

Blue Springs Nature Preserve

Steering Committee Newsletter / Oct. 2007

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Steering Committee Member,

What began as a dream now has a vision. The Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee, in collaboration with 4Site, Inc., has finalized the master plan to establish the former Brannon farmstead into an outdoor classroom for students and a playground for families to enjoy nature.

We'll unveil this Master Plan to other community members Nov. 13 at the Ragland Community Center at 11:30. Mark your calendars now for this exciting event!

Still, there is a lot of work to do. Our main objective over the coming months is to begin a comprehensive fund-raising campaign in order to undertake the plans that we want to fulfill. The Finance Subcommittee is in the process of developing a preliminary budget to identify short and long-term needs and costs associated with the project. In addition, we are exploring other revenue-generating avenues unique to Blue Springs that are available to us.

I appreciate everyone's patience and participation in this worthwhile endeavor. We have made some giant leaps forward, and we are ready to make another one.

Sincerely,

Spencer Weitman



Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee

Spencer Weitman
National Cement Company of Ala.
Chairman

Lyman Lovejoy
Lovejoy Realty
Finance Chairman

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Envision Ecology
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Finance Committee

Hon. Charles Robinson
St. Clair County Circuit Court
Finance Committee

Hon. Gary Daffron
Mayor, City of Ragland
Finance Committee

Committee At-Large:

Jean Claude Brocheton, National Cement; Joan Ford; Jeff Hardy, Ragland High School; Charlie Brannon; Jerry Sue Brannon; Chairman Stan Bateman, St. Clair County Commission; Commissioner Paul Manning, St. Clair County Commission; Ed Gardner, Jr., St. Clair County EDC; Don Smith, St. Clair County EDC; Bob Champion, National Cement; Con. Larry Means, State Congressman; Randy Gray, National Cement; Dr. Jenny Seales, St. Clair County Board of Education



a prominent water oak, estimated to be over 100 years old and found in the preserve's prairies.

"It never did grow too tall, always expanding its limbs in an uneven pattern," said Charlie Brannon, who grew up on the land. "It was always in the way when we mowed the fields beside it. My dad wanted to cut it down, but my mother thought it was so unique, she would not let him."

In addition to the tree, the logo was designed to incorporate various elements of the site, including the hillside and stream.

BSNP Logo Revealed

The new logo for Blue Springs Nature Preserve was unveiled at the Sept. 5 Steering Committee meeting. The logo is influenced by

BSNP Plans Come Together

Now that Huntsville-based land-planning firm 4Site, Inc. has finalized the master plan for Blue Springs Nature Preserve, a clear vision for the project is in place.

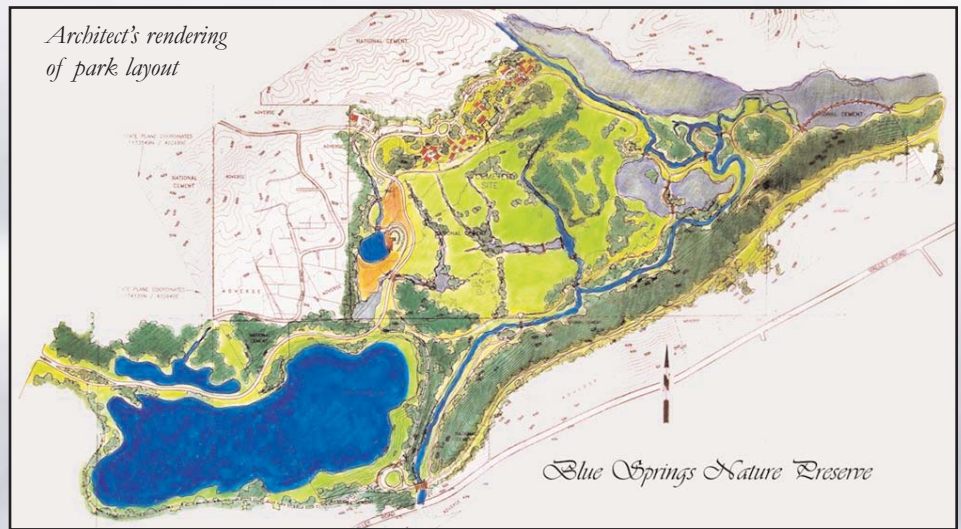
In 2006, a charrette was conducted with the Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee to develop a master plan for Blue Springs. The resulting plan, presented to the Steering Committee on Sept. 5, proposes the following features:

Highway 144 Entrance - This site will be a dedicated access point to Blue Springs, with a parking lot and transportation by tram into Blue Springs.

Alabama Wildflower Gardens - Located near an old farm pond, an outdoor arboretum showcases native plants, such as the endangered Alabama Leatherflower.

