



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

June 5, 2023

Program

The guest speaker, Executive Director Maggie Johnston, from "WILD ALABAMA", was introduced by Lion Randy Kraft. Lion Randy noted that Maggie had been a teacher for deaf students at the Talladega School for the Deaf, and that she could probably handle our audience without difficulty. After retiring, Ms. Johnston said that she had also been Director of the Nature School and helped to start the McDonald Farm School. Then, about 3 years ago she was asked to help restart the Wild Alabama organization, which was initially started in 1993 to challenge the U.S. Forestry Service for not adhering to Federal laws concerning corporate plundering of Alabama's public forests and wilderness areas. Through the years, the organization changed its name from Bankhead Monitor to its present name of Wild Alabama. Through its strong programs and robust volunteer participation, it carries out its mission of inspiring people to enjoy, value and protect the native eco-systems of Alabama.



Ms. Maggie Johnston accepts token of appreciation from Lion Randy Kraft as Lion President Milford Parrish looks-on. The organization operates mainly in (1) the Talladega National Forest with the with the Cheaha & Dugger Mountain Wilderness areas,

the Pinhoti National Recreational Trail, Devil's Den Falls, and Cheaha Falls; and (2) the Bankhead National Forest with the Sipsey Wilderness area. The organization is a non-profit, consisting mainly of volunteers with funding from various corporate companies and individuals. It does get some Federal funding through the Nation Forest Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. Maggie thanked and recognized Rhonda and John Riley who donated property to Wild Alabama; this property will be utilized in building an educational facility soon. Mr. Riley took a moment to express his appreciation for what Maggie and Wild Alabama are doing and for his whole family's appreciation for Alabama's wild areas.



Ms. Johnston recognizes Mr. John Riley (standing) for his donation of property to Wild Alabama.

Ms. Johnston had a slide presentation of many, many beautiful sights throughout these Alabama National Parks to include our two endangered species (the flattened mud turtle and the Black Warrior water dog salamander), waterfalls, mountain top views, sights along the trails, forest views, etc. She also talked about the organization's activities, much of which is focused on getting volunteers to help in trail maintenance; the biggest trail project was the re-



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

blazing of the 138 miles of the Pinhoti Trail in Talladega Forest that leads into the Appalachian Trail, going all the way to Maine. Wild Alabama provides trail guides for hikes, traditional tool training, leave-no-trace training, map reading workshops, outreach in both our National Forests, and virtual learning. It sponsors events such as kids & family and school group nature hikes upon request, as well as workdays on various legacy trails and community science projects such as the Save our "Alabama Hemlocks," collecting trash (there most recent retrieved 2,500 lbs. of trash from trails and riverbanks).

This was an inspiring presentation and gave everyone an appreciation of the wild landscape of our State and Wild Alabama's efforts to maintain it. You can get park maps and more information at the Wild Alabama website at www.wildal.org.

Other Business

Lion Gordon Boyd was taken to the hospital for treatment of spinal stenosis. Lion David Goodwin is not doing well after starting chemotherapy.

Lion Bill Ruehl submitted a new member application for Clade Clay

Our Club meetings are being recorded and can be seen live, or you may view past meetings at the following Facebook web site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1106236123576541/?ref=share>. Call Lion Craig Gadow at 256-736-8361 if you need help getting to this site.

Upcoming Programs and Events

June 12: New Members installation on June 12th Jacket and Tie for new members and sponsors.

June 19: New Officer Banquet with installation of new officers, summary of past year's activities, and award presentations. Location is Cullman Church of Christ, located on Child Haven Road NE, just south of Highway 157.

July 17: Speaker will be Ms. Rhonda McDavid, Executive Director SE Diabetes Education Services, Camp Seale Harris. Photo, below.



Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings. Lion Carey can be reached at 256-739-0580 (H) or 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 (C).