


Lawley Honored with Alabama Tourism Advocate Award

Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley received the 2006 Alabama Tourism Advocate Award in the Government category for his contributions to the travel industry. The selection was announced during the Alabama Governor's Conference on Tourism in August.

Lawley said his mission as commissioner was to position Alabama as the ultimate destination for nature-based tourism. In the process, he has demonstrated how to successfully grow the state's economic strength through enjoyment rather than exploitation of natural resources. He has been a catalyst for developing a bona fide nature-based tourism industry in Alabama. Under his leadership, DCNR and the Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel partnered to promote Alabama's beautiful outdoors destinations and activities. Both agencies cooperated to celebrate 2006 as the "Year of Outdoor Alabama," and as a result, "Outdoor Alabama" is now a household name and a message. The *Outdoor Alabama* television show promotes family activities such as bird watching, fishing, boating, camping and hunting, and *Outdoor Alabama* magazine showcases exciting destinations across the state.

Lawley thanked the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel and Director Lee Sentell for their support of his department. "I am proud that Alabama epitomizes Thoreau's claim that, 'Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads,'" he said. "From the magnificence of the Walls of Jericho to the Mobile Tensaw Delta, Outdoor Alabama is incredibly diverse," he added.

The award that was presented is among 12 that comprise the Alabama Tourism Awards. These awards, first given out in 1998, annually honor outstanding achievement in the state's tourism industry. Each award winner is recognized as a key player in making tourism a strong economic force in the state. The tourism industry contributes \$7.6 billion to Alabama's economy and supports 159,650 jobs statewide. 



Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley (center) is joined by his wife Deanna as he accepts the 2006 Alabama Tourism Advocate Award in Government from Lee Sentell, Director of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.



Liles Named Wildlife Conservationist of the Year

Richard "Rick" Liles, former Operations Director of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), was named 2006 Wildlife Conservationist of the Year at the annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards ceremony.

Liles served as the detail man to see that all functions of the Department were carried out in the most effective and efficient manner possible. He worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create and implement an aggressive economic development program that united government, education and business.

Liles was involved in many projects during his tenure at the ADCNR. The list includes the revamping of the information technology section, which provides better commu-



L-R: Willard Bowers, Alabama Power Company; Barnett Lawley, Conservation Commissioner; Richard Liles; and Ted DeVos, Alabama Wildlife Federation.

nication throughout the Department's offices and provides more conservation information to the public; the development of the North Alabama Birding Trail; the addition of more sites to

the Hunting and Fishing Trail for People with Physical Disabilities; the promotion of the Outdoor Alabama ad campaign; the improvement of the hunting and fishing license purchasing process; and the enhancement of ADCNR's public relations and outreach programs.

In his role as legislative liaison, he helped see a number of measures passed, including the enhancement of boating safety laws, increased protection for black bears and the Marine Sewage Bill. Liles also played a major role in coordinating emergency measures during and following Hurricanes Katrina and Ivan.

From quail to coastal management and from tourism to technology improvements, Liles' impact is seen throughout the Department and throughout the state. His work made a difference and will last beyond his tenure. **GA**

Marine Resources Officers Receive Governor's Conservation Achievement Award

Marine Resource Division officers Major John Jenkins, Lieutenant Scott Bannon and Officer Christopher Glover were recipients of the Enforcement Officer of the Year at the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards ceremony.

All three officers have a track record of going above and beyond the call of duty. They were stationed in the Bayou La Batre area as Hurricane Katrina approached last fall. As the storm was making landfall, a 911 operator took a call from a pregnant woman who, along with her five children, was trapped in her home by the rising floodwaters.

Major Jenkins, Lt. Bannon and Officer Glover went to help. Battling 100-mile-per-hour winds and driving rain, the three officers managed to guide a small boat to the woman's home. Inside,



L-R: Willard Bowers, Alabama Power Company; Major John Jenkins; Barnett Lawley, Conservation Commissioner; Officer Christopher Glover; Ted DeVos, Alabama Wildlife Federation; and Lt. Scott Bannon.

they found the woman holding an infant and a two-year-old in chest deep water and three other children standing on the kitchen table with the water above their knees. It took two trips, but

the officers moved the family out of the house and to safety.

It was the first of many rescue trips the trio would make during the height of Katrina's devastating winds and swiftly moving floodwaters. In total, the three men were credited with rescuing at least 30 people, most of them pulled from the water as they were attempting to swim from their flooded homes.


The Alabama Wildlife Federation's Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards are the most prestigious conservation awards in the state. For over 30 years, the awards have been presented to individuals and organizations that make great contributions to the conservation of our wildlife and related natural resources, the natural elements upon which all life depends. **GA**

Kellenberger and Cook Lauded for Rescues

Two Marine Police officers were recently recognized for saving the lives of others.

