



Restoring and protecting the Cahaba River watershed and its rich diversity of life

Cahaba
River
Society

WILL YOU HELP US ACHIEVE THESE GAINS IN 2011-12?

Reduce Polluted Runoff and Flooding

Mud, Flood, & Dried-Up Streams – Our urban areas are turning a blessing – rain – into a serious problem. Increased rain runoff from paving and roofs, concentrated in conventionally-designed stormwater systems, prevents rain from recharging groundwater and drinking water sources and causes pollution, flooding, erosion of tributaries, collapse of the Cahaba's banks, reduced drinking water supplies during dry weather, and higher drinking water costs.

Water-Smart Solutions – CRS promotes Low Impact Development (LID), innovative stormwater design for construction and redevelopment that conserves and mimics natural systems by saving forests, minimizing paving, percolating rain into the ground, and capturing rain to reuse it.

Progress! CRS and our Alabama Urban Stormwater Partners have worked for years to win better standards for stormwater under the Clean Water Act. We won a major victory this past year when EPA objected to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's weak proposed rules governing stormwater programs for 60 small cities and counties – ***the first time EPA has ever taken this step nationwide***. ADEM improved the permit, and also adopted a stronger permit governing construction sites across Alabama.

The higher standards are reasonable and achievable. CRS's many collaborative projects with can-do developers have proven that better development practices are both economically successful and protective of our rivers, lakes, and drinking water. LID practices are often less expensive than conventional stormwater engineering, a strong business case for their use.

Attacks on Cleaner Water - Resistant development interests are fighting against these long-overdue water quality gains. They appealed the permit and aim to weaken requirements that our cities and counties must review the developer's "best practices" plans, inspect construction sites, strengthen enforcement for bad actors, and improve stormwater design to reduce flooding, recharge our groundwater, and protect drinking water.

We need your support to defend these water source gains. CRS and partners have intervened at the state level in their appeal. Help us make sure their attack on the permit does not prevent progress on clean water and sustainable growth. This outcome will set precedent for the next step – improving stormwater programs in Cahaba watershed communities.

Next: Stormwater Rules for Large Communities and for Highways - With your financial support, CRS can continue to help lead our Stormwater Partners from across the state, with expert help from regional and national organizations. Together we'll make sure the upcoming permits that ADEM is drafting for large cities and counties – ***including our Cahaba watershed communities – and for ALDOT*** will protect our rivers and drinking water and promote sustainable growth.

Your Southeast & National Voice – CRS and partners have a strong voice with ADEM, our SE regional office of EPA, and EPA national headquarters to make our case for better stormwater policy. We help organize annual meetings of our Alabama partners and watershed leaders from across the SE with EPA Region IV in Atlanta. CRS is participating in a coalition of water and environmental nonprofits to influence EPA's 2012 nationwide rulemaking on stormwater, helping identify feasible stormwater standards for our conditions in the southeast. CRS is the only local watershed group in the national coalition, bringing valuable on-the-ground experience to these conversations.

Save Water = Save Energy = Save Money

Why Save Water? Saving water has a triple impact to save households, businesses, and institutions money through lower water, sewer, and energy bills. More efficient use of drinking water stretches existing supplies to meet growth needs at least cost. With improved efficiency our water providers could delay and perhaps downsize expensive projects, such as the Birmingham Water Board's planned \$380 million water supply expansion on the Black Warrior. Saving water also saves energy, reduces carbon output, and calms climate change. It takes huge amounts of energy to pump and treat drinking water, use it in our homes, businesses, and industries, and pump sewage. More efficient water practices and systems prepare us to better serve essential needs during droughts.

Unusual Partners – CRS and an unusual spectrum of groups are promoting investment in water efficiency. The Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama's Water Working Group (WWG) includes active participants from **environmental, industrial, business, utility, and service and product providers**. CRS, the Birmingham Water Works and other water systems, Alabama Power, Alabama Rivers Alliance, McWane, Inc., Alabama Technology Network, innovative water technology businesses, Alabama Environmental Council, Clarus Consulting Group, World Wildlife Fund, and others are ready to launch a collaborative education effort to convince the region's largest volume water users that saving water will help them meet the triple bottom line – profits, people and planet.

Local Successes - In 2010 we listened and learned from each other and collaborated to produce an educational powerpoint and presentation script that uses local success stories to connect water conservation, efficiency and reuse, energy efficiency, and cost savings and makes the business case for water efficiency. In just one example, a large downtown office building has reduced water use by 70%, saving 14 million gallons a year – enough water for 100 homes. Your support will help CRS and WWG members take this presentation to peers in business, government, development, water & energy utilities, faith communities, the landscape industry, and institutions such as hospitals, and encourage them to pursue their own water efficiency projects.

Transform Development to Restore Water Resources

Living With the Cahaba - We love having a natural, beautiful and life-filled Cahaba flowing close to our homes for easy recreational access. But this is also the River's great challenge – the Cahaba winds through growing communities, even interstate interchanges. CRS's main focus is helping to transform development, striving to have both a healthy river and healthy communities.

Bringing Developers & Public Officials On Board – CRS is a resource for the people who shape our communities and the impact development has on water – developers and their engineers, architects, landscape architects and contractors, city planners and engineers, mayors, commissioners and city council members. We promote Low Impact Development (LID) through education and collaboration on successful model projects. Our LID educational presentations have already reached over 700 people in government and development. Your support will help us show city/county officials how LID can cost-effectively meet new EPA stormwater standards. With our partners we will help local governments upgrade their stormwater programs to implement LID.

Shaping & Promoting Good Development - CRS offers a collaborative approach to find water-protective solutions for challenging projects. Our involvement with the Shops of Grand River outlet mall on the Cahaba proved that mud runoff can be controlled under the most difficult development conditions with the right design, team, and commitment from the developer. This is a vitally-important relationship, since Grand River aims to encompass 6,000 acres along the Cahaba. Our 2011 Conservation Development Awards, dubbed "The Cahabies" by The Birmingham News, honored 26 development-related firms and government agencies for 4 successful and high profile projects. With your support, CRS can be part of more success stories, proving that Low Impact Development is achievable to protect the Cahaba and our drinking water.