



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY ALABAMA POWER COMPANY FOR LAKESHORE RESIDENTS

SPRING 2009

## Employees protect lakes with fishing-line bins



Photo by Denny Winn, Bouldin Hydro

Plant Auxiliary John Cochran installs a fishing-line bin at Bouldin Hydro Dam near Wetumpka.

Fishermen on the Tallapoosa and Lower Coosa rivers have a new, environmentally friendly means of disposing of their old fishing line, thanks to Alabama Power.

Hydro plant employees have made special, 3-foot-long, 4-inch-wide receptacles for use in throwing away monofilament line. The polyvinylchloride containers not only prevent littering – they also protect wildlife and aquatic health. Fishermen drop old monofilament line in the receptacle, and employees empty them periodically.

"I think people are seeing the receptacles and not realizing what they're used for," said Martin Hydro Plant Manager David Waites, one of many Hydro

employees spearheading the project on company lakes. "Working at the dam, I've picked up what looks like a rat's nest of fishing line many a time." It costs \$25 to build each bin. When they're full, employees mail the material to Berkley Conservation Institute, which recycles the monofilament into plastic structures used for fish habitats.

"We're thrilled Alabama Power Hydro has taken this project and run with it," said Allison Jenkins, statewide coordinator of the Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP) since 1999. During a Lower Tallapoosa River stakeholders meeting, Jenkins alerted employees about the dangers old fishing line presents to wildlife. The ACWP has provided stickers for use on receptacles.

Danny Tignor, Lay Hydro Plant manager, said fishermen will find receptacles at company piers on tailrace areas for Lakes Mitchell, Jordan, Yates, Thurlow, Martin and Harris. Alabama Power also donated a receptacle for the Tallassee City Boat Launch.

"We've installed receptacles where the public takes advantage of good fishing, such as the tailrace area of the dams," Tignor said. "When we're generating power, running water through the dam, that movement of the turbines creates a lot more oxygen in the water. Fishermen have found that attracts fish."

"We want people to know the receptacles are available," he added. "It's just one more way Alabama Power is making a day on the lake more pleasant."

**Editor's note:** For more information about the ACWP project or installing fishing-line receptacles, contact Allison Jenkins at 205-266-6285.

## Alabama is on verge of recovering from drought

The state has turned a corner on the severe drought of the past three years, according to the National Weather Service (NWS).

"Cautiously optimistic" is the feeling from service hydrologist Roger McNeil - NWS Office in Calera. Though hot, summer temperatures are approaching, McNeil said, "Things are gradually improving" with regard to stream flows, higher reservoir levels and refilling of groundwater stores. "Assuming we receive fairly normal rains – and our outlook shows fairly normal patterns for May, June and July – we're not looking for an extended drought." He said there are equal chances for above- or below-normal precipitation and temperatures going into August.

Because Alabama and

much of the Southeast continue to be in recovery mode, state climatologist John Christy still views the situation with a watchful eye. Christy said the drier weather and hot temperatures of the last weeks are warning signs. "We're only two weeks from slipping back into an agricultural-drought

situation," he warned, noting that Alabama's soils don't hold onto water very well. "At this point, anything could happen." He noted Mississippi is showing some signs of drought, which could expand eastward to Alabama.

In the meantime, Alabama Power Hydro System Operations Supervisor Alan Peebles said the company remains in a water-conservation mode on its hydro projects. "We plan to conserve as much of the water as we can, to keep our lakes as high as possible as we start the summer."

### Beautiful Lake Mitchell ...

More rains mean Alabama Power is back to using its hydro to make low-cost power. This Mitchell Dam "waterscape" shows the reservoir's floating trash boom, a series of 56 barges that catch debris and prevent clogging of the generator's turbine intake.



Photo by Gregory Daniels, Mitchell Dam

# Alabama Power to conduct relicensing studies on Martin Lake this summer

**As** part of relicensing for Martin Hydro Dam Project, Alabama Power is required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to address the effects of continued operation and any operating modifications on environmental, recreational and generation resources.

On April 17, the FERC issued a study plan determination for Martin, which involves Alabama Power conducting 22 studies in 2009 and early 2010. Jim Crew, Hydro Relicensing project manager - Alabama Power, said, "The company wants to bring residents' attention to these studies because they'll often be seeing crews around the lake, as a result."

As part of lake-management studies, Alabama Power will survey anglers, boaters and other recreational users of Lake Martin. Starting in May, Alabama Power's recreational survey crew will cover Lake Martin by boat and foot for the next 12 months. Recreational users may be approached by Alabama Power's survey crew and asked to complete an interview, which will cover aspects about the lake's recreational uses.



