

Alabama  
Scenic  
River Trail









# Leverage: something out of nothing

- Eighteen percent of water in America that flows into an ocean flows through Alabama.

[Alabamaencyclopedia.org](http://Alabamaencyclopedia.org)





# What it is

- Over a thousand miles with sprawling flatwater, to whitewater, through bluff country to river delta and salt water
- The longest river trail in a single state
- It's the closest thing we have to a National Park
- Didn't build it but packaged it for use: established access, campsites, portages, fuel points, guidebooks, and events



# Why it is

- It's a way to reconnect communities with their rivers
- It's a way to bring tourism to life in the forgotten reaches of our rivers



# Background

- The Alabama Scenic River Trail came into existence mainly through the efforts of Anniston Rotarian Fred Couch and friends
- The first meeting was held in January, 2007
- National Recreation Trail status achieved in June 2008 — at the same time as the opening



# Created in 18 months

- We dealt with fewer landowners along the original 631 miles of the trail than you might think



# Two landowners

- Alabama Power
- US Army Corps of Engineers



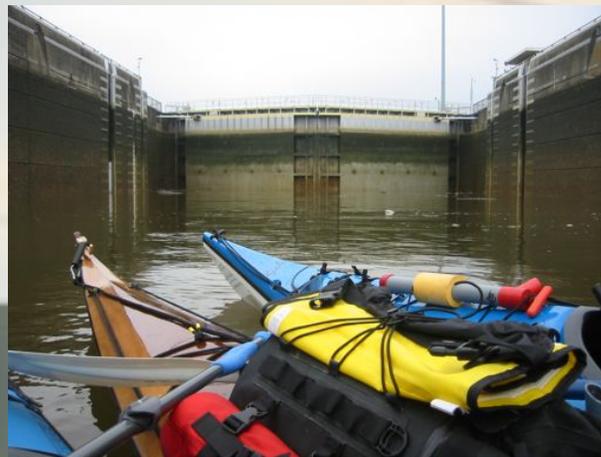
# Making it possible

- We worked with Alabama Power to establish portages around their dams



# Making it possible

- We worked with USACE to understand how the locks could be used, and tailored our approach to support their policy
- We are still working with everyone we can to identify campsites and assets along the Trail

