

RECEIVED

MAY 02 2016

COMMUNITY SVCS

FY2016 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

PRE-APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE: NOON, TUESDAY, May 3, 2016

Applicant's Name (Organization): Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trail Assoc

Address: P.O. Box 240503

1095 Kowaliga Road

Eclectic, ALABAMA ZIP: 36024

County: Elmore

FEI Number: 01-0818427

DUNS Number: 007758286

Project Title (6 words max): Smith Mountain Exhibit Signage Project

Project Description (25 words max):

Park Name, if applicable: Historic Smith Mountain

Park Address: Tower Road

TALLAPOOSA County

ZIP:

GPS Coordinates of Project: N32.80922 W85.83868

Congressional District: 3rd

State Senate District: 27

State House District: 81

Applicant Chief Elected Official or Executive Director/President: Jerry Bynum jerrybynum2@charter

Phone and Email: (256) 825-7408 net

Grant Consultant or Other Contact (if applicable): Jimmy K. Lanier

Phone and Email: (334) 541-2729 jlanier2@elmore.RR.com

### Project Descriptive Narrative

Provide a brief, yet informative, description of the proposed project; address each evaluation criterion on the following pages (provide additional narrative and documents as may be needed to support your response to each evaluation criterion); and include a cost estimate, a preliminary site plan, plat and/or legal description, and location map.

#### Project Information

Name of Project: Smith Mountain Exhibit Signage Project

Trail Length in Linear Feet (L.F.): 26,400 Trail Width: 3 Feet

Trail Surface Type: NATURAL

Application Type:  Non-motorized for a Single Use  Motorized  
 Non-motorized for Diverse Use  Educational

Type of Applicant:  City/Town  County  
 State  Private Organization

Total Estimated Project Cost	\$	<u>200,000</u>
Grant Amount Requested	\$	<u>100,000</u>
Total Local Match	\$	<u>100,000</u>
Cash Match	\$	<u>25,000</u>
In-Kind Match	\$	<u>50,000</u>
Donation	\$	<u>25,000</u>

Brief Description of the Project:

Please address each evaluation criterion and insert your answers below each (115 Total Available Points).

1. Describe the degree to which the project's scope and feasibility meet the project area's recreational needs. (Key Consideration: Does the project appear to be feasible and incorporate a good project design with consideration given to the natural and cultural environment in which the project is located, and appropriate consideration given to needs and benefits?) **10 Points Available**
2. Describe the ways in which the project provides for the greatest number of

**compatible recreational purposes. (Key Consideration:** An important concern is that this project will enhance the quality and quantity of recreational trail opportunities available in the community or region. Maximum points will be given to projects with connectivity to other trails or parks, environmental education and preservation, and economic development opportunities.) **10 Points Available**

3. **Describe the ways in which the project provides a new, unique, or more effective means for making trail opportunities available to the public. (Key Consideration:** This criterion includes projects of national, regional, and local demonstration value. The most important concern is whether the grant recipient is committed to trying an approach that is new at the local level. Additional points are awarded for nationwide applicability and statewide or regional value. The applicant must commit to documenting the results of the demonstration.) **10 Points Available**
4. **Describe the ways in which the project facilitates the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities, older citizens, economically disadvantaged, and other special populations or groups. (Key Consideration:** Whether this project will expand recreation opportunities for special populations with recreation deficiencies.) **10 Points Available**
5. **Describe the ways in which the project creates opportunities for new partnerships between trail users, private interests, and public agencies within the project area. (Key Consideration:** The major concern is that this project is a component of an integrated effort to enhance economic revitalization and community conservation. Maximum points will be given to applicants providing evidence of cooperative efforts with trail user groups, and/or multiple public meetings.) **10 Points Available**
6. **Describe the ways in which the project uses the grant funds to leverage other public or private investments (in the form of services and materials as well as dollars. (Key Consideration:** The major concern is whether actual leveraging is assured or the potential for leveraging is good, outside of any funds committed for the initial grant match. Maximum points will be given for applicants committing double the minimum local match or higher.) **10 Points Available**
7. **Describe the degree of commitment to continue operation and maintenance of the project. Include an operation and maintenance plan detailing the amount of money needed to operate and maintain the trail after it is completed and identify who will be responsible for the work. (Key Consideration:** Whether the grant recipient is willing to commit to continue the maintenance and operation of the project and whether the applicant provides a realistic operation and maintenance plan/budget. Points will be awarded to applicants demonstrating innovative funding measures for trail maintenance.) **10 Points Available**
8. **The degree to which community involvement is addressed: i.e., (A) Project**

**idea originated with trail users or a community group that has substantial knowledge, and (B) The private sector (including individual citizens, community groups, or local business enterprises) has participated in the development of the proposed idea and has made commitments of labor, money, or materials to support proposed implementation. (Key Consideration: The objective is to determine if the project is responding to citizen-identified needs. The priority of the project to users is evidenced by citizen support for the idea. Points will be awarded to applicants demonstrating that the project concept was originally proposed at the grassroots level and, especially, for extensive citizen or private organization involvement in project development and support in project implementation. Maximum points will be awarded to applicants demonstrating extensive involvement and participation from citizens and interest groups during all phases of application development and commitments beyond.) 10 Points Available**

**9. Describe in detail how the trail will be managed. Include discussion on season length, hours of operation, limitations on use, enforcement provisions, and scheduling. 10 Points Available**

**10. Identify and describe the service area of the project. Approximately how many people do you propose to serve with this project? Identify other trail resources in the service area by trail type (motorized, non-motorized, multi-use), distance, location in relation to the proposed trail, and ownership. (Key Consideration: The RTP was created to address trail needs in the urban and rural areas of the state. In order to assess the need for additional trails it is first necessary to identify the quantity and location of existing resources within the service area. It is also necessary to establish a service area – either population or resource based. For example, a population based service area could be a neighborhood, school district, or political jurisdiction whereas, a resource based service area might be defined along a linear greenway, water course, or unique natural/cultural area. However, in both instances, an estimate of the number of beneficiaries should be provided.) 10 Points Available**

**11. Identify the length of time the trail will be maintained and open and available to the public and identify the method to be used to ensure this commitment (deed covenant, deed restriction, etc.). (Key Consideration: The objective is to utilize RTP funds to the greatest extent possible by ensuring the improvements are maintained and available for public trail use as long as possible. Points will only be awarded to applicants exceeding the minimum required timeframe for a trail development project to remain open to the public. Maximum points will be awarded to applicants electing to maintain the improvements in perpetuity.) 15 Points Available**

**NOTE: Property acquired with RTP funds must remain open to the public in perpetuity. Should the property cease to be open to the public for trail use, the applicant must repay the RTP 80% of the fair market value of the property at the time**

of the change in use. If the project is located on an easement or on leased land, the minimum timeframe for the easement or lease is 25 years. The project must remain open for public access for the use for which the RTP funds were intended during that time. For development projects on applicant owned property, the project must remain open for public access for the use for which the RTP funds were intended for a minimum of 25 years.

