

Conservation Officer Champion Receives Life Saving Award

Morgan County Conservation Enforcement Officer Chris Champion recently received the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association Life Saving Award. The award was presented by Bill Brace, a regional director with NAWEOA.

On September 5, 2003, Officer Champion responded to a call for assistance from the Morgan County Sheriff's Department regarding a man with a gun in the Lacey's Springs Community. Morgan County Deputies Michael McCoy and Chuck Porter arrived along with Champion at the residence of James E. Hill, 44. Hill came out of his home with a 12-gauge shotgun and fired, grazing Deputy McCoy's head. All three officers took cover and Hill went back inside the house.

Moments later, Hill returned outside and charged Deputy McCoy, shooting him in the upper arm from approximately 8 feet away. Hill again pointed the gun at Deputy McCoy at near point-blank range, at which time Officer Champion demanded that Hill drop his weapon. Hill refused the order and Champion fired one shot, striking McCoy in the abdomen. Hill died later that night in after surgery at a Huntsville hospital.

In saving Deputy McCoy's life, Officer Champion was selected by NAWEOA to receive their Life Saving Award. NAWEOA is a 9,000-member organization of wildlife and fisheries enforcement officers from across North America. The association was founded in 1980.

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division Director Corky Pugh said, "Chris Champion epitomizes our highly professional, dedicated law enforcement officers. Our officers are well trained and equipped, and function as an integral part of the overall law enforcement community."

Conservation Enforcement Officers are state peace officers with full police powers statewide. Chief Enforcement Officer Allan Andress said, "Since the vast majority of people that our officers deal with on a day to day basis are peaceable, law abiding citizens, it is easy to become complacent about officer safety. It is events such as this that remind us of just how dangerous a Conservation Officer's job really is." DA



Bill Brace presents the Life Saving Award to Officer Chris Champion.

KIM NIX



Conservation Employees Receive Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards

Three Department of Conservation employees are recipients of the 2005 Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards.

Conservation Officer James H. Postma and Marine Police Lt. James M. Coleman received the Conservation Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. These two officers worked together on a sub-freezing night in the floodwaters of the Tombigbee River to apprehend two outlaws and find the necessary evidence to bring them to justice.

The officers confronted two suspected night hunters and found traces of evidence in their boat that indicated that they had illegally harvested wildlife and disposed of them on their run down river. With no other evidence, the officers were forced to simply cite the suspects for operating a boat at night without running lights. But before releasing them they took samples of the blood in the bottom of the boat for DNA testing.

After releasing the suspects, the two officers went searching for additional evidence, suspecting that the suspects had stashed their kill somewhere along the river bank. After searching a few likely spots they came upon the stash and found four antlered bucks hidden under debris along the flooded river bank. Later that morning they arrested both men.

Knowing they were busted, the outlaws pled guilty just before going to trial. Each received a \$2,000 fine, six months probation, and loss of hunting privileges for a year.

The officers showed their commitment and spirit of cooperation in working this case together.



L-R: Rebecca Pritchett, Alabama Wildlife Federation President, Ray Metzler, Willard Bowers, Alabama Power Company and Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley.


Willard Bowers, Alabama Power Company, Lt. James Coleman, Officer James Postma, Rebecca Pritchett, Alabama Wildlife Federation President and Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley.



Ray Metzler is the Hunter Safety Instructor of the Year. Metzler has been actively involved in teaching hunter safety for the last 10 years and serves as the state's Hunter Education Coordinator. He has demonstrated exceptional leadership by developing and implementing programs for hunter safety education that help enable all instructors to be effective and efficient while also highly entertaining to the youth being instructed.

In 2002, he led a team of professionals to create a new electronic course format for the Hunter Safety Certification Program that combines a study at home approach with a

one-day field course for certifying new hunters. This was the first of its kind in the nation and is being copied in 13 southeastern states.

Metzler is also actively involved in the success of other key programs such as Becoming an Outdoors-Woman and the rapidly growing Archery in the Schools Program. Most importantly, Ray is committed to the full team of instructors, the key to the success of the Hunter Safety Education Program in Alabama. Without this commitment the program would not be successful nor the envy of the rest of the nation. 

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American Canoe Association Recommends Bartram Canoe Trail

The American Canoe Association has selected the Bartram Canoe Trail as an “ACA-Recommended Water Trail” for 2005. Jeffrey Liebel, President of the Board Directors of the American Canoe Association, announced the selection at the Rappahannock River Running Free Celebration in Fredericksburg, VA, in July as part of the unveiling of the ACA’s 2005 Water Trails Initiative.

ACA-Recommended Water Trails meet certain threshold criteria and stand out as particularly good destinations for paddlers. The basic criteria are:

- ▶ The trail is a contiguous or semi-contiguous waterway or series of waterways that is open to recreational use by paddlers.
- ▶ The trail has public access points for paddlers.
- ▶ The trail is covered by a map, guide, signage or a web site that is of reasonable quality and detail and available to the public.
- ▶ Published or printed materials for the trail (e.g. guidebook, map, signs, website) communicate low-impact ethics to trail users.
- ▶ The trail is supported and/or managed by one or more organizations.

