



the river's voice

The Official Publication of the Friends of the Locust Fork River Winter/Spring 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

Saturday, Jan 19, '08 Fossil Outing

with fossil hound Ashley Allen. He will show us a good time! Meeting at Jack's in Russellville at 9 am. Possible carpool from Hayden/Corner. Please call Joe at 205-965-4565.

Saturday, February 2

First race of Alabama Cup series: Locust Fork Invitational Canoe & Kayak Races

March 1st and 2nd

2nd race of the Alabama Cup Series: 27th Annual Mulberry Canoe & Kayak Races visit: www.mulberryraces.com

(continued on page two)

Birmingham Water Works and Sewer Board vs. free-flowing Locust Fork River:

SAGA UPDATE *By Sam Howell*

- BWWSB'S LATEST NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMPLETE
- BWWSB'S LATEST SOURCE ALTERNATIVES READY BY SUMMER '08

NEEDS ?

I learned of the completed needs assessment report while attending the "Drought Summit" staged by the BWWSB in November. This kind of report was critical during the first go-round of the proposed dam project, in the 90s (when FLFR was born). It provided lots of BWWSB assumptions for our team members to question.

FLFR is now working to secure a copy of this new public document, and, as before, it's not an easy process.

However, we understand the needs assessment advises an additional area water source to become operational by 2025, and it indicates various options, but no cost analysis.

COSTS?

Sonny Jones, BWWSB's water source project engineer, said the upcoming source alternatives report will recommend the most feasible "new" source, based upon numerous criteria, including costs.

GO- ROUND #2

Many of you remember the fight we Friends of the River waged with BWWSB in the 1990s over the first proposal to dam the river.

Only through hard and persevering work by many people of all walks of life did we declare "victory".

But we knew it couldn't be absolute victory as long as 1) the dam remained an option, and 2) uncontrolled growth continued across the BWWSB service area.

Well, FRIENDS, we may need to start dusting off the brain cells, sharpening those pencils, and updating the phone trolling list because the next round could begin as soon as Summer of 2008.

SUPPLY/DEMAND

FLFR is concerned that the Locust Fork will again be at the center of the gun sites of the "alternatives" study, despite the fact that since 1991 the BWWSB water supply has increased and water demand has decreased. Since 1991, BWWSB has merged with the Industrial Water Board - gaining access to the good n' plenty Inland Lake water supply. At the same time, Birmingham and Jefferson County populations have been in decline for the past several years.

FLFR has heard that no "preexisting circumstances" will sway the engineering studies and that all possible source alternatives will be studied objectively. Other alternatives include added water supply from the Mulberry Fork, an additional pipeline for added supply from Inland Lake, and a Coosa River option.

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OUTINGS & EVENTS

CONTINUED

March 14-16

Alabama Rivers Alliance
2008 Watershed
Leadership Conference
205-322-6395 or
www.alabamarivers.org

Saturday, March 29

Final Race
of the Alabama Cup:
Locust Fork Whitewater Classic
Canoe & Kayak Races

April

A spring paddle on
LF Section 6, water
permitting . date TBA



17th Annual LF Invitational
Canoe and Kayak Races
Saturday, February 2nd, 2008

Annual Mulberry Fork Races
March 1st & 2nd, 2008

16th Annual LF Whitewater
Classic Canoe and Kayak Races
Saturday March 29th, 2008

METRO TIRE LANDFILL *The Latest.....by Sam Howell*

WARNING :

LEGAL CONTORTIONS TO FOLLOW!

Since our last newsletter story on this landfill, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (now joining the process, after Black Warrior Riverkeeper and FLFR filed a "Notice of Intent to Sue") has submitted a "Consent Order".

VIOLATIONS

The consent order outlines the alleged violations against the Alabama Water Pollution Act and the Federal Clean Water Pollution Control Act by the landfill and the basis for penalties levied upon the owner, Metro Recycling Incorporated.

This past summer, waters apparently leaking from the landfill were shown to contain serious pollutants. ADEM had issued

warnings to Metro Recycling, but not taken any enforcement action.

