

Cahaba River Society is an educator, expert resource, and collaborative partner for science-based and practical solutions to protect and restore the Cahaba River.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE CAHABA RIVER?

Drinking water, biodiversity, recreation, education, tourism ~ the Cahaba River is globally-significant & essential to the health and economy of central Alabama.

The Cahaba River is the heart of Alabama's globally-significant biodiversity and imperiled freshwater life, with more species of fish per mile than any river its size or larger in North America. Did you know there are more fish species in the small Cahaba watershed than in the entire Columbia and Colorado River basins combined? The River and its groundwater are also essential to the people of central Alabama, providing drinking water sources for residents, business, and industry.

The River gives us unique opportunities for recreation, education, and tourism, building knowledge, health, and economic stability for central Alabama people and communities. The Cahaba River Society has built relationships, strategies, expertise and partners necessary to restore the Cahaba and sustain its value as the region grows.

OUR GOALS:

Connect People to the River
Education ~ Recreation
Stewardship

A photograph showing a group of people, including several children and one adult, wading in the shallow waters of the Cahaba River. They appear to be engaged in a water-related activity or educational program.

Promote Water-Smart Communities
Low-Impact Development
Water Efficiency ~ Water Quality

A photograph of a landscaped water feature, possibly a park or residential area. It features a stone bridge over a small stream, surrounded by lush greenery and vibrant red flowers in the foreground.

Grow Our Strength, Partners, and Impact
Collaboration ~ Celebration
Support

A group photograph of approximately ten people of various ages and ethnicities standing together outdoors. Some are holding tools like shovels and buckets, suggesting they are involved in a community project or volunteer work.

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE RIVER

CLEAN PROGRAM

Children Linking with the Environment Across the Nation

Having served more than 33,600 students over 20 years, the Shane Hulseley CLEAN Program connects youth with nature, teaches the science that underpins water stewardship, and opens the door to environmental and science careers to students from all walks of life.

2,146 People Served in 2016



39 Schools & Organizations



15 Schools & Organizations in Economically-Disadvantaged Communities



57 Field Programs



6 Classroom Programs

51%



of Participants were People of Color



CAHABA BLUEWAY



The first Cahaba Blueway site – Grants Mill – was dedicated in March 2016. CRS and partners (The Nature Conservancy, the UA Center for Economic Development, and Freshwater Land Trust) are collaborating to develop more Cahaba River access points with unified signage, public information,

and marketing to boost public recreation & tourism-related economic development from Birmingham down to the Black Belt. With a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham through TNC, the partners have completed a Blueway sites master plan and Design Guidelines for low impact, safe, durable river access and signage. Public use has greatly increased at the new Grants Mill river access, and the City of Irondale is impressed and has allocated funds for Phase II. At least 17 more river access sites need only official Blueway signage and minor work to fully launch the Blueway system. Twelve other sites will need substantial upgrades.

Thank you to our Major 2016 CLEAN Sponsors

- The Coca-Cola Foundation
- Vulcan Materials Company
- Independent Presbyterian Church
- Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation
- Joseph S. Bruno Foundation
- The McWane Foundation
- Wells Fargo Foundation

CANOE OUTINGS

Cahaba River Society takes hundreds of people onto the river each year with our special guided canoe trips

