

# Alabama Scenic River Trail – Extension's Key Roles

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# Alabama Scenic River Trail





# Leverage: something out of nothing

- Eighteen percent of water in America that flows into an ocean flows through Alabama.

[Alabamaencyclopedia.org](http://Alabamaencyclopedia.org)







# What it is - Originally

- 631 miles in length
- The longest river trail in a single state
- Included stretches of 7 rivers, 2 creeks, and 1 bay
- Passes through or borders 19 of Alabama's 67 counties
- Begins where Coosa River enters Alabama from Georgia and ends at Fort Morgan of "damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead" fame



# What it is - Currently

- Over 4600 miles with sprawling flatwater, to whitewater, through bluff country to river delta and salt water
- Almost 50 rivers and creeks
- It's the closest thing we have to a National Park
- Didn't build it but packaged it for use: established access, campsites, portages, fuel points, guidebooks, and events



# What it is – Coming Soon

Designation as a

## **National River Trails System**





# What it is – Coming Soon

## National River Trails System

- A distinctive national network of exemplary water trails that are cooperatively supported and maintained.
- Established to protect and restore America's rivers, shorelines, and waterways and conserve natural areas along waterways, increase access to outdoor recreation on shorelines and waterways.





# Why it is

- It's a way to reconnect communities with their rivers
- It's a way to bring tourism to life in the forgotten reaches of our rivers



# ASRT Important to Tourism

## Economic Impact of Water Based Recreation Paddling (AL, MS, TN, KY)

- 9% of population
- \$616 million spent on trips
- \$197 million spent on taxes
- 9,571 jobs

2006 “The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy”, conducted  
study by the Outdoor Industry Foundation  
([www.outdoorindustryfoundation.org](http://www.outdoorindustryfoundation.org))





# Background

- The Alabama Scenic River Trail came into existence mainly through the efforts of Anniston Rotarian Fred Couch and friends
- The first meeting was held in January, 2007
- National Recreation Trail status achieved in June 2008—at the same time as the opening



# Obstacles

- 6 dams without locks in upper portion of Trail
- Lack of designated campsites
- Lack of fuel in lower stretches of Trail
- Mixed user type interactions – paddle versus power





# Partners

- Alabama Power Company
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Alabama Tourism Department
- Ala Dept of Conservation & Natural Resources
- RC&D Councils
- National Park Service
- Alabama Cooperative Extension System
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Boy Scouts of America



# Making it possible

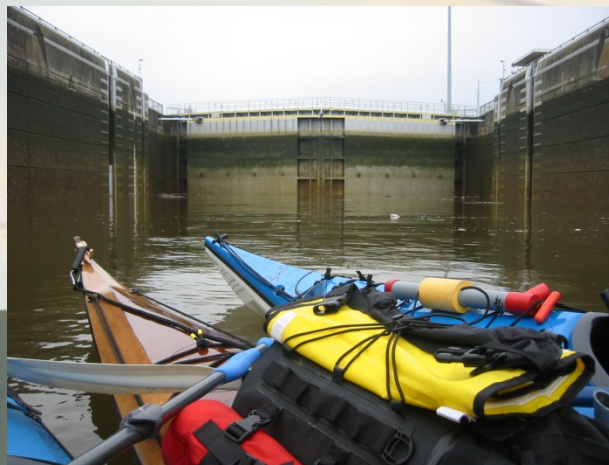
- We worked with Alabama Power to establish portages around their dams





# Making it possible

- We worked with USACE to understand how the locks could be used, and tailored our approach to support their policy
- We are still working with everyone we can to identify campsites and assets along the Trail



# Making it possible

- We didn't just meet—we did it
- We took what we learned and packaged it
- We logged campsites, paddled, visited marinas, took waypoints and invited local officials

