

# The Delta News

## 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center



Volume II, Issue I

January, 2010

## 2009: 5 Rivers Best Year So Far!



### Your Delta Fun Fact of the Month:

We all know Alabama has a state tree and a state bird, but did you know we have a state fossil?! We sure do and it's the Basilosaurus!

These meat-eating whale like creatures have been found in Clarke, Washington, and Choctaw counties.

They would have averaged 55 to 75 feet long and you can catch one on exhibit at the McWane Center in Birmingham.



2009 was just an incredible year for us here at 5 Rivers! In just our second full year of operation, we accomplished many firsts. In May we teamed up with the city of Spanish Fort to host the first "Delta Woods and Water Expo," giving students in the Spanish Fort School system the chance to experience all the delta has to offer through eight different stations. In July, we were proud to kick off our Saturday Adventure classes beginning with "Alternative Energy: Wind."

In October, we took our first public excursion to the Bottle Creek Indian Mounds and held our soon to be annual Trick or Treat at 5 Rivers. In November, we had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of the first ever South Alabama Independent Film Festival. Finally we ended the year with a bang by hosting our first Holiday Celebration and Annual Kayak Flotilla!

2009 also saw many great additions to the facility. In May, we welcomed our resident opossum Loretta, who is seven months old and seems to love her "opossuminum". We added to our variety of snakes by acquiring a Northern Pine Snake, and adult and juvenile Corn Snakes. We also had the chance to harvest an abandoned Osprey nest that is now on display in the Apalachee Exhibit Hall.

When the year was all said and done, we had an estimated 60,862 people stop in and visit us. We had 1,200 scheduled meetings and tours. This included 152 guided tours serving 6,168 people many of whom were students and youth. As the new year dawns, we look forward to sharing new events, interesting exhibits, and a variety of educational classes with our guests. And of course, we thank all of you for your support and participation during last year's events.

For information on what is coming up, visit our website at [Alabama5Rivers.com](http://Alabama5Rivers.com) or find us on Facebook.

We love to thumb through our guest book to see what our visitors have to say. During 2009, we had visitors from 12 countries, 41 states, and even 1 full time RVer! We enjoyed reading the comments, and these are a few of our favorites:

☞ "WEEEEEE!"

☞ "All I can say is Woot, Woot, Woot, Woot!"

☞ "Fantasamous!"

☞ "What a great learning experience!"

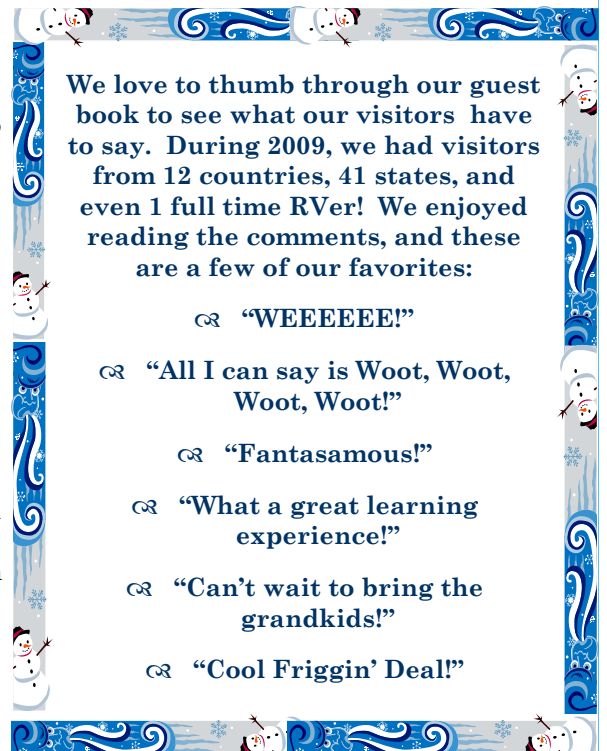
☞ "Can't wait to bring the grandkids!"

☞ "Cool Friggin' Deal!"



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# Goodbye 2009, Hello 2010!



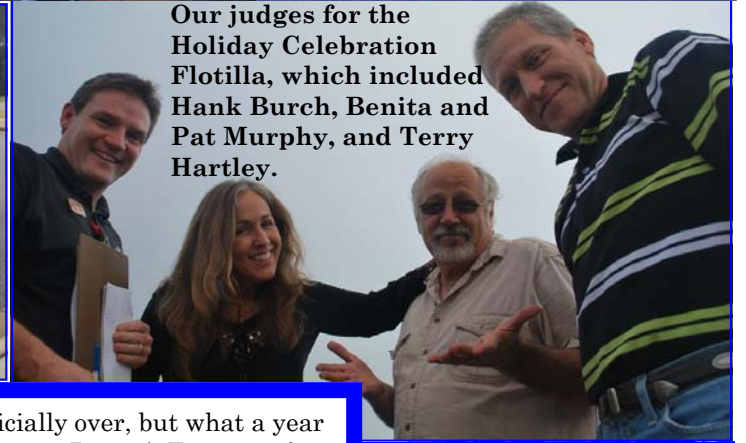
Trick or Treat at 5 Rivers



Start! Heart Walk



Our Delta Sleigh Ride from the Holiday Celebration.



