

25th annual
Alabama Water Rally
Alabama's annual gathering of clean water advocates



MARCH 24 - 26, 2023
CAMP BECKWITH IN FAIRHOPE

HOSTED BY Alabama Rivers Alliance

WITH AWESOME SUPPORT FROM



WELCOME TO WATER RALLY!

Welcome to the 25th annual Alabama Water Rally! This event is thoughtfully designed to give you the tools, the knowledge, the friends, and the motivation to go back to your community and lead the way to protecting your local creek, river, bay, or lake – and all the life that depends on it.

Our weekend together takes place on the shores of beautiful Weeks Bay in Fairhope, Alabama. This national estuary, where salt and freshwater converge to create one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world, provides the perfect place for clean water advocates from all across the state to come

together and plan for the next 50 years of working for clean water in Alabama!

Our picturesque location was originally the land of the Pensacola, a Native American people that spoke Muskogean language and lived in this area until the mid-18th century. Just upstream from here and across Mobile Bay is also the site of the last slave ship to come into America, the Clotilda, and Africatown, where the descendants of those slaves are living today and working to restore their community from decades of environmental injustices.

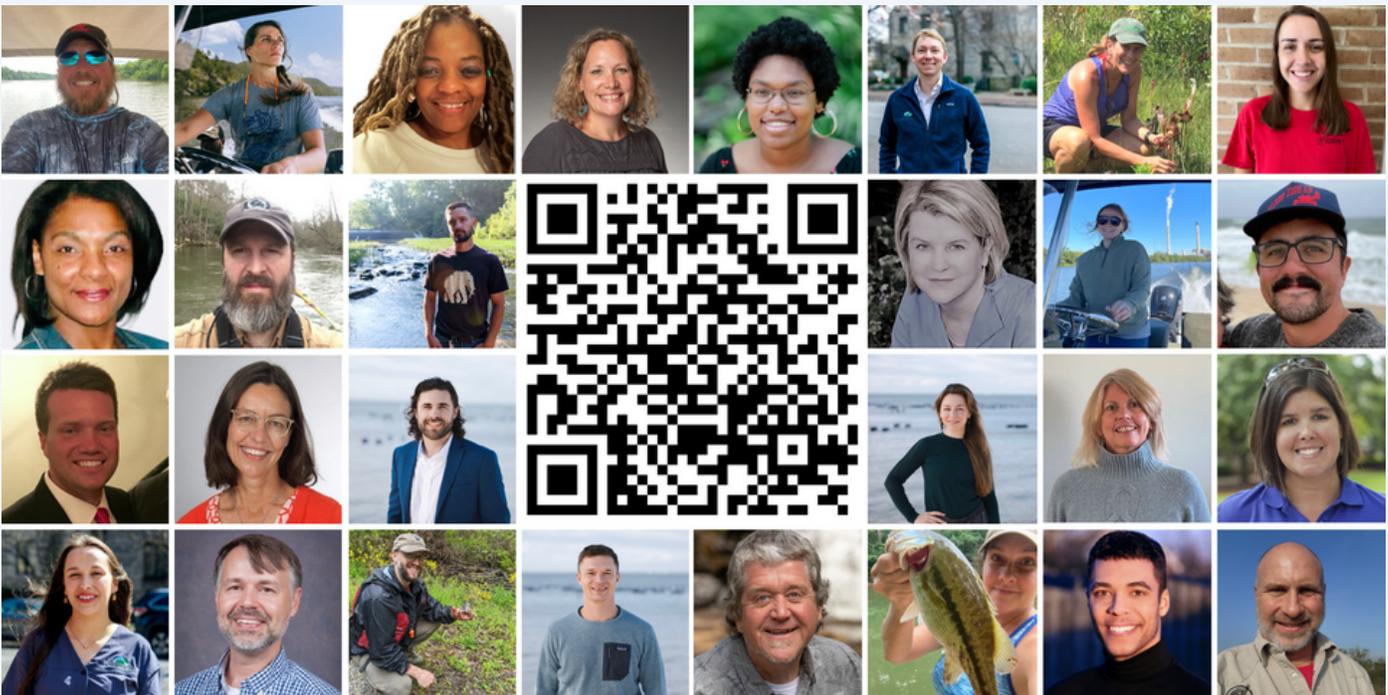
This weekend will provide us with opportunities to acknowledge the injustices that have occurred on these lands and waters for centuries and to come together to become leaders in promoting justice from here forward and advocating clean, accessible, equitable, resilient waters for all Alabamians!