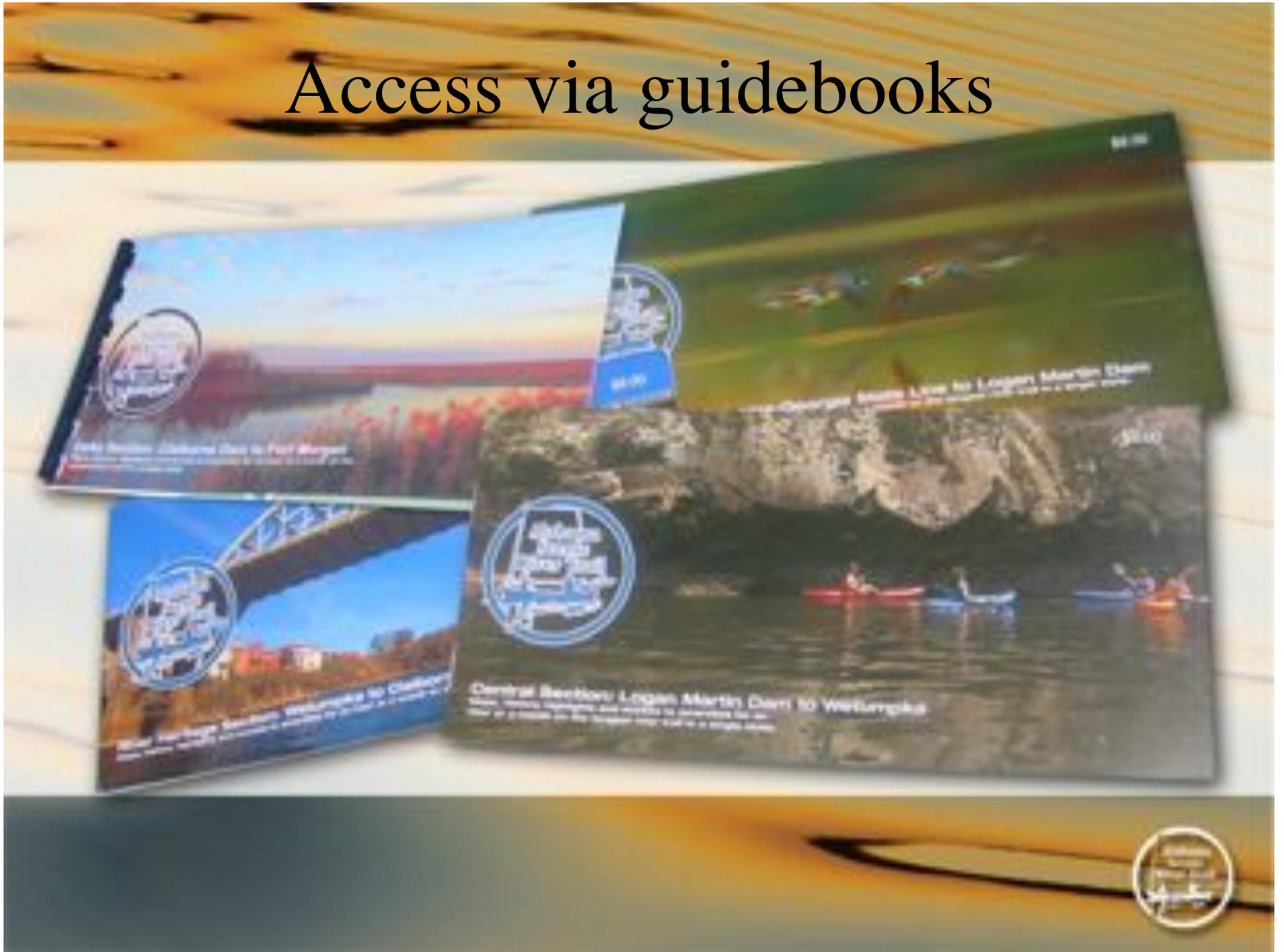


# Making it possible

- We didn't just meet — we did it
- We took what we learned and packaged it
- We logged campsites, paddled, visited marinas, took waypoints and checked with local officials



