

Exhibit A
Minutes of the Alabama Trails Commission
and Advisory Board Joint Meeting

November 20, 2019
11:00 AM

Alabama Municipal Electric Authority
80 TechnaCenter Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36117

Alabama Trails Commission Attendees

Dr. Graham Sisson, Chair
Phillip West
Debbie Quinn
Sonya Baker
Grey Brennan
Jeff Pruitt
Jonathan Hester (William Filmore's Proxy)

Advisory Board Attendees

Jim Felder
Steve Newton
Dr. John Jensen
Freddy Padilla
Tim King
Elizabeth Kennedy Lawlor
Marie Bostick
Josh Burnett
Nisa Miranda (via telephone)

Associates & Visitors

Brian Rushing - UACED
Bobby Whaley – former Advisory Board member / equestrian community
Dr. Richard Guthrie – former Commissioner
Jeanne Jackson – Alabama Trails Foundation
Carolyn Buck – Freshwater Land Trust
Josh Yerby – Alabama Power
Will O'Connor - River Region Trails
Andrew Semanskie –River Region Trails
John Steiner –River Region Trails
Lisa Booher – Birmingham Ultra Trail Society
Greg Wingo – Birmingham Ultra Trail Society

Welcome and Introductions

In Amy Rauworth's absence as Chair, Dr. Graham Sisson (Vice-Chair) called the meeting to order at 11:00AM and asked attendees to introduce themselves. A quorum was present for the Alabama Trails Commission (ATC) but not for the Advisory Board (AB).

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Sisson asked for approval of the November 28, 2018, April 10, 2019, and August 20, 2019 meeting minutes. Sonya Baker made a motion for approval. Jeff Pruitt seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

ATC Chair's Report

- *1st Action Item for Commission Approval.* Election of new officers for the ATC: Dr. Graham Sisson as Chair, Jeff Pruitt as Vice-Chair, and Mayor Johnny Smith as Secretary. Debbie Quinn moved for approval. Phillip West seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously. Advisory Board officer election will be postponed until there is a quorum of the Advisory Board.
- *Planning Update for 2020 Alabama Recreational Trails Conference.* Dr. Sisson reviewed preparations for the February 6-7 conference at the Lodge at Gulf State Park, including mobile workshops, plenary, and concurrent sessions. The conference focus areas will be accessibility, connectivity, and equity. Dr. Sisson called for additional help in securing sponsorships for the conference.
- *Initiatives Status.* Referencing an update in the board packet, Brian Rushing reviewed Andalusia's acquisition of a 16-mile rail Corridor from CSX, Gadsden's acquisition of a 2-mile rail corridor from Norfolk Southern, and Fayette's acquisition of a 2-mile corridor from Norfolk Southern. Mr. Rushing also provided an update on the 100 Alabama Miles Challenge and reported that the program has just shy of 4,000 participants that have logged over 100,000 miles. The steering committee for this program will be convening soon to make preparations for the 2020 season. Mr. Rushing also reviewed the status of the economic impact studies underway at a number of trail facilities.

Alabama Trails Foundation

Jeanne Jackson shared recent activities of Alabama Trails Foundation (ATF). She discussed the diversification of the ATF board geographically. There are three new board members: Julia Segars (already approved by the ATC Board), former head of Eastern Division of Alabama Power; Maggie Cunningham (not yet approved by ATC Board), who is from Piedmont and is active in economic development around the trail recreation in that area; Spencer Hardy (not yet approved by ATC Board) who is a respected leader from Coosa County, where he returned several years ago after retiring from the military. ATF's fundraising: all ATF board members are giving \$1,000 or more; ATF is raising an initial \$20,000 for the Pinhoti Trail project. Mrs. Jackson invites the members of the ATC and AB to contribute as well. Mrs. Jackson reviewed the process of aligning ATF and ATC bylaws functionally so that there is clarity regarding the relationship of the two organizations and how they work together. ATF has decided to support the work of the Friends of Flagg Mountain and Alabama Forestry Commission to restore and enhance Flagg Mountain.

ATF is funding a historical and archaeological survey of the CCC structures at Flagg Mtn. and a site plan to guide enhancements to the mountain while preserving its historical character. Part of the site planning process for Flagg Mountain involved an online survey to secure public input in the planning process. The ATF will be fundraising for the tower restoration and other restoration and enhancement work on the site in 2020. The ATF has been meeting with elected officials and held a legislative luncheon in September in Anniston to talk about the Pinhoti Trail planning process and economic development around trails.