A visitor center will include a weather-protected exhibit space, a greenhouse, public restrooms, and an outdoor gathering space for self-guided tours.

Cultural Preservation Building - Visitors can relive the history of St. Clair County through artifacts and exhibits, such as a cotton gin from the Civil War Era.



Spencer's Bluff - An elevated knoll overlooking the lake near the tram route, this feature provides an optimum location for picnics and resting, with a covered pavilion, restrooms and drinking fountains.

Visitor's Facilities - Atop the knoll along the ridge line rest the principal buildings, such as the education center, administrative offices and classrooms.

Prairie, Wildflower and Ridge areas - Visitors can explore Blue Springs through a network of trails, which provide access to scenic overlooks and streamside greenways, as well as wetlands

and prairies, restored to their original state.

Trout Creek Crossing - A boardwalk provides an up-close view of the rivers and wetlands, an ideal venue for first-hand outdoor education.

Primitive Campgrounds - In the preserve's wooded areas, visitors have the opportunity to camp in a rustic setting.

Future phases include a dormitory, kitchen facilities and a conference center.

A public unveiling of the plans for Blue Springs Nature Preserve is expected later this fall.



Did You Know? BSNP is a Butterfly Sanctuary

The Monarch butterfly is the official state insect of Alabama. During last year's charrette, participants witnessed a large rabble of monarch butterflies. According to representatives of 4Site, Inc., the Blue Springs Nature Preserve is within the flightpath of the migrating butterflies, who stopped over to sample the site's goldenrod flower population.

More info at: www.archives.state.al.us/kids_emblems/st_insect.html



Web site design underway

Construction of the Blue Springs Nature Preserve web site is underway.

The site will provide information on the background of the property and the Ragland area, a synopsis of the master plan, photographs and multimedia of the site, opportunities for support of the project, news and contact information.

"The web site will give us a visible hub for information that will help us spread the word about Blue Springs Nature Preserve to prospective donors, educators and outdoor enthusiasts alike," said Darlene Rotch, chair of the Communications Committee.

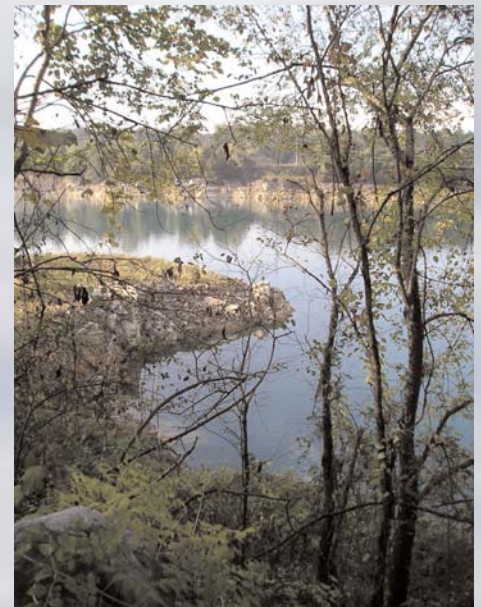
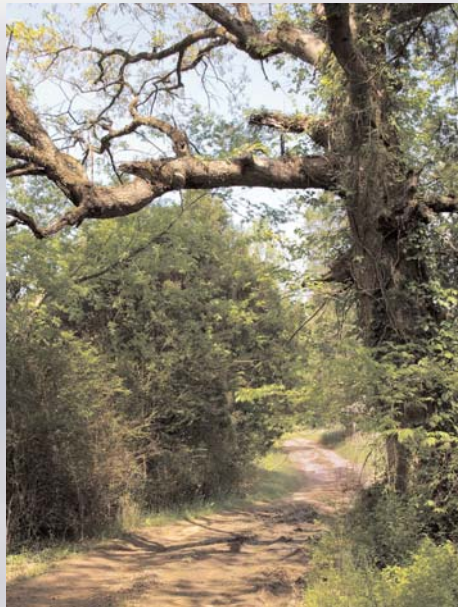
Opportunities exist to sponsor hosting of the web site. Interested parties may contact Tommy Palladino at 205-328-9334.

About National Cement

National Cement is a major producer of cement in the United States. Founded in 1910, the company employs over 1,255 employees in Alabama and California.

The company is highly committed to environmental stewardship and supporting the communities in which it operates.

The Sights of Blues Springs



About Blue Springs Nature Preserve

Blue Springs Nature Preserve is located in St. Clair County, Ala. The 147-acre preserve was made possible thanks to a land donation from National Cement of Ragland, Ala. The park is a 501c3 non-profit organization.



Blue Springs Nature Preserve
2000 SouthBridge Parkway
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Birmingham, AL 35209

Mark your calendars!
BSNP Master Plan Community unveiling
Nov. 13 at the Ragland Community Center
at 11:30 a.m.