# Access via guidebooks

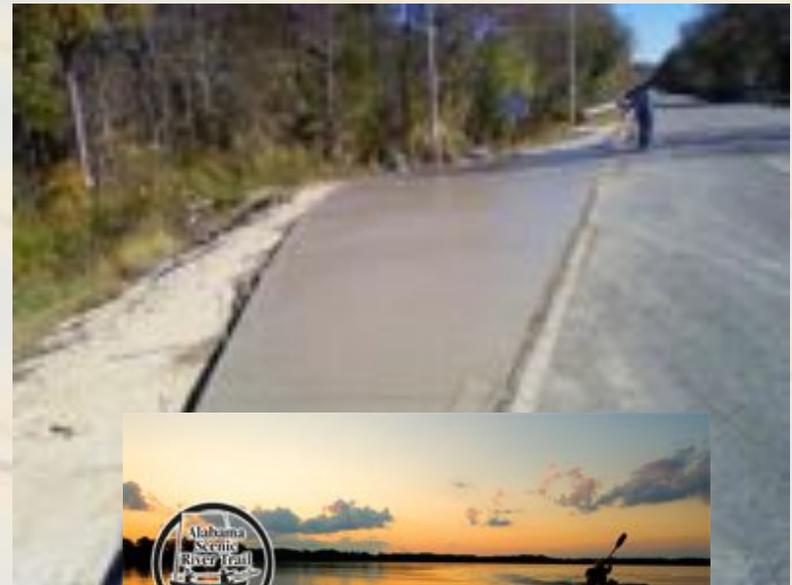


# Guidance



# Two kinds of access

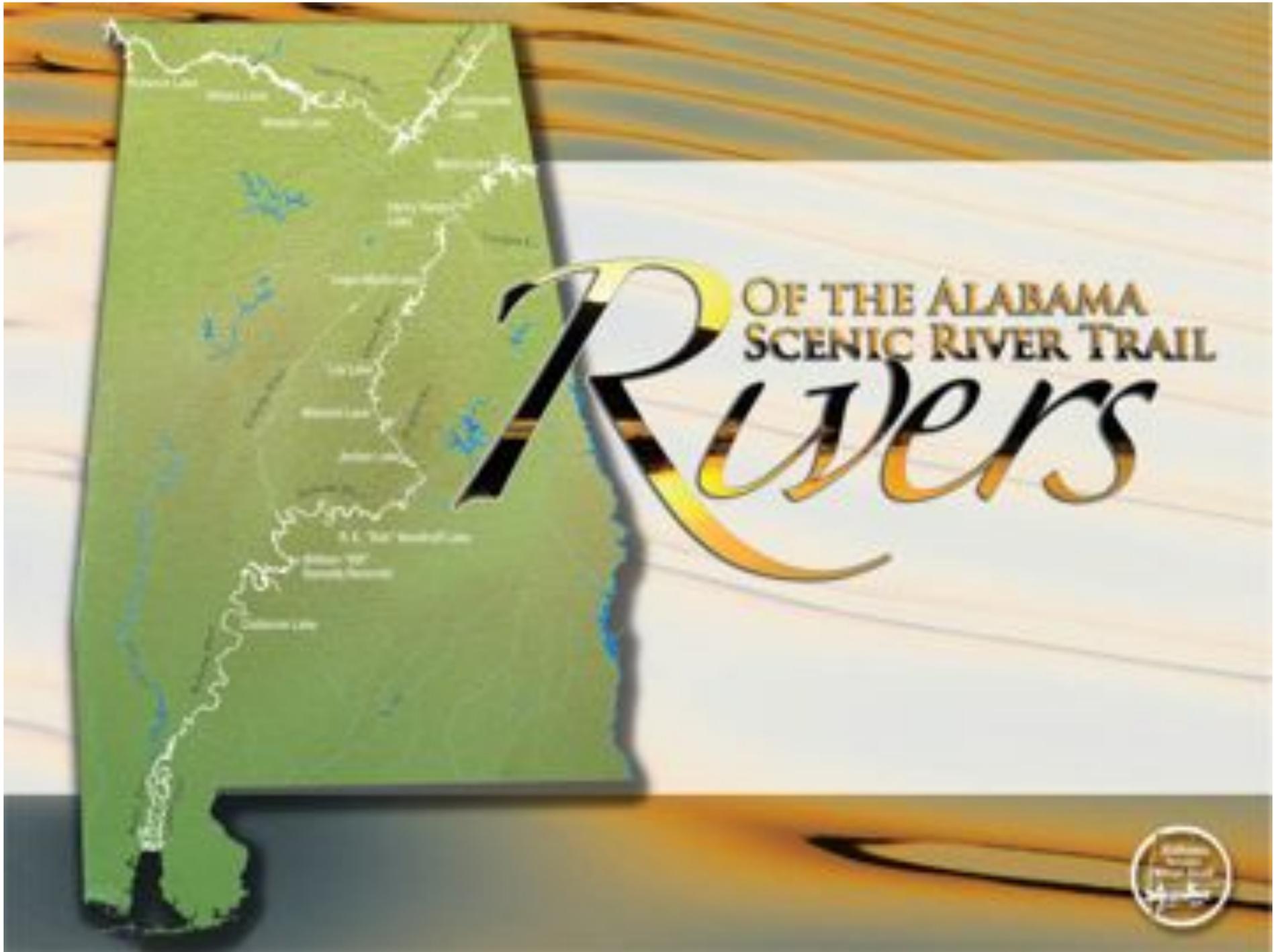
- Physical—ramps, docks, roads, parking and other improvements
- Mental—maps, guides, descriptions, directions, suggestions
- No point in creating one without the other



A group of people is gathered in a wooded area, possibly for a kayaking activity. In the foreground, a blue kayak is visible. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the word "LEVERAGE" in large, bold, black capital letters. The background shows several people, some wearing hats, standing among trees with green foliage.

