



# Blue Springs Nature Preserve

Steering Committee Newsletter / Dec. 2008

## Letter from the Chairman

Dear Steering Committee Member,

Autumn brings forth change. In this issue of the newsletter, we feature a new article from Bill Phillips that sheds some light on the changing of the leaves, along with some new photography of the site from Hugh Hunter.



At Blue Springs Nature Preserve, the colors of the leaves are not the only change. It is my privilege to announce to you the launch of the Blue Springs Nature Preserve web site.

Launching this web site represents another step towards making this project a reality. With a presence on the World Wide Web, we will be able to tell our story to a global audience, particularly to individuals with an interest in the environment and outdoor recreation. We have a grand vision with this project, and it will take much more effort to bring Blue Springs to fruition. The web site will allow us to show those efforts to our supporters.

Please take a moment to browse through the site and let us know what you think. We plan to make a broader announcement regarding the web site in December.

As always, thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,  
*Spencer Weitman*

## Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee

Spencer Weitman  
National Cement Company of Ala.  
Steering Committee Chairman

Lyman Lovejoy  
Lovejoy Realty  
Finance Chairman

Bill Phillips  
Envision Ecology  
Land Use Chairman

Darlene Rotch  
Panorama Public Relations  
Communications Chair

Ed Gardner Sr.  
St. Clair County EDC  
Facilities and Infrastructure

Marsha Boswell  
Ragland High School  
Education Chair

Rep. Blaine Galliher  
State Representative  
Finance Committee

Hon. Charles Robinson  
St. Clair County Circuit Court  
Finance Committee

### Committee At-Large:

Chairman Stan Bateman, St. Clair County Commission; Charlie Brannon; Jerry Sue Brannon; Jean Claude Brocheton, National Cement; Bob Champion, National Cement; Gary Daffron (Finance Committee); Joan Ford; Ed Gardner Jr., St. Clair County EDC; Jeff Hardy, Ragland High School; Commissioner Paul Manning, St. Clair County Commission; Con. Larry Means, State Congressman; Randy Gray, National Cement; Dr. Jenny Seales, St. Clair County Board of Education, Don Smith, St. Clair County EDC

## In This Issue:

Autumn falls on Blue Springs

BSNP launches web site



Visit us on the web at [www.bluespringspreserve.com](http://www.bluespringspreserve.com).

---

# Autumn falls on Blue Springs

---

Mother Nature just loves to show off! And that is especially true at Blue Springs Nature Preserve in the fall when the lush green summer vegetation turns to a mosaic of blazing hues before putting on the somber colors of winter.

The changes begin with the last migrations of the monarch butterflies, which glide across the Blue Springs valley, pausing occasionally to sip nectar from the daisies and goldenrod, to power their flight to warmer climes.

And so the yellow and white daisies and the well-named goldenrod begin to fade in late October, while the leaves begin to turn. Now the fields become seas of straw-colored, waving broomsedge and dog-fennel, while the emerald leaves of summer turn to yellow, red, orange, and brown.

Blue Springs Nature Preserve is blessed with a variety of natural habitats, which exhibit an abundance of tree and shrub species, each with its characteristic fall colors. For example, the sweetgums that border the fields turn to red or yellow; the tulip poplars become amber; and the dogwoods become



*The trees covering the ridges of Blue Springs Nature Preserve burst forth at sunrise in blazing hues of yellow, red, orange and brown before giving way to the gray of winter. (Photo: Hugh Hunter)*

reddish brown to purple. The leaves of my favorite, the red maple, turn to shimmering, transparent yellow, which contrast sharply with their almost black trunks and limbs. The bright sunshine of cloudless fall days shines through the leaves to create a dazzling display.

Along the streams, the pawpaws turn yellowish brown, the sycamores become mottled in yellow and green, and the hickories turn yellowish orange.

The leaves blow in the breeze and settle daintily on the surface of the stream. The color is everywhere!

But the fall showcase is the ridge beyond the stream, where the bright colors of the mature forest wash the ridge in colors too rich to describe. Beneath the trees gray squirrels and chipmunks work diligently to store acorns and nuts for the winter. The squirrels make numerous trips up the tree trunks to the cavities that will serve as

---

## About National Cement

National Cement Company of Alabama, Inc. is a major producer of cement in the Southeastern United States, employing approximately 450 people.

The company is highly committed to environmental stewardship and supporting the communities in which it operates.

---

## About Blue Springs Nature Preserve

Blue Springs Nature Preserve, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is located in the town of Ragland in St. Clair County, Ala. The 147-acre preserve was made possible thanks to a land donation from National Cement Company of Alabama.

