



# Blue Springs Nature Preserve

Steering Committee Newsletter / Summer 2009

## Letter from the Chairman

Dear Steering Committee Members,

Blue Springs Nature Preserve is fortunate to have many committed and industrious leaders in place via the Steering Committee.

We have run guest columns from members such as Marsha Boswell and Bill Phillips and profiled others such as Charlie Brannon and Lyman Lovejoy in this space. In this issue, we are pleased to feature Commissioner Stan Batemon, chairman of the St. Clair County Commission.

With his background as a game warden and affinity for the outdoors, Stan is an ideal cheerleader for Blue Springs Nature Preserve throughout St. Clair County. Because of his position on the Commission, his knowledge of grants available to parks like Blue Springs will be instrumental in helping to secure necessary funding.

As always, I appreciate your interest and support of Blue Springs Nature Preserve.

Sincerely,  
*Spencer Weitman*



## Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee

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Steering Committee Chairman

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Lovejoy Realty  
Finance Chairman

Bill Phillips  
Envision Ecology  
Land Use Chairman

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Marsha Boswell  
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St. Clair County Circuit Court  
Finance Committee

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## In This Issue:

**Steering Committee Profile:  
Chairman Stan Batemon  
shares his love of the  
outdoors**



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# “Call of the Wild”

**Batemon has made a career of exploring the outdoors and serving the community**

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Commissioner Stan Batemon, chairman of the St. Clair County Commission, knew what he wanted to do by age nine. He wanted to be a game warden.

As he read nature magazines and books such as Jack London’s *Call of the Wild*, he dreamed of working in nature.

“As a child, my father, grandfathers and uncles liked to hunt and fish, so I grew up enjoying the outdoors,” said Batemon, who also serves on the Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee.



*(At left) Batemon pauses for a break during a recent hike.*

*(Below left) Game Warden Supervisor Batemon helps a child reel in a big one during a Kids Fishing Day event.*



During his childhood, Batemon typically fished for brim and catfish on small streams, and occasionally he would have the chance to hunt squirrel, rabbit and quail. Since then, Batemon has hunted every type of game in the United States. He has added saltwater fishing to his repertoire, as well as crappie fishing on fresh water.

While Batemon had his career mapped out at a young age, his path was not exactly direct. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps first, which included a tour during

the Vietnam War. Despite being in the middle of a war, Batemon never stayed far from nature. In his leisure time, he fished in the streams, and, armed with a slingshot, he went dove hunting several times.

“Doves had never been hunted in Vietnam before, so we were able to get close,” recollected Batemon.

Upon completing his military service, Batemon finally had the chance to fulfill his childhood dream by joining the Alabama Department of Conservation in

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## About National Cement

National Cement Company of Alabama, Inc. is a major producer of cement in the Southeastern United States, employing approximately 450 people.

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

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## About Blue Springs Nature Preserve

Blue Springs Nature Preserve, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is located in the town of Ragland in St. Clair County, Ala. The 147-acre preserve was made possible thanks to a land donation from National Cement Company of Alabama.

For more information, please visit [www.bluespringspreserve.com](http://www.bluespringspreserve.com), contact Tommy Palladino at (205) 328-9334 or send an e-mail to [info@bluespringspreserve.com](mailto:info@bluespringspreserve.com).

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1974. He started with the Marine Police Division, but after a year, he transferred to the Game and Fish Division. He spent his entire career stationed in St. Clair County as a game warden before moving to part-time status in 2001 and finally retiring in 2005.

During his time with the Department of Conservation, Batemon also found time to complete his degree at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he studied in two areas that were ideally suited for work as a game warden - biology and police administration.

As a game warden, Batemon helped develop the Kids Fishing Days program and implemented it throughout Alabama, which included recruiting sponsors. He also developed activities for special needs children at Oak Mountain and sponsored a children's turkey hunting program.

"I enjoyed every minute of it," said Batemon of his game warden career. "I felt so blessed to be able to do that as an occupation. What I miss most was the freedom to explore the land in my area, and meeting the other wonderful people who loved the outdoors. It was a great way to make a living."

A life in politics was a natural evolution of his work with the Department of Conservation, allowing him to continue service to the community. Encouraged by friends to run for office in 1985, he was successfully elected to the St. Clair County Commission, where he has served ever since.

"I didn't come from a political



*Batemon (far right) and friends wade through Border's Creek in the Sipsey Wilderness Area of Alabama's Bankhead National Forest.*

family, but it has been a very rewarding choice - to serve people and make the area that you live in a better place," said Batemon of his political career.

His position on the St. Clair County Commission has allowed him to enact several initiatives to enhance the outdoor assets of the county. With his leadership, the county has secured grants for walking trails in unincorporated areas, built several county-maintained lake access areas for boats, and developed a day-use county park at Neely Henry Lake.

In addition, Batemon says the county is involved in monitoring and testing of landfills, and has cleaned up several illegal dumping sites, such as a lead recycling operation, and grease pits in the Coal City area. The county is also careful to monitor incoming industries for environmental impacts.

"Environmental clean-up is outside of county responsibility, but we still find ourselves involved in it and filling in the gaps left by state and federal environmental

laws and enforcement," said Batemon.

Looking forward, Batemon and the Commission are encouraging more green space use without restrictive zoning in subdivisions and industrial sites. In particular, the county is evaluating a site in northern St. Clair County to develop horseback riding and hiking trails. The county is in the process of looking for grant money, which Batemon hopes will be secured within the next year.

"St. Clair Co has some of the most diverse ecological treasures in the State of Alabama," said Batemon. "We have mountains, forests, rivers, lakes and wetlands all located within one county."

Despite having retired as game warden, Batemon has not let his political career impede his time outdoors.

"When I am traveling on business for the county, I will typically rent a car and encourage others to get out of the city and explore the natural areas nearby," said Batemon.

For instance, during a recent conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, Batemon recruited a group of colleagues to accompany him to Antelope Island State Park. The largest island on the Great Salt Lake, the park is home to hundreds of bison, as well as sheep, deer, coyote and various species of birds. He also had the opportunity to explore Little Cottonwood Canyon, an area of Wasatch-Cache National Forest that boasts various contrasting ecosystems.

While he does not hunt and fish much anymore, Batemon still enjoys exploring nature, and continues to share his passion for the outdoors with others.

A member of the Church of the Highlands, Batemon leads a small group of 20 to 30 congregants on hiking trips to different areas

throughout the region. During the trips, Batemon and the participants identify plants and animals that are listed in the Bible. For instance, cedar trees are descendants of acacia trees, whose wood was used in the construction of Noah's Ark.

The Sipsey Wilderness is an example of one of the group's destinations. Located within Alabama's Bankhead National Forest, the Sipsey Wilderness is the third largest wilderness area east of the Mississippi River. Batemon's group has also taken kayaking trips and has camped at Lyman Lovejoy's farm in St. Clair County.

"We are asked to choose our passion for life and plug spiritual education into it," said Batemon. "It is a fun to learn about plants and animals in the area."

Batemon's passion for the outdoors extends to his vision of Blue Springs Nature Preserve.

"My vision for Blue Springs is that it will be a source of outdoor education and recreation for citizens of St. Clair County, specifically for the young people," said Batemon. "I hope it becomes an area that people can learn about the plants and animals of the area."

Batemon believes that Blue Springs Nature Preserve plays a vital role in sustaining the region's natural assets.

"With today's environmental challenges, places like Blue Springs are very valuable to our communities and our natural world, so that we can raise awareness of our moral responsibilities towards the world around us."



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