# LEVERAGE





OF THE ALABAMA  
SCENIC RIVER TRAIL

# Rivers



Coffee Slough

Lake Guntersville

Weiss Lake

Weiss Lake

Terrapin Creek

Cahaba

Gees Bend

Claiborne

Bartram Trail

OF THE ALABAMA  
SCENIC RIVER TRAIL

# Rivers



# April 2011 — Bartram Trail

- Two days
- Visit floating platforms
- Camp at Hubbards Landing



# April 2011 — Terrapin



- Three days
- Progressive float



# May 2011 — Cahaba Lilies

- Next year, our paddle will coincide with the Lily Festival
- We'll do lower Cahaba if the weather doesn't cooperate



# May 2011 — Cahaba Lilies



# May 2011 — Cahaba Lilies



# June 2011 — Weiss Lake

- Three days
- Education and fun



# August 2011 — Wilcox

- Third annual cleanup near Gees Bend
- Keep the backwaters beautiful



# September-October 2011

- Tennessee River
- Coffee Slough
- Gunterville



# November 2011 — Claiborne

- Naturalist paradise
- Lock through Claiborne Dam
- Camp at Isaac Creek



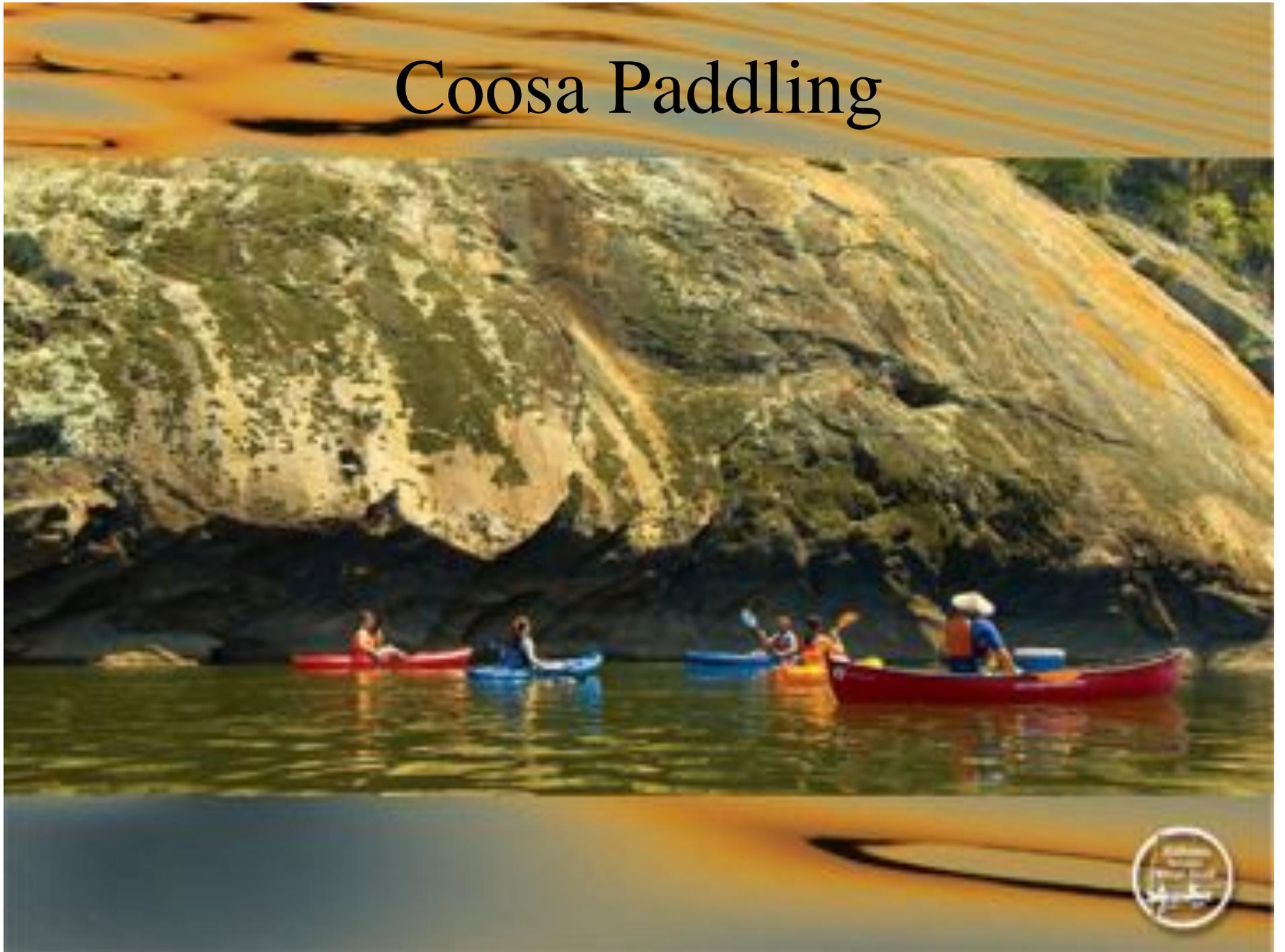
# November 2011 — Claiborne



# November 2011 — Claiborne



# Coosa Paddling



# Coosa Whitewater



# Delta



# 2011 Adventure Race



**Terrapin Tri-County**  
**2010 Adventure Race**  
Calhoun · Cherokee · Cleburne Counties of Alabama



# 2011 Adventure Race



- At the confluence of the ASRT, Pinhoti and Chief Ladiga trails
- Paddle, run and bike
- Adventure race



# Trail Achievements

- Salaries in state's 2009-2010-2011 budgets
- Awarded AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteers
- Grant for two fuel points on the Alabama River
- Worked to help pass Rec Trails Commission



# Trail Achievements

- Producing the largest paddle events in the state, and bringing them to every corner of the state
- Won the 2009 Governors Award for Tourism in the Alabama Tourism Theme category



# Current Goals

- Developing and focusing on day trips
- Establishing outfitters
- Providing fuel
- Creating campsites
- Education
- New guidebooks



# What's the big deal with trails?

- We never had them before
- We didn't need them before



# What's the big deal with trails?

- In the woods and on the water, it's the same:
- 20% of participants are under 40
- 60% are over 50
- Older is often the norm out-of-doors
- Aging population coincided with the development of rural land



# Paradise Lost?

- The notion of a recreational trail is a recent phenomenon
- In 1960 you just went outside
- In 1970 you trespassed
- In 1980 you went to nearby states
- In 1990 you went wherever your kids wanted to go



# Trails are portals to nature

- In 2010, you need a portal to the outdoors
- You can't just go outside anymore
- Who provides that portal?



# Essential Services

- The purpose of this presentation is to remind you of the disappearance of access to a scarce resource called the out-of-doors,
- To put in your mind the notion that access to the out-of-doors is an essential service, and
- To illustrate some ways you can go to your city, county or state for that essential service



# Essential Services

- Cities and counties pick up trash, run water and sewer, create roads and bridges, direct traffic and many other things
- These services were all new and controversial at one time
- They were adopted as community growth made self-provision impossible or problematic



# Essential Services

- Community growth has made self-provision of outdoor access impossible
- Americans have been cut off from their place in the natural world
- We must include access to the natural world as an essential service



# What's the point?

- The only alternative to sedentary life for most people
- The alternative to cubicle/couch life
- For kids, an alternative to indoor life
- Sunlight increases Vitamin D and serotonin
- Enhanced social networking



# What's the point?

- Quality of life
- Quality of jobs
- Quality of schools



# Look to cities and counties

- You have the ability to raise the quality of life in your community
- Your community can provide the access you need to do that work
- Form a group, impart your vision and they will help you



# Look to cities and counties

- Look to (or start) local clubs
- Take advantage of social networking
- Learn to express your vision



