

January 2007

Volume 1, Issue 1

Alabama's Landowner Incentive Program, Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries



Welcome!!!

This marks the first issue of the Alabama LIP newsletter!

If you have any projects or conservation news you would like to showcase please contact the LIP Coordinator.

Individual Highlights:

- What is LIP?
- What are priority species?
- What are some examples of LIP projects?
- 2006 LIP Focus Area
- Landowner Qualifications

Upcoming News:

- LIP activities
- Paint Rock River Projects
- Species Highlight



"Restoring Habitat for Alabama's Rare Wildlife on Private Lands"

What is the Alabama Landowner Incentive Program?

Alabama's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a new Federal grant program, through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), recently established within the Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries. This source of funding assists private landowners in conserving, managing or enhancing the habitats of high priority wildlife species. The USFWS requires a 25% non-federal match for LIP grants.

Individual landowner projects are selected through a competitive ranking process. The ranking of projects are based on the number of species in greatest conservation need (GCN) to benefit from the proposed restoration or enhancement project.

What are species in greatest conservation need (GCN)?

GCN species is a mussel, aquatic snail, fish, crayfish, amphibian, reptile, bird or mammal native to Alabama that are at risk due to a decrease in population numbers and/or loss of suitable habitat. Alabama is home to 303 GCN species and is one of the most diverse states in the Nation.

DID YOU KNOW?

Alabama ranks 1st among all eastern states and 5th in the nation in total plant and animal diversity. Relative to the North American fauna, Alabama harbors 60% of all freshwater mussel species, 43% of all gill-breathing snails, 38% of all freshwater fishes and 20% of all crayfish. Overall, the state's aquatic diversity is probably greater than any area of comparable size worldwide! This gives the state a central role in wildlife conservation. With 96% of the land in Alabama under private ownership, landowner management plays a vital role in conserving Alabama's resources.



Blochsideside Logperch, Priority 1 – Paul Freeman



Gopherus polyphemus, Priority 2- TGeorge
"The Gopher Tortoise is designated as a Priority 2 species by the AL CWCS and is federally threatened west of the Tombigbee River. Considered a keystone species, around 350 species utilize a gopher tortoise's burrow".

What are some examples of potential LIP projects?

- Wetland restoration
- Stream restoration
- Management of livestock grazing
- Restoration of riparian habitat
- Protection of bat caves
- Cattle fencing and alternative watering sources for livestock
- Replanting of native vegetation
- Removal of nonnatives
- Implementation of prescribed burns
- Management / Enhancement / Restoration of longleaf pine habitat

LIP Focus Area: Middle Tennessee River Basin Habitat Restoration Initiative, Paint Rock River

The Tennessee River Basin is considered the most biologically diverse river basin in North America. The Alabama portion of the basin is home to 163 fish species, 90 freshwater mussels and 66 aquatic snails. The Alabama Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) identifies 101 aquatic species in greatest conservation need for the middle Tennessee River basin.

The Paint Rock River basin, a tributary critical to the biodiversity of the Tennessee River basin, will be the initial focus area of this project. The Paint Rock River is one of the most diverse watersheds in the southeastern United States, with 98 species of freshwater fish and, historically, 58 species of mussels. Twenty-nine GCN mussel and snail species historically occurred in the Paint Rock basin, of which 16 are federally endangered. Only four of the endangered species persist in the watershed, all of which currently have their entire Alabama distributions limited to the Paint Rock basin.

Five GCN fish species inhabit the Paint Rock system, of which two federally listed species have their Alabama distributions limited to the Paint Rock basin.

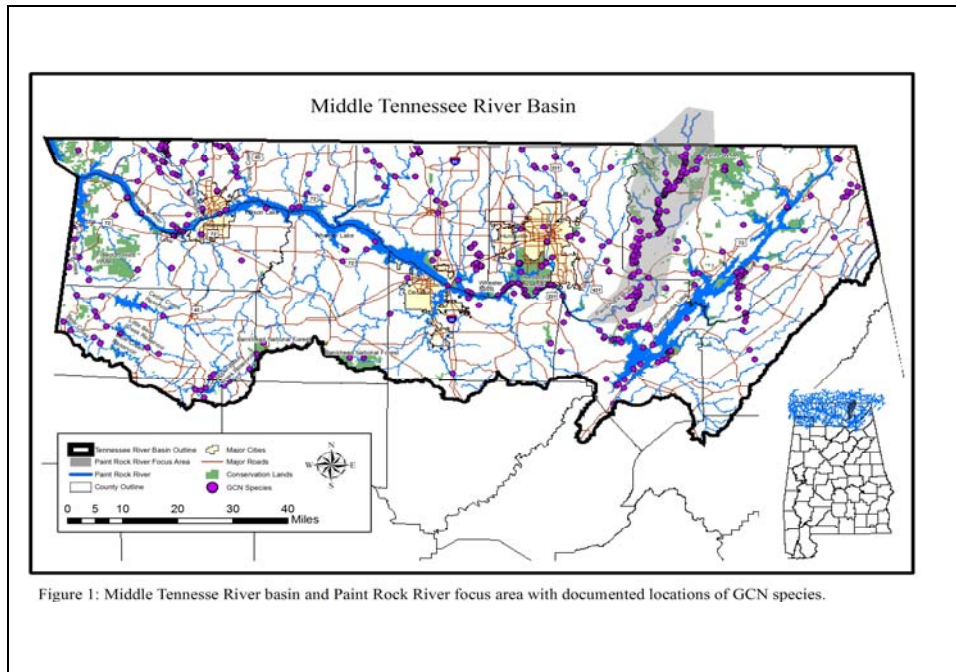
Three GCN stream crayfishes occur in the Paint Rock River watershed, two of which have their Alabama distributions limited to the Tennessee River basin.