Metro Tire Landfill will have a number of days to reply, agree, or rebut the consent order.

At this time, FLFR and our colleagues (read Riverkeeper legal experts) are unaware of a reply or rebuttal from Metro.

SATISFACTION

FLFR's continued efforts will be based upon what ADEM and Metro Tire Landfill negotiate as cause, penalty, and means to satisfy. If any proposed remedies are unsatisfactory, FLFR and our colleagues will make continued efforts to require Metro Tire Landfill to correct the problems addressed before re-opening for business.

FLFR will work to keep you, our membership, abreast of this continuing situation. We truly appreciate the over-whelming support you have shown FLFR.

Race for the Alabama Cup Begins February 2

Winter is paddling season for streams in the Southeast. And here on the Locust Fork River that means it's time for the Alabama Cup. The Alabama Cup is a whitewater racing competition that spans three separate races, the first and third of which are on our own Locust Fork. Get a calendar 'cause here're the dates.

The Locust Fork Invitational Canoe & Kayak Race is the first of the series and is coming up Saturday, February 2nd (it's traditionally the first Saturday in February) The second race of the series is the Mulberry Fork Canoe & Kayak Races on March 1st & 2nd (first wknd of March). The concluding race (and awards) is the Locust Fork

Classic on Saturday March 29th (the last Saturday of March – though there's talk of, after this year, moving to the first Saturday of April)

The two Locust Fork races are held at Kings Bend in Cleveland and are produced by you know 'em, you love 'em The Friends of the Locust Fork River (FLFR). These are primary educational and fund-raising events for FLFR and we sure could use your help.

For opensers you could round up a few friends and family and come be witnesses to the competition - everyone has more fun when there's a gaggle of spectators. In preparation you should dress appropriate to the weather - remember that it's always a few degrees cooler down in the river
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COAL BED METHANE DRILLING ON THE BANKS OF THE LOCUST FORK RIVER

by Sam Howell

FLFR has learned from some of our members that river property owners are being approached by companies interested in leasing for coal bed methane drilling. This is somewhat new territory for FLFR and we are currently working to learn more about the details of this process and how to ensure the protection of the Locust Fork River watershed.

WELLS

Coal bed methane is fuel gas located in coal seams that are otherwise too deep or thin to feasibly recover for coal. The Cahaba River and Black Warrior River basins have been subjected to coal bed methane drilling wells for years and the discovery of a large gas bed in St. Clair County has spurred additional exploration from the industry.

CONCERNS

FLFR is concerned because the technique used to extract the gas is often harmful to freshwater resources – ground water and surface water. The procedure typically used to force gas (and oil) supply out of the rock layers deep in the earth is called “hydraulic fracturing technique” (also known as “fracing” – rhymes with “cracking”). It involves injecting sand and chemicals into the well to allow the gas to move freely through the fracture and to keep the seam open. But the sand and chemicals can migrate to private water wells and surface waters.

In addition, other impacts to the watershed include the clearing of land for well pads, access roads, and pipelines, all of which can increase stormwater runoff and sediment loading. Not to mention how aesthetically displeasing this business is to our beautiful Locust Fork landscape!

REGULATIONS?

As you can see, there are many reasons for FLFR to be concerned about this process in the watershed. There are even members of the U.S. Congress raising questions about the methane drilling business. Some legislators want to see the practice of hydraulic fracturing investigated, and regulation studied more thoroughly because of problems that have been associated with the technique.

HELP IN LEARNING

We at FLFR are still learning about coal bed methane drilling and could use your help:

if you have experience with this business (technique and regulation) and could make the time to share it with us,

OR

if you are a landowner who has been approached about drilling on your property

please contact any board member(s), listed in the contact box. We would really appreciate discussing this issue with you. ***Thanks for your interest.***

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On Water Conservation

A tremendous amount of energy is wasted for the purpose of extraction, filtration, heating, and pumping water, often to flush down the toilet or water the yard.

- Install low-flow shower heads and low-use toilets to reduce consumption.
- Install a water heating system that only heats on demand.
- Take a shower instead of a bath and make it a short one.
- Wash fewer clothes and be sure to do it in cold water.
- Install Rain-barrels and Rain-gardens to harness natural resources and reduce run-off.

