

Cawaco News

Serving Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker Counties of Alabama

WINTER 2014

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT MEETINGS HELD IN FIVE COUNTIES

At the Council Meeting in November, the staff was tasked with conducting Needs Assessment Meetings in each county in its 5- county area. In the month of December, Kellie and Patti met with Board and community members from Blount, Jefferson and Chilton County. In January they met with Walker and Shelby members.

Participants were then asked to list the needs and opportunities that exist in their areas that overlap with the mission and goals of the Cawaco Council.

These meetings will continue on a yearly basis and already have been a helpful tool in communicating to City and County leaders, as well as legislators, the ways in which Cawaco can assist with projects in their areas. We expect the quality and impact of proposals to increase as a result.

VISIONS FOR EACH COUNTY

While each county had specific areas of interest, the vast majority shared a vision for the area: To preserve local natural assets and develop them for their recreational and tourism potential.

BENEFITS OF TOURISM

According to the Alabama Dept. of Tourism 2010 Annual Report, *the total impact of the travel and tourism industry on Alabama's earnings in 2010 is estimated at over \$3.5 billion.* In Central Alabama alone, the total income from tourism in 2012 was **\$2,451,735,251.** We have identified several locations in the Cawaco area that hold great promise for recreational, community development, job creation, and tourism potential. Among these are development of Walker County Lake as a community park, and the creation of a canoe trail on the Locust Fork in Blount County. There is also potential for a connecting trail along the Cahaba River in Jefferson County.



Needs Assessment Meeting in Chilton County Alabama, on December 18, 2013.



The Locust Fork of the Warrior River is already a destination for local paddlers. By developing a canoe trail on the Locust Fork, Blount County will have another opportunity for tourism through inclusion in Alabama's Scenic River Trail System.



Walker County Lake near Jasper AL



The historic Graves Bridge in Wetumpka, Al, along the Alabama Scenic River Trail. Photo by Darrin Swanson.



The Coosa River along the Alabama Scenic River Trail. Photo by Darrin Swanson.



Cawaco RC&D has received six kayaks for local groups to use to teach water safety and outdoor recreation to local students. Kayaks were donated to every Alabama Resource, Conservation and Development Council in Alabama by the Alabama Scenic River Trails Program. Pictured: Senator Orr and Mike Roden of AMRV RC&D.

THE ALABAMA SCENIC RIVER TRAIL- 631 MILES THROUGH ALABAMA

The Alabama Scenic River Trail is part of the **National Recreational Trails Program**.

The Alabama Scenic River Trail, a route that includes beautiful stretches of seven rivers, two creeks and one bay, will be the longest river trail in any one state: 631 miles from the Georgia state line to the Gulf of Mexico..

The Alabama Scenic River Trail opened in June of 2008 as a recreational and tourism trip destination for paddled and powered boats. At approximately 631 miles in length (the suitability of various river channels will vary the exact route for different types of watercraft), the trail is considered to be the longest in a single state in the U.S.

The Trail begins at the point where the Coosa River enters Alabama just northeast of Cedar Bluff, and continues down the Coosa River to its confluence with the Tallapoosa near Wetumpka. From this conjunction the trail follows the Alabama River to its junction with the Tombigbee/Warrior system just north of Mobile.

The Trail then proceeds along the Mobile River and through the Tensaw-Mobile delta, along the Tensaw River and its tributaries to Mobile Bay. To avoid maritime traffic, paddleboats such as canoes and kayaks follow a slightly different route to the Trail's terminus at Fort Morgan.

The Trail is designed to be clean and hospitable, and activities of the Trail Association will include conservation stewardship, and outreach projects, to ensure the Trail's family-friendly aspect. Cawaco would like to see the trail begin at the northern part of the state and go through all five of our Counties!

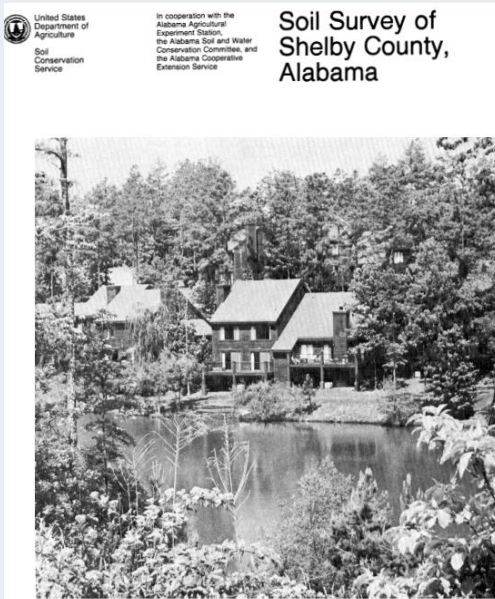
For more information:

The Alabama Scenic River Trail Association publishes four trail guides, each describing in detail the route through a portion of the Trail, providing information regarding campgrounds, marinas, put-in and take-out locations and points of interest along the way. Although the Alabama Scenic River Trail Association suggests more detailed maps, especially in the Delta, maps outlining the Trail's route and key facilities including fuel stops for powerboats along the way are included in each of the trail guides. Visit the website at www.alabamascenicrivertrail.com





Allan Lowe, At-Large Member for Shelby County, says, "I can't name all the projects that were accomplished through the direct involvement, and funding, by CAWACO. Local schools, businesses, ecological and agrarian organizations have all benefited tremendously."



