

Join Today . . . Enjoy Hiking Alabama's Great Outdoors!

Alabama Hiking Trail Society, Inc. Member's Code: I understand that I am entitled to all rights and privileges of a dues-paying member; and that only members may hike the Trail across private property. When on the Trail, I agree to: Protect wildlife: hike only marked routes; not carry firearms; leave gates as found; use crossings on fences when possible: where permitted keep fires small, then drench and obliterate; carry out all refuse; report irregularities to property owners; pick up after those who have gone on before; leave only footprints.

I understand that hiking the Trail is a privilege and that I do so at my own risk. Neither the Alabama Hiking Trail Society Inc. nor landowners are in any way liable for any injury or accident I might sustain while hiking the Alabama Trail.

Name: _____ Address: _____ City: _____

County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____

Cell: _____ Email: _____ Employer/Occupation: _____

Family Membership Info: Spouse's Name: _____ Employer/Occupation: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Life *	\$750	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen	\$15 (65 & over)	General Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution *	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting *	\$150	Land Trust	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	\$200	Building Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Life	\$500				

I learned about the Alabama Hiking Trail Society, Inc. from _____

* Includes spouse and children 18 or younger.

Make checks payable to: Alabama Hiking Trail Society, Inc or AHTS. Mail to: AHTS, 1425 I85 Pkwy, Suite I, Montgomery, AL 36106 or use your credit card online at www.hikealabama.org.



ALABAMA HIKER

The Official Newsletter of the Alabama Hiking Trail Society



1425 I-85 Pkwy, Suite I, Montgomery, AL 36106
(334) 244-1579 - www.hikealabama.org

The Alabama Hiking Trail Society, Inc., is Alabama's foremost volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to planning, building, and maintaining hiking trails, and to the education for careful usage and enjoyment of Alabama's great outdoors.

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Celebrate the Environment and Alabama's Great Outdoors September 30th!

AHTS will be on the road September 30th to celebrate the environment and outdoor recreation in Alabama.

We will be in Flomaton, AL, as we join our friends at the Turtle Point Environmental Center for a celebration of Alabama's abundant natural resources. The day will be packed with exhibits and activities (see page 2 for the lineup.)

That same day we will also be at one of Alabama's most popular state parks, Oak Mountain near Birmingham for the Outdoor Alabama Expo presented by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

DCNR is suspending admission to the park for the day so visitors can take in all that makes Oak Mountain special. There will be dozens of "hands-on" exhibits including canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, fishing, and of course, hiking and backpacking presented by the Alabama Hiking Trail Society. AHTS will also host a hike on one of Oak Mountain's many beautiful trails.

There will also be an "Outdoor Alabama Retail Center" where you can browse and shop for the latest outdoor sports gear.

We hope you will make plans to join us for one of these fantastic celebrations. For more information about the Turtle Point event, contact J. Erik Douglas by email at edouglas@hikealabama.org or Turtle Point at (251) 296-3401 (or by email at turtlepoint@escambiak12.net). For the Outdoor Expo, contact Joe Cuhaj at jcuhaj.vppublicity@hikealabama.org. You can also contact the AHTS office at (251) 244-1579.



A couple enjoys the tumbling waters of Peavine Falls at Oak Mountain State Park, site of the Outdoor Alabama Expo September 30th

Make a Difference

We are busy planning the 2007 Trail Conference that will return to Cheaha State Park. During this meeting new officers will be voted on and installed.

The offices scheduled for election in 2007 are President, Vice President of Membership, Vice President of Public Relations, and Secretary.

All members are encouraged to seek a leadership role. There is much to do and new talent, enthusiasm, and ideas are welcomed.

Anyone wishing to run for one of these offices are encouraged to contact J. Erik Douglas at (251) 363-0539 or (251) 867-7608 or by email at edouglas@hikealabama.org

ALABAMA HIKING TRAIL SOCIETY, INC.
1425 I-85 Pkwy, Suite I,
Montgomery, AL 36106



Moving? Send your change of address to: ahts@hikealabama.org or the address below.

Forging Partnerships to expand the traditional outdoor hiking experience in Alabama.





Tailgating and Trailgating Into the Fall!