~ from Alabama Environmental Council's Top 10 Ways to Impact Climate Change

On Water and Climate Change

"Saving energy by saving water ought to be at the top of the list (for reducing CO2 emissions) because it will keep coal and oil in the ground, carbon out of the air, water in our streams, and money in our pockets...Saving energy by saving water will actually improve the environment."

Don Elder, FLFR hero, and national River Network president, at a recent conference

CANCER STUDY CONTINUES THROUGH SEPTEMBER

by Adam R. Snyder, Conservation Alabama

After a six-month effort led by the Friends of the Locust Fork River, Conservation Alabama, the Alabama Rivers Alliance, and 15 other conservation organizations, the Environmental Management Commission (EMC) voted 6-0 at the end of June to deny a request to reduce the risk of cancer in Alabama.

SIMPLE REDUCTION

The conservation groups made a simple request – reduce the amount of cancer-causing chemicals in Alabama's streams, thereby reducing the cancer risk in Alabama from 1 in 100,000 to 1 in a million people. Alabama Power, the Business Council of Alabama, the Alabama Coal Association, and the Pulp and Paper Council all balked at the proposal, exposing their apparent priority for higher profits over the health of the public.

DELAY

Despite more than 2,000 pages of data and comments, as well as an EPA recommendation of the 1-in-a-million cancer risk level, the EMC stated its reason for denial of the request was lack of sufficient information. The commission did, however, establish a committee to review questions and information.

TO COMMITTEE

Conservation Alabama and Mobile Baykeeper are the only conservation organizations represented on the committee of 15 individual and agency experts from around the state. Currently, the committee is charged with answering 33 questions submitted by the EMC related to cancer, cancer risk, and the economic costs of reducing cancer.

ADEM has set a deadline of the end of September to submit answers to these questions so that the full Commission can discuss the issue further at its October 19 scheduled meeting.

If you would like further information, please contact me at asnyder@conservationAlabama.org.

FLFR recently donated to the schools of Blount County a full DVD set of Dr. Doug Philip's acclaimed TV series, *Discovering Alabama*, received here by Stoney M. Beavers, Secondary Curriculum Coordinator for the county system. Blount County Schools, as well as Oneonta Schools, have worked with FLFR to help publicize FLFR's Day on the River and encourage kids and families to attend our riverside education event. (See article on the award it won!) Sharon Cook, FLFR board member, delivered the boxful of the entire series of DVDs. All teachers across the county may access these educational materials from the Blount County Resource Center.



Statewide Recognition for “Day on the River”... We All Won!

By Debra Gordon-Hellman (who applied for the award)

FLFR's Day on the River 2007 has been selected as an award winner in the Environmental Education Association of Alabama's (EEAA) 2008 Best Environmental Education Programs in Alabama (BEEP) Awards! The award will be made at EEAA's 20th Annual Conference to be held on January 31-February 2 at Camp Blue Lake in Andalusia, Alabama.

FLFR's Day on the River garnered this award because it demonstrated:

- an “outstanding effort by a community group to enhance environmental quality and
- citizen awareness of the environment”.

It more than met all the eligibility criteria by showing:

- “caring for our environment, promoting a greater understanding of people's relationship to the environment, promoting environmental education in the community, and using new and innovative approaches to environmental education”.

Kudos again to all.

Although FLFR and its dedicated Board members and volunteers, especially this

year's organizer Sharon Cook, are the canoe and oarsmen of the event, this award wouldn't be possible without the rest of the crew. We are indebted to the cooperation and/

or participation of the the following crew members: the Robert P. King family, Ashley Allen, Bama Backpaddlers, Birmingham Canoe Club, Black Warrior Riverkeepers, the Blount Countian, Blountsville Fire & Rescue, Blount County Schools, Cahaba River Society, Jamie Jarrard, McDowell Environmental Center, McWane Science Center, Oneonta Elementary School, Ruffner Mtn. Nature Center, Venture Scouts of Oneonta, Vera Vaughn. Thanks and appreciation to the following sponsors: Piggley Wiggly (Cleveland), Wal-Mart (Oneonta), Prosource Landscape Supply (Oneonta), Wolf Creek Creations (Pell City), and the Robert P. King Family. With our great team work, WE ALL WON!