The Bartram Canoe Trail is now given special recognition in the ACA’s new Water Trails Database, now on-line at www.acanet.org. This database, with information on 400 trails in the United States and Canada, is the most comprehensive water trails directory on the web.


In addition, the ACA has recognized the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as a “Champion of Water Trails.” Champions of Water Trails awards go to people and organizations that are responsible for establishing and maintaining premier water trails around the country. Champions of Water Trails deserve special recognition for providing safe and enjoyable access to our recreational waterways, and sound stewardship of our natural environment. 



Fun Day for Fishing at Chambers County Lake

Chambers County Lake was the setting for a great day of fishing for 160 kids in May. Lake Manager Jeff Hadaway coordinated the event with several sponsors who provided t-shirts and lunch for all who participated. Prizes were also given away.

Fifteen hundred pounds of fish were stocked in a netted off portion of the lake to ensure successful fishing, and the kids were enthusiastic about their catches.

Local sponsors for the event were Bishop Equipment, Chambers County Sheriff’s Department, Clarksville Refrigerated Lines, Designs R-Us, George Green Construction, Givorns Foods, J&J Logging, Jeff Dodgen Logging, Ison Logging, LaGrange Equipment and Rental, Mr. Ice, Parker Foods, Quantum Communications, RFM, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and Wood Real Estate. 


Outdoor Alabama Magazine Receives National Honors



Outdoor Alabama magazine recently received third place honors in a national competition among natural resource agencies. The Association for Conservation Information, a professional organization of communicators who promote conservation, presented the awards at their annual meeting in Ogden, Utah in July. *Outdoor Alabama* received third place in both the magazine and calendar categories.

“It’s truly an honor to be chosen as one of the top three state agency magazines in the nation,” said Managing Editor Kim Nix. “We strive to provide quality content and photographs for our readers.”

Additionally, a brochure about the magazine called “Outdoor Alabama: Discover the Wonder,” received third place in the brochure category. An article by Eric Soehren entitled “Symbol of Elegance: The Swallow-tailed Kite” received a Special Award in the wildlife magazine article category.

Outdoor Alabama is the official publication of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. It is published five times a year with one issue being a calendar. Subscriptions are just \$8 for one year, \$14 for two years and \$20 for three years. Subscriptions may be purchased at www.outdooralabama.com or by calling 1-877-339-0508. 



Shoal Creek Preserve Now Open for Public Use

The Forever Wild Land Trust's Shoal Creek Preserve Tract in Lauderdale County is now open to the public. The tract consists of 298 acres of fallow fields, mature upland hardwood forest and scenic creek bottoms. It is managed by the Alabama State Lands Division of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The parking lot opens daily 1 hour and 30 minutes before sunrise and closes 1 hour and 30 minutes after sunset. The property is managed under a multiple-use philosophy for traditional recreational activities and has a 4.5-mile loop hiking trail and 2.0-mile loop horseback riding trail.

This tract will also be open to public hunting as provided under the laws of the State and Lauderdale County as designated by the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Legal arms for deer and hogs will be limited to primitive weapons.

Shoal Creek Preserve is located approximately 3 miles north of the St. Florian community north of Florence, Alabama. The tract can be accessed from Lauderdale County Road 61. A parking area is located approximately one-half mile off Lauderdale County road 61. The trailhead for both trails is located on the north side of this large parking area. The hiking trail is limited to foot traffic only. Horseback riding is permitted on marked trails only. ATVs and bicycles are not permitted. Additionally, camping is not permitted.

This tract was purchased through the efforts of the Forever Wild Land Trust, a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant awarded by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the City of Florence and the Lauderdale County Commission

For more information about the Shoal Creek Preserve Tract or the Forever Wild Program visit www.outdooralabama.com or call the State Lands Division at 1-800-LAND-ALA.

Third Annual River of Words Program Announced

Students throughout Alabama will have a chance to get their feet wet in science and the arts again this year as the third annual Alabama River of Words (ROW) program gets underway.

ROW, a National Center for the Book-affiliated international program, is a contest that promotes environmental awareness, literacy and the arts among the world's children and youth by encouraging young people to translate environmental science into art and poetry.

ROW is open to all kindergarten through 12th grade public, private and home-schooled students in the state. It is co-sponsored by the Alabama Center for the Book, the Auburn University Environmental Institute, AU Libraries, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, AU College of Agriculture and the Alabama Water Watch program.

Deadline for sending in entries to the ROW contest is Feb. 10, 2006. For more information contact 334-844-4946 or visit www.riverofwords.auburn.edu.

Purchase your Take a Kid Fishing Car Tag...

Proceeds from the sale of Take a Kid Fishing tags can only be spent on improving habitat, teaching kids how to fish and restoring Alabama's aquatic and threatened and endangered species.

- Make fishing in Alabama better through improved habitat.
- Provide education through expanded kids' fishing events.
- Protect Alabama's fishes, snails and mussels.

- Prepurchase your tag now at your local probate office for \$50 above the regular renewal price.
- Personalization is available at no additional cost.
- 1,000 tags must be sold before production begins.



"Join me in purchasing the new Take A Kid Fishing tag – for less than 14 cents per day, you can improve fishing in Alabama."

Ray Scott

For more information visit: www.outdooralabama.com