Photo by Viki Pate

## What residents can expect during survey

Crew said the surveys will take 10 to 15 minutes. The survey crew will conduct surveys on the water by boat and will also walk the shoreline.

Alabama Power surveyors will wear bright green clothing and will also carry identification. He said boaters may be approached by survey crew members in boats that fly a bright green flag, and dock users may also be approached by survey crew boats. "We're asking all recreational users to take part in these important survey efforts as part of our relicensing process," Crew added.

Alabama Power is conducting environmental studies, partnering with Auburn University for several studies on Lake Martin during 2009. One study involves collecting adult striped bass this spring, surgically implanting radio transmitters in them and tracking their movements in the lake through fall 2009.

"We request anglers to release tagged fish back to the lake," Crew said. Another study will involve the collection of fish, water quality and aquatic insect information to evaluate shoreline habitats. Activities will be in the Blue Creek area beginning in April or May and continuing through fall. Crew said field crews will collect samples day and night. For more details, see the Alabama Power Relicensing Web Page for postings of study plans, at <http://www.alabamapower.com/hydro/martin.asp>.

Please call Crew at 205-257-4265 for additional information.

## FEMA Insurance questions?

The Alabama Office of Water Resources is the state's administrator for FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.

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## Coosa and Warrior hydro relicensing continues

After 10 years of work on obtaining new operating licenses for Alabama Power Hydro projects on the Coosa and Warrior rivers and for Lake Martin, Jim Crew knows the process intimately.

Crew has filed thousands of pages of documentation for those relicensings with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The company must have FERC licenses to operate its hydro facilities. Alabama Power filed applications for new Coosa and Warrior licenses in 2005, which include Weiss, Henry, Logan Martin, Lay, Mitchell, Jordan, Bouldin, Smith and Bankhead dams.

"Relicensing is a very complex

process," said Crew, relicensing project manager - Hydro Services and a 30-year employee. "There are hundreds of stakeholders involved and many controversial issues addressed. And once our work is done and the applications are filed, FERC begins its analysis. FERC has been in various stages of evaluation of our Coosa and Warrior applications since they were filed in 2005."

On March 2, FERC issued its Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) for the Warrior Project (Smith and Bankhead). The FEA is an environmental analysis document that evaluates the company's proposed measures in

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# Bowers passes environmental torch to Bowden

*It's the "little bitty things" in life that shape a person.*



**Willard Bowers**

So says Willard Bowers in describing his successful 38-year career at Alabama Power, the last seven years spent as vice president of Environmental Affairs. Bowers retires June 30. Matt Bowden now takes the helm.

Through his busy years in public life, Bowers helped forge environmental policy for the company while making long-lasting

friendships and developing strong working relationships. In the past several years, he's worked closely with members of homeowner and boat owner (HOBO) associations and other lake stakeholders, numerous state and federal agencies and community partners, particularly in regards to Renew Our Rivers (ROR) cleanups. He's helped forge drought policy-making. That's in addition to overseeing numerous environmental initiatives at Alabama Power fossil plants.

Shad Ellis, member and former president of the Weiss Lake Home Improvement Association, said Bowers will indeed be missed. "Willard is a true friend of mine and a true friend of Renew Our Rivers," Ellis said. It's telling that Ellis, who met Bowers eight years ago through ROR, added, "He's the type of person you feel you've known forever. Concerning Renew Our Rivers, I feel Gene Phifer planted the seed, Doug Powell nourished it and Willard Bowers brought it to fruition."

A dash of fate led to Bowers' career. As a junior at the University of Alabama in 1965, a buddy asked the future industrial engineer whether he'd be interested in a summer job testing lake water samples for Alabama Power. Later taking a full-time position, Bowers performed environmental reviews for Southern Company's nuclear power plants, working on licensing Plants Hatch, Farley and Vogtle, and was involved in environmental rule-making

under the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Bowers was tapped as manager of Environmental Compliance in 1984, later serving as manager, director and vice president of Environmental Affairs.

"I've been very fortunate," Bowers said. "The leadership of this company has given me opportunities to do things that I felt would make a difference, and I'm very appreciative of the opportunity."

Though his retirement date looms, Bowers won't be settling into a favorite armchair. "Retirement is a state of mind," said Bowers, who will spend newfound extra time with wife Ruth Ann and their grandchildren.