Experimenting with a Miniature Watershed was another activity at Day on the River 2007

Yes, that's a grey rat snake, and yes, Day on the River fairgoers got up close and friendly.



Photos thanks to Nancy Crane

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. i.e. family reunions, baptisms, fishing, etc.

Still wishing:

Canoes, sit-on-tops, paddles

Custom picture framing

Raffle items

River stories, memories, pictures

EEAA is a non-profit group comprising: classroom teachers and other educators; local, state and federal agency personnel; business and industry representatives; and others involved in, or interested in, teaching about the environment and/or Alabama's natural resources. EEAA is an affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education .

EEAA conducts environmental education training workshops throughout the year, hosts an annual EE Conference, takes members on excursions to various natural sites across the state, sponsors an annual environmental awards program , offers financial grants to members for EE training opportunities, and even provides members with free thematic teaching trunks to help teachers incorporate environmental topics into curricula

(Race for the Alabama Cup Begins continued from page 2)

valley. Bring something wool or moisture resistant to sit on the rocks and maybe a stadium blanket, especially in February. Something warm to drink or eat is a good idea, which is why there's a Boy Scout Troop that comes and runs a kitchen selling coffee, hot chocolate, burgers and soup.

If you're the type that's figured out that it's often more fun to be one of the do-ers, then have we got a job for you - several actually. Mostly we need volunteers to be judges or scorers for 3 - 4 hour shifts the day of the race. You'll get a little training and have lots of company on the banks of the river. We're also keen on a few folks helping out on Friday for set-up, and Sunday for breakdown. For more on the volunteer opportunities please call Sam Howell at 205-706-4376 or pres@flfr.org. Stay tuned to our e-bulletins for details on the third race, the Classic, on March 29th.

We're hoping to hang some new practice gates for prospective racers as well as maybe have canoe & kayak or fly fishing clinics. See you on the River!

P.S. If you're not getting our monthly e-bulletins then drop me (Stephen) a line at members@flfr.org

DROUGHT, AGRICULTURE, GRAB AND WOES

Excerpted from articles by April Hall in a recent Alabama Rivers Alliance newsletter

DROUGHT AND the AGENDA

The extreme drought led to the Alabama "irrigation initiative" to study pumping water from rivers to farm ponds for use during dry times. It may also have led some burnt-out farmers to consider growing corn for a hungry ethanol fuel market.

These prospects only underline the critical need for a comprehensive statewide instream flow policy and sustainable use and management of our water resources.

The Alliance has been hammering at this critical need with its proposed Alabama Water Agenda. Please support the effort. See below.

WATER GRAB

The resolution of the water grab raging between Georgia, Alabama and Florida lies in the courts at present. While that process turns ever-so-slowly, the Army Corps of Engineers has adapted flows

from the headwaters of the Coosa River basin, and is updating its operational plan for the Chattahoochee River. Stay tuned.

WATER WOES

The drought revealed the lack of a water withdrawal regulation program in Alabama. Withdrawals of more than 100,000 gallons per day must be registered, but no evaluation of impact to instream or downstream is required. Once again, the glaring need for a comprehensive statewide policy stares us in the face.

DO YOUR PART

Please support ARA's effort to promote the Alabama Water Agenda. Endorse on-line at www.AlabamaWaterAgenda.com. Encourage your friends, neighbors and coworkers to help propel a water plan for the state. Explain to them how the drought has clearly and emphatically proven this critical need.

Be water wise:

- Follow all mandatory and voluntary water use restrictions
- Use native plants in landscaping to reduce irrigation needs
- Wash your car only at facilities that recycle their water
- Re-use stormwater from roof drains, and bath and shower water for outdoor irrigation
- Take quick showers instead of baths
- Repair leaking faucets and toilets
- Don't run water while brushing teeth or shaving
- Install low-flow showerheads, faucets, and toilets
- Reduce your electricity usage: saving energy saves water (and saving water saves energy!)

