



# Alabama Wildlife Federation

## MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: May 5, 2008  
Contact: Doyle Keasal, AWF  
(334) 844-6398  
[dkeasal@auburn.edu](mailto:dkeasal@auburn.edu)  
[www.alabamawildlife.org](http://www.alabamawildlife.org)

- What:** Outdoor Classroom Dedication Ceremony
- When:** Thursday; May 15, 2008; 2:00 p.m.
- Where:** Wellborn Elementary School – (256) 741-7500  
525 Cooper Circle, Anniston, Alabama 36201  
Doug O’Dell, principal  
Robyn Ownens, project leader

Wellborn Elementary School, a Kindergarten through sixth grade school with approximately 630 students will be the first school in Calhoun County and only the nineteenth school in Alabama to be certified as an official Alabama Outdoor Classroom School through the Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program. In addition, Wellborn, Elementary School will be certified as an official National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat® school during this ceremony.

As an official Outdoor Classroom school, Wellborn Elementary School will serve as a role model for other schools in Alabama who would like to develop an outdoor classroom site on their school grounds for hands-on learning opportunities.

The dedication ceremony will include comments from the school’s principal and the outdoor classroom project leader as well as from representatives for the Alabama Wildlife Federation, Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The dedication ceremony will conclude with the school being designated as an official Alabama Outdoor Classroom and Schoolyard Habitat Site at which time they will be presented with a special award to acknowledge their accomplishments. Following the ceremony, all guests and the media will be invited to tour the Outdoor Classroom and take additional pictures.

### **Background Info**

The Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program, a partnership between the Alabama Wildlife Federation, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Alabama Cooperative Extension System, provides technical assistance for schools who want to develop sustainable outdoor classroom sites that can be utilized as effective teaching tools. During a time when schools are struggling to find new methods to raise students’ test scores, the Outdoor Classroom Program provides hands-on, outdoor learning opportunities that allow students of all ages to utilize multiple-disciplinary skills (including math, science, history, geography, and language arts) in a fun and exciting environment.

Outdoor Classrooms can include a wide variety of outdoor learning stations and components including raised bed gardens, vegetable gardens, butterfly gardens, forest communities, nature trails, aquatic studies areas, bog gardens, weather stations, and much more. At present, approximately 140 schools across Alabama are developing outdoor classroom sites through this program. For more information on the Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program, visit Alabama Wildlife Federation’s website at [www.alabamawildlife.org/conservation\\_education/classrooms.asp](http://www.alabamawildlife.org/conservation_education/classrooms.asp).

Wellborn Elementary School’s outdoor classroom site currently includes an amphitheater, gazebo, bird sanctuary, composting station, and weather station as well as various ecological learning stations including tropical, woodland, aquatic and desert areas. In addition, The Wanda McGhee Storybook Garden and the

Elizabeth Russ Butterfly Garden have been established in honor of two past Wellborn educators. These outdoor classroom areas provide the students with a variety of hands-on, learning opportunities where they can observe nature first-hand. Wellborn Elementary has future plans to continue developing their outdoor classroom and will be working to develop a historical learning station called Alabama Alley as well as experimental gardens for each grade level, a soil study station, and a paleontology station.

Funding and support for their outdoor classroom project has been provided by Legacy; Coosa Valley Resource Conservation and Development; Wellborn Elementary PTO; Calhoun County Beautification Board; Master Gardeners of Calhoun County; Miller's Landscaping and Supply Co.; Calhoun County Commissioner Eli Henderson; Representative Barbara Boyd; The Opportunity Center; Marvin's Building Materials and Home Center; Cottaquilla Growers; The Center of Hope; The Waffle House; Alabama Wildlife Federation, Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.