All we ask of you is that you come with your full self and an open mind. We want this to be a safe, inclusive space for vibrant conversations. If at any time your experience does not feel inclusive or you feel uncomfortable, please reach out to me or ARA staff.

Cindy

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Alabama Water Rally has an incredible lineup of speakers with all sorts of lived experiences and expertise. Scan the QR code to read all about them!



MEAL TIMES

Meals are served family style and start and end PROMPTLY at the indicated start/end times. Please help Rally organizers and Camp staff by being on time for meals!

ARTBREAK!

ARA is excited to offer a creative outlet for attendees – of all ages and self-perceived talent levels - to explore how we can better use the arts as an effective avenue for change. Is your brain overloaded with data, facts, doom and gloom? Head over to the Art Break areas and relax your mind a bit while you work with clay, watercolors, nature-collecting / sketching and more. Let your imagination flow and who knows what great discovery may come next!

COFFEE AND HOT WATER

Available 24 hours a day at the Bayfront Pavilion.

SUGGESTION BOX

Do you have a suggestion for next year or a complaint about this year? Look for the SUGGESTION BOX in the Dining Hall and drop your anonymous note in the box. We will be checking throughout the weekend.

PHOTOGRAPHS

A volunteer photographer or two will be taking photos throughout Rally. Please let any ARA staff member know if you do NOT want your image to be published on ARA's website, social media, and other publications. We will happily respect your wishes.

Friday

WHAT IS HAPPENING	WHAT TIME IS IT HAPPENING	WHERE IS IT HAPPENING
CLEAN WATER ACT MANUAL WORKSHOP	1 - 5 pm	BAYFRONT PAVILLION
SUPPER	6 - 6:45 pm	DINING HALL
WHAT DID THE TABLER SAY TO THE RIVER DEFENDER WALKING BY?	6:45 - 7:30 pm	Meet Inside the CHAPEL to find out!
WELCOME TO WATER RALLY AND THE BAY with Cindy (ARA) & William (Mobile Baykeeper)!	7:30 - 9 pm	Inside the CHAPEL
A COSMIC WALK: A JOURNEY THROUGH DEEP-TIME with Dr. Bill Deutsch		Outside the CHAPEL <i>if weather does not cooperate, this will happen inside the CHAPEL</i>

Saturday

WHAT IS HAPPENING	WHAT TIME IS IT HAPPENING	WHERE IS IT HAPPENING
BIRDING WITH BILL	7 - 7:50 am	Meet outside DINING HALL
BREAKFAST	8 - 8:45 am	DINING HALL
PLENARY: LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY	9 - 10:15 am	inside the CHAPEL
BREAKOUT SESSION 1	10:30 - 11:30 am	Science: ALVES 1 Policy: ALVES 2 Organizational: BAYFRONT PAVILION
LUNCH	11:45 am - 12:45 pm	DINING HALL
PLENARY: WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE	1 - 2:30 pm	inside the CHAPEL
GROUP PHOTO	2:30 - 2:45 pm	TBD <i>we'll announce the weather-dependent location at breakfast and the plenary!</i>
BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2	3 - 4 pm	Bubbling Brook: ALVES 2 Policy: BAYFRONT PAVILION Organizational: ALVES 1
BREAKOUT SESSIONS 3	4 :15 - 5:15 pm	Science: ALVES 2 Policy: BAYFRONT PAVILION Organizational: ALVES 1
HAPPY HOUR & SHRIMP BOIL SPONSORED BY OSPREY INITIATIVE AND LITTER GITTER and RED CLAY BREWERY	5:30 - 6:45 pm	BAYFRONT PAVILION
RIVER CELEBRATION AWARDS	7 - 8 pm	inside the CHAPEL
FUN TIMES WERE HAD BY ALL!	8 pm - whenever!	<i>All over! If you get confused, listen to the music play...</i>

Sunday

WHAT IS HAPPENING	WHAT TIME IS IT HAPPENING	WHERE IS IT HAPPENING
BREAKFAST	8 - 8:45 am	DINING HALL
PACK UP TIME!	8:45 - 9:30	
PLENARY: CONNECTING WITH STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH & ADVOCACY	9:30 - 11:30 am	inside the CHAPEL
LUNCH	11:45 am - noon	Pick up your boxed lunch at the DINING HALL
FIELD TRIPS!!	12:15 pm	Meet outside the DINING HALL

All Weekend

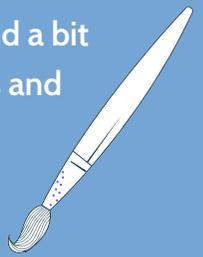
THE CREEK SQUAD

Do you have a burning question about Google Drive, email marketing, public relations, Facebook/Instagram/TikTok/Twitter or any of the other bazillion different ways to communicate with your community or organize your work? Head over to the The Creek Squad Tech Help station and we will do our best to help make your life easier. We may not know everything, but we sure know a lot of tiny things – stump us! *Meet us in the Registration Area!*

ART BREAKS!