As the first hints of fall are arriving in the south, most of us look forward to tailgating and filling the stadium as we cheer on our favorite football team. Fall weather is also the calling card that Mother Nature delivers to the hiking community as well, announcing the beginning of a new outdoor "season"!

Most of the members of AHTS enjoy all of the above, filling our weekends and photo albums with memories to cherish forever. The board members have decided that since we are running late with our annual kayak raffle this year that we would spice it up by offering as a second place prize a nice portable grill, great for tailgating or trailgating! The grill mentioned is a Coleman® Road Trip LXE and the first place prize kayak is a Coleman® Quest with paddle. Members will be receiving in the mail soon a flyer and tickets that they can buy and share with their friends to support the worthy mission of Alabama's only statewide hiking organization, The Alabama Hiking Trail Society. As before, tickets will be \$5 each or 5 for \$20. The drawing will be held at our overnight car camp this November 4th at Geneva State Forest.

We look forward to your continued support of AHTS and hope to see you on the trail soon. Happy trails (and waterways)!

Mike Kennedy



Don't Be Left Out in the Cold

The 5th Annual AHTS Conference will be here before you know it. The Conference is set for March 30-31/April 1, 2007 and will once again be held at the beautiful Bald Rock Lodge high atop Cheaha Mountain.

As always, the weekend will be packed with informative speakers and this year will feature more "hands-on" presentations. We will begin posting conference information in September on our website, www.hikealabama.org and in the next issue of Alabama Hiker.

We can't stress enough that if you plan to attend you need to make lodging reservations early! While campsites should be available, hotel rooms, cabins, and chalets go fast! Contact Cheaha State Park for more information and to make your reservations.

Celebrate the Environment Day September 30th

Seven years after opening to the public, Turtle Point is celebrating a grand opening for the second time on September 30, 2006.

Celebrate the Environment Day is a community festival highlighting environmental issues, organizations, and education in Alabama. This year's attractions include Alabama's own world-famous Eco-Illusionist, Steve Trash. Steve Trash will entertain and educate the crowd with his magic tricks using garbage. Dr. Doug Phillips of Discovering Alabama will present a lecture and will be dedicating the new Discovering Alabama Wetlands exhibit. Professor Bobby Harrison and Artist Larry Chandler, both of Ivory-billed Woodpecker fame, will be at the event as well. Auburn University's Raptor Rehabilitation Center will be here with live birds of prey. A trio of environmental "edu-tainers" – Jimmy Stiles, Stephen Faughn, and Dave Holloway – will put on a great show highlighting Alabama's native wildlife.

This year's event will include the dedication of Turtle Point's new addition and several new exhibits. Museum Designer Jan Mize created a diorama of Alabama's wetland ecosystem and the Longleaf Pine ecosystem. This exhibit was funded in part by Legacy, Inc., Partners in Environmental Education and the DW McMillan Trust. Thanks to the generosity of Escambia County native John Walker Hoopes, they will also be dedicating a new fossil exhibit featuring the Basilosaurus cetoides.

The event will also feature representatives and informational booths from environmental organizations throughout Alabama and as we mentioned on the front page, AHTS will be there as well to talk about our beautiful Alabama landscapes that can only be reached by foot.

The gates will open at 9 am. Bring your family and some lawn chairs – the festivities will conclude around 3 pm. The event is free to the public. For more information, please call our office at (251) 296-3401 or email turtlepoint@escambia12.net.



Become a Life Member and ensure the preservation of Alabama's trails for future generations! Easy installment payment plans are available. Contact the AHTS office for details at (334) 244-1579 or by email at ahts@hikealabama.org.



Help AHTS and Get a Break

When you volunteer to help AHTS achieve its goals, your time and expenses are tax deductible! Here are some basic deductions you can claim:

- All out-of-pocket expenses * Mileage at 14 cents per mile
- Motel rooms - 100% deductible * Meals - 50% deductible

Please contact your tax preparer or accountant for details.

NEW MEMBERSHIP and RENEWALS

Your dollars contributed to AHTS, Inc. a tax exempt 501c3 non-profit corporation, are tax deductible and are your vote for support of an Alabama hiking trail system.

