

CURRENTS

Newsletter of Flint River Conservation Association

<http://flinriverconservation.com>

January 2006

A Happy Holiday season

FRCA and its members had a very happy holidays enjoying another Potluck Christmas Party last month. FRCA held its annual holiday gathering at Burritt on the Mountain with over 40 people visiting the mountaintop museum to share their company, knowledge, love of the river, and of course their favorite recipes.

This is also the time of year when FRCA elects its Board of Directors, so elections were conducted at the meeting as well. The new leaders of FRCA for the coming year are: Lynn Leach, President; Soos Weber, Vice-President; Andrea Hardy, Secretary; and Joe Imhof, Treasurer. Other Board of Directors elected include: Ben Ferrill, Membership coordinator; Lance Brecht, Special projects coordinator; Allison Bohlman, University liaison; and Dawn Lemke, Communications chair.

We are always SO happy to see so many people at the Christmas Party, and wonder why we can't get this many people to come to EVERY meeting... maybe it's the food! Thanks to everyone who cooked the wonderful side dishes and desserts and we hope we'll see everyone more often than once a year!!! In that vein, our next members meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7th at 6:30 pm at the City of Huntsville Engineering Department.

What's Happening in (and for) the Watershed

ADEM's Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference on January 25

Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management will host its 17th NPS Conference at the Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center in Montgomery on Wednesday, January 25th. The theme for this year's conference is "Making a Difference in Nonpoint Source Pollution: From Education to Implementation." Session topics will include Looking Back at Successes, Education and Outcomes, Stream Restoration Projects, Clean Water Partnership Updates, ADEM and EPA Updates, and Watershed Management Plans. The conference runs from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm, registration is FREE, and lunch is provided. To receive registration information, contact Molly Tatum at ADEM, (334) 394-4360.

Madison County Soil & Water Gets 319 Grant for Watershed Improvements

Madison County Soil & Water Conservation District has landed its third "319 Grant" from the U.S. EPA for agriculture-related watershed improvements. Brier Fork Creek and Beaver Dam Creek sub-watersheds of the Flint are the targeted areas for this particular grant. Cost sharing will be available to landowners who wish to install BMP/conservation practices on their farms. The cost share rate will be 75%, and there should be approximately \$300,000.00 available for these projects. A public kickoff meeting is being scheduled on February 28 at Alabama A & M University, however the meeting time not yet set. For more information, contact Sam Sandlin, Flint River Watershed Coordinator, at 532-1677 extension 3.

Alabama Rivers Alliance Leadership Conference on March 24-26

ARA will host its 8th Annual Leadership Conference at the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana, AL on March 24th-26th. Conference topics are being developed, but in addition to great speakers the conference also features a River Jam, live and silent auction and guided field trips. This event is a MUST for anyone who cares about rivers -- it offers you an opportunity to network and gain inspiration from fellow river lovers from across Alabama and registration costs are always VERY reasonable. For more information, go to their website at www.alabamarivers.org!

From the President...

I'd like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year! There are many reasons to be excited about the year ahead for FRCA. Our Board is ready to roll up their sleeves and get busy building membership and getting our message of protecting our Flint River watershed to everyone we can. One new action is training our members to be "Watch Dogs" for violations pertaining to construction sites, both in Huntsville city and Madison county jurisdictions. We hope the folks at ADEM and the city and county engineers know our members will be watching to make sure all developments in our area are in compliance with regulations. Another exciting opportunity open to our general membership, is to fly over the Flint River and see firsthand where non-point source pollution is coming from. Southwings, a non-profit organization, has a pilot in our area who will fly up to three people to get a bird's eye view of what is really going on along the banks of the Flint.

In the very near future, we are also planning a guided hike for our members to visit the Keel Mountain Preserve. This member's-only hike will be held on **Saturday, February 4th beginning at 1:00 pm**. For more information, see the article about the hike on the next page. Please come along and join us!

Thank you for your support, I hope I will get a chance to meet each of you and that together we can continue to have a positive impact on our community.

Lynn Leach
FRCA President

Alabama Water Agenda

The Alabama Rivers Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center held a meeting last March after soliciting comments from the public on the most critical water issues in our state. The top 10 threats were Suburban Sprawl, urban storm water, in-stream flow, buffer zones, state and federal agency problems, lack of a comprehensive state water policy, enforcement, funding, and quarries. Stream restoration, protection of aquifers and groundwater, agriculture and CAFO's conservation, coal mining, mercury levels in waterways and aquatic habitat protection were also deemed very important. These "impairments" were discussed and solutions were offered. If members want to read the entire report it will be posted on FRCA's webpage soon. We hope to discuss how FRCA can take a pro-active role in helping the implementation of ideas that will improve Alabama's waters.

FRCA has decided to join Alabama Reform Coalition. This umbrella organization is made up of 30 environmental groups and the Coalition's sole purpose is to encourage ADEM to "do the right thing." With their help, North Alabama has its first representation on ADEM's Environmental Management Commission. Dr. Kathleen Felker, a radiologist from Huntsville, is also the first woman to ever serve on this board! We hope that she will agree to be a speaker at a future FRCA members meeting.

Promote Recycling in Huntsville!

The curbside recycling program was initiated in Huntsville in 1989 with great fanfare and good participation. In recent years, however, the amounts collected have been steadily decreasing as participation has declined.

Disposing of recyclable materials as garbage costs the residents of Huntsville about \$40 per ton. This is an unnecessary waste of tax dollars. Simply doubling the 4,200 tons collected last year would save over \$150,000/year. Garbage disposal costs could be reduced further by returning glass to the recycling program and by recycling more items such as computers and cardboard. Other cities do it, why can't Huntsville?