Total Project Cost: \$ 200,000.00 Funds Requested: \$ 100,000.00

**Important Note:** The maximum grant amount by trail type is **\$35,000** for non-motorized, single-use trails; **\$100,000** for non-motorized, diverse-use trails; **\$524,936** for motorized trails, or **\$87,489** for education projects.

Jerry B. Gamm  
(Chief Elected Officials or Executive  
Director's/President's Signature)

President  
(Title)

MAY 2, 2016  
(Date)

## Introduction

### History and Purpose

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal grant program authorized by Congress for the purpose of providing states, local governments, and private sector organizations with funds to acquire lands and develop and/or improve trail and trail-related resources.

### Allocation of funds for the 2016 Funding Cycle

The RTP funds are appropriated by Congress to the U. S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FHWA allocates the funds through state agencies as a grants program to sub-grantees. Alabama's allocation to sub-grantees in the 2016 funding cycle will be approximately \$1,609,000.

### Division of Available Funds

The maximum grant amount by trail type is **\$35,000** for non-motorized, single-use trails; **\$100,000** for non-motorized, diverse-use trails; **\$524,936** for motorized trails, or **\$87,489** for education.

Thirty percent of Alabama's RTP funds must be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses. Diverse motorized projects (such as ATV and motorcycle) or diverse non-motorized projects (such as pedestrian and equestrian) may satisfy two of these categories at the same

time. The State encourages applicants to consider projects that benefit both motorized and non-motorized users, such as common trailhead facilities.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants include incorporated municipalities, counties, legally constituted recreation authorities and commissions, and private sector organizations that can demonstrate an ability to adequately manage Federal grant funds. **No application will be reviewed from an applicant not currently registered in sam.gov under its own name and Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.**

### **Pre-applications**

The Alabama State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2013-2018 is the guiding document for funding projects from the RTP. This document is available on the ADECA website at [www.adeca.alabama.gov](http://www.adeca.alabama.gov). Statewide issues were gathered and new criterion were developed to evaluate projects. These criterion make up the pre-application. **City, county, or private sector applicants may submit only one application for its highest priority outdoor recreation project. State agencies may submit multiple applications.** Funds will be allocated to the highest-ranking projects based on scores derived from the evaluation criterion.

Applicants are required to adhere to the grant ceilings listed.

### **Formal Applications**

Applicants receiving the highest-ranking scores on their pre-applications will be asked to submit formal applications. A formal application will be mailed and the Recreation and Conservation Programs staff will be available to answer any questions. **Note: An environmental review and/or assessment will be required for all projects selected to proceed in the formal application process.**

### **Target Timeline for the 2016 Funding Cycle**

#### **February 2016**

Funding cycle for 2016 RTP grants and Application Workshop is announced to all municipalities, counties, regional commissions, and grant administrators via e-mail and/or direct mail and website announcement.

#### **May 3, 2016**

Pre-applications (1 original and 1 digital copy (we will not accept emailed copies)) are due to ADECA.

#### **Each pre-application must include:**

- A signed Pre-application Form to include a response to each of the evaluation criterion
- A resolution adopted by the legal entity of the applicant authorizing the application and committing all matching funds required to complete the

- proposed project
- A narrative description of the proposed project
- Estimate of cost
- Preliminary site plan
- Plat and/or legal description of the property proposed for purchase and/or development
- Location map
- Verification of sam.gov registration

### **May 2016**

Recreation and Conservation Programs staff and the Alabama Recreational Trails Advisory Board review pre-applications for priority rankings based on evaluation criterion, make recommendations for funding to the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Director, complete site inspections, invite the respective local applicants receiving the highest-ranking scores to submit formal applications, and forward copies of the selected pre-applications to the FHWA.

### **TBA**

Formal applications mailed.

### **TBA**

Formal applications are due to ADECA. Recreation and Conservation Programs staff will coordinate and correspond as appropriate with each successful applicant to determine if additional documents are needed to complete the formal application process.

### **TBA**

Official notification of award sent to successful applicants.

## **Minimum Requirements**

These are requirements that an applicant must meet in order to be considered for a RTP grant. There are no points attached to these requirements. Only one of two situations may occur: (1) Yes, the applicant meets all minimum requirements and is therefore eligible for consideration of funding based on how the proposed project scores under the evaluation criterion; or (2) No, the applicant does not meet the minimum requirements and is therefore ineligible for funding under the RTP.

Any questions concerning the minimum requirements should be addressed to the Recreation and Conservation Programs staff.

### **Equal Opportunity:**

Applicants must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended;

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; and all other State and Federal laws and regulations on nondiscrimination. This means that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age or disability for recreation programs and facilities sponsored by applicants.

### **Legally Constituted Entity**

The applicant must be a legally constituted entity. This includes a municipality, county or a legally constituted recreation board, commission or authority with legislative sanction, or private sector corporation. All applicants must be currently registered in sam.gov with their own DUNS number.

### **State and Federal Laws / Regulations**

Applicants must comply with existing laws and regulations for receiving and expending State and Federal grant money including, but not limited to, public notices, bidding and purchasing requirements, Uniform Relocation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), Energy Standards, laws and regulations regarding Historic Preservation and archaeological concerns, National Environmental Policies Act, and related environmental rules and regulations. Applicants must not have been debarred, suspended, or otherwise ruled ineligible to participate in Federal programs by any Federal department or agency.

**Important note:** An environmental review and/or assessment will be required for all projects selected to proceed in the formal application process.

### **Operation and Maintenance**

Applicants must have a satisfactory record of accomplishment for operation and maintenance of public recreation areas and facilities or must have a formal written agreement with an entity with a satisfactory record of accomplishment for operation and maintenance of public recreation areas and facilities in order to apply.

### **Grants Administration**

Applicants must have a satisfactory record of administering Federal grant funds or must have a formal written agreement with an entity with a satisfactory record of administering Federal grant funds. Grant administration professionals may be acceptable substitutes for some institutional capacity upon approval from ADECA.

### **Twenty Percent Match**

Applicants must document the availability of the required minimum twenty percent (20%) match for each application. This requires that each applicant **submit a resolution** passed by its governing authority that, if a grant were awarded, the required match would be forthcoming. Applicants should be advised that this is a reimbursement program. Funds must be available to expend. Once expenditures are made, reimbursements can be requested. The reimbursement process can take up to 90 days.