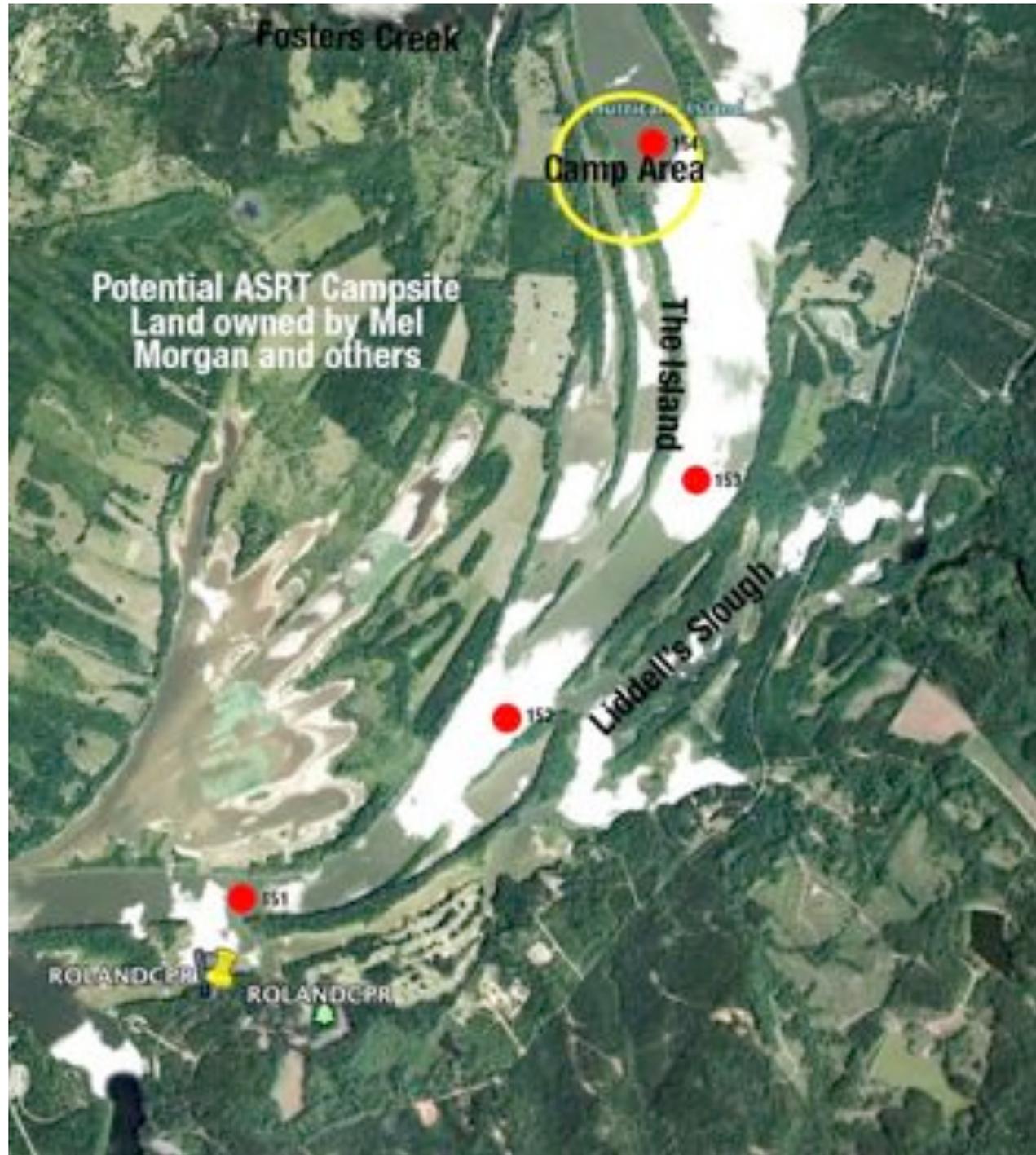
# Find out more

- Visit [www.alabamascenicrivertrail.com](http://www.alabamascenicrivertrail.com)
- Buy guidebooks and maps for each region
- Become a member and be part of the movement
- Access to how-to and experience
- Keep up with Trail events



