Between those March and April meetings, FLFR board members talked to property owners, Commissioner Cochran, and the BWWSB property manager, seeking a suitable solution short of vacating the property and denying access.

FENCE

On April 14th the commission voted not to vacate the property, but to close the road with a metal gate and fencing that would stop traffic 1/4 mile from the river. Mr. Cochran even stated his hopes for a park or recreational area eventually at that location with the road reopened.

Although the barrier will discourage irresponsible river users, especially ATV riders, it will also unfortunately make it difficult for responsible users, such as canoers and fisherman, to access the river a quarter of a mile further down the gated road.

(continued on page five)

OUTINGS & EVENTS

CONTINUED

Sat. May 24

Memorial Saturday Hike on the Locust Fork

A joint outing of the Sierra Club and the Friends of the Locust Fork River. Moderate-difficulty hike down the Locust Fork River to Cornelius Falls. Some folks go slow and admire wildflowers; other folks scoot ahead to get in more playtime at the falls, where we'll eat our brown bag lunches on the sunny rocks. It's a great time of year to play in the falls, so bring wading shoes and swimwear if you like.

To carpool from Birmingham, meet at 8:30 am at the Golden Rule BBQ on Highway 79, between Tarrant and Pinson. Rendezvous at Tonka Shell Station (Hwys 79 & 160) in Cleveland at 9:30 am. We'll leave the cars at Martha & Stephen's at 10 am and return about 2:30.

For more information call Stephen at 205-919-6231, or the Sierra Club Leader, Sonja Mathis at 205-556-3330 or email at smath2casa@aol.com.

May or June: TBA

A National Rivers Clean-up.

We're working on Plan C... We'll notify by our e-bulletin so make sure you sign up for it by emailing Stephen: greenworks@juno.com
(continued on page four)

IS ALABAMA GETTING "GREENER"?

by Cindy Lowry

April is sometimes referred to as "Earth Month" by conservation groups; in Alabama, this April definitely proved to be a good month for Earth.

Alabama's state leaders made some important decisions for our environment and public health this past month and as an all-volunteer, citizen organization that helped advocate for these important changes, the Friends of the Locust Fork River (FLFR) is proud to report them.

LEGISLATURE

In early April, the state legislature voted on two important pieces of legislation that could help move Alabama strides forward toward protecting and managing our natural resources.

PLAN!

Introduced by Senator Kim Benefield (D, District 13), SJR28 was passed forming a "Permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Water Policy and Management". The purpose of this committee is to study and develop the Alabama Water Management Plan that will address the state's long term and short term water resource challenges.

A comprehensive water management plan for Alabama has long been advocated by FLFR's statewide partner organization, the Alabama Rivers Alliance, as part of the Alabama Water Agenda (www.alabamawateragenda.com). The Rivers Alliance hopes to be involved as a stakeholder at the subcommittee level, representing the interests of groups like FLFR.

RECYCLING

In addition to the water resolution, the legislature also passed an important recycling bill. The Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Act was signed into law on April 16th and will provide new funding for counties, municipalities, and nonprofit community groups to develop or expand recycling programs. The bill will also provide increased funding for the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) to clean up illegal dumps and enhance their solid waste management program. Reports confirm that Alabamians recycle less than most other states in the country and produce more trash. This bill, which was advocated by FLFR partner organization, the Alabama Environmental Council, will potentially begin to move Alabama up on that list.

CANCER

The state legislature wasn't the only decision-making body making good decisions in April. At their regular meeting on April 18th the Environment Management Commission, which is the oversight board for ADEM, voted to reduce the risk of cancer allowed into our waterways from 1 in 100,000 to 1 in 1 million. This important public health standard was first introduced in a citizen petition filed by 18 environmental organizations, including FLFR, in the spring of 2007. After more than a year of studying the issue and going through the proper procedures, the EMC made the right decision for protecting water quality and public health throughout Alabama.

FLFR and all of our partner organizations on these efforts are pleased to be able to commend our state leaders for making these important decisions for the long term benefit of our rivers and all of our natural resources.

Another Lovely Day at the Races

by Stephen Guesman

Despite the weatherman's dire predictions, the 16th Annual Whitewater Classic played out to a lovely spring day and a near record field of canoe and kayak racers. Given the forecast for serious rain scared away many, we probably would have had a record crowd of spectators as well. Thanks to the gang of folks who once again helped FLFR produce such a remarkable event. Special thanks to committee members Sam Howell and George Merkel for helping ward off the rain by going to such extraordinary efforts to prepare for it.

We're appreciative that Fowler Springs Baptist wrapped up their first season at the races with us. To the regular fare of hotdogs and hamburgers, they added fresh ice cream that was churned on site by an antique hit-and-miss engine from the collection of Harley Marsh. Yummy.