## User Fees

Applicants must agree that any and all user fees, either resulting from this application or as part of the applicant's system of public parks and recreation areas, cannot be so large as to be exclusionary.

Prospective applicants are not eligible to apply if:

- Entity has an open Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) or RTP grant as of May 3, 2016.
- Entity has unresolved compliance issues from a previous LWCF or RTP grant.
- Entity did not respond in writing to a LWCF or RTP inspection report that contained deficiencies.
- Entity has not completed and received approval of a Corrective Action Plan for previous compliance issues.

## **Submission Instructions**

Please submit an original and a digital copy (an emailed copy will not be accepted) of your application. Be sure each application includes:

- A signed Pre-application Form to include a response to each of the evaluation criterion
- A resolution adopted by the legal entity of the applicant authorizing the application and committing all matching funds required to complete the proposed project
- A narrative description of the proposed project
- Estimate of cost
- Preliminary site plan
- Plat and/or legal description of the property proposed for purchase and/or development
- Location map
- Verification of sam.gov registration

Please submit your application with a single binder clip. Please do not staple, spiral bind, or book bind your application.

Please submit applications to:

### BY MAIL:

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)  
Community and Economic Development Programs Division  
Attention: Crystal Davis, Recreation and Conservation Programs Manager  
Post Office Box 5690  
Montgomery, AL 36103-5690

BY COURIER:

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)  
Community and Economic Development Programs Division  
Attention: Crystal Davis, Recreation and Conservation Programs Manager  
401 Adams Avenue, Suite 524  
Montgomery, AL 36104

All applications must be **received** by Recreation and Conservation Programs staff by 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, May 3, 2016.

For more information please contact: Crystal Davis at (334) 353-2630, or [crystal.davis@adeca.alabama.gov](mailto:crystal.davis@adeca.alabama.gov).

## RESOLUTION 004-16

The Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trail Association  
hereby agrees to develop and construct the Smith  
Mountain Exhibit Signage Project

And to make application for a grant from the  
Alabama Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April 2016.

Jerry Bynum for  
CRATA Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Bynum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

## Alabama Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Narrative Smith Mountain Exhibit Signage Project

The Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trail Association (CRATA) is a 501(c)(3) private not-for-profit organization based in Elmore County in east central Alabama. Its purpose is to build and maintain hiking trails and destinations in Tallapoosa and Elmore Counties on or near the shorelines of Lake Martin and Yates Lake. These trails are currently located on Alabama Power Project Lands (which are under usage control of the Federal Energy Regulatory commission) and Forever Wild. Over twenty (20) miles of trails, parking areas and one (1) restored historic fire tower are currently maintained by CRATA and open to the public, year-round, without discrimination.

CRATA is now working on new developments to enhance the Smith Mountain Trails and Smith Mountain Overlook and Tower on Lake Martin. A new “Tower Keeper Building” will replace the former Forestry Commission office at the same location. The building will look similar to the old, but constructed of materials that are fire-resistant and more secure. It will be “off-the-grid” with no public water or power supply. It will be designed to house volunteers who man the site on selected weekends and for special events.

**Brief Description of the Project:** CRATA proposes to build and provide a network of “state-of-the-art” graphic displays, exhibits and signage for interpretation and education experiences for visitors. The displays, exhibits and signage will provide historical, directional, topographical, geographical, ecological and “current use” interpretation for visitors. A focus on “current use” and “multi-use” will allow visitors, trail groups, private interests and public agencies to better understand and encourage trail usage and development on Alabama Power Project Lands and nearby Forever Wild lands. There are currently thousands of acres available for such usage.

Additional new options for usage of the trails, new building and tower destination include an emphasis on “boat-to-hike” for Lake Martin residents and visitors through the provision of signage and an Alabama Power approved dock access point to the trails. Canoeists and kayakers on the Harold Banks Alabama River Trail will be able and encouraged to “boat-to-hike” Tallapoosa River, Lake Martin to Smith Mountain and Overlook Park trails, and on to Yates Lake Forever Wild trails.

CRATA board members, association members and volunteers will coordinate the effort with support from Tallapoosa Publishers (Lake Magazine, Lake Martin Living), Alabama’s Recreational Trail Program (RTP), Lake Martin Resource Association (LMRA) volunteers, Methodist men, Auburn Extension, Tallapoosa County, Elmore County and other public and private entities.

**1. Describe the degree to which the project’s scope and feasibility meet the project area’s recreational needs.** CRATA currently receives numerous requests for

interpretation of usage of APC/FERC and Forever Wild properties. Project displays/exhibits/signage will be appropriately and unobtrusively displayed from trailheads, along trails, in and near the new Tower Keeper Building, and on the fire tower itself. This will allow all visitors to understand and encourage trail development and usage, multi-use, and current use. It will also provide historical (fire tower is on the list of National Historical Places), cultural and geographical interpretation. Before the development of Smith Mountain, there has been limited public access to trails around Lake Martin and in east central Alabama. A project description (Smith Mountain Exhibit Signage Project) and corresponding budget (Attachment #1) is included for review. The proposed project will greatly enhance an outstanding, exciting “destination” and over seven (7) miles of existing trails at the Smith Mountain site.

**2. Describe the ways in which the project provides for the greatest number of compatible recreational purposes.** Many acres of APC/FERC designated natural-undeveloped or general public use properties adjacent to Lake Martin and Yates Lake have been left underused and misused over the years. Illegal dumping, illegal shoreline usage and other forms of misuse of beautiful forested properties have occurred. CRATA’s development of Smith Mountain (with a large influx of people hiking, climbing, “boating-to-hiking”, geo-caching, bird-watching, tower destination visiting, camping, picnicking, etc.) has provided a major turnaround in property usage through beautification, conservation and education efforts. Current usage (per guest book sign-in) has far exceeded expectation of usage and misuse has been virtually eliminated. A number of trail associations, tower groups, church groups, private groups, university groups and others have used the trails and overlook destination for special events. CRATA proposes to extend and expand the knowledge base of the Smith Mountain’s national and historical environment through the encouragement of trail building and usage of APC/FERC and Forever Wild properties. The project will encourage series connection of Smith Mountain trails to Overlook Park trails and the new Yates Forever Wild trails south of Martin Dam.

**3. Describe the ways in which the project provides a new, unique, or more effective means for making trail opportunities available to the public.** The proposed signage project will provide on-site immediate availability to answer related to property usages as well as historical, cultural and environmental interpretations. This will provide a direct benefit for visitors (individual and groups) wishing to build or expand trails on public utility and state-owned properties. The “boating-to-hiking” aspect of the project is new and unique for local residents (3 county area) and a possible new connection with Alabama River trails. Current approval for a boat dock to access trails to Smith Mountain has been approved by Alabama Power.

