



# the river's voice

The Official Publication of the Friends of the Locust Fork River Spring/Summer 2012

## 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.

## NOTE!!

### NEW MAILING ADDRESS

Now send mail to:

The Friends of  
the Locust Fork River  
P.O. Box 638  
Cleveland, AL 35049

## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE RIVER

**Sat. May 26**

**Annual Memorial Day hike.** Moderate difficulty hike downriver to Cornelius Falls as a joint outing of the Sierra Club and FLFR.

Go slow and talk wildflowers or scoot ahead for more playtime at the falls. Your brown bag lunch on the sunny rocks at the falls. Bring wading shoes and swimwear if you like. There's a carpool from Birmingham (check out (continued on page 2)

## Hey kids, come celebrate the river with us at DoR'12 on June 16

It's the 12th birthday for *Day on the River* and the party's already started. In April FLFR members and some new friends had a ball at Cleveland High. In *record time* they divided thousands of invitational flyers into classroom packets for Blount County and Oneonta schools. The party continues at Day on the River June 16th.

- Every child gets in a canoe or kayak, thanks to trained Birmingham Canoe Club members
- Big Dave and the friendly vipers of McDowell Environmental Nature Center are looking forward to meeting you in person
- Ashley Allen, teacher / paleontologist, returns with million-year-old fossils buried in sand ready for you to discover

- Free admission and free lunch for everybody
- (continued on page 3)

In record time this band of 12 divided 3500 Day on the River flyers for classrooms. Debra Gordon-Hellman was the Chief Operations Officer and the photographer.



## More photos from the 2012 Alabama Cup on page two

Shown to the left: Ray Ingram & Jennifer Taylor cutting hard for the next whitewater gate.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE RIVER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

www.flfr.org/outings for details). Or rendezvous at Tonka Shell in Cleveland at 9:30. Return about 2:30. For more information call Stephen at 205-919-6231.

**Wed. June 6, 10 a.m.**  
**Oneonta Library's Children's Summer Reading Program**  
*"Hoo, Hoo, Who's Out There?"*  
*Night Critters on the Locust Fork*  
 by Debra Gordon-Hellman.  
 Call the library for details (205-274-7641) or just come.

**Sat. June 16**  
**Annual award-winning Day on the River for kids.**  
*(See article on page one.)*

**Sat. July 7**  
**Annual hot n' hazy tube float.**  
 Call Leigh for info & signup 205-951-5194.

**Sat. Aug 25**  
**2nd Hotter n' hazier tube float.** With our new weather patterns, who knows what the water level will be? Call Nancy for info & signup 205-429-3090.

**Thurs. Oct. 25**  
**FLFR Covered Bridge Festival public meeting.**  
 Topic: Forever Wild constitutional amendment vote Nov. 6. Details TBA at website, newspaper & radio  
*(continued on page 4)*

## "HOUSTON, THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER DELAY"

~ by Sam Howell, Chief ALDOT liaison

Are we surprised? The on-going ALDOT project at the 79/231 bridge, including prospective river access, has been moved to the Guntersville Division (from the Birmingham Division), causing additional delays.

### WHEN A PUT-IN, THEN?

Short answer: Survey crews and ribbons could appear as early as this summer. Construction work, including a river-right access, could begin Fall 2012.

Longer story: This re-assignment helps distribute the workload within ALDOT. You may remember the "boots" were to hit the "ground" last fall.

Guntersville Division was to begin reviewing the plans for demolition,

utility relocation, and site work May 1st. They'll discuss their review with the original engineers (in Birmingham Division) to make sure "intent and implementation" are understood.

Within the next couple months, ALDOT will ask the utility companies to submit their plans and projected costs for relocating their lines from the old bridge to an under-river bore. The work platform necessary for heavy boring equipment on river right is thought to be adaptable at project's end to river access. At least that's my understanding of the plan *so far*.

Expect more review, etc. River-left access is projected to remain open until right access is open.