Officer Scott Kellenberger was at the Jackson County Courthouse on May 31 when a shooting occurred. A man shot two people outside the courthouse and then ran inside the courthouse. As he was preparing to shoot one of the victims again, Kellenberger who was off duty and unarmed, disarmed him, forced him to the floor and held him until other law enforcement officers could arrive.

On June 17, Officer Joe Cook was patrolling Smith Lake in Cullman County when he noticed two people in distress and struggling to swim. Although two onlookers attempted to save both victims, one of the rescuers began to struggle along with the victim he was attempting to help. Cook entered the water and got both safely to shore, saving both their lives.

Director Corky Pugh stated, "Both Kellenberger and Cook used the skills that they have been taught as Marine Police Officers to save the lives of others. These are just two examples of the highly trained personnel who are employed by the Alabama Department of Conservation." 



Above: Marine Police Major Larry Kelley places a lifesaving award pin on Officer Joe Cook's uniform.



Left: Marine Police Major Larry Kelley, Officer Scott Kellenberger and Division Director Corky Pugh.

Grand Honored with Leadership Excellence Award




Dr. Barry Grand

Dr. Barry Grand, Associate Professor and leader of the Alabama Cooperative Research Unit at Auburn University, has been recognized as a recipient of the Leadership Excellence Award by the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey. Dr. Grand was one of three Cooperative Research Unit scientists nationwide recognized for his leadership to the CRU program, cooperators, and to natural resource conservation.

The Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit is one of 39 Cooperative Research Units housed on college campuses in 37 states. The Units conduct research on natural resource issues, provide training opportunities for graduate students, and deliver technical information to parties interested in natural resource issues.

The Alabama Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit was established on the Auburn University campus in 1936.

Among the first 10 Units, it was established to conduct wildlife research and promote the education of wildlife professionals for the southeastern region, Alabama, Georgia, northern Florida and eastern Mississippi. The Alabama Cooperative Fisheries Unit was established at Auburn in 1966 with a similar role. The Units were combined in 1984 to form the Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The Unit is staffed with personnel from the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey and supported by Auburn University, the Wildlife Management Institute and the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Unit is an important partner to the Division, which depends on them for research and survey information relating to fisheries and wildlife. 




Registration for Oak Mountain State Park Bow Hunts Closes Oct. 31

For the third consecutive year, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will hold three regulated archery deer hunts to reduce the overpopulation at Oak Mountain State Park. An online registration process will randomly select 80 hunters for the November 28-29, December 19-20, and January 23-24 hunts.

The three, two-day hunts will occur on Oak Mountain State Park's 9,940 acres in Shelby County. Online hunter registration for all hunts closes on October 31 at www.outdooralabama.com. Residents and non-residents are eligible to apply. A \$6 registration fee is required to register for the computer drawing.

Bowhunters must pass an archery proficiency test and pay a \$50 fee for each of the three hunts. Funds will be used to recoup a portion of the costs associated with conducting the wildlife management hunt, and for wildlife habitat improvement projects within Oak Mountain State Park.

The bag limit for these hunts is increased from two deer per day to three deer per day. Hunters may donate deer to the Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH) program, which distributes processed venison to local food banks. Since 2000, HHH has provided over 319,000 pounds of processed venison to help those less fortunate. More details may be found on the Department's Web site, www.outdooralabama.com. 



Lee-Sasser Wins Sporting Clays Championship

Marisa Lee-Sasser, regional hunter education coordinator for the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, won the Alabama National Sporting Clays Association State Championship ladies' state title. The championship was held at Greenway Sportsman Club in Union Springs in July.

One of three regional hunter education coordinators in Alabama, Lee-Sasser is responsible for working with instructors to teach hunter education classes in the central part of the state.

In Alabama, all hunting license buyers born on or after August 1, 1977, must show proof of completion of an approved hunter education course prior to purchasing a hunting license. The course includes firearms safety and handling, responsible hunt-

ing and hunter ethics, wildlife laws, wildlife management and identification, archery, muzzleloading, first aid, survival and game care.

As part of hunter education efforts, Lee-Sasser is a shooting sports instructor for the Department of Conservation's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshops. Gary H. Moody, Chief of Wildlife for the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, stated that, "Marisa's shooting skills and willingness to teach others the fine points of shotgun shooting, along with many other positive attributes, allow our agency to further promote the hunting and shooting sports heritage."

Lee-Sasser has been shooting competitively since 1997. She previously won the ladies' state title in 1999 and 2000. She resides in Lowndesboro with husband Mark, who also works for the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. 