So mark your calendars, kids. The 2009 Canoe and Kayak Races will be the Invitational on February 7th, and the Classic on March 28th. See you on the river!

ALABAMA CUP 2008 WINNERS

OC1 Short Championship
Dooley Tombras

K1 Mens Championship
Keith Yell

K1 Womens Championship
Renee Clark

K1 Masters Championship
Eric Baker

OC2 Mixed Championship
Jim Robertson/Nancy Cate

OC2 Mixed Cruising
Jim Robertson/
Nancy Cate

OC2 Mens Championship
Nicholas Lee/
Eric Baker

K1 Mens Cruising
Keith Yell

OC1 Mens Cruising
Dooley Tombras

OC1 Womens Cruising
Gabiella Schlidt

K1 Mens Novice
Charlie Simmons

K1 Masters Cruising
Allen Jones

OC1 Medium Championship
John Duncan



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OUTINGS & EVENTS

CONTINUED

Sat. July 12

Tube float down the river

If there's water this year, we'll float lazily along. Bring water, lunch and a flotation device; wear swimsuit or old shorts and rivershoes or sneakers and a hat or sunscreen.

Call Nancy 205-429-3090 or njackson@urisp.net to sign up

Sat. Aug. 2

Another tube float

if there's still water

Same plan as July float.

Call Richard 205-681-0808 to sign up

Sat. Sept 13

Day on the River 08

See inside for how you can be part of our Winner!

Note: Our April canoe trip was great with fine weather and picnic at Standridge Bend — under water according to the proposed dam; stay tuned with your powder dry!



Stephen Guesman

WINNERS!

DAY ON THE RIVER 2007 *won Best Community Environmental Education Project in Alabama last year from the Environmental Education Association of Alabama.*

In case you weren't with us at King's Bend last September, our "fair" format with 11 stations allowed fair-goers to choose 6-7 activities, including free lunch and canoe time on our beautiful Locust Fork River. This format allowed us to include a larger group of kids (84) plus 54 parents, and 48 adult and 10 teen volunteers, all of whom clearly enjoyed themselves.

Stations were varied and fun.

Here's who provided the 11 different environmental activities:

- Birmingham Canoe Club
- Cahaba River Society
- Camp McDowell Environmental Center
 - Black Warrior Riverkeepers
 - Venture Scouts
 - a representative of the local Cherokee Indian tribe
 - Ashley Allen, paleontologist from Oneonta High School

- Ruffner Mountain Nature Center
- Bama Backpaddlers
- Debra Gordon-Hellman, environmental educator
- Alabama Water Watchers

Of course, we plan to make Day on the River 2008 even bigger & better.

Please consider joining us Saturday, September 13th : we need everything from kid managers to cooks, river safety monitors, meeter/greeters & park folks.

Our goals:

unbridled enthusiasm and respect for our river while keeping safe with seamless organization ... Only with LOTS of help can we do this.

Contact otebear@urisp.net to volunteer. It takes a village of FLFRs to make this happen.

Day on the River 2008

Saturday, September 13th

Mark your calendar

If you really want to influence people — teach the children.

ANOTHER WINNER!

FLFR's own Stephen Guesman received the Volunteer of the Year Award at the Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA) 10th annual Watershed Leadership Conference held on March 14-16 at Camp Beckwith in Fairhope, AL. The Volunteer of the Year Award is given to someone who has gone above and beyond to help the ARA throughout the year. In addition to his volunteer duties as FLFR board member and membership coordinator, Stephen helped the Alliance put on their 2nd annual River Revival music

festival in the fall of 2007 and has helped out with the Watershed Leadership Conference on multiple occasions. According to Alliance staff, "Stephen is always around to help out when called upon and he does it all with a smile on his face and a song in his heart!". ARA is a statewide river advocacy organization that FLFR helped form in the mid-1990's and the two have been vital partners ever since. For more information about the Watershed Leadership Conference or the Alabama Rivers Alliance, visit www.alabamarivers.org.

Meetings Of Note

A rash of meetings we've attended recently. by Nancy Jackson

BWWSB: Sam Howell and Nancy Jackson met with Mac Underwood, general manager of BWWSB, and Jerry Jones, with consulting engineering firm Malcolm, Pernie. We received the requested copy of the updated Needs Assessment, which Underwood said estimates need for a new water source by 2025-2035. Sources to be evaluated include quarries, drilled wells to pump to Lake Purdy, the Coosa, Black Warrior and Locust Fork Rivers. Evaluation of those options will be published in a study due out next spring/summer.

