



The Delta News

5 Rivers Delta Resource Center



Volume II, Issue VI

June 2010

Your Delta Fun Fact for the Month:

Did you know that armadillos will have four babies that are completely identical? They have a perfect set of quadruplets every time!



What's Up in the Delta this month?

Two words this month! Love bugs! The pesky couples are making their appearance. These bugs are beneficial for nine months out of the year in their larvae stage. They eat dead vegetation releasing nutrients into the ground. Don't worry though, the annoying phase we see only lasts about four weeks. Hang in there!



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Just One Tree Has Just One Winner!



Addie Hill, a 9 year old student from Spanish Fort Elementary School, is the winner of the "Just 1 Tree" contest!

After a few hundred years of causing damage to our natural habitats, the invasive Chinese Tallow Tree (a.k.a. "popcorn tree") has finally benefited someone in Alabama! In February of this year, the "Just One Tree" exhibit opened in the Apalachee Exhibit Hall at 5 Rivers. The exhibit shows the dark side of this invasive exotic tree. Centered in the display is a turnable "Wheel of Misfortune." As the wheel turns, all the seeds collected from a single popcorn tree in a single growing season pass through its hourglass. Anyone under 18 was given a chance to guess just how many seeds came from "Just One Tree" for a chance to win a fully loaded canoe donated by Bass Pro of Spanish Fort and 5 Rivers. The prize package includes a 14-foot Old Town Rogue River canoe, a youth and adult personal flotation device, two paddles, a first aid kit, dry bag, compass, and flashlight, a guided canoe trip with 5 Rivers staff and more!

The "Just 1 Tree" contest ended June 1, and the 5 Rivers staff finally faced the music and began sifting through the more than 2200 ballots entered in search of a winner! We're pleased to announce that 9 year old Spanish Fort Elementary student **Addie Hill** has won the "Just 1 Tree" prize package. While on a weekend outing with her parents and two older sisters, Addie filled out a ballot with her estimate of **38,000** seeds. This proved to be the closest guess we had to the actual number of **37,905**. Amazingly, our popcorn tree turned out to be an underachiever, as some of these trees have been known to produce up to 100,000 seeds per year!

Though the contest is now complete, the "Just One Tree" exhibit will be revised and will remain in the Apalachee Exhibit Hall as a reminder of the challenges our public lands continue to face from nonnative, invasive plants.



Counting the seeds from "Just One Tree" was a daunting task!

2nd Annual Delta Woods and Water Expo a Success!

For the second time, 5 Rivers teamed up with the City of Spanish Fort to host the Delta Woods and Waters Expo. What a fabulous success it was! We enjoyed over 1500 people as they came through our gates to experience only a little bit of what the delta has to offer. From retrieving dog demonstrations, to turkey calling, to fly tying instructions, a great time was had by all who stopped by for a visit! Mark your calendar and join us for the 3rd Annual DWWE April 28-30, 2011. If you were not able to make it out to this year's expo, here is just a taste of what took place:





See you later, Sprocket!



We should start by saying 5 Rivers is not a rehabilitation center, and that we do not have a wildlife veterinarian on staff. However, we made one exception when a sad eyed 2nd grader named Alex came to us with a 3-inch, 23 gram, bald pouch opossum with its eyes still closed. Its mother had been killed, and all the babies in her pouch were dead except for this one. Alex asked if we could help it. We really didn't think the pouch 'possum would live, but we told the polite young man we would give it our best shot.

Eight weeks later, the baby opossum Sprocket is big city bound — off to Birmingham Zoo's Children Education Department. Stop by to see him if you go!



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(1) Sprocket at 23 grams, and about 3 inches long. Completely bald, eyes not open, helpless. We had to force feed him at first, but he got the hang of it fairly quickly. When they're first born, they're the size of honeybees, and they make their way to their mother's pouch where they continue to develop. This little guy was about 5 weeks old when his mother was killed.



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(3) Once his eyes opened, he was very curious and liked to explore. His body was still too small to take him far though.



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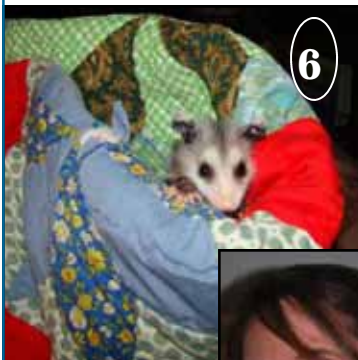
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(4) He grew quickly, and switched from being bottle-bed to being able to lap his own food. That made our life a lot easier!