Jackson County alone harbors 24 obligate cave species that exist no place else. Studies by the Karst Waters Institute have identified northeast Alabama as one of the major hotspots for cave animal diversity in the United States. The Alabama CWCS identifies 14 cave-obligate GCN species, of which nine occur in the Paint Rock River watershed. The project area includes both the most important summer cave (Blowing Wind Cave) and the largest hibernaculum (Fern Cave) for the endangered gray bat.

Greatest Need of Conservation Species in the Middle Tennessee River Basin includes 31 fishes, 48 mussels, 15 snails, 11 crayfish, 2 amphibians and 7 mammals.



Cambarus

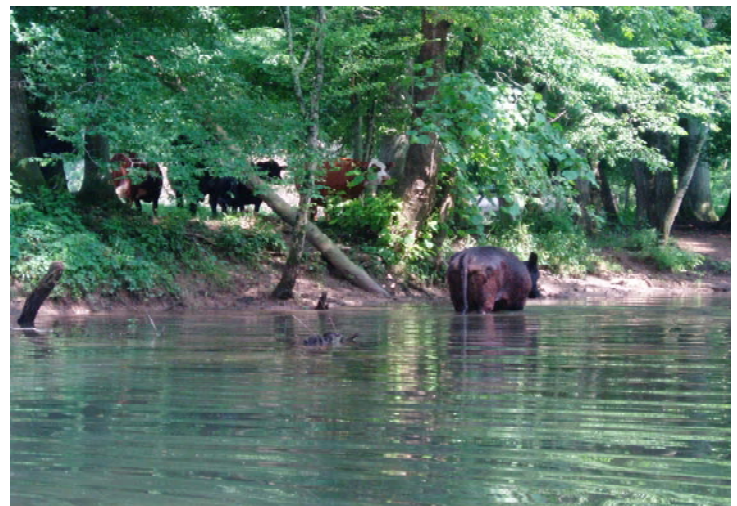


Funding of this LIP project will address the following high priority habitat conservation needs identified in the Paint Rock River basin focus area:

- Improve streamside habitat, riparian forests and other buffer strip habitats
- Protect of bat caves
- Construct fish passages at low water crossings for vehicular traffic
- Provide suitable brood and reintroduction habitat aquatic GCN species for propagation and restoration by the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center
- Greatly expand protection and restoration efforts for aquatic and subterranean habitats and ecological processes in the middle Tennessee River basin and surrounding Southern Cumberland Mountains



Photos by Doug Fears



A significant problem in Paint Rock River watershed is loss of riparian habitat from incompatible agricultural practices, which leads to streambank degradation and subsequent siltation and sedimentation.

**Alabama Division of
Wildlife & Freshwater
Fisheries**

**Traci D. George
LIP Coordinator**

64 N. Union St.
Montgomery, AL 36130

PHONE:
(334) 353-0503

FAX:
(334) 242-3032

E-MAIL:
Traci.George@dcnr.alabama.gov



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.outdooralabama.com

Share the Wonder!

Landowner Information

- Only private property is eligible
- The proposed project must restore or enhance critical habitat for priority species
- A landowner agreement must be signed
- Applications that fall within the focus area will receive higher points in the ranking procedure
- A minimum amount of acreage is not required.
- Provides technical conservation assistance
- Offers up to 75% of project funding
- Increases economic & esthetic values of private property
- May offer financial incentives in the form of conservation easements and/or other funding opportunities
- Complements other programs that enhance, protect, restore lands for wildlife

The mission of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division is to manage, protect, conserve and enhance the wildlife and aquatic resources of Alabama for the sustainable benefit of the people of Alabama.