



the river's voice

The Official Publication of the Friends of the Locust Fork River

Winter 2013

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.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE RIVER

ALABAMA CUP!

(see article to the right for more details)

February 2-3

Locust Fork Invitational Canoe & Kayak Races

March 2-3

Mulberry Fork Canoe & Kayak Races

March 23-24

Locust Fork Classic Canoe & Kayak Races

March 15-17

Alabama Water Rally

Camp McDowell in Nauvoo, AL
(see page 5 for more details)

Saturday, April 6 (raindate 4/13)

Annual Easy Canoe Trip

Please join the Friends of the Locust Fork and the Sierra Club to paddle an easy section of the Locust
(continued on page 2)

Welcome to the 2013 races, Tracy!



www.stephaniewhatleyphotography.com

SALUTE THIS VET

One paddler returning to the races this year deserves an extra salute. Disabled vet Tracy Click, who grew up in Huntsville, has turned paddling into a path of recovery. A traumatic brain injury

from a parachute jump forced Tracy to relearn communicating appropriately, reading body language correctly and managing the details of daily life. But Tracy's injury didn't change her desire to be a whitewater athlete or to try for a spot on the slalom kayak Olympic team.

WINNING ON ALL COUNTS

Last year, Tracy made a good showing in the first Alabama Cup race. She followed up a few months later with 8th place in her first Olympic trials. Besides training and competing, Tracy is studying for a master's degree in leadership at Montreat College in North Carolina.

PASSING IT ON

Her goal, after she graduates, is to develop a program that helps disabled vets transition back into civilian life through involvement in sports. Sports got Tracy back on track. She wants the same for other disabled vets, too. Paddle on, Tracy!

Race for the Alabama Cup

On Saturday, February 2nd, the race for the 22nd Annual Alabama Cup will begin with the first of three whitewater races. The Locust Fork Invitational is traditionally run at King's Bend on the Locust Fork River on the first Saturday and Sunday in February.

The second race in the series, the Mulberry Fork Canoe & Kayak Races is traditionally the first weekend in March. The third and final race of the Alabama Cup series is the Locust Fork Classic, again run at King's Bend on the fourth weekend of March (23 & 24).

From a spectator's perspective, race day is an opportunity to visit a gorgeous stretch of the river and share in the good clean fun of (continued on page two)



WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE RIVER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Fork River — just 45 minutes from Bham. Rain date April 13th. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen and dry clothes. Meet 9am at the Hayden Corner Park and Ride, exit 284 off I-65 north. Call our good friend and ex-board member Vicky Wilson to sign up 205-960-4524, or email vickywilson58@hotmail.com. (Some boats, paddles and life jackets available for persons with some paddling experience — call Sam Howell to reserve: 205-706-4376)

Saturday, April 13th Whitewater Raft Trip

This is a rare opportunity to experience the thrill of whitewater from the relative comfort of a 6-person raft — thanks to Locust Fork Expeditions. Plan on a four-hour easy trip in the heat of the day, 10 - 2 pm. Bring a brown bag lunch and your own water.

The cost will be \$30 per person with all proceeds benefiting us (FLFR)! We hope to sell out the limited seats so call now to reserve your place. Leigh Lynn 205-915-5493.

Saturday, May 25 Memorial Hike to Cornelius Falls

It's a moderate-difficulty 1-hour hike down the Locust Fork River to Cornelius Falls. Some folks like to go slow and talk wildflowers. Other
(continued on page 5)

Forever Wild Land Trust Renewed

Most Alabamians know a good thing when they see it. Thanks to a really successful get-out-the-vote job, they did see it, then renewed Forever Wild by a landslide vote of 75%.

SAVING WHAT WE CAN

Alabama is 5th in biodiversity in the United States. Yet it has the lowest percentage of public lands (4.4%) of all the southern states. The renewal of Forever Wild assures we will not fall further behind in land holdings open to the public for hunting, fishing, hiking and other outdoor activities.

Kathy Stiles Freeland, founder and former executive director of the

Nature Conservancy of Alabama, led the effort to establish the Forever Wild Land Trust over two decades ago.



GOT OUT THAT VOTE

When Forever Wild came up for renewal, Kathy left her post as executive director of the Ruffner Mountain Nature Center to coordinate the get-out-the-vote campaign. It really worked! In support of the campaign, Friends of the Locust Fork River sponsored a public presentation by Kathy about Forever Wild on October 25 at the Depot in Oneonta.