**4. Describe the ways in which the project facilitates the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities, older citizens, economically disadvantaged, and other special populations or groups.** By developing an understanding of public utility and state-owned property usages, people with disabilities, the elderly, and other special populations and their supporters will be encouraged to develop fully accessible tracts.

CRATA currently has a working relationship with Camp ASCCA for people with disabilities on Lake Martin which has provided for special access and events for campers. CRATA currently provides for access for the elderly and people with disabilities and the proposed project will expand these opportunities through education. Although the primary trails at Smith Mountain are not accessible for mobility-impaired individuals, the mountaintop parking area, new Tower Keeper Building, and all exhibits at this vista point will be fully accessible. Extreme elevation changes prevent accessibility on primary trails without fundamentally altering the physical environment. Accessibility with assistance has been regularly accomplished with Camp ASCCA groups.

**5. Describe the ways in which the project creates opportunities for new partnerships between trail users, private interests, and public agencies within the project area.** The proposed project (with enhanced interpretation and exhibits) will open new doors for area and regional school systems (many of which are Title I schools) for field trips and educational opportunities. Similarly, local and area Chambers of Commerce, economic development alliances, and businesses will use the site as a destination for special events and business recruitment. Currently, the Alexander City and Dadeville Area Chambers of Commerce conduct annual events at the site. CRATA has also teams with PATH roadside and trail clean-ups and other private and public organizations for usage of Smith Mountain trails and tower. The proposed project will also enhance local clean-up and conservation efforts through targeted signage and exhibits.

**6. Describe the ways in which the project uses the grant funds to leverage other public or private investments (in the form of services and materials as well as dollars).** CRATA's Smith Mountain Tower Restoration Project during 2010-2011 was spearheaded by Tallapoosa Publishers (Lake Magazine). See pages 40-45, Lake Magazine, May 2010, attached. The owner, publisher and editor have agreed to assist with development efforts to make the proposed project a reality. Many other commitments of volunteer time, material supplies and financial contributions are in place. Combined efforts for the total project will more than quadruple the required local match.

**7. Describe the degree of commitment to continue operation and maintenance of the project. Include an operation and maintenance plan detailing the amount of money needed to operate and maintain the trail after it is completed and identify who will be responsible for the work.** The proposed project will be built with "state-of-the-art" materials and workmanship with minimum 10-year warranty on selected outdoor graphics. A depreciation fund from existing financial resources as well as future contributions will be used for repair/maintenance of signage/displays/exhibits. The current CRATA Board of Directors/membership is composed of dedicated volunteers who have consistently provided trail maintenance (including kiosks, gates, tower, ~~directions~~, parking area, etc.) Selected members are currently assigned to each trail area and trail. CRATA does not charge entrance fees, but encourages paid membership and tax-deductible contributions. CRATA recently received an unsolicited gift of \$7,500.00.

512292

**8. The degree to which community involvement is addressed; i.e., (A) Project idea originated with trail users or a community group that has substantial knowledge, and (B) The private sector (including individual citizens, community groups, or local business enterprises) has participated in the development of the proposed idea and has made commitments of labor, money, or materials to support proposed implementation.** The existing Smith Mountain project has enjoyed overwhelming success and the area-wide “base-of-support” includes CRATA membership as well as the aforementioned private and public organizations. All entities have been involved in an eighteen (18)-month planning process which has included numerous site visits and meetings. Again, aforementioned participants include the following: CRATA Board and membership, RTP (Recreational Trails Program), Alabama Power, Tallapoosa Publishers (Lake Magazine), Lake Martin Resource Association, Dadeville Methodist men, Auburn Extension, Tallapoosa County, Southern Custom Exhibits, Forever Wild, and other public and private entities. Additionally, retired employees of the Alabama Forestry Commission have been consulted resulting in numerous donations of historical supplies, photos, information and offers of support.

**9. Describe in detail how the trail will be managed.** The proposed project will be open and available to the public without discrimination; self-guided, from dawn until dusk, year-round. The new Tower Keeper Building which will house selected displays will be open and manned on selected weekends, year-round. Additionally, volunteers will man or make the site available for selected special tours, events, or activities per advanced scheduling. APC/FERC rules for “natural undeveloped” lands will be in place. This will include prohibition of illegal substances, no fires, no littering, no dumping, no sale of items for profit, no timber harvesting and “other” as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors of CRATA. Enforcement is currently provided by “site-watch” by CRATA volunteers at the site and excellent working relationship with the Tallapoosa County Sheriff’s Office.

**10. Identify and describe the service area of the project. Approximately how many people do you propose to serve with this project?** The primary service area of the project is East Central Alabama. Additionally, the site is located between the metro areas of Birmingham, Montgomery, Auburn/Columbus and Atlanta. Visitors have come from all over the southeast U.S. and worldwide. Approximately 10,000 people visit the site annually. The site is located near Wind Creek State Park and between Cheaha State Park and Chewelah State Park. River trails, mountain bike trails, horseback trails and OHV trails are located in the Anniston, Auburn, and Montgomery areas. There are very few public access “foot-path only” trails in east central Alabama. (For this reason, Forever Wild has invited us to help develop hiking trails in the Forever Wild Yates property south of Martin Dam.) Upon project completion, we would anticipate usage to double or triple or more with school groups, businesses, public agency usage, trail groups, and others.

**11. Identify the length of time the trail will be maintained and open and available to the public and identify the method to be used to ensure this commitment.** CRATA, as a 501(c)(3) organization, is the current owner of the project site Smith Mountain. The

current deed provides for hiking, foot-path only, in perpetuity. Surrounding APC/FERC properties provide for hiking, foot-path only, for a period of forty (40) years per public utility license with FERC.

## Smith Mountain Exhibit Signage Project

<b>A. Design of all signage and exhibits -</b>		\$ 14,400.00
This includes all design, detailing material and finish specifications, research, writing and graphic design for all signage and exhibits.		
<i>Client to assist with research, writing, and photo acquisition.</i>		
<b>B. Parking Lot Trailhead Sign -</b>		\$ 1,401.00
36" x 48" Upright wayside frame with 10 year outdoor graphic material aluminum frame with powder coat finish.		
	Sign Frame -	\$ 789.00
	Graphic panel -	\$ 612.00
		<u>\$ 1,401.00</u>
<b>C. 24" x 36" Low Profile Wayside Exhibits -</b>		\$ 11,100.00
Qty of 12		
On trail to Tower, Aluminum Finish, Powder coated, 10 year outdoor durable graphic panel.		
	Sign Frame -	\$ 625.00
	Graphic panel -	\$ 300.00
		<u>\$ 925.00</u>
		x12
		\$ 11,100.00
<b>D. 16" x 20" Tower Mounted Wayside Graphics -</b>		\$ 4,264.00
Qty of 8		
Aluminum Construction, Powder coat finish. Custom Bracket to bolt to Tower frame with no holes required.		
	Sign Frame -	\$ 298.00
	Graphic panel -	\$ 235.00
		<u>\$ 533.00</u>
		x8
		\$ 4,264.00