When you renew your membership, please consider renewing at a higher level of giving than last year. If this is the beginning of your membership, please consider giving at the highest level good financial responsibility will allow.

If you join between Jan-June each year, it is a full year membership, July-Dec: half year.

Most of our activities require no financial fees other than camping fees required directly by the campground or gas to drive to the activity location. Much of the planning is done by Activity Leaders who make it fun and easy for the participants. But it's not without work by dedicated people - your friends - who want you to have a great time.

THE a.H.T.S. STORE

AHTS Logo Patch (2.5" diamond)	\$3
AHTS Logo Patch (3" round)	\$3
AHTS T-Shirts (L, XL, XXL)	\$10

Books:

"Hike Alabama" by Joe Cuhaj
A guide to 48 of the best hikes in the state. All proceeds go to the AHTS general fund ...\$17.95

ECT Alabama-NW Georgia Handbook
40 pages covering hiker amenities and mileages from the AL-FL State line to the beginning of the A.T....\$5.00

DVD:

"Alabama Landscapes: A View from the Trail"
A 15-minute slideshow of only a few of Alabama's beautiful landscapes that can only be reached on foot...\$5.00

For items EXCEPT patches and the ECT Handbook, make check or money order payable to AHTS and mail to:

AHTS, 1425 I85 Pkwy, Suite I,
Montgomery, AL 36106

For patches add \$1 SH.
For ECT Handbook add \$5 SH.

Make checks payable to Rick Guhse'. Mail to:
41 School St., Keene, NH 03431

Please consider giving a little of your time to help the AHTS meet its mission. Plenty of volunteer opportunities are available. Contact the office at (334) 244-1579 to find out more about ...

- Leading an activity
- Helping with trail work
- Help plan new trails throughout the state
- Conference planning and organization

Farewell to a Dear Friend

It is with a sad heart that we pass along the news that a dear friend and member of AHTS and FTA / Western Gate Chapter, George Ferguson, passed away recently.

Those who knew George said he was a quiet and reserved man, generous and big of heart.

George's long time companion AHTS member Peggy Grantham wrote a letter to God for his service that sums up all that he was and we wanted to share a little bit of that with you. George will be missed, and Peggy, know our thoughts and prayers are with you.

* * * *

He was the kindest man I have ever known and most patient. What ever I wanted, wished for, or nearly liked, George got for me, he spoiled me in so many ways.

George opened the world up for me to see. He took me to Paris, London, Scotland, and Ireland. Europe became real to me not just a faraway place.

He was smart and constantly amazing me with all the real information that came out of his mouth.

George was steady like a rock, nothing seemed to upset him. In the 4 years I was with him I only saw him loose his cool a couple of times.

He never liked to ask for help but did not mind asking for directions. He never raised his voice to me or got angry with me though there were many times he should have.

He took me on so many trips to so many places, first a cabin in NC, then Europe, New England, a cruise to Mexico, Amtrak to Chicago, 3 long summer camping trips across America, Canada, and Puerto Rico. He supported me on all my hiking/camping activities I led or attended with the Florida Trail / Western Gate. I could not have done the 3 Trace hikes without him and I don't know how I will do another. I could ALWAYS count on George, whatever my need was.

Thank-you God for giving me four wonderful years with George Ferguson.



Special Presentation to be Held on the Manatee Fossils of Conecuh

You may recall hearing or reading about a 5 million year old manatee fossil recently discovered in Conecuh National Forest. Two herpatologists, Jimmy and Sierra Stiles, from Auburn University found the ancient fossil while on Yellow River on the east side of the Forest.

Both Jimmy and Sierra will be guest speakers of the Conecuh/Sepulga Watershed Alliance at Solon/Dixon Forestry Education Center September 10th, 2006. The Center is located on US Highway 29 at the Conecuh County/Covington County line Conecuh National Forest.

The presentation will start at 2:00 pm. Some of the members of Conecuh/Sepulga Watershed Alliance are also members of AHTS. The meetings and presentations are always informal and relaxed. Join our friends at the Center and enjoy meeting these two fortunate people. For more information on the program or directions to the Center contact J. Erik Douglas at 251-363-0539 or 251-867-7608 or email edouglas@hikealabama.org.