Is your brain overloaded with data, facts, and your to-do list when returning home? Head over the Art Break areas (Chapel and under the Bayfront Pavilion) and relax your mind a bit while you work with clay, watercolors and nature-collecting and sketching.

Let your imagination loose and who knows what great discovery may come next!



WHAT NEXT?

Meet us in Montgomery for our annual Lobby Day on Rivers of Alabama Day, April 11!
Scan here to learn more or visit www.AlabamaRivers.org/RAD



POWERFUL PLENARIES

All Plenary Sessions will take place in the Chapel unless otherwise announced.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

SATURDAY 9 - 10:15 AM

SPEAKERS: Justinn Overton (Coosa Riverkeeper), Bradley Davidson (Conservation Alabama), & Jack West (Alabama Rivers Alliance)

A little like Schoolhouse Rock's *How a Bill Becomes a Law* ... with an Alabama twist. The Alabama Legislature has the power to make important decisions impacting our waterways. This plenary will discuss the upcoming legislative session, how you can build relationships and engage with your elected officials and what's in the works from environmental groups for this session. Coosa Riverkeeper, Alabama Rivers Alliance, and Conservation Alabama are eager to share updates on legislative priorities around safe and healthy outdoor recreation.

WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

SATURDAY 1 - 2:30 pm

SPEAKERS: Sherry Bradley (Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program), Eric Reidy (Alabama Department of Environmental Management), Dr. Mark Elliott (University of Alabama), Eva Dillard (Black Warrior Riverkeeper)

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) have brought an unprecedented amount of federal dollars into our state for improving water and wastewater infrastructure. This panel will share how these essential dollars are being used to address long-standing sanitation inequities in Alabama's Black Belt region as well as how the money is being distributed statewide and how you can advocate for projects in your community.

CONNECTING WITH STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH & ADVOCACY

SUNDAY 9:30 - 11:30 am

SPEAKERS: Hank Hershey (Auburn University), Victoria Miller (Alabama Rivers Alliance) Jaxon Tolbert (University of Alabama in Huntsville) Moderated by: Dawn Lee (ARA Board)

As small nonprofits, we can't always hire enough staff to conduct our research and do the work needed to achieve our goals. College students and academic institutions can be a great resource for groups to connect with the most up-to-date research and provide much-needed professional help for organizations. Learn how to connect with undergraduate and graduate-level students and what they need from you to get the most out of internships and volunteer opportunities to build their skills and career opportunities. It is a win-win for everyone involved when you know what to do!

BREAKOUT BONANZA

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1		Saturday 10:30 - 11:30 am	
TRACK	TITLE	SPEAKER OR PRESENTER	LOCATION
SCIENCE	Fish Passage	Hank Hershey (Auburn University) Jason Throneberry (The Nature Conservancy)	ALVES 1
POLICY	Public Health & the Environment	Dr. Claudette Poole (UAB School of Medicine)	ALVES 2
ORGANIZATIONAL	Talking Trash with Litter Gitter	Don Bates & Ellie Mallon (Osprey Initiative)	BAYFRONT PAVILION

SCIENCE I - FISH PASSAGE

Dams have severely altered our river systems throughout the state. They have blocked the ability for fish - such as paddlefish and shad - to migrate upstream to spawn and support mussel reproduction. Looking closely at the Mobile Basin, one of the most biodiverse basins in the entire nation, we will learn about the natural history of fish migration, what has been lost, and what we may still be able to restore. We will also discuss efforts by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Alabama to conduct a feasibility study on the Alabama River. Many species of native and migratory fishes historically utilized this corridor which has been disconnected since dam construction. If successful this would reconnect the Cahaba River with the Gulf of Mexico, potentially the most ecologically significant river restoration in North America.