**Smith Mountain Exhibit  
Signage Project**

<b>E. 16" x 60" Panoramic Photos -</b>	\$	4,244.00
Qty of 4		
In frame at top of cab to give orientation to specific locations.		
Aluminum Construction, Powder coat finish.		
Sign Frame -	\$	633.00
Graphic panel -	\$	428.00
	\$	1,061.00
		x4
	\$	4,244.00

**INSIDE THE NEW TOWER KEEPERS BUILDING**

<b>F. Topographic Model of Smith Mountain Area -</b>	\$	11,688.00
Map to have selected locations labeled and information can be wall-mounted or base cabinet.		
4' x 4' at 250% vertical exaggeration.		
<b>G. Exhibit Case -</b>	\$	4,750.00
36" x 36" x 40" to contain artifact sighting device used to locate smoke plumes when tower was in use.		
Could also have interactive element to look through.		
<b>H. Wall Panel (38" x 72") -</b>	\$	3,970.00
Wood frame standoff with full color graphic panel.		
Subject - " History Timeline"		
<b>I. Wall Panel (38" x 72") -</b>	\$	3,970.00
Wood frame standoff with full color graphic panel.		
Subject - " Alabama Power Company & Lake Martin"		
<b>J. Wall Panel (38" x 72") -</b>	\$	3,970.00
Wood frame standoff with full color graphic panel.		
Subject - " Longleaf Pine Ecosystem"		

## Smith Mountain Exhibit Signage Project

<b>K. Wall Panel (38" x 72") -</b> Wood frame standoff with full color graphic panel. Subject - " Tower Restoration Project"	\$ 3,970.00
<b>L. Wall Panel (38" x 72") -</b> Wood frame standoff with full color graphic panel. Subject - "Tallapoosa River System"	\$ 3,970.00
<b>M. Custom Illustrations and Paintings -</b> Artwork depicting scenes that photographs do not exist for such as Native American usage, Historic uses of tower and river, etc. Also used to accent all graphic panels. Image acquisition of photographs	\$ 12,000.00
<b>N. Trail Directional Signage -</b> For entire trail network and waysides, other trailhead signs, etc. Allowance of -	\$ 15,000.00
<b>O. Shipping -</b>	\$ 2,100.00
<b>P. Installation -</b>	\$ 12,384.00
<b>Q. Closeout and Training -</b> Includes archiving all files for future use.	\$ 1,200.00
<b>R. Contingency -</b>	\$ 5,000.00

**TOTAL \$ 119,381.00**

LAKE MARTIN ALABAMA EDITION

# LAKE

MAGAZINE

## NEW ATTRACTION

Restoration of the Smith Mountain  
Fire Tower will raise Lake Martin  
sunset watching to new heights

Also Inside:  
Our Annual Summer Calendar &  
A Peek in Scrushy's \$5 Million Mansion

# What a View!

Outdoor lovers put on your hiking boots. The lake's highest point is about to become part of a new recreational area, complete with a restored fire tower and four new walking trails.

STORY & PHOTOS BY KENNETH BOONE

Anybody with a pair of hiking boots and several hundred calories to burn will soon be able to enjoy breath-taking aerial views of Lake Martin from 850 feet above the water.

The old fire tower on Smith Mountain, a longtime lake landmark which has been officially off-limits and unsafe to visitors for years, will be fully restored this year and opened to the public as part of the new Smith Mountain Alpine Trail. The tower and four new hiking trails being constructed around the mountain will be managed by the Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trail Association (CRATA).

"With hiking trails and picnic areas, as well as unparalleled views from the tower, the Smith Mountain Historic Site promises to be an attraction for residents and a destination for visitors to Tallapoosa County," said Bill Brown, a volunteer with the tower restoration project who lives on Sandy Creek near Smith Mountain. "For many, it will bring back memories of days gone by."

Although plans are still being made, the 80-foot tower will likely be open for climbing on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons year around and it will be staffed by a CRATA official. The steep road that now leads up to the tower will be closed and visitors will hike a 1-mile loop up the mountain to access the fire tower.

Three other hiking trails will also be established around Smith Mountain and Little Smith Mountain, which comprise one of the most beautiful landscapes on Lake Martin. The area is famous for its steep slopes and rocky outcroppings, beautiful water dotted with islands and forests of old-growth longleaf pines, rhododendron and mountain laurel.

"We have a guy from Virginia Tech University who is doing a study for his doctorate on the long leaf pine. He has discovered a long leaf at Smith Mountain that he knows is at least 340 years old," said Jimmy K. Lanier, one of the leaders of the restoration effort.

The top of Smith Mountain has long been a gathering place for locals, and plans including beautifying the area by cleaning up litter and removing graffiti spray-painted on the rocks in the area.

Restoring the tower and creating the new hiking trails will require about \$100,000 and is the focus of a new fund-raising effort. The project is expected to be complete this fall.

## How the ball got rolling

The restoration effort has been spearheaded by Jerry Bynum, who's a director of the Lake Martin Resource Association, and Lanier, who founded CRATA.

After hiking around the exposed shoreline during the drought several years ago, Bynum noticed a lot of litter left by people on Smith Mountain.

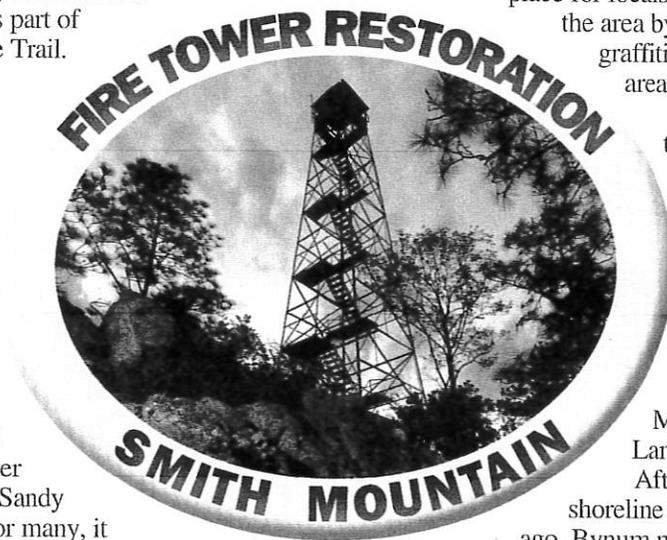
"I invited Jimmy up to the tower to look around," Bynum said.

