

Gavins and Makemson Receive Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards



L-r: Matt Bowden, Alabama Power Company; ADCNR Commissioner Lawley; WFF Enforcement Officer Gavins; Horace Horn, PowerSouth Energy; Lee Thuston, AWF President.

Officer Bradford Gavins of Calera was awarded Conservation Enforcement Officer of the Year and Jeff Makemson of Duncanville was awarded Wildlife Conservationist of the Year at the 2009 Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards banquet. The Alabama Wildlife Federation held the banquet, co-sponsored by the Alabama Power Company and PowerSouth Energy, on Friday, August 7, 2009. Other sponsors included First South Farm Credit.

Officer Gavins pursues his work with professionalism and enthusiasm. He is never too busy to assist a fellow officer or too tired to go the extra mile. In just more than a year working as a conservation officer in Shelby County, Officer Gavins has been dragged alongside the car of someone suspected of hunting from a vehicle, apprehended five commercial musselers operating illegally on the Cahaba River and spent many late nights chasing night-hunters across Shelby County, catching six.

Despite his impressive arrest record, which includes more than 200 arrests since November 2007,

Gavins isn't solely focused on ticket writing and punishment. He is also an educator, having aided in the certification of more than 600 hunter education students, served as a judge at the National Archery in Schools state tournament and volunteered at several fishing events in Shelby County.

His deep understanding of conservation, conservation law, and Alabama's flora and fauna, along with his soft-spoken personality, make him one of the most respected conservation officers in the state. That respect, combined with his depth of knowledge and passion for the job, is what makes it possible for him to patrol over 800 square miles of land in Shelby County by himself, and do it well.



L-r: Matt Bowden, Alabama Power Company; ADCNR Commissioner Lawley; WFF Biologist Makemson; Horace Horn, PowerSouth Energy; Lee Thuston, AWF President.

Jeff Makemson serves as a Certified Wildlife Biologist in the Division Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. He manages the wildlife, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, of the 45,000-acre Oakmulgee Wildlife Management Area of the Talla-




dega National Forest located in Hale, Bibb and Tuscaloosa counties. He also provides technical wildlife management assistance to private landowners in Tuscaloosa and surrounding communities.

Makemson's WMA is consistently in the top three WMAs in Alabama in number of harvested deer, number of deer hunters and number of mature bucks harvested. In addition, his WMA is also one of the best managed WMAs for turkeys and usually is in the top two WMAs for number of birds harvested and number of turkey hunters.

He has always been a major promoter of wildlife whether it be teaching about wildlife food plots, discussing wildlife management or cooking deer chili as a fundraiser.

Because of his passion for teaching enthusiasm for wildlife, Makemson is called on to teach wildlife conservation and management to 4-H children, boy and girl scouts, various schools and numerous other outreach programs. He has attended every 4-H natural resource field day since his career started 16 years ago and has made a lasting impression on hundreds of 4-H youth. He has also been the primary hunter education instructor for all the hunter education field days in Tuscaloosa, Bibb and Hale counties for over 10 years, certifying over 15,000 hunter education students.

Since 1993, when Makemson became involved in helping coach the Tuscaloosa County 4-H Wildlife Judging Teams, they have won six Alabama State Championships, four National Championships and one reserve National Championship.

The Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards were created to promote leadership by example and increase conservation of the natural resources in the state of Alabama including its wildlife, forests, soils, water and air. The program is designed to bring a greater knowledge and awareness of conservation practices and projects and to give proper recognition to people and organizations that make outstanding contributions to the natural resource welfare of their community and state. The Alabama Wildlife Federation, established by sportsmen in 1935, is the state's oldest and largest citizens' conservation organization. 


Sievering Wins National Leadership Award



Supervising Wildlife Biologist for District III Mike Sievering.

Mike Sievering, Supervising Wildlife Biologist for District III, was presented with the National Trappers Association Leadership Award at the 2009 National Trappers Association banquet in Lima, Ohio. This award is given to an individual or organization for work in the education field, establishing trapper education programs or similar accomplishments.


In 2007, Mike established a trapper workshop for the youth of Alabama. The initial program was held in Decatur, Ala. The three-day workshop consists of a day of classroom education, a day of field work that includes setting traps with trapping mentors and a day of checking traps and learning how to prepare and market the fur. The overwhelming success of that workshop led to three workshops in 2008-09. There will be four workshops held during 2009-10.