(5) When he got a few teeth, we discovered he loves chicken, pears and pineapple—and really doesn't care for carrots in the least!



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(6) He loves to run around, smelling and exploring everything...



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(8) At 115 grams, 5 times the size he was when he first came to 5 Rivers, he was ready to head out to the big city! Maybe they'll send us some pictures of him at the zoo. If you go by there, ask to meet Sprocket!

...(7) and stopping to nap in the closest "pouch" he can find!



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While 5 Rivers is not a rehabilitation facility, we are aware of a couple of centers you can call for injured or orphaned wildlife:

**Mobile County
Environmental Studies Center
221-5000**

**Baldwin County
Bay Animal Clinic 928-5630**

You can also consult your local veterinarian or pet shop.



Congratulations!



5 Rivers' Joe Buschell Named State Employee of the Year!



5 Rivers' Maintenance Supervisor, Joe Buschell, receiving his award from Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley and State Lands Division Director Patti Powell

5 Rivers had the opportunity to celebrate one of its own this month! Our Maintenance Supervisor, Joe Buschell, was named "Alabama's State Employee of the Year." Since joining 5 Rivers in March, 2008, Joe has been an integral part of the facility. Just step inside the Apalachee Exhibit Hall and you can see what his expertise has brought to 5 Rivers. A few of the wonderful projects he has completed are the "Just One Tree" Exhibit, Loretta's one-of-its-kind "possuminium" enclosure and our pine snakes' beautiful enclosure. In addition to the physical projects he has completed, Joe has been a tireless ambassador for the facility. As part of his recognition for the award, Joe spent an evening in Montgomery, where he threw out the honorary first pitch at a Montgomery Biscuits baseball game.

Congratulations Joe, and thank you for your outstanding dedication to our facility and our state!

A Quick Glimpse of June's Events:

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|----------------|---|--------------------|---|
| 6/1/10 | Mobile Bay Canoe and Kayak Meeting | 6/13/10 | Last day of Outdoor Alabama Photo Exhibit |
| 6/1/10 | Alabama Hiking Trail Society Meeting | 6/13/10 | Sunday Matinee: "Silence of the Bees" |
| 6/1/10 | Gulf Coast Amphibian and Reptile Keepers Meeting | 6/14/10 | Spanish Fort Art Camp (Full Week \$125.00) |
| 6/1/10 | Sierra Club Meeting | 6/17/10 | StoryTime: "Opossum at Sycamore Road" with 5 Rivers Opossum Loretta |
| 6/4/10 | 5 Rivers Road Show: Eastern Shore Centre Malbis | 6/19/10 | Boater Safety Course |
| 6/5/10 | Alabama Hiking Trail Society National Trails Day | 6/19/10 | 5 Rivers Road Show: Azalea Church Shrimp Boil |
| 6/6/10 | Sunday Matinee: "Crane Song" | 6/20/10 | Sunday Matinee: "The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies" |
| 6/7/10 | 5 Rivers Road Show: Daphne Public Library | 6/21/10 | Spanish Fort Art Camp (Full Week \$125.00) |
| 6/8/10 | Hunter's Education Course | 6/22/10 | StoryTime: "Manatee Winter" |
| 6/8/10 | Audubon Society Meeting | 6/24/10 | StoryTime: "Cottontail at Clover Crescent followed by bunny search in the woods" |
| 6/8/10 | StoryTime: "Pelican's Catch" followed by short movie on White Pelicans | 6/26/10 | Saturday Class: "Alligators" for children and adults (Class is \$10; includes a 1-hour gator spotlighting boat tour) |
| 6/10/10 | StoryTime: "Box Turtle at Silver Lane Pond" with Myrtle Turtle | 6/27/10 | Sunday Matinee: "Garden Insects" |
| 6/12/10 | Saturday Class: "Metamorphosis" Grades 3 thru 5 | 6/29/10 | StoryTime: "Monarch Butterfly at Aster Way" with walk to butterfly garden |
| | | 7/3 -7/4/10 | 5 Rivers Road Show: Gulf Coast Exploreum |

For more information on any upcoming events check us out at Facebook, at our website at www.Alabama5Rivers.com, or give us a call at 251-625-0814. To subscribe to this newsletter, send an email to Shonda.Borden@DCNR.Alabama.gov.