



The Outdoor Alabama Expo held at Oak Mountain State Park on May 1-2, 2009 was a success in many ways.

On Friday, May 1, more than 1,000 area fourth and fifth graders made a field trip to Oak Mountain. Many of these students had never visited the park, caught a fish, touched a stingray or shot a bow and arrow. They were able to do this and much more during the fun-filled day.

Saturday, May 2 was open to the public and more than 5,000 people attended to enjoy outdoor recreation and learn about conservation through a variety of exhibits, presentations and hands-on activities.

One highlight of the Expo was a helicopter water rescue demonstration by the WMD State Trooper Rescue Team, State Trooper Aviation Unit, Pelham Fire and Rescue, Calera Swift Water Rescue and Alabama Marine Police. They practiced rescuing someone from the water by lowering equipment and lifting the person up to the helicopter or safely putting him on land. The beach area at Expo provided a perfect area to view the demonstration. As evidenced by the long lines to ride it, Marine Police's new personal watercraft simulator was popular as well.

Other activities Expo visitors enjoyed included a fish touch-tank containing live fish and other aquatic species from the Gulf, a wildlife nature walk, wildlife track making, taxidermy displays, mystery boxes, and shooting sports such as archery, shotgun and muzzleloaders. Also exhibiting were many state, federal and private conservation organizations. Demonstrations on birds of prey, snakes, backyard wildlife and turkey calling were also presented throughout the day.

Tractor-pulled hay wagons shuttled guests between two activity areas and several food and snack vendors were available.

Plans are underway for the 2010 Expo, which promises to be even bigger and better. Look for details coming soon!



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