The trapper workshop is an outreach program that gives both the students and their parents the opportunity to experience and to be educated in an outdoor skill that helped to settle this country. It is a pilot program that was initiated by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division with assistance from the Alabama Trappers and Predator Control Association and USDA Wildlife Services. This outreach program passes on the historical aspects of trapping, biological information concerning furbearers and furbearer management and allows students to learn the proper techniques that include the use of trapping as a sound wildlife management tool. 

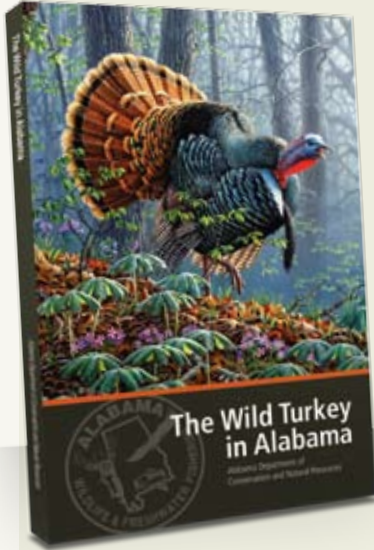
Earn a Free Night at one of Five Alabama State Parks

Alabama staycationers have until February 28, 2010 to take advantage of Alabama State Parks' new Fab 5 promotion. Guests who stay for three nights at a participating State Park will earn a free night during their next stay. The Fab 5 participating parks are Cheaha, DeSoto, Joe Wheeler, Lake Guntersville and Lakepoint State Park.

The Fab 5 combine resort-style luxury with the best of Alabama's natural beauty. From championship style golf courses to beautiful hillside chalet views, the parks of the Fab 5 offer something for everyone.

Guests have one year to take advantage of their free night. Qualifying accommodations include resort-style hotel and lodge rooms, cabins, chalets and cottages. Visit www.alapark.com for a complete list of Fab 5 details. 





Conservation Department Publishes Wild Turkey Book

The Wild Turkey in Alabama is now available from the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF). The 106-page book was written by the husband and wife team of wildlife biologists Steven and Victoria Barnett, and is packed with color photos and information about the state's popular game bird.


Intended as a tool to assist in habitat enhancement and the management of wild turkey, the book contains chapters dedicated to taxonomy, population distribution, habitat requirements, predation and predator management, and harvesting. *The Wild Turkey in Alabama* also chronicles conservation efforts started in 1943 that were aimed at reversing the near extinction of Alabama's turkey population due to unregulated year-round harvest-

ing and habitat destruction in the early 1900s.

Since then the eastern wild turkey has enjoyed a successful comeback in Alabama thanks to WFF conservation efforts and habitat improvements by landowners. Based on a 2007 estimate there are more than 500,000 wild turkeys statewide.

"The conservation model that led to the successful wild turkey recovery in Alabama hinged on strong partnerships with private landowners," said Steven Barnett. "Forward-thinking land use decisions that focus on conservation will ensure a bright future for not only the wild turkey, but wildlife as a whole."

According to the authors the economic impact of the bird's presence in the state is as dramatic as its population recovery. In 2007, hunters spent \$45 million during spring turkey season. However, the authors state that the value of a well balanced ecosystem, including the presence of wild turkey, is as important as the birds' economic impact because it ensures wildlife encounters for generations to come.

The Wild Turkey in Alabama can be downloaded at www.outdooralabama.com. A printed copy can be obtained by calling the ADCNR Wildlife Section at 334-242-3469. 

Aquatic Plant Field Guide Now Available on OutdoorAlabama.com


An updated version of the Field Guide to *Aquatic Plants of Alabama* is now available on the ADCNR Web site. The guide is designed to help biologists, educators and pond owners identify both native and invasive aquatic plants. According to the U.S. Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force invasive plants and animals cost taxpayers billions of dollars to control annually.

The guide is packed with detailed photographs and descriptions of more than 80 native and invasive species. The plants are divided into six categories: Emergent, submersed, floating, floating-leaved, and two types of algae.