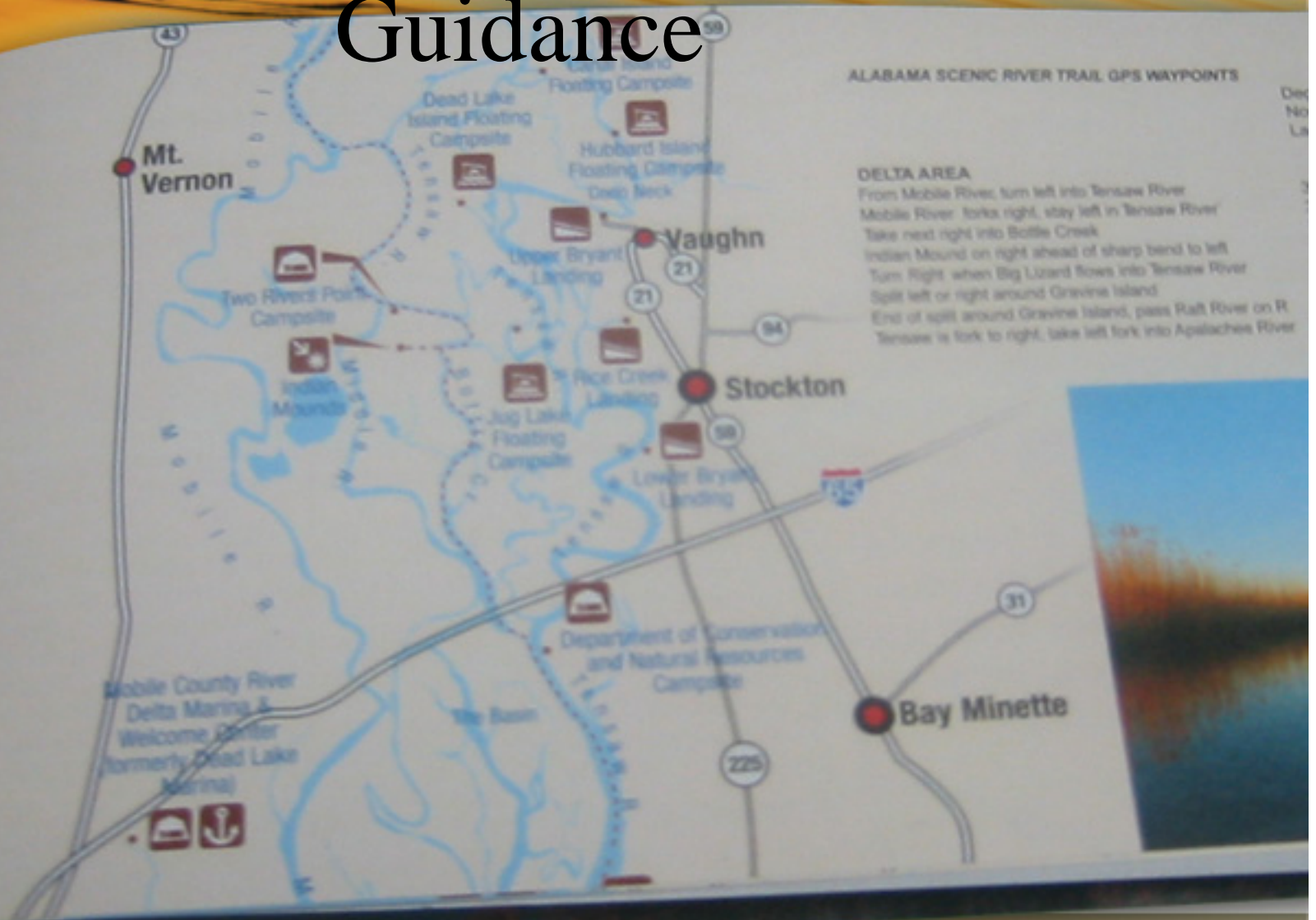




# Access via guidebooks



# Guidance

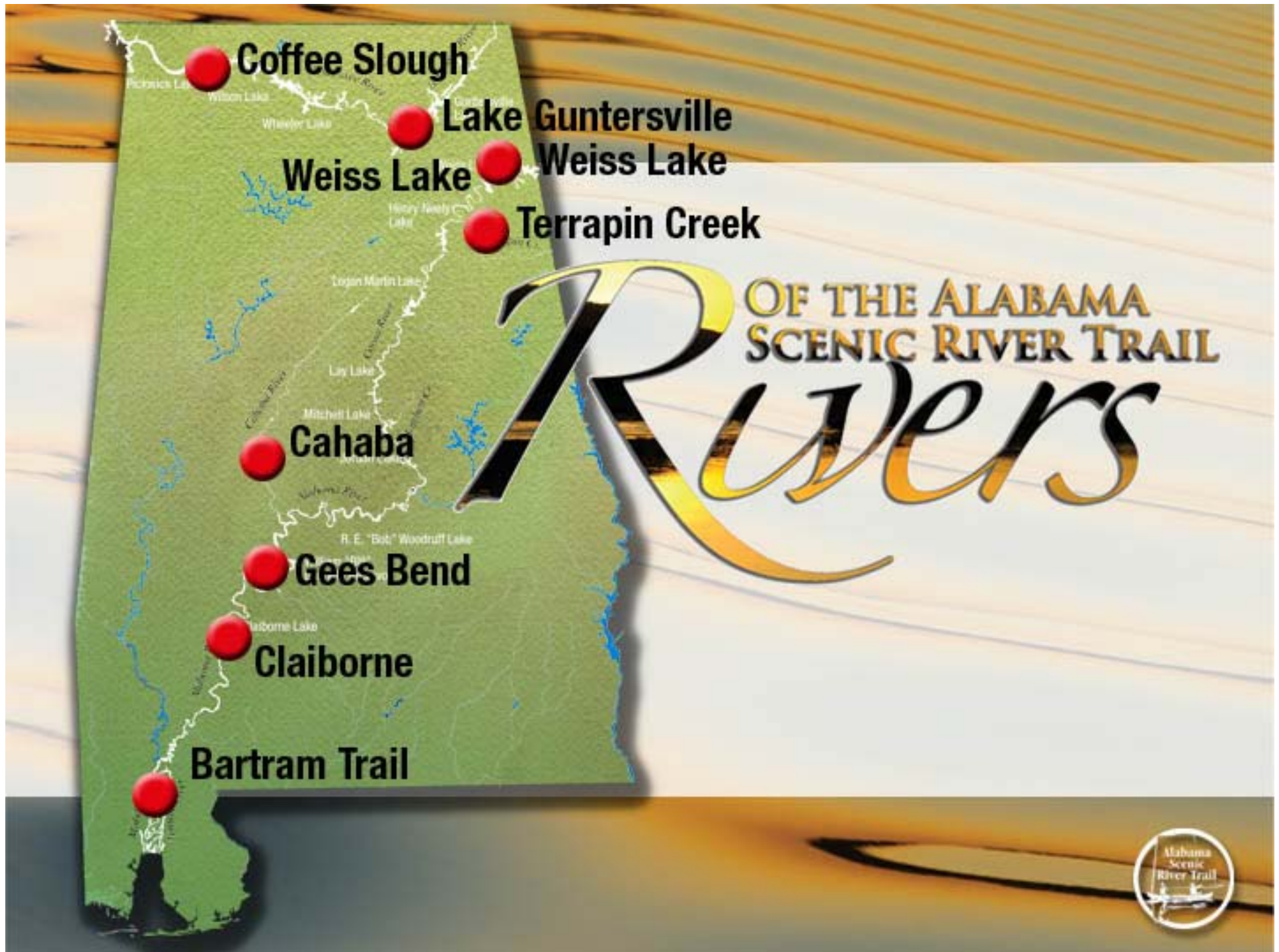




# Two kinds of access

- Physical—ramps, docks, roads, parking and other improvements
- Mental—maps, guides, descriptions, directions, suggestions
- No point in creating one without the other





**Coffee Slough**

**Lake Guntersville**

**Weiss Lake**

**Weiss Lake**

**Terrapin Creek**

**Cahaba**

**Gees Bend**

**Claiborne**

**Bartram Trail**

# **Rivers** OF THE ALABAMA SCENIC RIVER TRAIL





# April 2011—Bartram Trail

- Two days
- Visit floating platforms
- Camp at Hubbards Landing





# April 2011—Terrapin



- Three days
- Progressive float





# May 2011—Cahaba Lilies

- Next year, our paddle will coincide with the Lily Festival
- We'll do lower Cahaba if the weather doesn't cooperate