Underwood said the likely scenario will be regional sharing of development and use of any new source.

Other topics included conservation measures, drought, rate structures to promote conservation, and the board's new Cahaba watershed protection policy.

In a follow-up letter we commended conservation, and suggested working with the Alliance for Water Efficiency, and offered to work cooperatively on a Locust Fork watershed protection policy if the board would consider that.

Birmingham Regional Planning Commission representatives met with various water supply stakeholders from

Blount County. Their report was preliminary and lacked some accurate detail. Meetings will include the five counties in the larger Birmingham area, prompted by the Alabama Department of Economic Affairs (ADECA), to help identify projects and secure funding, etc. ADECA also plans to create an Alabama Water System map. Work includes identifying current and future water supplies and demands. Sam mentioned the need for conservation, which had not been especially noted.

A Saving Our Water conference presented by the new Green Resource Center in Homewood gathered a few dozen professionals and lay people interested in water use, including the landscaping industry, but also architects, planners and government officials. Although small, the meeting achieved good networking and brainstorming about conservation, efficiency, planning, etc. We appreciate this effort from the center, currently all-volunteer. You can find out more about the center at www.greenalabama.org.

In sum, the drought of '07 was a wake-up call for some who had taken the lush rainfall of the Southeast for granted. It's progress toward more sustainable use in this area.

FLFR'S WISH LIST

New Wishes!

- telephoto lens for 35mm digital camera
- expendable inner tubes for tubing the river at low water.
- old/antique photos of people enjoying the Locust Fork. (i.e. family reunions, baptisms, fishing, etc.)

Still wishing:

Canoes, sit-on-tops, paddles

Custom picture framing

River stories, memories, pictures

Organizational Development Intern

Dean's Ferry Road Access

(continued from page 1)

PUBLIC GOOD

We Friends of the Locust Fork River commend Commissioner Cochran and the Blount County Commission for weighing out public opinion on this difficult situation and voting not to vacate the property. However, we encourage the commission to continue

to work with the responsible users of the river to keep this important public access point available. Limited public access is already a problem for many who want to enjoy the river.

FLFR upholds the idea of the river as a public good with responsible use available to all people.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF TRASH

This year's Renew Our Rivers cleanup was NOT without humor and curiosity.

Most Interesting Find:
A small terra cotta cow (reclining)

Grossest find:
a bra and jockey strap

Oldest find:
an old Budweiser can

Most collectible find:
a full small fire extinguisher

Unidentifiable find:
bones

We gave a \$25 gift card to each winner.

CANOE CLASSES

Birmingham Canoe Club will offer several classes this spring/summer. Visit www.birminghamcanoeclub.org for full info. Classes include:

Recreational Introductory Class for both Canoe and Kayak:

Sat April 19, 2008. Oak Mountain 9 a.m. Open to all; not a whitewater course. Designed to be an introduction to either canoeing or kayaking. Cost \$25.00.

First "Traditional" Beginning White Water Class for both Canoe and Kayak:

Classroom May 27, June 3
(continued in sidebar on page seven)

Renew Our Rivers Cleanup '08: 1.5 TONS OF TRASH

by Susie Wilkerson

On May 2 we cleaned up six river crossing sites while one canoe worked instream along the Locust from Church Street to Hwy 31 in Warrior. Dean's Ferry was one of the crossing sites, yielding 900 pounds.

In all, we picked up 2,820 pounds of trash and collected 11 tires (5 from the Warrior Civitans canoe clean up). This total is considerably less than the approximately 9,000 pounds collected from our first ROR clean up in 2005 (along with 20-25 tires). We hope this means 1) we've made a dent in the backlog, and 2) maybe people are throwing out less trash.

WILLING HANDS

Participants included ten folks from Southern Company as part of the company's statewide Renew Our Rivers campaign; two FLFR members;

two Black Warrior Riverkeeper staff members; 39 Hayden High School Beta Club students along with four teachers from Hayden High; five or six members of the Warrior Civitans for the canoe crew, and, last but not least, the Fire Chief of Warrior. What a fine team!

This was the second year of participation for the HHS Beta Club. They will definitely be back next year, and we are very grateful for all their help.

This annual Renew Our Rivers event has gained the attention of communities surrounding the Locust Fork from Cleveland through Warrior. Maybe it's raising some awareness!

We hope to make it even bigger and spread into more areas of the watershed year by year.

THANKS TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE IT A SUCCESS.

