

Wild About Our Refuge

What a beautiful, ideal spring weather day Saturday, April 12 was! The weather was pleasant throughout Bibb County---not hot enough to make you sweat, yet not cold enough to make you put on a jacket. The memorable experiences and setting my son and I shared with about 30 other folks, on the Cahaba River near the Piper Bridge, made the day even more special.

No, we weren't fishing, canoeing or bird watching, although we did spot a few interesting plants and critters. Actually, everyone worked quite hard for most of the morning picking up trash as part of the Renew Our Rivers cleanup. Although the gathering was not the largest Renew Our Rivers cleanup I've participated in, it was one of the most rewarding. Two large county dump trucks were filled with trash collected along the river and along Bibb County 24 (Cahaba River Drive).

I thought often during the day of a quote from American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, shared during Leadership Bibb 2008 by presenter Dr. Joe Summers, Director of the Economic and Community Development Institute at Auburn University: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Renew Our Rivers proves there's a lot of truth in that quote. Part of that truth is validated by the very existence of Friends of the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge to clean and preserve the Refuge. Additional validation comes from the cooperative partners, public and private, who offered resources to the Friends to make the cleanup possible. Then, there were the 'worker bees' who cleaned up.

While small groups of people can make a difference, larger groups can make an even more profound impact. **Here's where you come into the picture...if you missed Renew Our Rivers and would like to help, you still have the chance. The Friends of the Refuge is offering everyone a chance to help the environment while enjoying the scenic Cahaba---at Cecil Crews Park in Centerville on Saturday, May 3 from 9am-5pm.**

Come join the Friends at Crews Park on Saturday, May 3 for its inaugural "Wild About Our Refuge" membership fundraiser. A small general admission fee of \$1 per person grants audiences 'all access' admission to Cecil Crews Park for numerous activities. Smokey Bear will be present, along with food vendors and information booths. Fishing and canoe safety demonstrations will also be conducted. Contact our office at 205-926-3117 for more information.

Bring the kids and lawn chairs and enjoy a day on the Cahaba learning about the unique natural resources Bibb County has to offer. If you feel somewhat adventurous, there will be a kayak "fun" race at 11am and a canoe "fun" race at 2pm. There is an entry fee of \$10 per craft, per race. First and second place prizes will be awarded for each race, and the distance is about one mile.

Finally, a separate but related event leading up to "Wild" is the Critter Costume Contest for kids ages 4-11 this Saturday, April 26 at the West Blocton Municipal Building at 11am. Entry fee is \$10. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes will be awarded to the best costumes depicting "critters" found on the Cahaba National Wildlife Refuge. The 1st place winner will also represent the Friends at public functions.

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