Soil surveys contain information that can be used in land planning. Planners, community officials, engineers, developers, builders and homebuyers can use soil surveys to plan land use, select sites for construction, and identify special practices needed to insure performance. Conservationists, teachers, students, and specialists in recreation, wildlife management, waste disposal and pollution control can use surveys to help understand, protect and enhance the environment.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ALLAN LOWE

Shelby County Member At-Large

Allan Lowe is our At- Large member from Shelby County, and is Shelby County's representative on the Cawaco Grant Committee. He is owner of Lowe Insurance Agency and also Associate Broker with Lowe and Associates Realty, Inc.

Allan tells me he originally went into the insurance sales career because he had just returned from a military tour in Southwest Asia during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and was tired of being in the sun and the sand and the dust storms in the Middle East. He figured it might be nice to wear a suit and learn something new, so he accepted an offer to become an agent with Nationwide Insurance. He's been an agent since 1992, and says he's grown to see the value in being there to help people through tough times in their lives.

Allan has been a Cawaco board member since 2006. Cawaco needed an at-large member and although Allan was the Mayor of Columbiana at that time, he found time to serve on the Cawaco Council.

When I asked him what was his favorite project Cawaco has helped with in his area, he replied, "I can't name all the projects that were accomplished through the direct involvement, and funding, by CAWACO. Local schools, businesses, ecological and agrarian organizations have all benefited tremendously."

Since retiring from the military, he has had the time to go back to woodworking, a hobby he's loved since his first days in Woodshop at Shelby County High School. "I never did drugs, so I don't know what kind of high you get from them, but I can't imagine getting a better feeling than I get from woodworking." He says.

When I asked if there was anything else he would like to share, he said, "I am a proud graduate of Auburn University!"

SOIL SURVEYS OF AREA COUNTIES

JEFFERSON:http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/alabama/AL073/0/Jefferson.pdf

SHELBY:http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/alabama/AL17/0/shelby.pdf

BLOUNT:http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/alabama/blountAL1979/Blount.pdf

WALKER:http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/alabama/AL127/0/walker.pdf

CHILTON:http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/alabama/AL021/0/Chilton.pdf



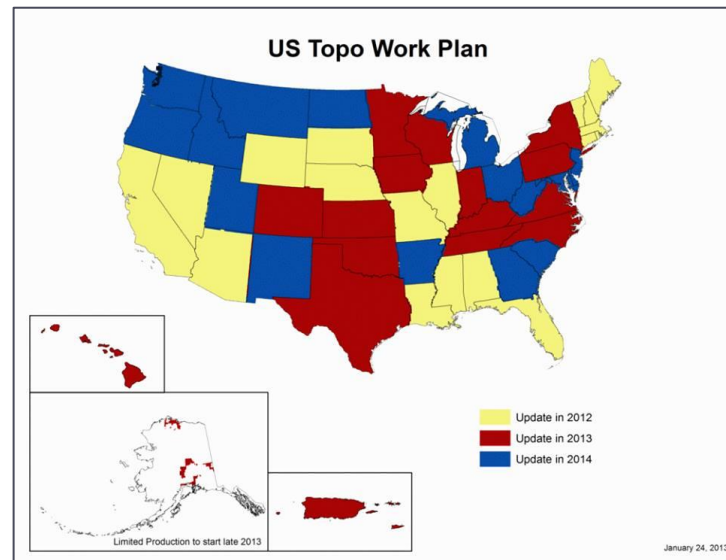
State Forester Linda S. Casey is pleased to announce the recent appointment of **Dan Jackson** as Assistant State Forester by the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC). This appointment was approved by the Governor, effective September 1. Jackson has 25 years of service with the Commission and has served at virtually every level of the agency from county forester to division director.

"Dan's broad range of experience will be a valuable asset as he takes on this new leadership role, and I look forward to his continued contributions to the AFC," said Casey.

On January 16, 2014, Cawaco hosted The Alabama Forestry Commission **Forest Certification Workshop**. This one-day workshop provided training to over 50 forest industry professionals on the current status of major forest certification systems in North America. This workshop was held at the 4H Center in Columbiana. Read more on [al.com](http://blog.al.com/wire/2014/01/forestry-experts-to-talk-susta.html):

<http://blog.al.com/wire/2014/01/forestry-experts-to-talk-susta.html>

OTHER NEWS...