*So far*, so good for river access at this great site. **THANK YOUs** to ALDOT for its continued cooperation with us. *Stay tuned.*

## 2012 Alabama Cup Races



*Some judges and spectators at the King's Bend race site.*

*A solo canoeist finishes an upstream gate as a safety boater looks on.*





## Clean Water Act: 40 Years on

The Power of Water Campaign is coming to your next river adventure. This national campaign celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, our landmark federal environmental law.

In recognition of the Act, FLFR will be participating in the national effort this year to promote public awareness and renew grassroots support for clean water. While the Act has helped to greatly reduce point-source water pollution, more difficult non-point-source pollution continues widely to degrade our waters.

FLFR and other Alabama river groups will be cooperating to highlight the vital role

of clean water and encourage decision makers as well as the general public to safeguard Alabama's remarkably diverse, valuable and beautiful water resources.

The Power of Water Campaign is a major effort of the Clean Water Network, the largest coalition in the country work-

ing to protect the nation's precious water resources.

FLFR is a new member of the Clean Water Network.



## FLFR CONTACTS

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*Be environmentally friendly! Switch your subscription to the FLFR newsletter to an e-newsletter. For more info go to our website at [www.flfr.org](http://www.flfr.org)*

## Come celebrate the river with us at DoR'12 (continued from page one)

- FLFR bandanna for each kid

If you want to volunteer at this party, email Sharon Cook ASAP (otebear@gmail.com). Families can register for a day of good fun at [www.flfr.org](http://www.flfr.org). Click "Day on the River" for more information and registration forms.

AND there's another party going on! This year everyone is celebrating the 40th anniversary

of the Clean Water Act. Aren't we glad we have clean water at the Locust Fork River?

**See you June 16 at King's Bend off Highway 79 in Cleveland.**



*Just a few photos from last year's DoR.*



## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE RIVER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

**Sat. Oct 27**

### Covered Bridge River Walk

Fall colors walk along the river from Swann Covered Bridge to Powell Falls. Call Stephen for info & signup: 205-919-6231.

### November TBA

#### Horton Mill walk

(see story on page 5)

### Back by Popular Demand

Jim Lacefield, geologist extraordinaire, with tons more info from the 2nd edition of his blockbuster book, *Lost Worlds in Alabama Rocks*. Rocks and geology have never been this fun! Watch website, etc. for TBA details.

## Rafting the River

The annual Locust Fork raft trip was a big time for all, again. Donna Matthews, who took these photos, said she enjoyed "the congeniality of the group and the expert guides". She got to see new sections of our river, including paddling under a surprise giant overhang, with a beautiful waterfall plummeting nearby. Yup, our gorgeous river!

Donna also took 3D pictures and they're at our splendid website, [www.flfr.org](http://www.flfr.org).

This year the rafters included Barbara Anderson, vice-chair of the Blount-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce. She reported a "wonderful time with the group of some 30-plus folks. The Locust Fork River is truly a Blount County treasure that more of us should visit."

She submitted a photo of the trip and her trip "report" to the April issue of the chamber's newsletter, "Chamber Connection". *We appreciate her appreciation!*



*Assembling the fleet at the King's Bend put-in.*

*Reconnoitering the rapids below.*



*FLFR Cap'n Guesman in a sit-on-top kayak exiting a rapid with the safety boater behind.*

*Class I rapids that were a prelude to the Class II and III rapids to come.*



*Intrepid rafters*

*President Emeritus Sam Howell, center, waiting his turn to slip into the rapids*

## Umpteenth Annual Locust Fork Canoe Trip

~ by Vicky Wilson, veteran trip leader

The annual Friends of the Locust Fork River canoe trip is different every year. Sometimes five feet of water floats us and sometimes only one. Sometimes 50 paddlers join us and sometimes only 10. The temp may be in the 60s or in the 80s.

No matter, it's always a great adventure and the 2012 trip was, too. A 2.5 feet reading at the Cleveland 231 bridge meant not much rock scraping, and no rain in the previous week meant lots of clear water to view the always abundant fish and turtles.