# May 2011—Cahaba Lilies





# May 2011—Cahaba Lilies





# June 2011—Weiss Lake



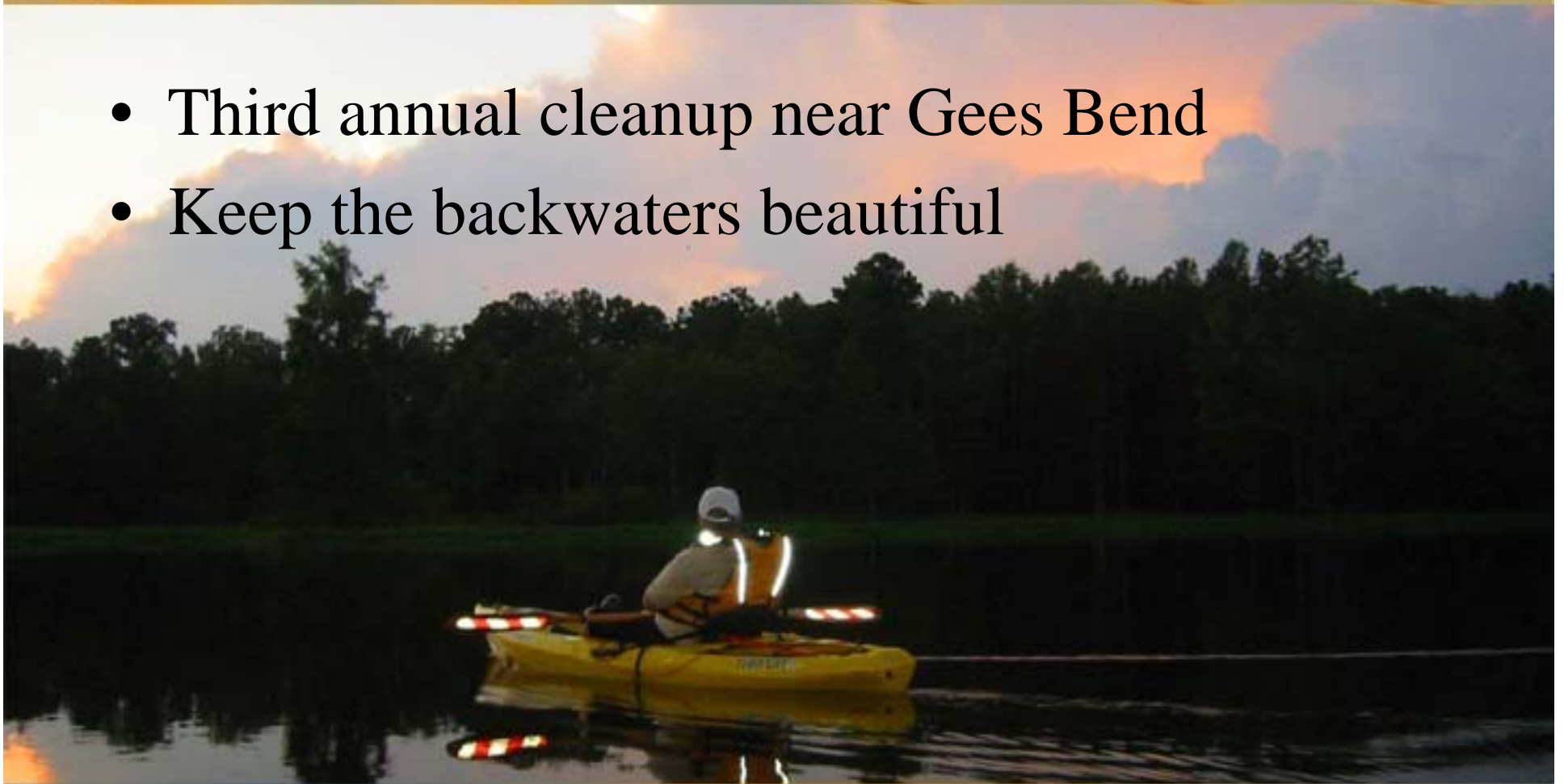
- Three days
- Education and fun





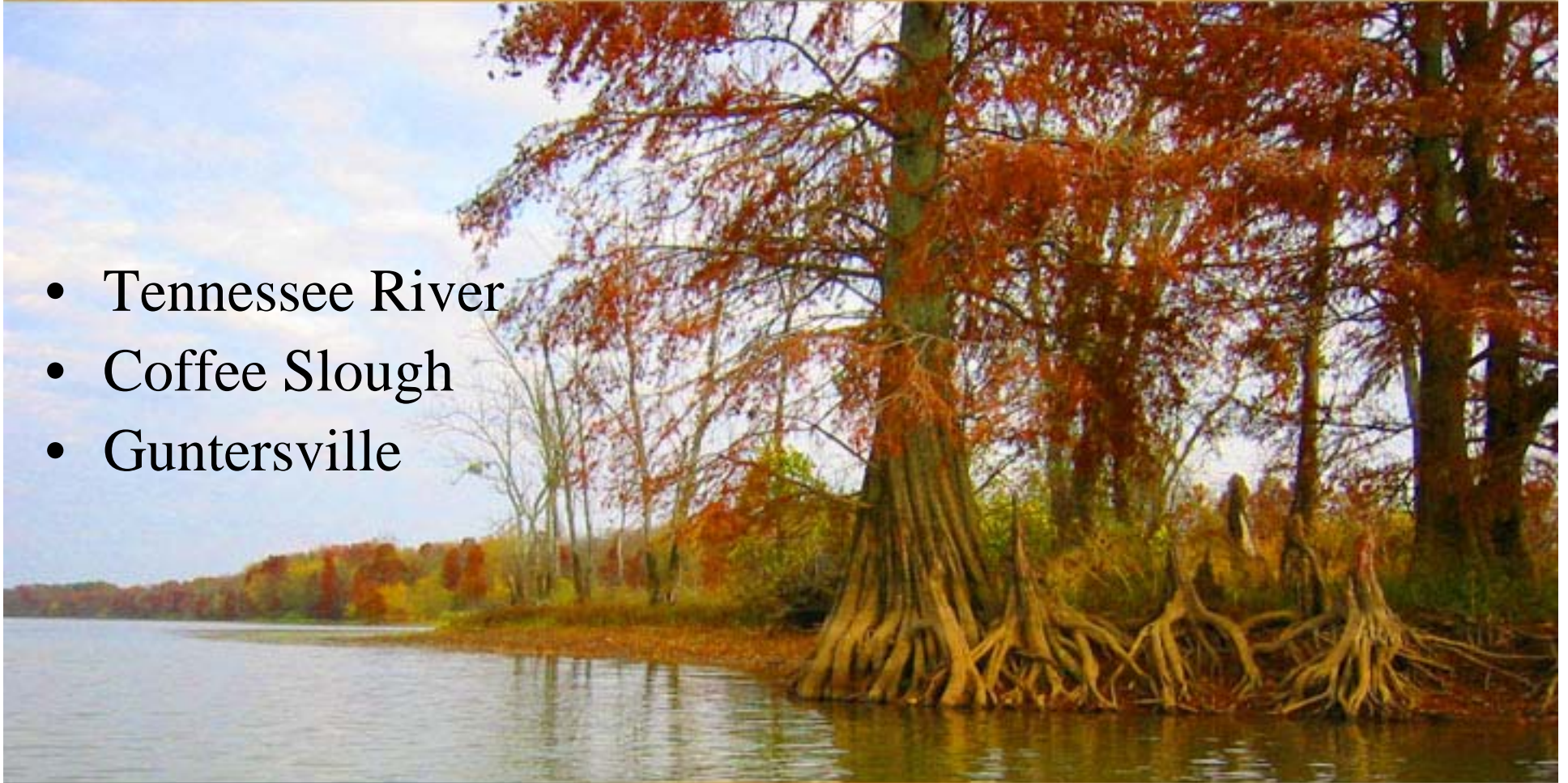
# August 2011—Wilcox

- Third annual cleanup near Gees Bend
- Keep the backwaters beautiful



# September-October 2011

- Tennessee River
- Coffee Slough
- Guntersville





# November 2011—Claiborne

- Naturalist paradise
- Lock through Claiborne Dam
- Camp at Isaac Creek





# November 2011—Claiborne





# November 2011—Claiborne





# Coosa Paddling





# Coosa Whitewater





# Delta





# 2011 Adventure Race



## Terrapin Tri-County 2010 Adventure Race

Calhoun • Cherokee • Cleburne Counties of Alabama



# 2011 Adventure Race



- At the confluence of the ASRT, Pinhoti and Chief Ladiga trails
- Paddle, run and bike
- Adventure race





# Trail Achievements

- Salaries in state's 2009-2010-2011 budgets
- Awarded AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteers
- Grant for two fuel points on the Alabama River
- Worked to help pass Rec Trails Commission and got an appointed seat to the Commission



# Trail Achievements

- Producing the largest paddle events in the state, and bringing them to every corner of the state
- Won the 2009 Governors Award for Tourism in the Alabama Tourism Theme category





# Current Goals

**Guntersville area**

**Terrapin Creek**

**Cahaba River**

**Wilcox Cty/Gees Bend**

**Mobile-Tensaw Delta**

**Mobile Bay**

- Developing and focusing on day trips
- Establishing outfitters
- Providing fuel
- Creating campsites
- Education
- New guidebooks



# What's in it for the community?

- Develop assets and access to your river
- Application for grants for improvements
- Develop day and overnight trips
- ASRT promotional engine increases mindshare for your area
- Potential business opportunities
- Potential support





# Extension's Specific Roles

- Member of initial development group
- Membership on task oriented committees
- Developed initial media kits
- Assisted in obtaining grants
- Promotion of ASRT
- Development of spurs
- Involvement of state specialists and county extension coordinators



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