Race for the Alabama Cup (continued from page one)

whitewater racing. But of course race day doesn't happen without a lotta work from a few, *and a little help from a lot of folks like you.* The Friends of the Locust Fork River (FLFR) earns a sponsor's billing at the Alabama Cup Races by providing volunteers for the first and third races at King's Bend.

We invite you to join us either as a spectator (bring your friends), or as a volunteer (friends also welcome).

For volunteer opportunities please call Sam Howell at 205-706-4376 or Sam@flfr.org.

Generally the Invitational (February) is a bit more challenging

weather-wise, but our need for volunteers is same as the more well attended Classic (late March). In addition, this year we're going to start working up a beginners course for folks to get initiated to whitewater paddling, and work on hosting paddling and fishing clinics at the March race. Sounds like lots to do so I better get going — Hope you'll join us on the banks of this marvelous river — the Locust Fork.



WRITE COMMENTS TO SURFACE MINING COMMISSION

Threats to the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior are a grave danger to Birmingham's drinking water supply and to the spectacular beauty and biodiversity of the Mulberry watershed.

UNSUITABLE FOR MINING

Please join FLFR in writing comments to the Alabama Surface Mining Commission (ASMC) in opposition to proposed coal strip mines.

Demand the ASMC designate areas around the Mulberry Fork as "Lands Unsuitable for Mining."

LEARN MORE

Learn more about the issue of Shepherd Bend and Reed surface coal mines at the homepage of Southern Environmental Law Center: www.southernenvironment.org.

Read FLFR's expansive letter on FLFR's website.

Learn more about Black Warrior Riverkeeper's petition and see suggested "talking points" to include in your comments, if you choose, at the homepage of Black Warrior Riverkeeper.

DO IT NOW (comment period ends Jan. 31, 2013): Send support and comment letters in favor of the "Lands Unsuitable for Mining" petition to the Alabama Surface Mining Commission before January 31st to ASMC, Attention: Ann Miles, P.O. Box 2390, Jasper AL 35502.

Please note comments may not be submitted via email. The ASMC said snail mail would reduce its administrative costs. No doubt. So please scratch or type it and send via snail express NOW.

UA CONNECTION

The majority of the property and mineral rights at Shepherd Bend happen to be owned by the University of Alabama. Strip mining cannot begin until Drummond Company leases or purchases the surface and mineral rights from the University of Alabama System.

For over five years, BWRk have asked the UA System to announce that it will never sell or lease its land or mineral rights at Shepherd Bend for mining.

ONE MORE LETTER

Send your own letter to the UA System's Chancellor, Dr. Robert E. Witt, asking him to stop the mine: Chancellor Robert E. Witt
The University of Alabama System
401 Queen City Avenue
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401-155

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, contact info@blackwarriorriver.org or 205-458-0095.

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The Birmingham Water Works Board's Mulberry Intake across the Mulberry Fork from the proposed mine site.
Photo by Nelson Brooke. Annotations by David Whiteside.

79/231 Old Bridge Demolition: NOT

~ by Sam Howell

In an earlier newsletter we reported that the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) was accepting quotes from utility companies for the relocation of their lines and demolition of the old bridge over the Locust Fork River just north of Cleveland, an estimated \$11 million project. But lack of movement suggests that demolition may stay on the back burner indefinitely. A popular idea gaining support is: "The bridge is not in the way. The state can save \$11 million by not ordering the demolition".

Here's food for thought. Might ALDOT think about using state and federal funds to take the bridge down for \$11 million and address the well-publicized infrastructure deterioration in the State, rather than spend an estimated \$4.7 billion for an unneeded Northern Beltline around Birmingham?

Hummmmmmm.....
Maybe the people with the power will think about that!

The River's Reach: Education Committee Report

~ by Debra Gordon-Hellman, Chair of the Education Committee

For example: The recent e-mail I received from a Blount County high school science teacher began: *"I am looking for any information you have on water quality and biodiversity in the Locust Fork and Little Warrior Watersheds...for our project on how water quality affects biodiversity. We will be doing water testing and animal and plant observation. I wanted to get some information on documented water tests and biodiversity for these two watersheds. Thank you for your help!!!"*

One of the most important functions of our organization is educational outREACH. We fulfill this function across our entire

volunteer operation: newsletters, an up-to-date website, public programs, testifying at public hearings, Day on the River, sponsoring hikes — almost everything we do has an educational component.