Wildflowers blooming /perfuming the river included native azaleas, mountain laurel, and blue star. Birds tunelessly announced spring to everybody. Kingfishers, ducks and several osprey showed up to greet us. A surprise pair of bald eagles made this "boater chick's" day (that's me!).

Seeing old friends and making new paddling buddies made this trip one more great one. Join us next April. Watch the website and newspaper for the date and come prepared for a fine day canoeing the beautiful Locust Fork River.



## A Rendering of Horton Mill site

Therman M. and Georgia Horton operated the mill for 21 years, from 1894 to 1915. Top left to right: smokehouse, home, wellshed. Bottom: general store, corn and wheat mill; blacksmith shop, saw mill, barn, cotton gin. An earlier covered bridge is shown far right.

Horton Mill is downstream of the present Horton Mill Covered Bridge off AL 75 north of Oneonta. Joe Still leads an annual hike from the bridge to the mill. Call him for information. 205-965-4565.

## Forever Wild FAQ:

**Forever Wild. Say, what?** Forever Wild appears on the November 2012 general election ballot as a constitutional amendment. This remarkable statewide land trust program sets aside some of Alabama's finest land treasures for preservation forever. A favorable vote will extend its expired funding for 20 years.

**Will it affect taxes?** No tax dollars fund Forever Wild. Fees paid to the Alabama Trust Fund by natural gas companies drilling off Alabama's coast pay for the program.

### Who benefits from

**Forever Wild?** Forever Wild lands are public lands. They attract tourists and outdoor enthusiasts. They are a net positive for residents, businesses and governments. Everybody wins!

**Can Forever Wild take away anyone's land?** Absolutely not! Forever Wild acquires land only from landowners willing to sell.

### Where do I find more information?

Go to the Alabamians for Forever Wild web site. This coalition, including Friends of the Locust Fork River, asks you to **VOTE YES** for the Forever Wild constitutional amendment on the November ballot.



*FLFR is looking for stories about the river. We'd love to hear stories behind the stream's name; how the historic crossings and old bridges figured into the settling of the county; how the Forrest - Streight Raid played out up and down its banks; and more.*



*"Sure has been a long, dry spring."*

## River Tales Wanted

~ by Stephen Guesman, president

"Sure has been a long, dry spring. Why, I haven't seen the river this low since..."

Next time you hear a beginning like this, grab a pen and paper and start writing — because we're looking for a few good tales.

Actually we want a lot of good tales — about the river, that is.

### Announcing: Locust Fork Tales

The Friends of the Locust Fork River is kicking off a project to collect tales about the river and its main tributaries such as Blackburn Branch, Calvert Prong, Little Warrior. We're looking for the stories behind the stream's names; how the historic crossings (like Taylor Ford, Lingo Bottoms) and old bridges figured into the settling of the county; and how the Forrest - Streight Raid played out up and down its banks.

### Who Knows?

Please start asking questions and taking notes — if not for the tales themselves, then for the names and



contacts of the folks who have the tales to tell, and we'll follow up.

So for instance, our annual Memorial Weekend Hike to Cornelius Falls is coming up this May 26th. Every year as I peer at the manmade sluice and the iron remnants of a mill,

I wonder how it was built and operated, and whose lives it affected. I bet somebody's got a story about Cornelius Mill, (or Zion Mill at Cornelius Falls?) and we want to hear it.

### Please call . . .

The Friends (FLFR) will be ably assisted in this River Tales project by Amy Rhudy of the Blount County Museum and Historical Society. You can call her with leads and contacts at 205-625-6905. Or e-mail me, Stephen Guesman, at [friends@flfr.org](mailto:friends@flfr.org).

### Don't forget:

Note on your calendar the various outings that are described in the sidebars of this newsletter. These sites all have a history, too. And please consider bringing the kids or lending a hand at our award winning outdoor classroom, Day on the River, coming June 16th.

