

**Alabama Hiking Trail Society
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Joe Cuhaj
Tel: (251) 533-1812
Email: jcuhaj.vppublicity@hikealabama.org

NEW FOOT TRAIL TO OPEN AT GENEVA STATE FOREST

They don't call it "Alabama the Beautiful" for nothing. The state is one of the most ecologically diverse areas in the world and the best way to visit these wonders is on one of the state's many footpaths.

The Alabama Hiking Trail Society invites everyone to join them for a celebration of the state's hiking trails at the annual National Trails Day event June 2nd at Geneva State Forest in Geneva County near Samson.

National Trails Day was established by the American Hiking Society, a national hiking organization, to celebrate our trails and the beautiful landscapes that they can take us to. The Alabama Hiking Trail Society is once again proud to join AHS in this annual celebration.

Geneva State Forest was selected for this year's event because of the recent trail work that has been done there. One year ago there were no hiking trails in the forest. Since then, members of AHTS' Three Notch Chapter adopted the forest and began constructing a loop trail around the centerpiece of the forest, the 200-acre Geneva State Forest Lake. Under the guidance of project leaders Johnny Brewer and Mark Nichols, the new trail was completed and is now open for the public to enjoy.

The day begins at 9am at the forests main parking lot on Canopy Road, which turns off of Forest Area Road. There will be a presentation of Leave No Trace practices, a method we can all use to keep our environment clean both at home and away, by state LNT trainer Skip Essman.

Then the fun kicks into high gear with a leisurely 4.5-mile hike along the banks of the lake on the new Geneva Lake Trail.

One of the highlights of the event will be the dedication of the first trail bridge built by AHTS to the memory of George Furguson. George was a member of AHTS and the Florida Trail Association. He was a friend to hikers and a shining example of outdoor stewardship.

Admission is free to National Trails Day and everyone is invited. Bottled water will be provided and everyone will meet for ice cream following the event at the Dairy Queen in Opp for fellowship and to talk about hiking.

The Alabama Hiking Trail Society is a non-profit organization and Alabama's statewide hiking club. Founded in 2001, the AHTS has members from Huntsville to Mobile. The mission of the AHTS is to "promote, protect, maintain, and develop hiking trails throughout Alabama."

For more information about National Trails Day, visit AHTS online at HIKEALABAMA.ORG. You can also call AHTS at (334) 239-3210 or by email ahts@hikealabama.org.

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Photos are available. Members of the AHTS Board of Directors and the project leaders for Geneva State Forest are also available for interviews and to take the media on a preview of the newly opened trail at Geneva State Forest. For more information contact VP of Publicity Joe Cuhaj at (251) 533-1812 or email Joe at jcuhaj.vppublicity@hikealabma.org.