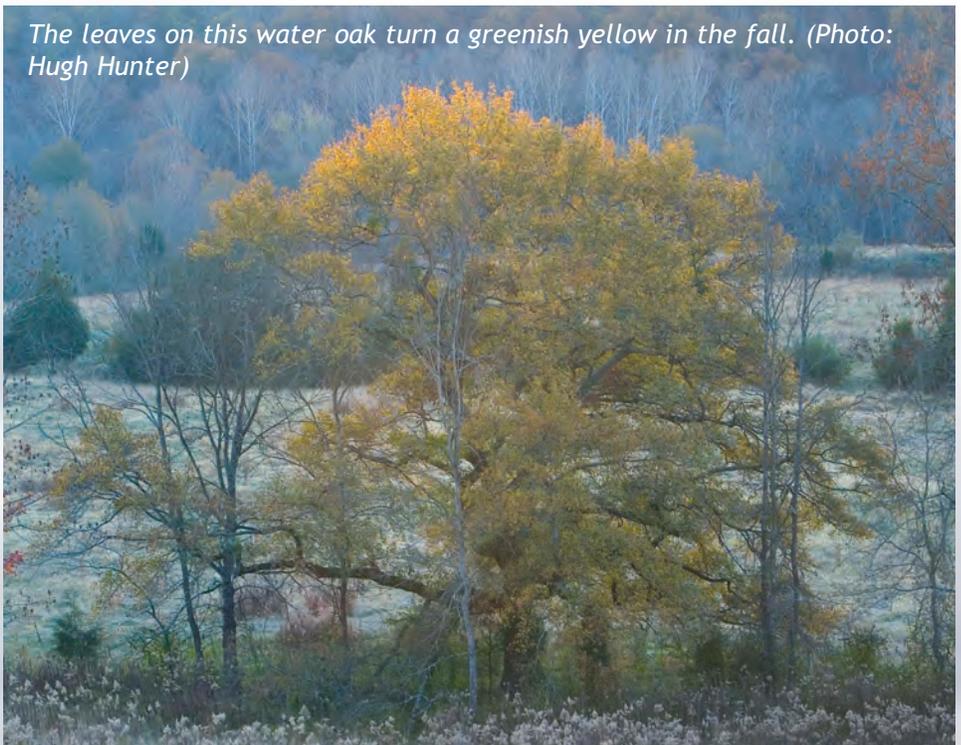
For more information, please visit [www.bluespringspreserve.com](http://www.bluespringspreserve.com), contact Tommy Palladino at (205) 328-9334 or send an e-mail to [info@bluespringspreserve.com](mailto:info@bluespringspreserve.com).

---

storage bins for the winter rations, carrying the nuts and acorns in their cheeks, while the chipmunks carry their supplies deep into the recesses beneath the boulders that dot the hillside. The trees have produced excellent mast this year, despite the continuing drought, and the abundant food will last the winter.

It is a fleeting image. It lasts for only a few weeks. And then it is over, the colors fading to the grays and browns of winter, the creatures becoming less active with the colder weather.

And while the critters and vegetation slumber through the winter, it won't be long before warm weather returns, as it always has from the beginning of time, triggering the rebirth of the spring wildflowers, the green grasses and foliage, the sounds of singing birds and frogs, the howling of coyotes, and the emergence of the first butterflies - the mourning cloaks and falcate orangetips, which flit among bushes along the stream.



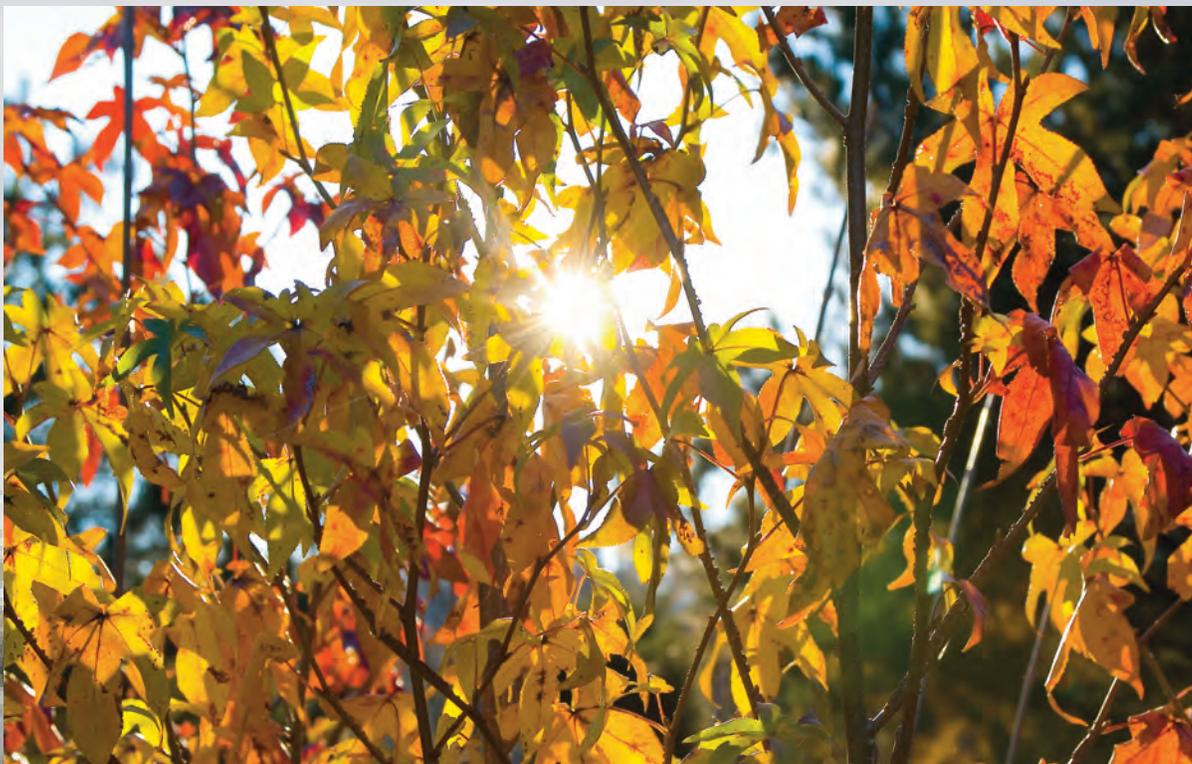
*The leaves on this water oak turn a greenish yellow in the fall. (Photo: Hugh Hunter)*

