



## **Alabama Hog Sucker (*Hypentelium etowanum*)**

An Alabama hog sucker is the mascot for our Creek Kids Program at Tannehill State Park. The Alabama hog sucker is a fish with a funny name and funny lips. For a sucker, an Alabama hog sucker is small, no longer than a foot long. An Alabama hog sucker likes to eat aquatic insects.

An Alabama hog sucker has a relatively large, rectangular brown head with the snout and lips tinged with orange. The hog sucker's back is charcoal, the bottom cream or white, and the sides mottled charcoal and cream. It has four or five dark bands that cross its back. All fins are light orange-red to cream mottled with charcoal.

Hog suckers live in the faster currents of streams with small rocks or sand on the bottom. The Alabama hog sucker uses its head to push rocks out of its way and then slurps up the mud and immature insects found under the rock.\* The fish expels mud out of its gill opening and swallows the insects (mostly midge larvae).\* The shape of the Alabama hog sucker and its large pectoral fins help it to stay in fast water.\*

The Alabama hog sucker and other Alabama aquatic animals live in habitats that are diverse and healthy. Humans need to be sure their activities do not affect the diversity and health of our habitats.\*

### **\*Vocabulary**

Diverse habitats – in a stream, diverse habitats include a variety of substrate, water speeds and depths.

Immature – have not yet become adults; some insects look very different depending upon whether they are immature or mature.

Larvae – an immature insect of a species that changes (undergoes metamorphosis) into adult; larvae and adults look very different (caterpillars are larvae and butterflies are adults).

Midge – an insect that, as an adult, looks like a mosquito, but it does not feed as an adult.

Pectoral fins – a pair of side fins behind the head.