**See you on the river!**

## Education Committee Out on Summer Vacation ~ by Nancy Jackson

FLFR's gangbuster Education Committee chair, Debra Gordon-Hellman has taken a leave of absence. She needs more time for family issues at the moment.

As you have been reading in the past few newsletters, she has forged many new connections with educators, schools and school kids in the watershed. We need and appreciate these new outreaches to younger people and educators.

FLFR is now focusing on educating our public about

this incredible county / regional treasure. Our beautiful river and its environs will always be subject to depredations, and depends on a strong, diverse advocacy base.

We will continue to collaborate with educational groups: FLFR President Stephen Guesman is heading up the search committee for a new gangbuster to step into Debra's huge shoes. Are you game?

She'll be back, of course, but we want to "keep on flowing," so to speak, during her sabbatical.

## We're so proud of Cindy

*(The Locust is her "home" river)*

Last summer FLFR board member Cindy Lowry invited NAACP of Metro Birmingham under the umbrella of Alabama environmental issues with the event, "Sustain Our State." Ever since then, the NAACP has been a valuable ally for environmental groups looking at issues of social justice / environment.

In recognition, Cindy won the Women's History Award at the annual Women's History Celebration of the NAACP of Metro Birmingham March 31, 2012.

With degrees in Wildlife Science and Public Administration, Cindy joined the staff of Alabama Rivers Alliance in 2005. Since 2007, she has been ARA's executive director. Congratulations, Cindy!



*Cindy Lowry, the 2012 Women's History Award winner at the annual Women's History Celebration of the NAACP of Metro Birmingham.*

## NOW! WATER ACT BEFORE LEGISLATURE

~ by Adam Johnston,  
Alabama Rivers Alliance

Our governor is recognizing the importance of water management. A great step forward.

After a well-attended water policy meeting in April at which Mitch Reid of ARA spoke, Governor Robert Bentley directed Alabama's water-governing agencies to develop a statewide water management plan by Dec 1, 2013.

*(continued on page 8)*

*(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

☐ Please dedicate this contribution of \_\_\_\_\_ to the RosaMine.org Watch Dog Committee

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.*

## WATER ACT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

The Alabama Water Sustainability and Security Act (HB 674), pending in the Alabama Legislature, addresses the need for a statewide comprehensive water plan. The bill was assigned to the House Ag Committee, with a public hearing set for May 8th.

The House and Senate need input from you on the overwhelming need for a water management plan in Alabama. Please contact your representative and senator and ask them to support HB 674.

Thank you, everyone, for all you do for our state and its rivers!



The Friends of  
the Locust Fork River  
P.O. Box 638  
Cleveland, Alabama 35049

### EVERGREEN-ER



Our newsletter is  
printed on 100%  
recycled paper  
with soy-based ink.

# River Recipes

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

## Dutch Oven Chorizo Meatloaf

- 1 1/2 lb. lean ground beef or venison
- 1/2 lb. Chorizo sausage, removed from casing
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3/4 cup oatmeal flakes
- 1 to 2 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- 1 med. Poblano pepper, chopped
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, coarse grd
- 1 16oz. can enchilada sauce
- 2 cups (1 cup) jack  
(1 cup) cheddar cheese

Ummmm... this dish is a creek-banking favorite.... especially the leftovers! Mix the meats in large bowl and everything else except enchilada sauce and cheeses in another bowl. Blend liquid into meat. Make into a loaf (1 or 2) and put in Outdoor (with feet) Dutch Oven. Set oven over 6+HOT coals and cover top with coals. Can be cooked in conventional oven @ 350 for 1 hour or so. After 40 minutes, pour sauce over meat. Replenish coals when necessary. Most of the cooking is from the top. When loaf sets and/or is at 160 degees, cover meat with cheese. Cook until cheese melts. Remove lid; remove from coals and let rest for a bit. Slice loaf and spoon on sauce. Goes really well with garlic mashed potatoes.