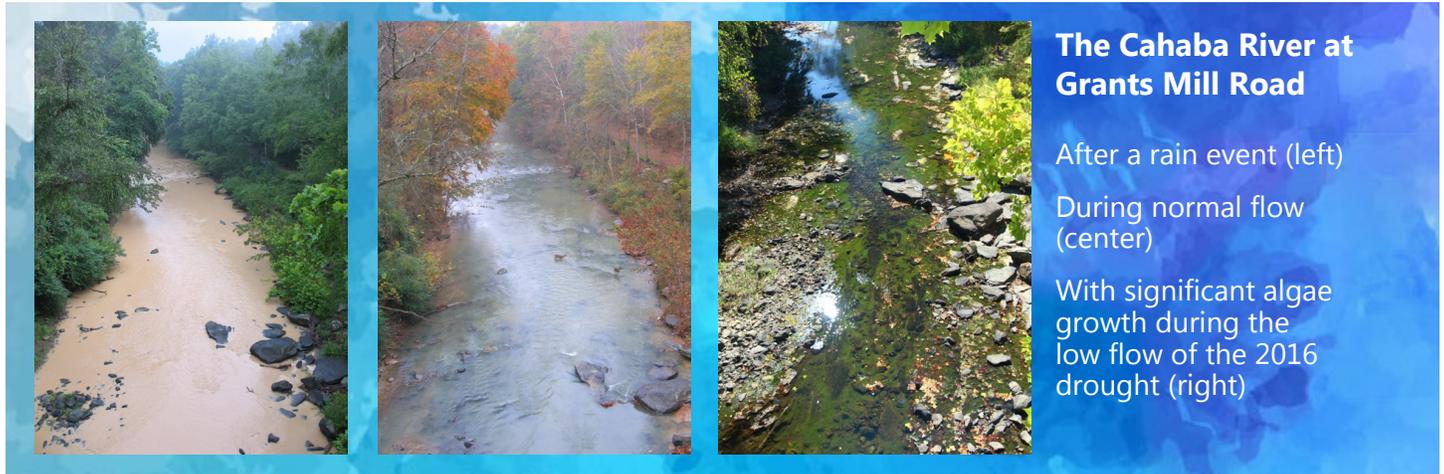
209 Guests paddled the River*



* This is a lower number than previous years. Several trips were cancelled due to weather conditions including low water levels due to the drought.

PROMOTING WATER-SMART COMMUNITIES

CRS is working to ensure our region is prepared for **growth that can better sustain our water resources**. To restore the Cahaba we must improve stormwater codes and development practices to recharge groundwater and reduce erosion, bank collapses and mud pollution; increase drinking water efficiency; reduce nutrient pollution, sewage and other contaminants; and launch a watershed plan to coordinate restoration efforts by cities, counties, nonprofits and private partners.



The Cahaba River at Grants Mill Road

After a rain event (left)

During normal flow (center)

With significant algae growth during the low flow of the 2016 drought (right)

STORMWATER

Our cities and counties are improving stormwater management and development codes. (Thank you to The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, lead funder of this work!) ADEM is revising the permits for each city and county that set expectations for stormwater management. CRS and the AL Stormwater Partners have already won improved protections in Shelby County, Alabaster, Pelham, and Helena. In 2016, we also commented on the Trussville permit, and CRS served on advisory committees that recommended innovative Low Impact Development approaches for Birmingham and Jefferson County. Birmingham and Irondale have asked CRS to advise their **strengthening of stormwater codes** in 2017.

STATE WATER PLAN

As part of the State of Alabama's water management planning, CRS proposed proactive water efficiency policy and gained support for an ecosystem-based definition of healthy flows for rivers.

DROUGHT

During the extreme drought of 2016, CRS documented how vulnerable the Cahaba is as a water source for all lives depending on it. Water levels were further drained by drinking water pumping. A stretch of River in Trussville was bone dry from May until the December rains. Some flows of the upper River were nearly 100% treated sewage. Algae choked the water, harming habitat. These conditions killed many fish, mussels and other rare aquatic life.



CAHABA BEACH ROAD

CRS is working with citizens and water groups to press for a full environmental study and alternatives for Shelby County's proposal to make 1-lane Cahaba Beach Road into a Highway 280 cut-through that will impact the Little Cahaba River and protected lands for the Birmingham drinking water source.

IMPACTS



12

Pollution Complaints

CRS responded to 12 **pollution complaints**, pressing responsible parties for clean up.



10

Development Projects

CRS advised river protection and stormwater management plans for 10 development projects, such as the new Mercedes dealership at the booming Irondale/I-459 interchange.

CRS' way of working is even more important now. We have built the relationships that keep us at the table with leaders in government and development. We listen to people's differing perspectives and needs, share information on river impacts, inspire people to respect river values along with economic needs, and together find collaborative solutions.

GROWING OUR STRENGTH, PARTNERS, & IMPACT

SPECIAL EVENTS

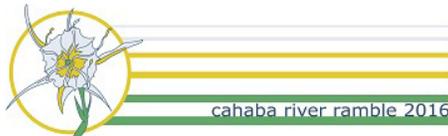
Come join us at Cahaba River Society's Educational and FUNdraising Events throughout the year that help to build support for the River.

1,100+

People Participated in CRS Events



presented by



A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!



2016 RIVER RESTORATION PROJECTS

343 Volunteers participated



13 River Restoration Projects



River Trace Road Restoration Planting at the Cahaba National Wildlife Refuge



Our most impactful volunteer project of the year was the **Amerex Privat Pull**. Along with being the lead Cahaba River Fry-Down 2016 sponsor and working hard to make our fundraising event a big success, Amerex Corporation also encouraged their staff to give us three days in September to work on a forest restoration project at the future Moon River Canoe Launch while the plant was idled for annual maintenance.

4 CRS can achieve so much because of YOU, our members, partners, & supporters. THANK YOU!