More Protection on the Way for Paint Rock River

If you have hiked the region around the Walls of Jericho and the Paint Rock River in north Alabama, you know what a special place it is.

The Huntsville Times recently reported that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a grant to increase protection of the environmentally fragile area.

The grant, known as the Landowner Incentive Program, provides \$865,000 over three years to reinforce stream banks thus preventing erosion and will provide fencing to keep cattle from contaminating the streams.

The grant will also provide additional protection of Fern Cave which is believed to be the country's largest habitat for endangered gray bats. Gates will be installed that will control public access to the cave.

2nd Annual "Give Us Your Best Shot" Photo Contest Announced

Dig out those photos from your favorite hike or your favorite Alabama landscape and enter them in the 2nd Annual "Give Us Your Best Shot" photo contest!

This year's contest will have some great prizes for the top three winners in 5 categories including the first place winners having their photos published in an edition of Alabama Living Magazine!

Complete rules and entry forms will be available in September online at www.hikealabama.org and in the next issue of Alabama Hiker.

Activities Calendar

Activity Leaders are VOLUNTEERS who plan the Activity for your enjoyment. All Activities are open to the Public unless otherwise noted which may be due to restrictions on the size of the group. To participate in Hikes, Camping Trips, Trail Work and Backpack Trips, YOU MUST notify the Activity Leader (AL) in advance that you will attend. Should you fail to do this you may arrive to find the trip changed to a different location or cancelled. Activity Leaders will cancel an Activity if nobody calls to participate. Your participation is important once you agree to take part in an Activity. If you need to cancel you MUST NOTIFY the AL.

Please check our website at www.hikealabama.org for last minute additions and changes

September

14 Trail Talk Thursdays (Shoals Group)
After a summer break, Trail Talk Thursday resumes in Florence, AL. The Shoals Group meets at 5:30pm the 2nd Thursday of each month at Alabama Outdoors, North Court St., Florence, AL. There is always an informative speaker and a chance to talk hiking with friends old and new. AL Bill Matthews (205) 757-8733 or billinflorence@aol.com

30 Celebrate the Environment at Turtle Point Environmental Center (Flomaton, AL) - See page 1 & 2 of this issue for details.

30 Alabama Outdoor Expo - Oak Mountain State Park
See page 1 of this issue for details.

October

08 Centennial Trail Hike (Gulf Coast)
Take a hike along the newly opened Centennial Trail at Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge. A series of boardwalks and footpaths connect the Pine Beach Trail and Jeff Friend Trail in the refuge and will take us to some beautiful wetlands and the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. Meet at 8am at the trailhead. Contact Joe Cuhaj (251) 533-1812 or jcuhaj@bellsouth.net.

12 Trail Talk Thursdays (Shoals Group - See Sept. 14)

14 Flagg Mountain Day Hike (River Region) Spend a fall morning hiking beautiful Flagg Mountain in Weogufka State Forest. Meet at 9am at the trailhead. The hike should end around 1pm. Bring along a lunch, plenty of water, and your day hiking gear. For information and directions to the trailhead, contact Mike Kennedy at slohiker@earthlink.net or (334) 657-3261.

22 Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center Day Hike (Gulf Coast-Three Notch Chapters)
A little gem deep within Conecuh National Forest, the Solon Dixon Center features lime sinkholes, caves, iron rock rings, and Blue Pond, a gorgeous 100-foot deep natural spring. Contact Joe Cuhaj (251) 533-1812 or jcuhaj@bellsouth.net.

November

04-05 Geneva State Forest Work Day / Car Camp (Three Notch)
Join the Three Notch chapter as we work toward completing the new loop trail around Geneva State Forest Lake. We will work on Saturday then camp that night (dinner will be provided by AHTS). Join us for the fun and fellowship! Contact Johnny Brewer at (877) 401-9059 or jbrewer@lbwcc.edu or and Mark Nichols at (334) 695-1708 or niiicchoollss@yahoo.com.