Presentations on Trail-Related Work

- **Carolyn Buck** (Freshwater Land Trust) gave a presentation on the Red Rock Trail System in Birmingham and the Freshwater Land Trust's work to facilitate the implementation of this plan with local communities. The Freshwater Land Trust works in an eight-county area in North-Central Alabama and focuses its work on the acquisition and management of lands that protects water quality and preserve open space for public enjoyment. The organization spearheaded the development of the Red Rock Trail Plan in 2012. The plan calls for 750 miles of complete streets and off-street bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout Jefferson County. FLT aims to open a new trail each year with communities in Jefferson County. Recently opened are 5.5 miles of the Five Mile Creek Rail-Trail north of Birmingham. This project has been spearheaded by the Five Mile Creek Greenway Partnership, which is comprised of six cities that are working to redefine themselves around outdoor recreation. The High Ore Line Trail also recently opened. This three-mile rail-trail that connects Red Mountain Park to the City of Midfield in western Birmingham and is adjacent to the Jefferson County Department of Health's Western Health Center.
- **Sonya Baker** (ALDOT) gave a brief overview of the wide2017 State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Ms. Baker oversees bicycle and pedestrian planning issues for the Planning Studies Section under the Engineering Bureau at ALDOT. Her section provides technical assistance to MPOs and RPOs in their bicycle and pedestrian planning. Sundae Ragland is the new bicycle-pedestrian coordinator for the state. The 2017 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is intended to promote and facilitate increased walking and biking through infrastructure development. The goals of the plan are to facilitate the development of a connected alternative transportation system, promote safety, support economic development, and protect the natural environment. It promotes the development of specific master plans for bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure in local planning efforts. The Transportation Alternatives Program is administered by James Boyer at ALDOT. This program funds bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements in both urban and rural settings. TAP applications are reviewed by ALDOT staff, and projects should be part of a local comprehensive plan that should be consistent with the statewide bicycle-pedestrian plan. In 2019 ADLOT awarded 28 projects. Currently, ALDOT is not taking applications for 2020 due to no federal funding appropriation at this time. If funding becomes available, they will announce an application round.
- **Josh Yerby** (Alabama Power Company) gave a review of Alabama Power's (APCO) new trail initiatives. Traditionally, Alabama Power entered into agreements with local groups to build and maintain trails on the company's reservoir recreation areas, but now they are developing trails internally under "The Preserves" program. The Preserves is a new brand that APCO will apply to all of its recreation sites. In 2017, APCO decided to create a new

trail on every reservoir in five years. The sites that have been developed to date are: Double Cove on Lake Logan Martin, Ten Islands Park on Neeley Henry Reservoir, Slackland Beach on Weiss Reservoir, Fox Creek on Harris Reservoir, Beeswax on Lay Lake, and Nature's Way at Lake Martin. A trail on Lake Jordan will be developed in the next year. Mr. Yerby showed examples of the program's way-finding signage, interpretive signage, gazebos, universally accessible playgrounds, and pollinator plots. All of the trails are currently multiple use, with an emphasis on hiking and biking, although equestrian use is allowed. APCO is publicizing The Preserves through article placement in various publications.

Round Table Discussion about Current Events & Opportunities

- Will O'Connor talked about River Region Trials' launch of an effort to design and build a 30-mile greenways loop in Montgomery as well as the development of the 260-acre Cypress Nature Preserve. They will be reaching out to many folks on the ATC and AB for help and input.
- Phillip West asked Bobby Whaley about the preferred surface for equestrian trail development. Bobby said that crushed gravel or dirt is preferred for horses.
- Dr. Richard Guthrie talked about the Old Federal Road and a book recently published on the road. He referenced that some short sections of the road have been developed as a trails, particularly in Monroe County.
- Greg Wingo provided an update on the Birmingham Ultra Trail Society's (BUTS) activities. They organized the BloodRock 100, which has entries from 14 states and 2 foreign countries. The Bearly Ultra has entries from 4 other states. BUTS has also given about \$8,000 to local parks in the Birmingham area. Mr. Wingo is the race director for the Great Alabama 650 paddling race, which took place September 14 - 24. It's the world's longest annual paddling race, running from Weiss Lake on the Coosa River to Fort Morgan. There were 11 entries in September's race with 3 boats finishing. The racers were wearing spot trackers and their positions were viewable online. Across all online media there were close to 1 million impressions, and this was great exposure for the Alabama Scenic Trail. Greg showed a well-produced promotional video that is available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP_oOecRyr0. Next year, race entries will be capped at 20 and racers will have to have qualified at other designated races, which should result in higher caliber racers.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday March 18 at 11:00AM, and it was agreed that the location will likely be at ADECA, but will be confirmed via email.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Rushing