



Oak Mountain State Park near Birmingham will host the annual Exceptional Anglers event called “Gone Fishin’, Not Just Wishin’” on May 13 – 15, 2009. During the event special needs students from the Shelby and Jefferson county school systems, ages five to 21 with various physical and mental challenges, will be given the opportunity to fish. Students will also express creativity through art projects, perform with local musicians, listen to storytellers, and learn aspects of water safety including the proper use of life jackets.

Volunteers from many companies including ADCNR personnel will assist and teach students the sport of fishing. Students will each receive a keepsake photo of themselves with their catch. To make the experience a positive one, a small portion of the park’s lake will be enclosed and stocked with channel catfish and largemouth bass to make it easier to catch a fish. Saturday morning these fish will be available for the public to catch.

Alabama Superintendent of Education Joe Morton believes the Exceptional Anglers program and others like it provide students with unique opportunities to learn many things about the outdoors. “Most of these students may not have the chance to enjoy activities like this if it weren’t for the Exceptional Anglers program,” said Morton. “The support that the Jefferson and Shelby county school systems have given the program is indicative of their commitment to Alabama’s special needs children.”

This Community Fishing Program would not be possible without the generous support of area sponsors including Alabama Power, Alagasco, Consolidated Pipe, El Paso Southern Natural Gas, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, Oak Mountain State Park, the Pelham Police and Fire Departments, Coca Cola, Ebsco, Golden Flake, Academy Sports + Outdoors, Bass Pro Shops, Styx Bait, and more.

***Volunteers needed. Please contact David Renaud at 205.326.8312 or drenaud@energen.com.

