

# Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom

By **JANE HARTSELLE**, County Extension Agent, Alabama Cooperative Extension System

**T**HE Alabama TREASURE Forest Association is dedicated to developing a network of landowners and stakeholders who have the desire and ability to encourage and educate our youth, other landowners, and the general public concerning the multiple-use management of natural resources. *Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom* was created to communicate the role private lands and private landowners play in environmentally and economically benefiting Alabama and its citizens. This project provides forest resource landowners, stakeholders, and professionals with the opportunity to work together to educate children and their teachers. The program can rekindle, through education and encouragement, a feeling of pride and respect for the land and the landowners.

The emphasis of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association is to promote wise management of all of our forest resources and to educate the general public on the importance of private land ownership and private landowners. Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom will expose more school age children to the TREASURE Forest philosophy of managing our forests for a variety of resources in a way that sustains productivity for future generations.

## Mobile County First to Adopt Program

The Mobile County Chapter of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association stepped to the head of the class as the first to adopt Classroom in the Forest. Nine private landowners in Mobile and Washington counties opened their TREASURE Forests to Mobile County Public School children as they completed the second phase of Classroom in the Forest. The ATFA and Jane Hartselle, Mobile County Extension agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, teamed up with other agencies and community leaders to take Classroom in the



*A representative from the Alabama Department of Conservation, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, interacts with students.*

Forest: Forest in the Classroom to fifth grade school children in Mobile County.

In the first phase of the program, volunteer resource development teams were put together. The teams were comprised of three people: a resource provider, a stakeholder and a private landowner. These teams took the forest to the classroom in 23 Mobile County schools. More than 1,125 children were introduced to the many lifelong lessons of the forest.

In the second phase, these same volunteer resource development teams took 12 classrooms (over 600 children) to the forest. Both in the classroom and in the forest, the students were taught the value of forestland and the importance of private land ownership to each of us.

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The idea of "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" was never more clearly demonstrated. Private landowners pulled together resources to ensure the success

of each of the forest field trips. School children saw beaver ponds, gopher tortoise habitat, wild turkey, deer, sheep, fishponds, and much more. They were treated to hay rides, nature walks, learning activities, as well as an old fashioned "lunch on the grounds."

## Learning Pride and Respect

The school children as well as the adults had a great time learning the lessons the forest has to teach each of us. Oftentimes, we take for granted the benefits we receive each day from the forest. Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom leaves each of the participants with a feeling of pride and respect for the forest and private forest landowners. After all, the private landowner and the TREASURE Forest Program have helped to make Alabama's forest the environmental and economic success story that it is today.

## Good Things Will Follow

Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom was a huge success in Mobile County thanks to the many wonderful volunteers. This program is coming to Montgomery, Huntsville, and Birmingham. Watch for times and dates. Good things will follow as Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom continues to grow. Look for it to premiere in your county soon.

## Learn More

For more information please feel free to contact the following:  
James Malone, Executive Director  
Alabama TREASURE Forest Association  
(334) 442-2424

Jane Hartselle, State Project Coordinator  
Classroom in the Forest:  
Forest in the Classroom  
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abundant forest roads and firelanes on the Brown property, the students were dropped off at pre-selected sites for their night's ordeal.

At daybreak, the instructors began their hike to pick up the students. All were awake and huddled around their fires when Jerry and Don arrived. The group then hiked back to the vehicles for the trip back to the Brown homestead.

Since each generation of Americans is growing farther and farther from the land, even this brief wilderness survival training will be of benefit. The students gained an understanding of what our Native American and pioneer forefathers' everyday lives were like. It also gave them a profound appreciation for the modern conveniences that we take for granted in today's world. Finally, this experience points out the value of Alabama's well-managed TREASURE Forests in providing field laboratories for environmental education. Our thanks go out to Jerry and Genelle Brown for sharing their beautiful and diversified TREASURE Forest, and their tireless effort in making a difference in the lives of some Alabama youths. 📞



Learning about the forest can be fun, as these Mobile County students will attest.

## Promote and Support the TREASURE Forest Program Join the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association

The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association is composed of people who practice TREASURE Forest management, people who encourage others to practice it, and people who believe that management of Alabama's forestlands according to the TREASURE Forest concept is good for both present and future generations.

Membership in the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association is open to certified TREASURE Forest owners (Full Members), any forest landowner who is not certified (Growing Member), and persons, companies, corporations, or organizations that do not own forestland (Associate Member), but want to support and promote the sustainable and wise use of our forest resource for present and future generations.

Yes, I would like to join the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Check each category and fill in the blanks as appropriate:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is \$20 annual membership fee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growing Member   | <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is \$25 annual membership fee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Member      | <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is \$30 annual membership fee |

Primary objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary objective: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Alabama TREASURE Forest Association, P.O. Box 145, Chunchula, AL 36521**

For more information about the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association contact James Malone, Executive Director, at (334) 442-2424.