7-11 / 13-15: Pinhoti Trail Work Week and Hike
It's time to "groom" AHTS' section of the Pinhoti Trail. Come for a day or spend the week! Not only will there be trail work but also hikes along the P.T. as well. Bring work gear if you have it (loppers, gloves, etc.), otherwise they will be supplied. If you plan on coming for a day, bring day hiking gear, plenty of water, snacks, and lunch. If you plan on spending more than one day, bring camping gear (camping at Cheaha State Park is free for trail workers.) Anyone who volunteers for Pinhoti trail work receives a free Pinhoti Trail Krewe t-shirt! For more information contact Rick Guhse' at (603) 209-2441 or rguhse@hotmail.com.

11-12 Nubbin Creek Backpack Trip (Talladega National Forest)
It's time again for one of our favorite weekend trips in the Talladega National Forest, Nubbin Creek! We will meet at the Nubbin Creek trailhead at 9am and spend a few hours giving back to the forest by clearing some blow downs at the trail head. After a quick lunch we'll backpack out at noon to visit a spectacular gorge, several waterfalls, and camp on a ridge with beautiful views. We will return to the trailhead the next morning. For more details contact Mike Kennedy at slohiker@earthlink.net or (334) 657-3261.

18-19 Little River State Forest Hike-Car Camp-Work Day
Join us at Little River State Forest for a little "bushwhacking". On Saturday we will get off the trail and explore the forest including its rock outcroppings, ponds, and look for possible routes to build a loop trail around the forest. Saturday night we'll camp and visit around the campfire. Sunday, we'll do a bit of grooming on the Gazebo Trail. Contact Joe Cuhaj (251) 533-1812 or jcuhaj@bellsouth.net.

December

9 River Region Day Hike
Join us for a day hike. Location to be determined. Stay tuned! For more details contact Mike Kennedy at slohiker@earthlink.net or (334) 657-3261.

26-30 Flagg Mt Work Week
Spend a day or the week as we continue work on the new trail at Flagg Mt! Enjoy the peace and serenity of the mountain and great fellowship on the trail and around a roaring fire in the fire place of the CCC pavilion. You can either pitch your tent or spend the nights in the enclosed CCC pavilion at the tower atop the mountain. For details on times and what to bring, contact Mike Kennedy at slohiker@earthlink.net or (334) 657-3261.

March 2007

A Pinhoti Trail Work Week will be scheduled in late March. Dates will be announced on our website and the next issue of Alabama Hiker.

The History of the Pinhoti Trail (Part II)

by Michael Leonard

In the first article about the background of the Pinhoti, I mentioned how I moved to Birmingham in 1978 and became involved in the effort to protect the Cheaha Wilderness which is home to the highest and most popular portion of the Pinhoti Trail. That effort taught me a great deal about how Congress works and provided me with Congressional contacts that I later relied on as we began to work to link the Pinhoti Trail to the Appalachian Trail.

But the background of my involvement in the Pinhoti began before the signing of the Cheaha Wilderness Legislation in January 2003. I took my first long hikes on the Appalachian Trail when I was 16 and 17 in 1969 and 1970. That led to a fascination with the Appalachian Trail, buying books about the Trail and reading the history of how the original planners and builders of the Trail routed the Appalachian Trail along spines of National Forest land between the Shenandoah National Park and Springer Mountain.

I distinctly remember pouring over a Road Atlas during a trip to Seattle and California in August 1970 and looking at how the Talladega National Forest runs southwest to northeast across east Alabama and points toward the southwest end of the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest in northwest Georgia, to the west of I-75. I also saw how the Armuchee District leads southwest to northeast and points toward the large Cohutta region of the Chattahoochee National Forest which lies in the Blue Ridge east of the Conasauga River Valley. I noticed how a belt of the Chattahoochee National Forest runs northwest to southeast from the Cohutta area to Springer Mountain and the Appalachian Trail. And sitting there in the car somewhere between North Carolina and the Colorado Rockies, I took a pen and drew a line following the basic "spines" of National Forest land outlined above and first dreamed of the basic route that has ultimately been utilized to link Alabama's mountains to the Appalachian Trail.