From the top of Smith Mountain, Lanier said he realized how close they were to the existing Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trails.

"And all the sudden a light went on and we thought, we need to connect these together," Lanier said.

Both the CRATA and LMRA boards of directors voted to sponsor the project.

The groups met with Alabama Power Co., which was concerned about the liability of the old fire tower and had considered taking it down. But after numerous meetings involving





Mark Tuggle, Jim Crew and others, an agreement was made to establish the new park as a way to get the tower restored, reduce litter problems, expand CRATA's hiking trails and create a new attraction on the lake.

Under the agreement, Alabama Power Co. will retain the property and will retain liability, but the hiking trail and tower will be operated and staffed by CRATA.

"They would be taking away a landmark, instead, we'll make it usable," Bynum said. "It's a win-win-win. It's a liability right now. But if it is done well, like we're proposing, it will become an asset."

Previously, Alabama Power Co. classified the Smith Mountain property as general public use, but as part of the cur-

rent relicensing plan it will be classified as natural undeveloped. That's the same status as the power company land crossed by other CRATA hiking trails on the lake.

**For additional information or to donate, please contact members of the Smith Mountain Fire Tower Restoration Team:**

Jimmy K. Lanier, Eclectic	(334) 462-8565
Bill Brown, Dadeville	(256) 825-0101
Laeman Butcher, Dadeville	(256) 825-8451
Jerry Bynum, Jackson's Gap	(256) 825-7408
Larry Tuggle, Alexander City	(256) 234-3109
John Thompson, Eclectic	(334) 541-2851
Mark Tuggle, Dadeville	(256) 329-3352
Wayne Shell, Elmore Co.	(334) 857-1887
Kenneth Boone, Alexander City	(256) 750-3200

rent relicensing plan it will be classified as natural undeveloped. That's the same status as the power company land crossed by other CRATA hiking trails on the lake.

**How to restore a 70-year-old fire tower**

In addition to the paperwork, a lot of physical work has already been completed.

Structural Engineer Robert Hodnett, a New Site native who is part of the Hodnett-Hurst Engineers, Inc. firm that helped

restore Sloss Furnace in Birmingham, has completed an extensive study on the tower. Hodnett found the supporting metal structurally sound and has developed a restoration plan to put



Ten flights of stairs and landings zig-zag between the tower's heavy steel legs.



the tower back into top shape.

“The engineer told us you could put a number of people on each landing at the same time and it would be safe,” Bynum said.

Speaking of safety, Lanier said it will be impossible to “fall off” the tower because wire mesh will enclose the stairs and landings.

“The head of the national fire tower association told me there has never been anyone who has fallen off a fire tower in the U.S., and a number of them have been restored,” he said.

In addition, Mark Tuggle has donated eastern red cedar trees that members of the Methodist Men’s group from First United Methodist Church in Dadeville have logged and had sawn into about 2,000 board feet of heart lumber. The boards will be used to make 2-inch thick replacement steps and flooring boards for the tower.

“That’s taken several weeks, and a lot of man hours have already been put in to that,” Bynum. “What we’ll do is haul all that material up the mountain, cut it to size and work all the way up to the top, all 10 flights.”

Remaining tasks include replacing some of the steel bracing, adding wire mesh around all landings and stairs, new railings will be installed, glass will be added in the cabin windows, the cabin floor will be replaced (it’s completely gone now), and the whole tower will be painted.

To allow the tower to be locked when there is not an attendant on site, a green plastic coated chain link security fence will be installed around the base of the fire tower.

A kiosk with trail maps and a brief history of the fire tower and other structures used by the Forestry Commission will be installed near the tower.

Improvements at the base of the mountain include doubling the parking lot size and adding a trailhead kiosk that includes hiking trail maps, a brief history Smith Mountain and educational information about the forest and biodiversity of the area.

Long-term goals include building an Interpretive Visitor’s Center near the parking area at the base of the mountain.

### New Hiking Trails

CRATA intends to build a total of four hiking trails on the

Smith Mountain site.

The Smith Mountain Tower Trail will be a 1-mile loop from the parking lot to the tower and back, Lanier said.

The longer Smith Mountain Alpine Trail will include much of the tower trail and will go around the base of Smith Mountain, including part of the shoreline and the “rock gardens.” The length of that trail has not yet been determined. However, it will be possible to hike the trails and visit the towers from the water using this trail. Because the land has been classified as natural undeveloped, no docks will be built and visitors who come by water will have to beach their boats.

A third trail will take visitors to the smaller “mountain” on the site.

“Little Smith Mountain Trail will loop off the main trail and then come back into it as a loop around Little Smith Mountain,” Lanier said.

A fourth trail will be seasonal and will be called the Smith Mountain Island Trail.

“In the wintertime, when the water is down, you will be able to access probably four islands from the Smith Mountain Alpine Trail,” Bynum said.

The entire park will be open to foot traffic only. The only exception will be for elderly or

mobility impaired visitors who can ride to the top of the mountain when an attendant is there, he said.

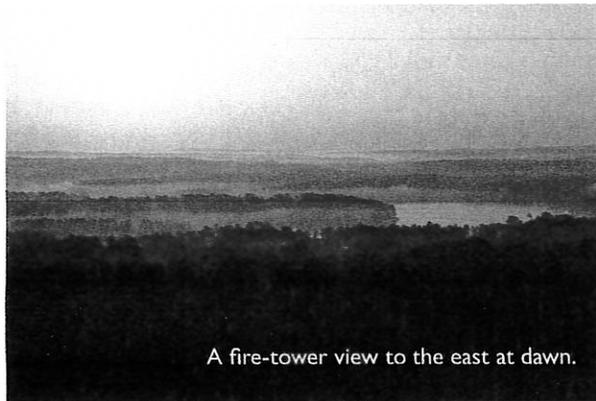
### Fire Tower History

After cutting most of the forests in the area during the construction of Martin Dam, Alabama Power Company embarked a program to reforest the area. Between 1935 and 1941, the company planted 2.7 million trees on Lake Martin lands. The company acted on the idea that “anyone who plants trees will not want them to burn,” adopting forestry management practices on its land around the lake.