So... What you can do to promote recycling? If you live within the Huntsville city limits, contact your city council member and voice your support for recycling. You can call Huntsville City Hall at 427-5011 or send an email directly to your City Councilman:

District #1: Richard Showers, Sr. (Richard.Showers@hsvcity.com)

District #2: Mark Russell (Mark.Russell@hsvcity.com)

District #3: Sandra Moon (Sandra.Moon@hsvcity.com)

District #4: Bill Kling (Bill.Kling@hsvcity.com)

District #5: Glenn Watson (Glenn.Watson@hsvcity.com)

Several city departments and offices are involved, and coordinated action is needed. You can contact these departments and urge them to coordinate their efforts to promote recycling and reduce the amount of garbage:

Solid Waste Disposal Authority: 880-6054 (Doc Holladay at doc@swdahsv.org)

Sanitation Department: 883-3964 (Kathy Hunt at Kathy.Hunt@hsvcity.com)

Operation Green Team: 427-5000 (Joy McKee at Joy.McKee@hsvcity.com)

Public Communications Dept: 427-5006 (Melissa Bullard at Melissa.Bullard@hsvcity.com)

And for those that live outside of the Huntsville city limits but within Madison County, you can still contact Doc Holladay at the Solid Waste Disposal Authority as they are the waste collection agency for Madison County as well. Also In the county, some of the commissioners provide recycling at the county sheds. People should call their commissioner to find out if they have it. And anyone in Madison County can bring hazardous waste for recycling on the first Saturday of each month at the Landfill on Leeman Ferry.

If you want to do more, contact Paul Wieland at 539-8976 or 426-4325 or via email at wiseland@hiwaay.net.

Members Only Field Trip To Keel Mountain

Join FRCA on Saturday, February 4, beginning at 1 pm for this members-only hike. This IS a mountain hike and we will climb an elevation of about 700' at the Nature Conservancy's Keel Mountain Preserve. You will see a disappearing spring and one of the largest sinkholes in Madison County. Dress for the weather, with boots, water, and a snack. The hike will be about 2 miles round trip. The group will meet near the AmSouth Bank in the Publix Shopping Center at Hampton Cove on Highway 431 South. For more information, contact Soos Weber at 427-5116.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Threatened

The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) which has been used by many conservation groups for the purchase of new parkland, particularly east of the Mississippi River, was zeroed out in the President's budget and the federal LWCF is severely cut. If you love your parklands and sanctuaries, you can call and leave a message asking for the funding to be restored and increased. In this area, the Wade Mountain Preserve and Cold Springs Natural Area are just two of the areas paid for by LWCF money. To call and voice your opinion, it is toll free at 1-888-FIX-LWCF or 1-888-349-5923. Protecting our green spaces is one way of protecting the watersheds of our rivers and streams from non-point source pollution (NPS).

How To Reach Us

FRCA's new Board of Directors are happy to hear from members any time about issues important to you or FRCA. Below is a list of contact information for YOUR Board and also for other Flint River affiliates...

President:	Lynn Leach lynneleach@bellsouth.net (256) 776-4015 (h)	Vice-President:	Susan Weber susan.weber@hsvcity.com (256) 539-3747 (h)
Secretary:	Andrea Hardy Bambinos3@yahoo.com (256) 533-4330 (h)	Treasurer:	Joe Imhof janddi_1279@bellsouth.net (256) 382-8390 (w)
Membership:	Ben Ferrill Ben.Ferrill@hsvcity.com (256) 427-5100 (w)	Communications:	Dawn Lemke dawnlemke@aol.com (256) 533-9472 (h)
Special Projects:	Lance Brecht lancebrecht@earthlink.net (256) 379-2445 (h)	University Liaison:	Allison Bohlman abnailed@hotmail.com (256) 656-3334

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7 at 6:30 pm at a NEW LOCATION!

The next FRCA member's meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7 at the City of Huntsville Engineering Department beginning at 6:30 pm. The Engineering Department's building is on the intersection of Fountain Circle and Williams Street, and across from the Bicentennial Children's Park. To come to the meeting room, enter the front double doors of the building and look for the FRCA signs to the meeting room which is located on the first floor.

The speaker for this month's meeting will be Lesley White. Lesley has a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from University of Alabama at Birmingham and also holds a Master's Degree in Biology from UAH. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at Alabama A& M University. Lesley is a stream ecologist that has worked on several research projects focusing on the Flint River. She will be speaking on biomonitoring in stream ecosystems and sharing past research experiences in the Flint River.

PLEASE JOIN US!

The Flint River Conservation Association is a non-profit organization. Only by your memberships and donations can we do the many projects we do each year. Individual memberships are only \$10, and family memberships are \$20. Please use the Membership Form below to renew your FRCA Dues. If you are unsure about the status of your FRCA Membership, please refer to the expiration date on your mailing label, or contact Ben Ferrill, FRCA Membership Coordinator, at 427-5100. You can also choose to receive your Currents, the FRCA newsletter, by email instead, saving stamps and trees...simply add your email address on the form and mark the "Save Trees" line on the form.

FRCA Membership Form

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

_____ **SAVE TREES** – Please save trees & stamps by sending my "Currents" newsletter by email instead of postal mail.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS: (please check your choice below)

_____ **Individual** - \$10 annually _____ **Family** - \$20 annually _____ **Life** - \$1,000 one-time payment

Make checks payable to FRCA and mail to FRCA, P.O. Box 275, Brownsboro, AL 35741