Our judges for the Holiday Celebration Flotilla, which included Hank Burch, Benita and Pat Murphy, and Terry Hartley.



Mobile Bay Kayak Fishing Association Tournament.

2009 is officially over, but what a year we had here at 5 Rivers! From our first January field trip to our December holiday celebration, we had a blast introducing and sharing the Mobile-Tensaw Delta with thousands of guests from around the world! We would like to thank everyone who came out and not only visited us, but also participated in our many ongoing events. Don't worry though, if you missed any of the happenings last year, even more is planned for 2010.



Student holding beetle larva on a class field trip.



Our Holiday Celebration flotilla all decked out for the parade.



Canoe demonstration at the Woods and Water Expo.

# Goodbye 2009, Hello 2010!

Weatherman Alan Sealls visiting for a Saturday Adventure.



Press at least 6-10 plants that you want to remember.  
Place the leaf in newspaper and sandwich it between cardboard pieces.  
Don't forget to leave a notecard with it.  
Use the ID card to take notes on how you identified the specimen.



"Wind Energy" Saturday Class.



Our Saturday Class "imPRESSive" Plants.

And they're off! 2009 turtle release for the Turtle Derby.



Painting with Mr. Ricky Trione.



Alabama Red-Bellied Turtle Release.



Dodge Elementary Class Field Trip.



# Watchable Wildlife: The Virginia Opossum

We have one. Many people have seen them, and even more have heard stories about them, but do you know the real truths behind North America's only native marsupial? The Virginia Opossum is a truly remarkable animal. Opossums are first found in the fossil record as far back as 60 million years ago, and they have remained virtually unchanged ever since. The name is derived from an Algonquin Indian word meaning "white animal." The opossum is North America's only marsupial meaning it has a pouch on its underbelly, much like a kangaroo or a koala. When the babies are born, they crawl into the pouch, where they continue to develop and grow for the next 60 days before climbing out on their mother's back. These nocturnal creatures have several unique features. Each of their hind feet have a nail-less opposable thumb which is used strictly for climbing. The long tail on the opossum is used not for hanging, but for balance and climbing. When it comes to teeth, opossums have plenty! Your 28-32 teeth are no match for the opossum's 50 teeth—the most among land mammals. The opossum's diet in the wild ranges from fruits and veggies to insects and road kill. In the wild, they live only one to two years, but in captivity can live three or four years. Knowing their diet, it may come as a surprise that opossums are actually very clean



animals that bathe themselves regularly. They maintain a body temperature of 94 degrees, which is too low to carry many diseases, including rabies. If you are one of the few who hasn't actually seen a live opossum, be sure to stop by and visit Loretta, our resident awesome opossum.

## Opossum Myths

**BUSTED**

**Myth:** Adult opossums can hang by their tail.

**False:** Opossums have a prehensile tail used only for climbing and balance.

☞

**Myth:** Opossums are very dirty animals.

**False:** Opossums are actually very clean, bathing themselves regularly.

☞

**Myth:** Opossums carry rabies.

**False:** Opossums have a body temperature that is too low for diseases such as rabies to survive.

### 5 Rivers Delta Safaris Partners with Scale Back Alabama

5 Rivers Delta Safaris is working with the Alabama Department of Public Health and Fresh Air Family Organization in an effort to help Alabamians get healthy in 2010. The state wide program, Scale Back Alabama, is an effort to get individuals to exercise, eat right, and pay close attention to their overall physical health. 5RDS has been asked to organize a variety of outdoor activities that will promote physical fitness as well as showcasing the many natural wonders of the state of Alabama.

Scale Back Alabama kicks off on New Year's Day! Visit [www.5RDS.com](http://www.5RDS.com) to see a calendar of events, or visit [www.scalebackalabama.com](http://www.scalebackalabama.com) for more information.



### A Quick Glimpse of January's Events:

01/05/10 Mobile Bay Canoe & Kayak Club Meeting

01/12/10 Audubon Society Club Meeting

01/30/10 Art Show: Mobile Association for the Blind

01/31/10 Bottle Creek Lecture and Tour

For more information on any events please visit our website at [www.alabama5rivers.com](http://www.alabama5rivers.com) or visit our Facebook page.

30945 5 Rivers Blvd.

Spanish Fort, AL 36527

251-625-0814

[www.Alabama5Rivers.com](http://www.Alabama5Rivers.com)

Find us on Facebook

Open Monday thru Sunday 8am to 5pm