POLICY I - PUBLIC HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT

Public health and environmental challenges are intricately related but it is not a simple task to identify and verify those connections. This session will look at ongoing work with communities in Alabama's Black Belt around household sanitation. This work seeks to increase community-based identify problems and propose feasible solutions. Dr. Poole will share lessons learned from a community-based participatory research project to conduct helminthiasis disease (parasitic worms) surveillance in at-risk children in the Alabama Black Belt.

ORGANIZATIONAL I - TALKING TRASH WITH LITTER GITTER

Using data to tell a story about litter collection is a critical way to show the success of a project centered around litter removal. Learn more about Osprey Initiatives' modified Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP), collection methodology, and Litter Collection Devices in this breakout session!

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2			Saturday 3 - 4 pm
TRACK	TITLE	SPEAKER OR PRESENTER	LOCATION
MISC.	The Bubbling Brook	Facilitated by Maggie Johnston (Wild Alabama)	ALVES 2
POLICY	The IRA & the BIL: A Lot of Letters that Mean a Lot to Alabama	Sheree Martin (Energy Alabama)	BAYFRONT PAVILION
ORGANIZATIONAL	Community Organizing & Trust Building	Karen Jones (To Whom It May Concern, Inc) Jean Cox (Friends of Pinchgut Creek)	ALVES 1

THE BUBBLING BROOK

Open Space is an exciting agenda style that lets "whoever needs to be there" be in the room where it happens! So often the very best take-aways from a gathering like Water Rally are the conversations you have around the coffee pot or with a glass of wine or River Defender beer in your hand. Open Space allows you to come to this session with the burning questions you want to ask or topics you want to share. Maggie will help us to quickly get a read on these topics that "Bubble Up" and set up mini-breakout conversations for those with similar needs. Interested in learning more, find Maggie and ask her!

POLICY II - THE IRA & THE BIL: A LOT OF LETTERS THAT MEAN A LOT TO ALABAMA

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), two federal laws enacted in 2022, incentivize and provide federal funding for a myriad of programs that will speed up the transition to clean, renewable energy across the U.S. In this session, Sheree Martin (Energy Alabama) will describe these programs, who stands to benefit from them, how the funds are being (or will be) disbursed, and how to seek funding for your organization, community, family or business (including farms). The focus of this discussion will be on programs most relevant to water defenders, but attendees are encouraged to bring questions and curiosity about the broader range of programs and funding opportunities under both important laws.

ORGANIZATIONAL II - COMMUNITY ORGANIZING & TRUST BUILDING

Whether you are starting a new organization or you have been around for years or decades, organizing a group of allies and building trust in communities is essential to your success in protecting your local waterway or your community's health and safety. Community organizing is not one size fits all. Each community has its own unique qualities and leaders that only someone from the community knows and understands. This session will provide examples from two community leaders' experiences in very different communities in Alabama—a suburban white community and an urban community of color. These speakers will share ways they are able to reach their goals by building relationships within their communities. We will discuss how to get members of the community involved, how to find and build our leaders, and how to get our community or municipal leaders onboard to make great things happen. This will be an interactive session with plenty of fun and informative discussion time.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 3

Saturday 4:15 - 5:15 pm

TRACK	TITLE	SPEAKER OR PRESENTER	LOCATION
SCIENCE	Flooding and Green Infrastructure Funding	Ben Wegleitner (Cahaba River Society)	ALVES 2
POLICY	Using the CWA Manual to #DefendRivers Near You	April Ingle (River Network)	BAYFRONT PAVILION
ORGANIZATIONAL	The Fundraising Trifecta: Memberships, Grants, & Events!	Cece Pless (Mobile Baykeeper), Abby Brown (Coosa Riverkeeper), Cindy Lowry (Alabama Rivers Alliance)	ALVES 1

SCIENCE III - FLOODING AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

As our cities continue to grow and sprawl, new developments are required to use more protective practices to control stormwater, reduce flooding, and prevent erosion. However, that won't be enough to turn back the clock on the damage already done to urban waterways. To fix those issues, cities and counties must also be actively retrofitting stormwater infrastructure in older developed areas that lack the necessary controls to capture and treat stormwater runoff. Funding is often the most challenging piece of implementing a stormwater retrofit project. In this session, we'll discuss a few of the funding mechanisms being used around the state and the country—including State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans, Section 319, FEMA floodplain buyouts, and others—along with some creative ways for municipalities to meet their grant match requirements.