## Meet Matt Bowden



*A self-described outdoorsman who has held leadership positions with the Alabama Wildlife Federation, Matt Bowden is a former partner of Birmingham law firm Balch & Bingham LLP.*

*At Balch & Bingham, Bowden's practice focused on environmental and natural resources, energy*

*and governmental relations. He worked with Alabama Power and Southern Company providing legal advice on issues high on the radar at the federal and state levels. For example, during the past year Bowden worked to obtain approval of Alabama's new state air emissions regulations and to secure adoption of the 2008 state energy bill, among other projects.*

*Bowden said, "I'm looking forward to helping Alabama Power meet challenges ahead, including federal proposals for renewable energy standards and climate change legislation, and continued tightening of water and air quality standards."*

*Outside the office, he can be found visiting Lake Mitchell with his family, at the ballpark supporting sons Curtis, 13, and Clayton, 10, or helping manage family land for timber production and wildlife habitat.*



*Photo by Bill Snow*

## Relicensing - from page 2

its applications.

"FERC has produced an excellent assessment and we are extremely pleased with the results. In essence, the document adopts all of the measures we proposed in the application, including the continuation of our current operations per the existing reservoir operation guide curve," Crew said. "Typically, once an FEA is issued by FERC, a new license order is issued two to three months later ... hopefully by June. Then, we can start implementing

## Relicensing expert ...

*Jim Crew said Alabama Power's hydro relicensings are the largest, most complex of all FERC relicensings by any Southeastern utility.*

the protection and enhancement measures in the application."

FERC is drafting the initial Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Coosa Project, which company representatives hope will be issued this summer. Issuing the initial EA is the first major step in FERC's process, so much work remains. Crew said Alabama Power hopes FERC will issue a new Coosa license in early 2010.

Another relicensing effort – the Holt Project on the Warrior River – gets under way in early 2010. Crew said the process should be simpler because, as a Corps of Engineers project, the relicensing will involve only the Holt Dam powerhouse and immediate downstream area. The existing license expires in 2015.

# Let's celebrate 10 million pounds of trash gone, and counting!

## It's official:

**Renew Our Rivers (ROR) volunteers have removed more than 10 million pounds of debris from waterways in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Florida.**

Doug Powell, ROR coordinator since 2000, said volunteers reached the 10-million-pound mark during cleanups held April 13-17.

"Lake cleanups held by members of the Smith Lake Civic Association in Walker County and Smith Lake Advocacy in Winston County pushed the total poundage over the mark," Powell said. "We only needed 38.7 tons to reach 10 million pounds. The first five spring cleanups – at Lakes Eufaula, Mitchell, Weiss and Logan Martin and on the Cahaba River – in addition to the two events



Photo by Tom Grubbs

APC Environmental Affairs Specialists Daniel Hatchett, Mike Clelland and Doug Powell, with Winston County Commissioner Roger Hayes and Asset Management Supervisor John Fuller, removed tons of Styrofoam from Smith Lake in Winston County April 16-17.

at Lake Eufaula on the Chattahoochee River on March 7, removing 2.17 tons of garbage.

at Smith Lake, made it happen.

"I knew early on in April we'd reach 10 million pounds," he added. "It was just a matter of time. Going into the Smith Lake and Lake Jordan events in mid-April, it was so exciting, knowing we were at that point."

The year started off a big success, Powell said, as 126 volunteers sprung into action

Powell said, "It's the volunteers who make Renew Our Rivers a success. Renew Our Rivers wouldn't exist without them. This program belongs to the communities, and they are what make the whole thing work." A total of 25 cleanups will be held in 2009. See below for a look at coming events.

## May 26-30

### Bankhead Reservoir (Black Warrior River)

The community cleanup will be Saturday, May 30, from 8 a.m. until noon at Buddy Vines Camp. A picnic lunch will follow.

**Contact:** Mark Meador, 205-553-9373, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or Kellie Johnston, 205-264-8461, Black Warrior Clean Water Partnership.

## June 11-13

### Smith Lake (Winston County)

The event will be staged at site to be determined. The Saturday community cleanup will begin at 8 a.m. and end at noon. A picnic lunch will follow.

**Contact:** Tom Counts or Allison Cochran, 205-489-5111, U.S. Forestry Service, or Linda Atkinson, 205-387-9999, Smith Lake Advocacy.

## August 8

### Upper Tallapoosa River

Volunteers will report to Tallapoosa River Outfitters off Hwy. 46 near Heflin.

**Contact:** Lex Brown at 256-239-6399.

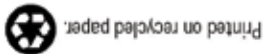


Photo by Bethany Claxton

Young Lake Eufaula volunteers included (front, from left) Nia Peterson, Akira Taylor and Annie Henderson; (second row, left) Hemadri Modi, Olivia Crawford, Laneisha Henderson, Samaria Thomas and Scharon Peterson, director of the Eufaula Housing Authority; and Betty Griffin (back).



Always on.™



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*Shoresides* is published quarterly by Alabama Power to provide information about the company's hydro projects, the hydro relicensing process, and departmental and company news affecting lakeshore residents.

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