PILOT OFFICE PAPER RECYCLING PROGRAM

The Alabama Environment Council's long-standing recycling program is partnering with Birmingham Recycling and Recovery to establish a pilot program to enlist 100 local businesses to capture all of their paper, and recycle it instead of landfilling it. For a small fee, businesses in the Birmingham area will receive a 96-gallon recycle bin for office paper that will be picked up on a weekly basis. To help the effort, call AEC and leave a message at 205-322-3126.

BWWSB and FLFR Saga Update (continued from page 1)

CONSERVATION, AGAIN??

FLFR will also press to know what BWWSB expects to gain in water capacity through the least costly means - surprise! - basic water conservation and efficiency. Conservation was a main anti-dam argument in the 90s, but FLFR has not seen much BWWSB action on this front — until the drought.

BWWSB's water conservation plan implemented during the drought was very effective — according to its own numbers. On an individual level, I personally spoke to one BWWSB rate payer who explained to me his family cut their water consumption in half during the Stage Three Drought Plan with very little discomfort to their way of life. FLFR has long maintained that truly making real strides to educate the rate payer might yield more additional water than the BWWSB might expect.

FLFR remains committed to working with partner organizations to make sure conservation is always part of the equation.

TEAMWORK

FLFR will keep you updated as best we can on new developments of the Dam Issue. You can help by supporting FLFR financially — earmark your donation to the Legal Fund, if you choose, but rest assured your donations will all be put to very good use. You can also fine-tune good water conservation in your homes and workplaces.

If you would like to receive (infrequent) email updates, please send an e-mail to Stephen Guesman at members@flfr.org. We need and appreciate your support, and know that by continuing to work together we will keep the Locust Fork free-flowing forever!

(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

Membership Musings

Hello, Friends. We have indeed figured out how to do bulk e-mails from FLFR — e-bulletins we call them. We intend to only use the e-bulletins to remind you of our monthly outings and in cases of urgency.

Of course you'll only be getting e-mails from FLFR if you give us your e-ddress. To do that — or if you'd like to get off our e-mail bulletins — please e-mail me at members@flfr.org.

Or use the handy Membership Form below. There's a space for your e-ddress right there next to your contribution amount. Two golden opportunities right there.

*Stephen Guesman,
Membership Chair*

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*

On the Critical Importance of Water.....

**World Water Day
March 22, 2008**

World Water Day is celebrated on March 22nd every year. The international observance of WWD is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro when the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution designating Mar 22 of each year as World Day for Water. For more info, visit the very interesting website (that's for U. N., not for "un"):
www.unwater.org



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

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

Campfire Spud with beef & 'shrooms

- 4 - 6 oz. beef filets (*season as desired*)
- 4 - Large baking potatoes (*half baked and wrapped in several layers of foil*)
-
- 4 TBSP Butter (*Let butter get to room temp and mix with next three ingredients*)
- 1/4-1/2 tsp Garlic (*minced*)
- 1 TBSP White wine
- 1/4 tsp Black pepper
-
- 8 oz. Fresh mushrooms (*sliced or diced*)
- 1/2 cup Green onions
(*diced green and white parts*)

Sautee mushrooms and onions in butter mixture in nice size camp pot until done. Keep warm over fire. Finish cooking spuds in coals of the camp fire. Remember to have some tongs, gloves, or sticks to turn spuds. When spuds are done, put a grate over more coals and cook steaks to doneness desired... dice... mix with mushrooms. Take outer layer of foil off potatoes. Put on camp plate, cut length-wise and fluff 'n mash potatoes. Salt and pepper to taste. Then, stuff with steak and mushroom mixture. Slow Eddy says, "Bon Appetite, y'all!"



THE ALABAMA CUP

17th Annual LF Invitational Canoe and Kayak Races
16th Annual LF Whitewater Classic Canoe and Kayak Races
Annual Mulberry Fork Races
(See bottom of page 2 for more details)