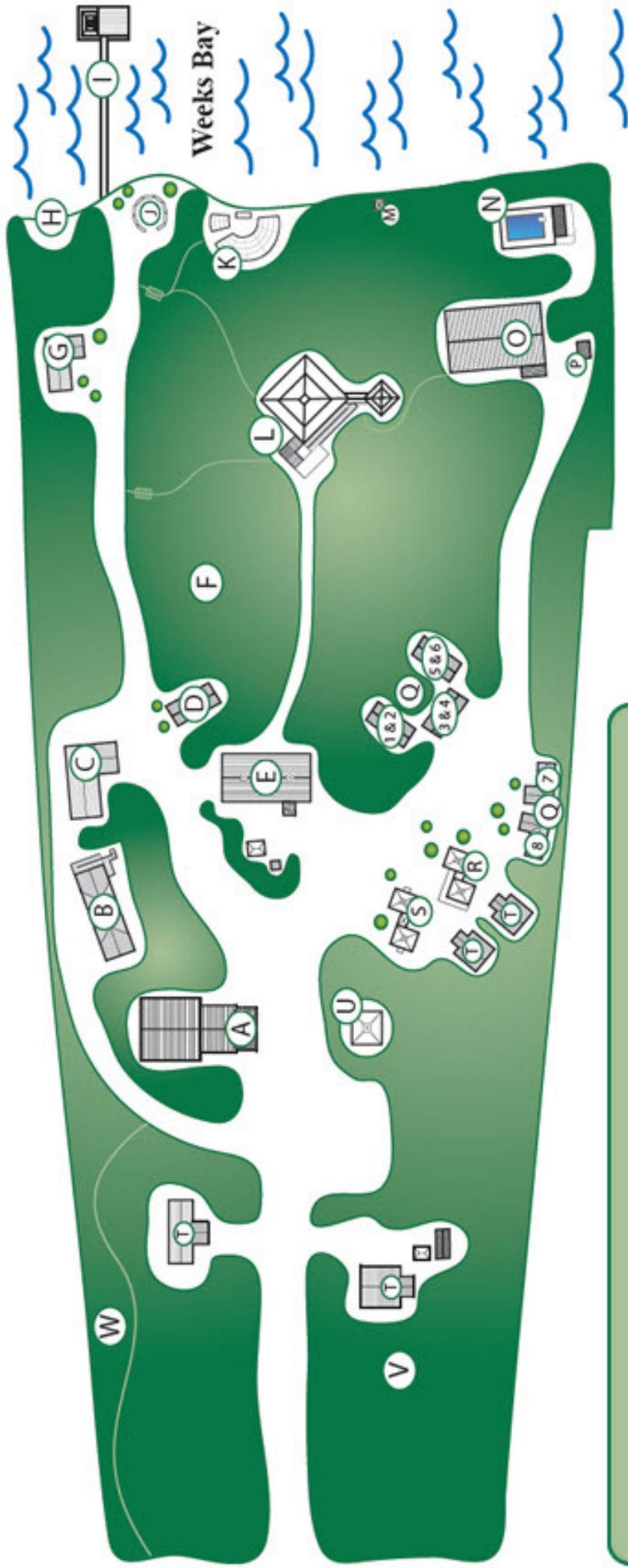
POLICY III - USING THE CWA MANUAL TO #DEFENDRIVERS NEAR YOU

Local advocates are the driving force behind achieving the Clean Water Act's objectives and goals. Join us for this interactive session to learn how you can use the Clean Water Act to protect your communities and local waters. During the workshop, you'll hear an overview of River Network's recently updated Clean Water Act Owner's Manual and you'll practice using the manual to address pollution challenges you're facing. The Clean Water Act Owner's Manual is a foundational tool that will guide you in applying the Clean Water Act to protect your local waterways and community. It also offers examples of how the Act has been used to advocate for specific issues facing communities and local waters, such as stormwater and wastewater pollution, climate change, and environmental injustice.

This session will introduce you to tools that can help you track changes in your waters, ask important questions, and advocate for implementation and enforcement of the Act in ways that are just, advance equity, and take climate change into account.