While I was in college and law school in Chapel Hill, North Carolina between September 1971 and May 1978, I focused on studies, fun and a good many hikes in the mountains of North Carolina. Meanwhile, unknown to me, the U.S. Forest Service in Alabama began planning the Pinhoti Trail along the length of the Talladega National Forest in Alabama. Thus, when I first spent time in Alabama during the summer of 1977 while working for Cabaniss Johnston, a Birmingham law firm, I realized that the Pinhoti was being constructed along the mountains in the Talladega National Forest. As a result, I first began to truly think and talk about the possibility of linking the Pinhoti Trail to the Appalachian Trail. Indeed, in late 1977 and early 1978, when I was considering where to work after graduating from law school at the University of North Carolina, the thought of being able to work on linking Alabama to the Appalachian Trail had some influence on my taking the job offer in Birmingham (though the fact that in 1978 my Birmingham law firm paid more than any firm in North Carolina and as much as the biggest firms in Atlanta probably had more influence).

Regardless, I moved from North Carolina to Birmingham over Memorial Day weekend in 1978. Three weeks later, after a Father's Day visit to my brother's house in Atlanta, I drove back to Alabama through Cedartown, Georgia (instead of going back on I-20) and looked at the "lay of the land" between Indian Mountain, on the State line, and Dugger Mountain. I even drove gravel roads leading through the Talladega National Forest from Piedmont and Dugger Mountain south to Coleman Lake which was then the north

end of the Pinhoti Trail.

Four years later, in September 1982, once it began to appear that the Cheaha Wilderness Bill would pass Congress, I returned to the mountains north of Dugger Mountain and the Talladega National Forest. This time, I did more than drive around. I began visiting county courthouses in Centre and Heflin, looking at tax maps and land records and figuring out who owned the land along several different possible routes between Dugger Mountain and the State line just east of the top of Indian Mountain. As a result, I learned that the land along the mountain ridges north of Dugger Mountain was owned in large blocks by timber companies and that you could cover all but a half mile of the 20 to 25 miles between Dugger Mountain and Indian Mountain by dealing with only four landowners. Other routes that I looked at (for example, trying to go from Dugger Mountain to public land at Little River Canyon involved dozens of landowners).

The analysis, therefore, became simple: imagine putting together a real estate transaction with one owner who owns several thousand acres that will provide several miles of trail versus putting together transactions with fourteen owners to put an equivalent amount of trail on the ground. From the simple standpoint of the best utilization of limited time and resources available, we had to choose the route that involved four owners instead of dozens of owners.

It just so happened that the route with the fewest owners was also a high, mountain crest route. Thus, the choice became even easier.

And, as it turned out, the most practical route was also the route I had drawn on the maps in the Road Atlas when I was 17, the route from Dugger Mountain north and east to Indian Mountain and then into Georgia.

Before starting to work on the Pinhoti north of the Talladega Forest, we needed to have a non-profit committed to pursuing the goal of connecting the Pinhoti to the Appalachian Trail. It was not really a suitable task for advocacy groups like the Sierra Club or the Alabama Conservancy (which later became the Alabama Environmental Coalition). Thus, I began to work with a trail group in Birmingham in 1983 and 1984 to see if that group could effectively take up the "cause".

For various reasons, that group's focus was elsewhere, and I ultimately decided that getting the group to change its focus was taking energy and time that needed to be spent on the trail effort.

Thus, in early 1985, George Blynn, Steve Spencer and I incorporated the Alabama Hiking Association which later changed its name to the Alabama Trails Association and which has played the major role constructing the trail between the Talladega National Forest and the Georgia state line. Of course, the Alabama Trails Association continues to work on the Pinhoti today. Indeed, I am still on the board of the Alabama Trails Association.

At the same time, Alabama Conservation magazine ran an article entitled: "It's About Time! For A Plan To Link Alabama's Mountains To The Appalachian Trail". In many ways, I date the formal effort to link Alabama to the Appalachian Trail from the incorporation of the Alabama Trails Association and the publication of that article in February 1985.

Trail Reports

Pinhoti Trail Report by Rick Guhse'

As we all know summer can be a damaging time for trails. As I write this report I'm happy to say there have been no storms entering the Gulf of Mexico and going north into Alabama's Appalachian Mountain Range, nor are there any on the horizon. That could change as the season moves into September but if we have a quiet summer and fall stormwise we'll get a reprieve from clearing blowdowns from the trail and can do a lot more trail maintenance.