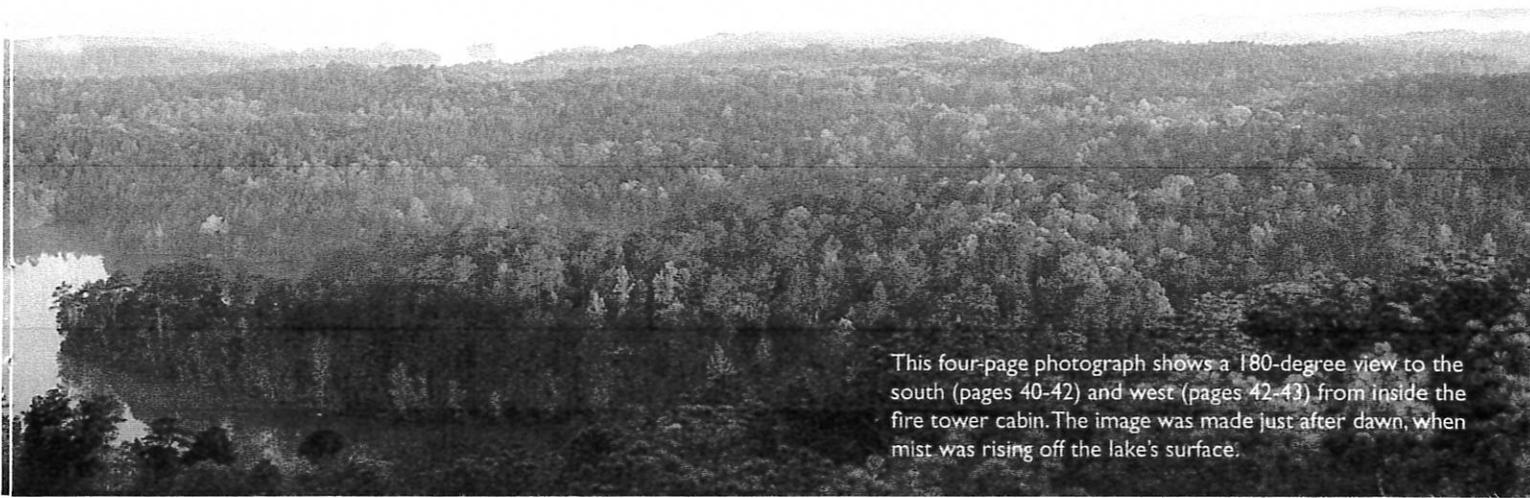
Alabama Power Company erected the Smith Mountain fire tower in 1939 on the top of the steep, rocky hill that stands 780 feet above the Sandy Creek area on Lake Martin.

“That tower cost \$1,000 when it was erected in 1939,” Lanier said.

Shortly afterward, the tower and 10 acres of property around it was turned over to the state and the Alabama Division of Forestry took charge of the fire tower. In 1941, Civilian



A fire-tower view to the east at dawn.



This four-page photograph shows a 180-degree view to the south (pages 40-42) and west (pages 42-43) from inside the fire tower cabin. The image was made just after dawn, when mist was rising off the lake's surface.

Conservation Corps labor was used to build a district ranger station at the base of the tower, and for the next four decades, the fire tower was a crucial part of the management of Tallapoosa County forests.

In 1976, Fire Ranger Skip Turner moved his office to the Tallapoosa County Courthouse in Dadeville. Fire watchmen still worked in the tower for four more years, until the Forestry Commission closed the Smith Mountain Fire Tower in 1980. In 2006, the Alabama Forestry Commission deeded the tower and 10-acre site back to Alabama Power Company.

Ironically, during the 2007 drought a fire broke out on Smith Mountain that burned steps and landings on the lower part of the tower, as well as burning many of the trees in the area.

The Smith Mountain Fire Tower district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs during the Great Depression. Of the 105 fire towers now standing in Alabama, the Smith Mountain tower is unique in that it is the only Aermotor LS-40 model in the state, though many others are standing in the U.S.

**Funding the Tower Restoration**

The new park and tower restoration comes through the efforts of a number of organizations, including Alabama Power Co., the Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trail Association (CRATA), the Lake Martin Resource Association (LMRA), the Methodist Men's group of First United Methodist Church in Dadeville, Hodnett-Hurst Engineers and *Lake Magazine*/Tallapoosa Publishers.

Although an estimated \$100,000 is needed to restore the tower and create the recreational facility, more than a third has already been pledged through in-kind donations of materials and services.

The remainder will be raised through an effort that is getting under way this month around the lake.

Members of the tower "Restoration Team" come from all corners of Lake Martin: Bill Brown, Laeman Butcher and Mark Tuggle of Dadeville, Jerry Bynum of Jackson's Gap, Jimmy K. Lanier and John Thompson of Eclectic, Wayne Shell of Elmore County, Larry Tuggle and Kenneth Boone of Alexander City.

Donations to help the Smith Mountain Fire Tower Restoration should be made out to CRATA. All donations are tax-deductible and all donors will be recognized in print when the tower is dedicated. Donors of \$100 or more will be recognized on a permanent cast plaque displayed on site.

**Contribution Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Reach for the Sky! Your gift is important.

**Giving Levels**

Base Builders	Up to \$99
Climbers	\$100-\$249
Vista Viewers	\$250-499
Summit Toppers	\$500-\$999
Stair Flight	\$1,000 or more
Cab Sponsor	\$5,000 or more

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tax deductible gifts to "CRATA-Smith Mountain Tower Restoration" are greatly appreciated!

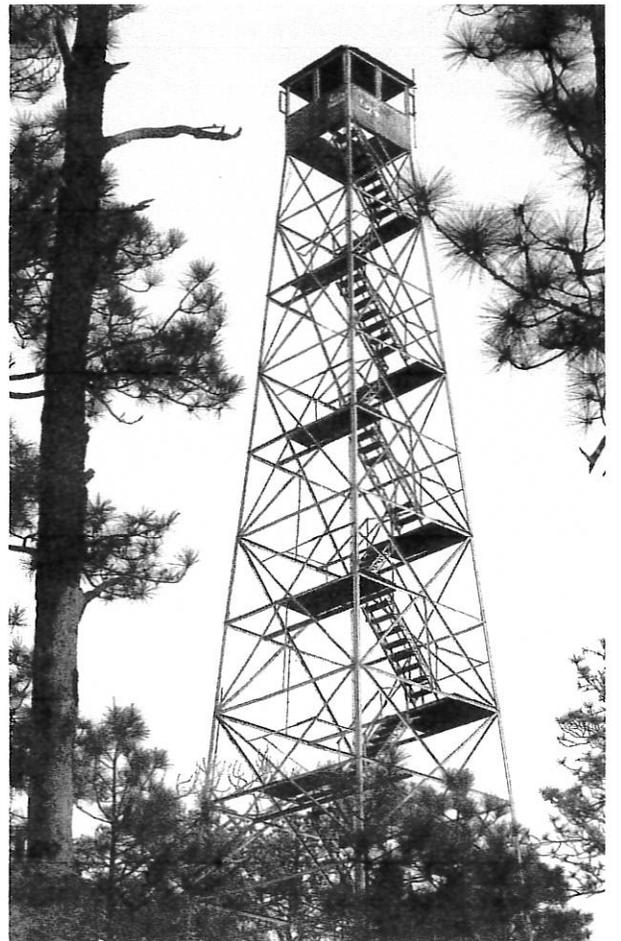
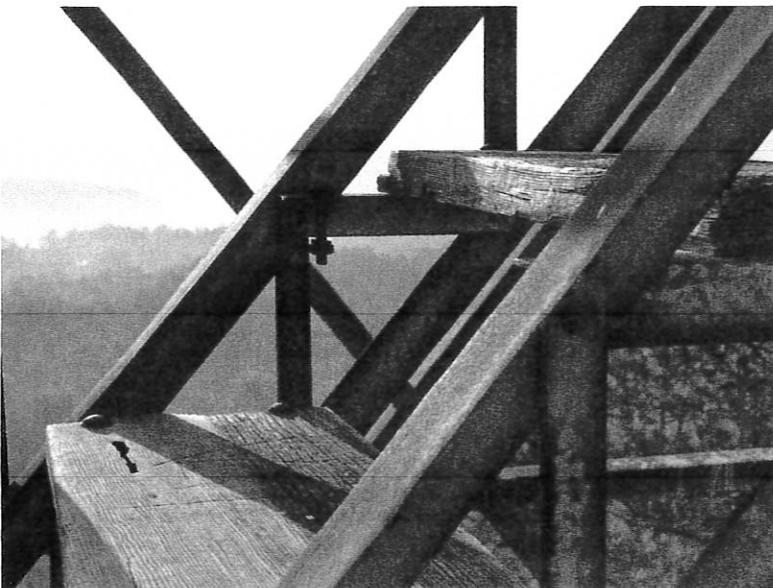
Please return this form and your gift to:

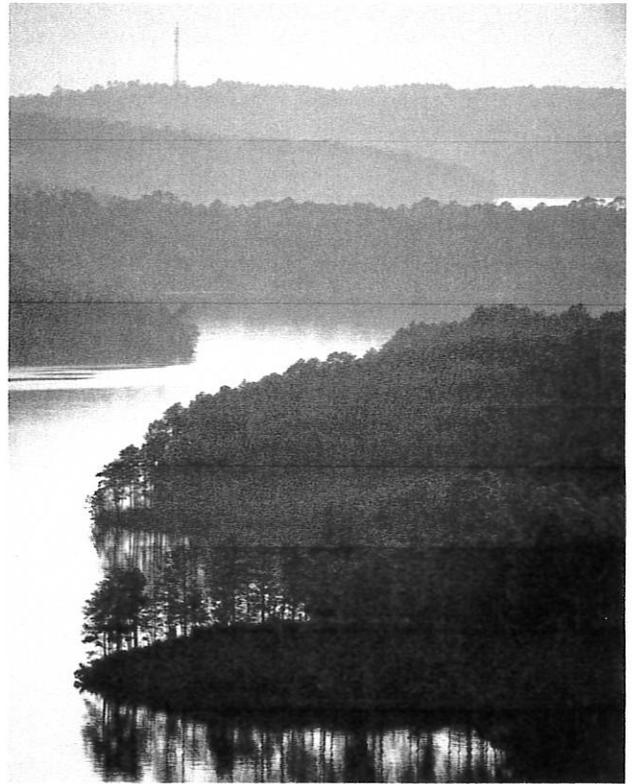
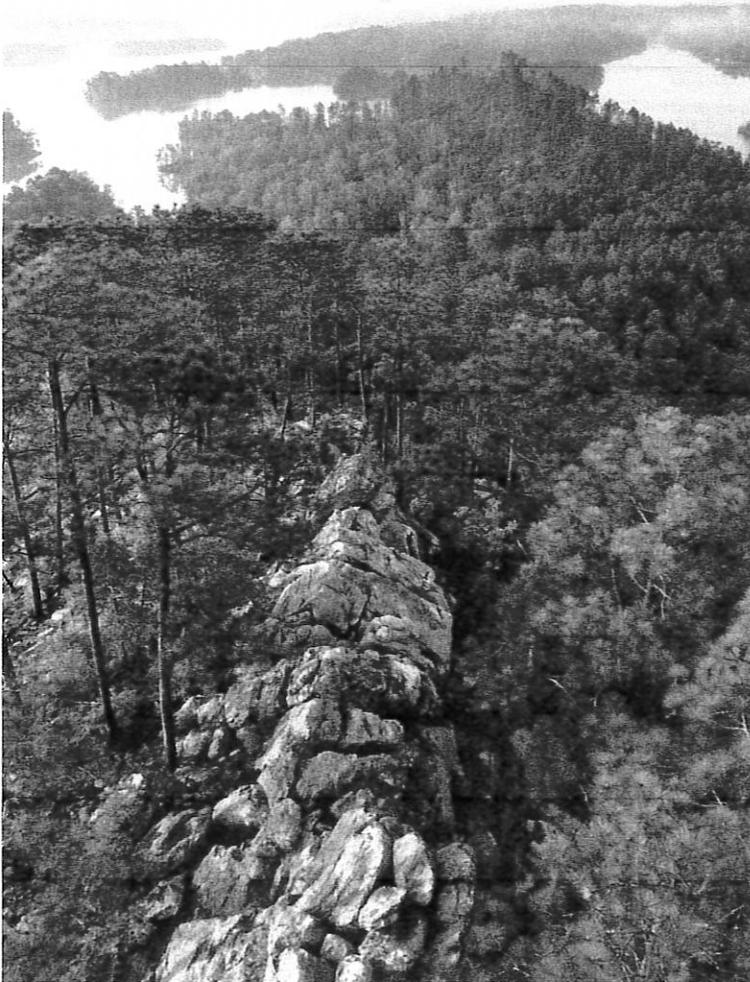
Jimmy K. Lanier, CRATA  
P.O. Box 240503  
Eclectic, AL 36024

All donors will be recognized in print at the tower dedication. All donors of \$100 or more will be recognized on a permanent cast plaque. Anonymous gifts at all levels will be respected for confidentiality. Honorariums, memorials and appreciations will be acknowledged per donor direction.



The old fire tower stands at the apex of the steep-sided Smith Mountain, about 850 feet above Lake Martin. After restoration, the tower's steps and landings will be enclosed by steel mesh safety fencing, giving visitors a little more security than the original fire rangers had.





Clockwise from top left: From the top of the fire tower, you can see the exposed mountaintop ridge of Smith Mountain in the foreground and Little Smith Mountain in the background. In this image made from the highest rocks on Smith Mountain, Sandy Creek weaves through islands and past points as it makes its way toward the Tallapoosa River Channel. The open windows in the tower will be filled with glass during the restoration process, which will make enjoying the spectacular views more safe for visitors willing to make the climb.