According to Graves Lovell, WFF Biologist and author of the guide, the first step in controlling aquatic weeds is proper identification. "Aquatic weed problems can explode quickly, but unfortunately we can't visit each private pond with a weed problem in a timely

manner," Lovell said. "Access to this online field guide will help most pond owners identify these plants so biologists can assist with control measures over the phone."

However, not all aquatic plants are nuisance species. Some species are relatively easy to contain in private ponds and can provide enhanced angling opportunities, as well as harbor juvenile fish. Aquatic plants are also critical in other aquatic ecosystems around the state.

Anyone who observes non-native plants in Alabama is encouraged to report the location on the Early Detection and Distribution database at www.eddmaps.org. The site was developed by the University of Georgia's Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health as a way to monitor the spread of invasive plants. 



Water hyacinth (larger leaves), and the water fern are both considered exotic plants in Alabama. Both plants are vigorous growers that can crowd out other non-exotics, and disrupt the natural balance of aquatic ecosystems.

Visit www.outdooralabama.com and search for Aquatic Plant Field Guide.



Citronelle 6th Grader Wins Big in National Fish Art Contest

Madelyn Howard, a 6th grader from Lott Middle School in Citronelle, Ala., has won 2nd place in the Best of Show category for Grades 4-6 in the Wildlife Forever State Fish Art Contest. Madelyn received the award for her painting of a breaching sailfish during the State-Fish Art Expo held at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. on Aug 1.

“Madelyn’s win at the State-Fish Art Expo showcases the artistic talent of Alabama’s students and draws attention to the diversity of fish species in our state,” said Barnett Lawley, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Commissioner. “We are very proud of her.”


The nationwide contest encourages young artists to draw and learn about state-fish from across the country. The

students also compete for art scholarships to attend the Art Institutes International Minnesota. The contest is open to all students in grades 4-12. Entries are separated into three grade categories: 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Winning contestants from every state are honored in each category and have the opportunity to attend the State-Fish Art Expo.

In addition to Madelyn Howard, the 2009 Alabama winners include: 7th grader Taylor Perkins from Floyd Middle Magnet School in Montgomery, and 11th grader Anna Riley from the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham.

Wildlife Forever is a non-profit conservation organization based in



Minnesota that works to preserve America’s wildlife heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat and scientific management of fish and wildlife species. Wildlife Forever projects in Alabama include the Alabama Goose Restoration Project, Flint Creek fish habitat improvements, and the Tsinia Wildlife Viewing Area at Alabama’s Tuskegee National Forest. 




OUTDOOR ALABAMA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Photographers Focus on the 2010 Outdoor Alabama Photo Contest

Are you an amateur photographer with an eye for Alabama’s diverse natural heritage? If so, you are encouraged to submit your images to Outdoor Alabama magazine’s 2010 Photo Contest. The annual contest is open to amateur photographers based in Alabama. An amateur is defined as someone who does not earn a living from photography. ADCNR employees and their immediate family members are ineligible. Deadline for entries is October 31, 2009.

The winning entries will be featured in the February 2010 issue of Outdoor Alabama. Prizes will also be awarded to first place winners in each category, which include: Student snapshots (ages 6-12 and 13-18), state parks, nature-based activities, scenic/pictorial, wild flora, birds, mammals, reptiles/amphibians, and other native wildlife. Certificates will be awarded to first, second and third place winners and one honorable mention in each category.

All photos must be high quality digital images submitted on a CD-ROM accompanied by an 8x10 print of each photo. Photographers may enter up to 10 photos. A complete list of contest rules can be found at www.outdooralabama.com.

By submitting an entry, photographers grant permission to the ADCNR to use photographs in publications or on its Web site. However, the photographer also retains the right to use the photo. No photos will be returned. 

Outdoor Alabama Honored with Three ACI Awards

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) recently received three awards from the Association for Conservation Information (ACI) during its annual meeting, July 13-17 in Baton Rouge, La. ACI is a non-profit association of information and education professionals representing state, federal and Canadian agencies as well as private conservation organizations.

The ADCNR Web site, outdooralabama.com, won first place among conservation agencies in the Web site category. The Forever Wild brochure produced by the State Lands Division and designed by OA Art Director Billy Pope won second place for color brochures. The “Pass It On” radio public service announcement produced by the Information and Education Section won third place for radio PSAs. 