Our next scheduled work days are November 7-11 and 13-15, 2006. That's a Tuesday through Saturday followed by a Monday through Wednesday. In the past I've scheduled trail work in late September but have found it still quite hot during the day. Because we have to carry a chain saw, weed whacker/brush cutter, and push and pull mowers on and off the trail I'm hoping for cooler weather in November. Summer growth alongside the trail will be great and this is the time to remove it for the winter hiking season.

In addition to camping gear, a lawn chair, clean clothes, and work clothes, trail workers should bring a backpack and all their backpacking gear as we may decide to camp on the trail for one night. Two places that call for this are the Hillabee Creek area which requires a long walk in and a long walk out and the Cheaha Wilderness.

I need Section Leaders who want to take over parts of our 31.7 miles of the Pinhoti Trail we maintain. Section Leaders hike their piece of trail every three months to report needed trail work. They aren't responsible for doing the trail work but are responsible for scheduling trail work days once every other month. Trail work can consist of nothing more than a clip and cut with loppers and hand clippers. It's some of the most rewarding work I've ever done and it may become so for you, too. Trail work required by a larger crew can be scheduled by others.

Geneva State Forest Report by Johnny Brewer

Mark Nichols and I worked at Geneva State Forest Lake on July 15, flagging an additional mile of trail. We were joined briefly by Greg Piland, Forest Ranger for Geneva SF, who was interested to see just how far around the lake we've gotten so far.

By the end of the work day, we were about half way around the lake. Near the point where we stopped, we found extremely thick brush, which Chris Mead, Forest Supervisor for Geneva SF has informed us will be taken care of by prescribed burn.

Our next work day will be September 16, on which day we will cut the newly flagged trail as well as re-mow the trail we cut in May.

We will also be having a workday/campout on November 4 and 5. Join us for the work day that Saturday and the car camp that evening. Dinner will be provided by AHTS. If you come to the car camp, bring all camping supplies, especially water, as there is no potable water at the lake. If coming to the workday, all trail tools will be provided. Contact Johnny Brewer (877) 401-9059 or jbrewer@lbwcc.edu or Mark Nichols (334) 695-1708 or nniicchoollss@yahoo.com.

Little River State Forest Report by Joe Cuhaj

It was another warm (understatement) day as the Three Notch and Gulf Coast chapters once again joined forces to groom the trails of Little River State Forest.

Emily and Marion Campbell (Mobile), Erik Douglas (Brewton), Johnny Miller (Brewton) and I got things rolling at 8am. We had arrived expecting thick overgrowth since our last grooming in May but instead we were pleasantly surprised that the trails held up fairly well. With Emily's Yazoo mower and AHTS' DR, a little lopping and weed-eating by Marion and we made quick work of trimming the Gazebo and Bell Trails.

We finished the Gazebo by 11am and after an hour break, took care of the Bell in about another hour. Afterwards, I can testify that the swimming in Little River Lake is GREAT!!!!

Hopefully this late summer grooming will last well into the fall. Our next meeting will not be a work day but an "exploratory" weekend. We will car camp at LRSF on November 18-19. On Saturday, we will bushwhack around the forest, exploring for interesting locations to route a loop trail around the 900+ acre forest including those elusive rock outcroppings.

Saturday night we'll camp, chat, and eat around the campfire. Perhaps if enough people join us we'll make it a big pot-luck dinner (as we get closer, call for an update on this.) Otherwise, bring along your day hiking gear with plenty of water and lunch, car camping gear, dinner and breakfast. Contact Joe Cuhaj for more information: jcuahaj@bellsouth.net or (251) 533-1812.



The Little River SF Crew 8/20/06: (L-R) Joe Cuhaj, Johnny Miller, Marion and Emily Campbell, and Erik Douglas

The deadline for the November -December issue of Alabama Hiker is October 16th! Please share your photos and hiking stories. Send them to Joe Cuhaj jcuahaj.vppublicity@hikealabma.org.