While we work to preserve the health and integrity of the river along with its recreational, scenic, and economic benefits, we know that growing and spreading knowledge about the river is the only way to ensure a healthy future for it.

I provided the teacher with resources, materials, other contacts in Alabama, and offered to help with her program. FLFR welcomes these inquiries.

Use us!

River Monitoring Costs

~ by Nancy Jackson

In the "good ol' days" Alabama Water Watch had funds to really pamper us water monitors. For 20 years I'd call up, have a nice chat, ask for the chemical refills I needed, and bingo!

In the mail they came.

Now, it's different. As you may have heard, Alabama's outstanding program through Dr. Bill Deutsch and Auburn has suffered deep funding cuts. They are tight on personnel and money.

GROWN UPS?

So we monitors have to grow up and order our own chemical refills, trying to group together to save on shipping and handling, and pay for them. Some are pricey, such as the least exotic of

them all: turbidity reagent at \$11! My latest order was \$34, excluding the E.coli test supplies, which are pricey too: \$50/year.

UNDERWRITE?

Our president, Stephen, suggested we let y'all know this turn of events, and ask if anybody might be interested in helping with these costs. Unfortunately, the only current active monitors we have in Blount County are Sharon Cook and your co-monitors, Susan Finley and I. That's 2 sets of various chemical refills, probably 3 times a year. We are joining with 2 monitors in another watershed to do "economy of scale", and may be able to find some more partners.

If you want to contribute something, please send it to Stephen Guesman, and note that it's for "monitor financial aid".
THANKS AGAIN, SOME MORE.

Join *THE ALABAMA RIVER RALLY:*

It's the 15th Rally, at Camp McDowell, March 15-17th. Anyone interested in healthy water, paddling, advocacy, or just meeting cool people is encouraged to attend. It's over 100 who come to network and learn.

Educational sessions range from environmental flows, strategic habitat units, communicating with elected officials, and new trends in media.

Beth Young will speak about (and sign your copy) of her new book *Longleaf As Far as the Eye Can See*. Keynote speaker, Dr. James McClintock, will speak about (and sign your copy) of his new book *Lost Antarctica*.

In the evenings there will be music and called-dance featuring musicians from the Alabama Folk School.

For more information and registration visit www.alabamarivers.org. Participants include agency employees, teachers, elected officials, scientists, lawyers, engineers, concerned citizens, nature lovers, and other eco-minded folks.

It's a great opportunity for professional development and a chance to get together to socialize, celebrate our victories, share our challenges, and have a good time. Days are packed with informative education sessions and each night features a different form of entertainment.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE RIVER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

folks scoot ahead to get in more playtime at the falls. We'll eat our brown bag lunches on the sunny rocks at the falls.

It's a great time of year to play in the falls, so bring wading shoes and swim wear if you like. To carpool from Birmingham, meet at 8:30 am at JJ's BBQ (used to be Golden Rule) on Highway 79 (call Stephen for details on the carpool). 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.

Saturday, June 15
13th Annual Day on the River
COME HELP us swing this award-winning kids' edu-venture (that's adventures in learning!)
Contact Sharon: otebear@gmail.com to volunteer. It takes a village.

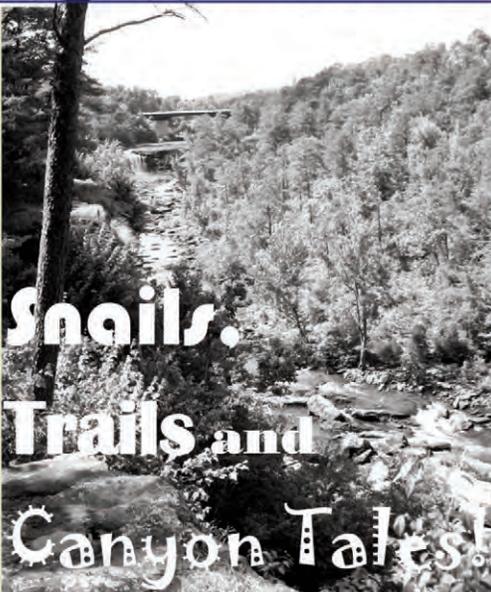
GREAT NEWS

Update presentation on our river's outstanding 300 million-year geology by Jim Lacefield. September or October, if the creek don't rise.



EEAA
Annual Conference
March 7-9, 2013
Jacksonville State University's
Little River Canyon Center
And Desoto State Park

PO Box 3062 Auburn, AL 36831



Snails.
Trails and
Canyon Takes!