North Carolina (833 maps), Pennsylvania (798 maps) and Virginia (596 maps) which are available for free download. These latest quads feature the new US Topo design released a few weeks ago and replace the first edition US Topo maps for those states. The replaced maps will be added to the USGS Historical Topographic Map Collection, which are also available for free download: <http://on.doi.gov/17ek42b>

ALABAMA TOPO MAPS UPDATED

Nearly 3,900 New Maps Available: To keep pace with a rapid schedule and increasing demand, the USGS has posted new US Topo quadrangles covering Indiana (640 maps), Iowa (1,011 maps),

ALABAMA LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

The AL Cooperative Extension System has just completed the **Alabama Low Impact Development Handbook**! The Handbook is online and available for download from the following web page:

<http://www.aces.edu/natural-resources/water-resources/watershed-planning/stormwater-management/LID.php>

You may download the entire document (select 'print version') or you may view electronically (select 'view on screen'). If you select the 'view on screen' download, be sure to look at it as a 2 page view in Adobe. Individual chapters may also be downloaded for print or view on screen.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

The Alabama Forestry Commission's 2013 Annual Report is now online. The link below will take you directly to the PDF file. Please share this information with anyone that may be interested.

<http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/PDFs/AFCAnnualReport2013.pdf>

FOOD ENTREPRENEUR CONFERENCE, FEB. 27-28

You might have the best cupcakes, catfish or organic beef around, but you need to know how to write a business plan, find financing, market yourself and negotiate a maze of regulations. Auburn University organized a two-day conference where you will learn from Auburn University experts who help aspiring entrepreneurs every day, and network with other food entrepreneurs. For more information or to register, call Regina Crapps at (334) 844-7456 or email crappre@auburn.edu. Check the website for speaker updates: www.aufsi.auburn.edu



For more information and to schedule use of the trailer visit us online: <http://www.cawaco.org/tools-for-trails-calendar/>

Or Call Charles

Tel: 205.680.4116

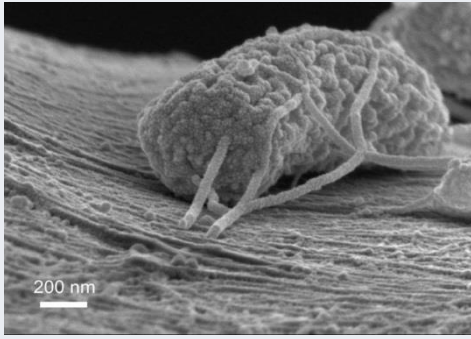


Funding for the trailer was provided by ADECA

Building a trail but don't have the right tools for the job? We can help! Cawaco RC&D has a utility trailer equipped with trail-building tools, and it is available for a \$20/day service fee + deposit.



Trailer contains weed-eaters, rakes, shovels, chainsaws, pole saws, privet pullers, pruners, a trash can and wheelbarrow, just to mention a few items!



Stanford University scientists have created a "living battery" that converts wastewater into energy using microbes one hundred times narrower than human hair. (Photo: Stanford University)

Staff:

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We are on the web!

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CONSERVATION PLEDGE

I GIVE MY PLEDGE AS AN AMERICAN
TO SAVE AND FAITHFULLY TO DEFEND
FROM WASTE THE NATURAL RESOURCES
OF MY COUNTRY – ITS SOIL AND MINERALS,
ITS FORESTS, WATERS AND WILDLIFE

DID YOU KNOW?

TURNING SEWAGE INTO ENERGY

Stanford University scientists have developed a "living battery" that takes sewage and turns it into energy. The battery system prototype is only the size of a D-cell battery, but the Stanford team hopes to scale the system up for practical uses, including potentially powering sewage treatment plants themselves.

The living battery prototype uses two electrodes, one positive and one negative, and places the electrodes into a bottle of wastewater. In the bottle, bacteria feed on organic waste in the water, creating an electricity that is captured by the positive electrode of the battery. The power-creating bacteria are exoelectrogenic microbes, organisms which live in airless environments and react with oxide minerals to create biological fuel (as opposed to breathing oxygen like animals or humans). So after ingesting waste, the exoelectrogenic microbes give off electrons that flow to the positive electrode, which is made up of electron-attracting silver oxide.

"We call it fishing for electrons," said Craig Criddle, a Stanford environmental engineer and co-author of a study about the living battery.

The result of this electron fishing is an efficiency that is equivalent to solar cells. The living battery scoops up roughly 30 percent of the potential energy of the wastewater, about the same the solar panels harness from the sun. The researchers admit that the sun has far greater energy potential than sewage, and that wastewater alone couldn't become a large-scale energy source. Rather, they believe that a bigger living battery could help offset the energy that goes into treating wastewater; developed nations currently use about three percent of their energy on wastewater treatment.

The Stanford team says that a big challenge in scaling up the living battery will be finding a cheaper material for the positive electrode. "We demonstrated the principle using silver oxide, but silver is too expensive for use at large scale," said Yi Cui, a materials scientist and co-author on the study. "Though the search is underway for a more practical material, finding a substitute will take time."

The study, "Microbial battery for efficient energy recovery," was published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.