Celebrate the Alabama Scenic River Trail

The Alabama Scenic River Trail begins where the Coosa River enters Alabama just northeast of Cedar Bluff and ends at the Gulf of Mexico. Montgomery is near the mid-point of the 631-mi. river trail. Join the grand opening festivities Friday, June 6 at noon on the Montgomery River Walk. Taking

part in this ceremony will be a group of people traveling the Alabama Scenic River Trail by canoe. Admission is free. Visit <http://www.alabamascenicrivertrail.com/> or call 256-237-2755 for more information about this inaugural event, plus upcoming activities. This is the nation's longest one-state river trail, according to the site.

SHANE'S WEATHER

From Joe Still

CHECK THIS OUT !

Every body needs to check our flfr.org website for Weather by the River, posted by Shane Wilson. Look down near the bottom for the link underlined in blue. Click it to see weather, updated every 10 minutes, inside and outside of Shane and Vicky's home in southwestern Blount County, "5 miles from the LFR". It also has links to local and national weather sites.

For example:

It features dew point, relative humidity, wind speed, times when Sun and Moon appear to rise and set (they don't, of course; it's Earth's rotation, remember?) There's a pie graph of wind direction (a neat way to present it).

According to the site, rainfall at Shane and Vicky's house for this year as of 4/29 was 17.92"; I guess you could call

that Rain YTD and that's not bad compared to last year.

There's daily and monthly rain too, from which I can see that 0.47" rain fell at their house on 4/27-28; a total of 3.63" for April. Monthly is shown in 2 places. As Shane says, "...stuff like river levels, do ya need to water plants, dump the water out of the old bottles on the yard, etc." (He's a clown!)

AND the temperature inside their house was 77.3 F on 4/26, and fell to 63 on 4/29, when he left the basement window open overnight. Haven't you just been dying to know their house temps?

Now isn't that JUST TOO COOL?

Thanks to Shane for this new feature in our already great website — also thanks largely to him. He now posts this very newsletter paper-free for you Webbers.

(Canoe Classes continued from page six)

and June 10.

Water sessions:

Oak Mountain May 31

Coosa June 1 and

Hiwassee June 7-8.

Cost \$125.00

Second "Traditional" Beginner's White Water Canoe and Kayak Class:

Classroom Aug 7, 14, 21.

Water sessions:

Oak Mountain Aug 9

Coosa Aug 10 and

Hiwassee Aug 16-17.

Cost \$125.00.

Fast Track Kayak Class

(Three days)

July 18th, 19th, 20th.

Cost \$125.00.

(cut form here to mail back in) -----

membership form

Yes, I want to help the Friends of the Locust Fork River preserve our local treasure:

I am a new member or a renewing member (check expiration date on label) **please check one**

Individual — \$20

Family — \$30

Friend — \$50

Patron — \$100

Donor — \$250 and above

Please include me in the FLFR e-mail network for outings and Locust Fork river alerts

Call me to help with FLFR activities

Name _____

(if mailing label is correct you just need to enter your name)

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Phone number _____ e-mail address _____

All contributions are tax deductible and gratefully appreciated! Please return this form to:

The Friends Of The Locust Fork, P.O. Box 245, Hayden, Alabama 35079

The Locust Fork has been compared to the Yellowstone and the Gallatin in Montana. Unlike those rivers, the Locust Fork doesn't enjoy the protection of flowing through a national park. It flows through Alabama. It is our treasure, and only the people of Alabama can save it. As a member of Friends of the Locust Fork River, your contribution will help in the fight to preserve and protect one of our state's rarest and most beautiful natural treasures.

River Recipes

From the pages of... *Locust Fork Yacht Club's Creek Bankin' Recipes*

EVERGREEN-ER



Please notice our 100% recycled paper and soy-based ink beginning in this issue. Those cost FLFR a bit more, and worth every penny by our reckoning. Our printer, Accuprint, has made these available upon request, and also grants us a 10% non-profit discount. We appreciate their help and newer, greener options.



The Friends Of The Locust Fork
P.O. Box 245
Hayden, Alabama 35079

You can find us on the web at
www.FLFR.org

Sam's Pimento Cheese

3 cups sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated
1/2-3/4 cup mayonnaise, Helman's
2-3 TBSP green onion tops, thin sliced
1 tsp Louisiana hot sauce
(2) 4oz jars pimentos, diced (or sliced if preferred)
1/2 tsp Worcestershire, Lea & Perrins
1/4 tsp Black pepper, fresh ground

Put cheese in mixing bowl, drain and add pimento peppers, add green onions, black pepper, and Worcestershire and mix. Add mayo a little at a time to assure desired consistency. Splash with hot sauce. Stir gently. Adjust seasonings if necessary. Suggestion: find some tender cabbage or favorite lettuce and make some pimento cheese roll-ups to take on your next canoe trip down the Locust Fork! Ummmmmmmm...