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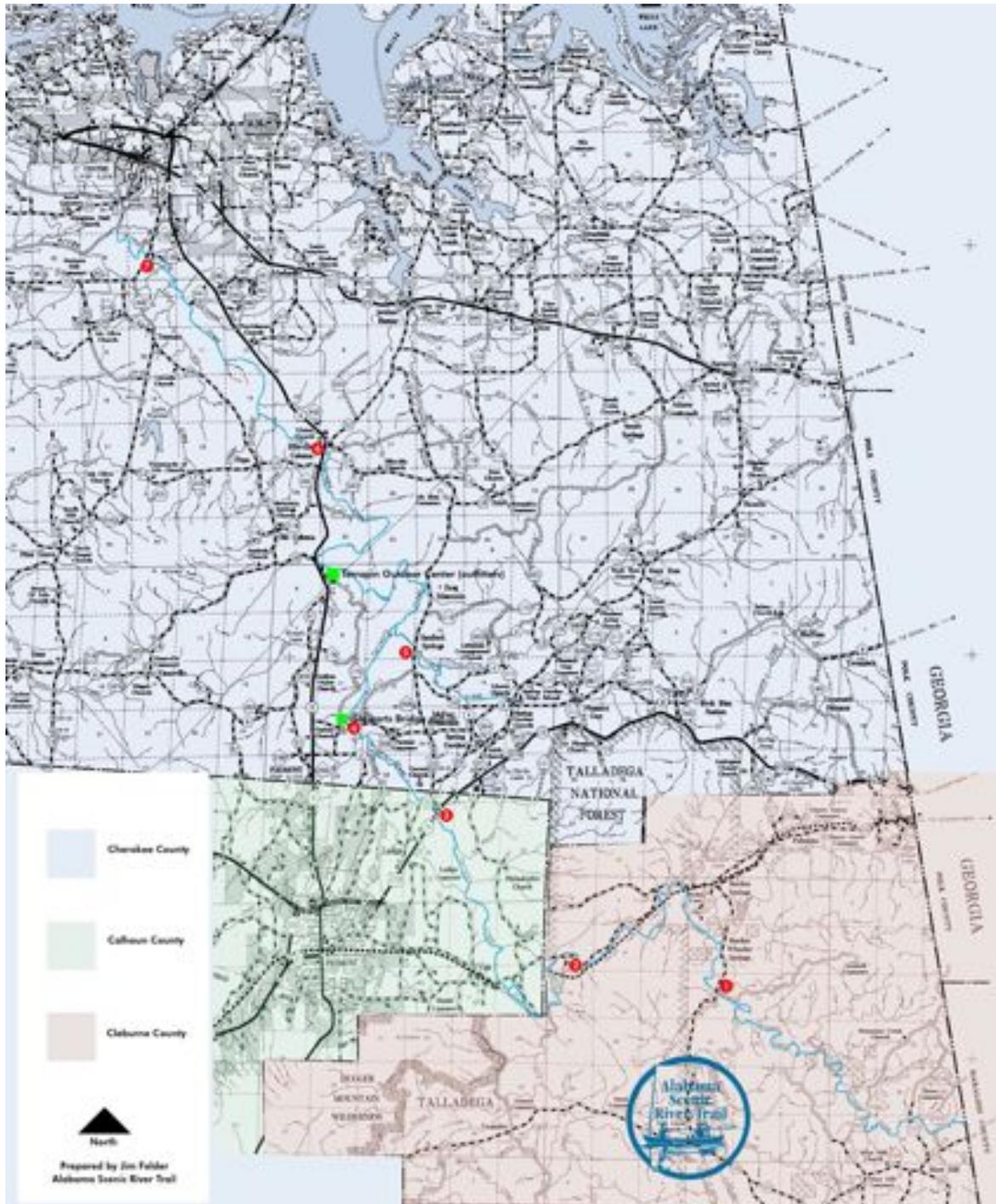






Alabama Map Showing Counties Adjacent to Teropin Creek and the sites of the proposed improvements.







One Mile

**Cahaba River Trip with  
Rick Lecroy  
May 11 2010**