March 7-9:
Environmental Education Association of Alabama: Annual Conference; Little River Canyon Center Workshops, field trips and much more. Visit www.eeaa.us for info & registration

From the president's pen.....

~ by Stephen Guesman, president FLFR

Having It All: Clean Rivers and Abundant Energy

You may have already surmised that there's a redundancy in our name — The Friends of the Locust Fork River. The Locust is one of two rivers that join to form the Black Warrior River. Our sister fork, the Mulberry, runs to the west of us, joining the Locust just northwest of Birmingham. (To confuse matters, there is also a Sipsey Fork that flows into Mulberry Fork.) So what happens to both the Locust and Mulberry forks is a major concern for the Black Warrior Riverkeepers (BWRk), and fortunate we are to have them as teammates. The BWRk are not only an invaluable resource on a host of river quality issues, but they have led the charge in a couple of lawsuits to date. Now they're asking for our help.

THREAT TO MULBERRY

Despite her distinguished headwaters, draining the Bankhead National Forest and Sipsey Wilderness, the Mulberry Fork is now under assault from two proposed strip mines. The Riverkeepers, and our allies at Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA), are mounting a campaign to ensure these proposed strip mines are permitted only within the full power of the Clean Water Act.

Perhaps you've heard of the Shepherd Bend Mine or Reed Mine. The Shepherd Bend has gained some notoriety because it is directly across the Mulberry from a major intake for Birmingham drinking water. And Reed mine is just a short way upstream.

LEND YOUR VOICES

So I'm asking you, the Friends of the Locust Fork, to come to the aid of our sister fork, the Mulberry, by adding your voices in support of the campaign to keep our rivers clean by holding these two proposed mine permits fully accountable to the Clean Water Act. No exceptions, no waivers, no special cases. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can find details on how you can help. Please do.



RESPONSIBLE ENERGY

But don't we need access to all the energy resources we can get? We all use energy; shouldn't we all cooperate when the quest for more energy comes to our back yard? Yes....and no! Yes, we should all cooperate by being responsible energy consumers, by using less and more effectively. And yes, we should cooperate by enjoining our government to promote a clean energy future. And no, ... **we should not be obliged to sacrifice the natural environment on which our future depends to satisfy our immediate desires for energy.**

TRUE COSTS

By holding energy producers to a high standard of environmental responsibility we're voting for a realistic economic future where the true cost of energy choices is reflected in the price. If the price for fossil fuels bears the full cost of their environmental impact, clean energy alternatives will become more price competitive. So, Friends of the Locust Fork, demand to have it all — clean rivers and abundant energy. And turn off those lights when you leave the room.

By holding energy producers to a high standard of environmental responsibility we're voting for a realistic economic future where the true cost of energy choices is reflected in the price.



Photos from the Covered Bridge Festival last October

(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**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual — \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Please include me in the FLFR e-mail network for outings and Locust Fork river alerts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family — \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Call me to help with FLFR activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend — \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Please dedicate this contribution of _____ to the RosaMine.org Watch Dog Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron — \$100 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donor — \$250 and above | |

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 638, Cleveland, Alabama 35049

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.



ALABAMA CUP

February 2-3

Locust Fork Invitational
Canoe & Kayak Races

March 2-3

Mulberry Fork Canoe
& Kayak Races

March 23-24

Locust Fork Classic
Canoe & Kayak Races

Volunteer at
www.alabamacupraces.com
or Sam@flfr.com

River Recipes

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

*Creek Bankers! Remember that meatloaf Sam featured in an earlier newsletter?
Well, here's how to make the main ingredient — all by yourself — before the creek bank.*

Homemade Chorizo Sausage

2 lbs. Pork Butt, 2" cubes w/some fat	1 tsp dried leaf oregano
2 Tbsp chili powder	1 tsp black pepper (fresh ground)
2 Tbsp paprika	1/2 tsp cinnamon
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar	2 tsp Kosher salt
1 tsp minced garlic	

Put all ingredients in a food processor and pulse until well processed.

Take a spoonful out and saute in a fry pan to taste and adjust seasonings to your taste. Portion Chorizo into single meal amounts and put in freezer bags to freeze for use later. This will freeze well for several months. This is excellent used in the popular Creek Bankin' Chorizo Meatloaf recipe! Look through your stash of FLFR newsletters for that recipe.



The Friends of
the Locust Fork River
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EVERGREEN-ER
Our newsletter is
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