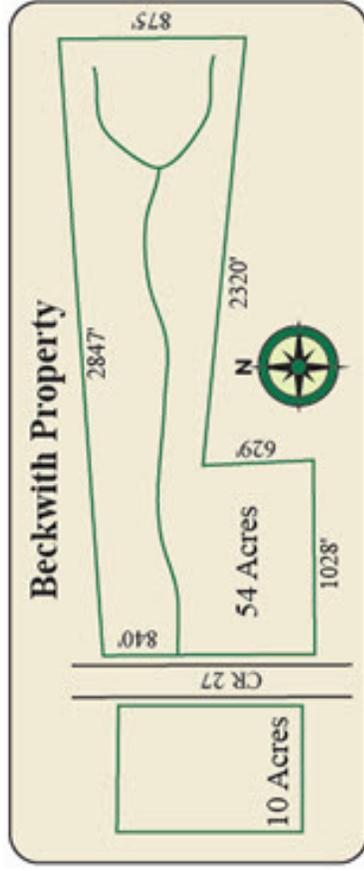
ORGANIZATIONAL III - FUNDRAISING TRIFECTA: MEMBERSHIP, GRANTS, & EVENTS

You've got your mission fine-tuned, your programs up and running, and an awesome group of volunteers and/or staff ready to make a difference in Alabama. Now you just need members and money to support the important work you are doing! Hit the trifecta with these three main pillars for a successful fundraising plan: membership cultivation and retention, grant research and writing and event planning and execution. Learn the importance of a diverse fundraising portfolio and the pros and cons of each of these pillars as you set your organization up for a successful and sustainable future!



- A Alves Welcome Center
- B Hardman Lodge
- C Cumming Lodge
- D Chason Lodge
- E Wilson Hall - Dining
- F Games Field
- G Bayfront Pavilion
- H Beckwith Beach
- I Pier
- J Camp Fire Ring
- K Byrne Chapel
- L Chapel of the Resurrection

- M Osprey Nesting Platform
- N Swimming Pool
- O Pavilion
- P Marsh Observation Deck
- Q Cabins
- R Odom Guest Rooms
- S Odom Guest Rooms
- T Odom Cottages
- U Odom Treehouse
- V Challenge Course
- W Nature Trails



Water Rally At A Glance

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, MARCH 24

- 1 – 5:00 pm Clean Water Act Manual Training, [Bayfront Pavilion](#)
- 6 – 6:45 pm Supper, [Dining Hall](#)
- 6:45 – 7:30 pm Networking & Such, [Chapel](#)
- 7:30– 7:45 pm Welcome to the Bay! [Chapel](#)
- 7:45 – 9 pm Cosmic Walk: A Journey through Deep-Time, [Outside the Chapel](#)

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

- 7 – 7:50 am Birding with Bill, [Meet outside Dining Hall](#)
- 8 – 8:45 am Breakfast, [Dining Hall](#)
- 9 – 10:15 am Plenary I: Legislative Advocacy, [Chapel](#)
- 10:30 – 11:30 am Breakout Session I, [various locations](#)
- 11:45 – 12:45 pm Lunch, [Dining Hall](#)
- 1 – 2:30 pm Plenary II: Water & Wastewater Infrastructure, [Chapel](#)
- 2:30 – 2:45 pm Group Photo
- 3 – 4 pm Breakout Session II, [various locations](#)
- 4:15 – 5:15 pm Breakout Session III, [various locations](#)
- 5:30 – 6:45 pm Happy Hour + Shrimp Boil, [Bayfront Pavilion](#)
- 7 – 8 pm River Celebration Awards, [Chapel](#)

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

- 8 – 8:45 am Breakfast, [Dining Hall](#)
- 9:30 – 11:30 am Plenary III: Connecting with Students for Research & Advocacy, [Chapel](#)
- 11:45 am - noon Lunch pick-up, [Dining Hall](#)
- 12:15pm – !!! Field Trips, [various locations](#)

BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

WHEN, WHERE & WATER WE TALKING BOUT?

TRACK	TOPIC	LOCATION
Science	Fish Passage	ALVES 1
Policy	Public Health & the Environment	ALVES 2
Organizational	Talking Trash with Litter Gitter	BAYFRONT PAVILION
Misc.	The Bubbling Brook	ALVES 2
Policy	The IRA & the BIL: A Lot of Letters that Mean A Lot to Alabama	BAYFRONT PAVILION
Organizational	Community Organizing & Trust Building	ALVES 1
Science	Flooding & Green Infrastructure Funding	ALVES 2
Policy	Using the CWA Manual to #DefendRivers Near You	BAYFRONT PAVILION
Organizational	The Fundraising Trifecta: Memberships, Grants, & Events	ALVES 1

BREAKOUT SESSION I
SAT 10:30 – 11:30 AM

BREAKOUT SESSION II
SAT 3 – 4 PM

BREAKOUT SESSION III
SAT 4:15 – 5:15 PM

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR UP-TO-DATE
INFO ABOUT WATER RALLY