Who could then doubt that God is indeed in His Heaven, and, at least at Blue Springs Nature Preserve, all is surely right with the world?

**About the Author:**

*Bill Phillips, Land Use Chairman of the Blue Springs Nature Preserve Steering Committee, has more than 35 years experience conducting a variety of*

*ecological projects. He currently resides in Ringgold, Georgia, which is home base for Envision Ecology, LLC, a consulting and mitigation banking company that he founded in 2006. In the 1970s and '80s, Phillips wrote for several popular outdoor magazines and served as the technical editor/senior writer for Bassmaster and Southern Outdoors.*



*The morning sun pierces through the green, yellow and orange leaves on this sweetgum at Blue Springs. (Photo: Hugh Hunter)*

# BSNP launches web site

Blue Springs Nature Preserve now has a presence on the World Wide Web with the launching of its web site this month.

The web site will serve as a vehicle for communicating news to interested parties and a means to attract potential donors.

The site features five main pages:

**About** states the mission of BSNP and discusses the history.

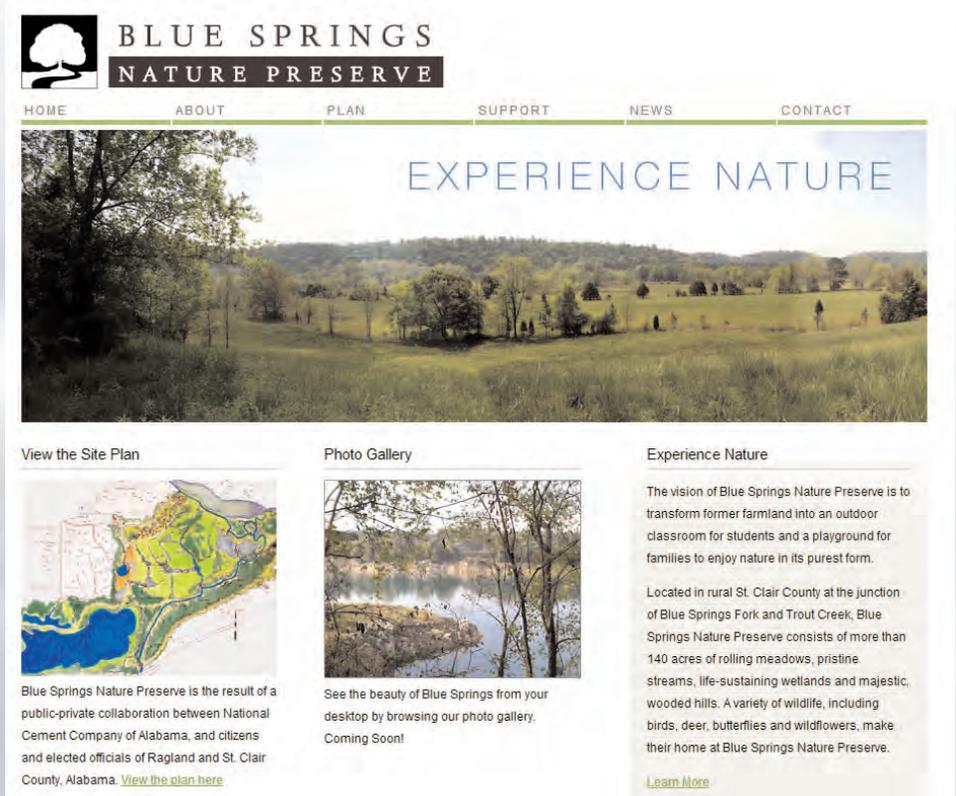
**Plan** describes the master plan for the site.

**Support** will detail fund-raising opportunities for donors.

**News** hosts the newsletter and news releases about the project.

**Contact** provides contact information and lists the steering committee.

A photo gallery, including recent fall images, is forthcoming.



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area features a large landscape photo and three columns of text: 'View the Site Plan', 'Photo Gallery', and 'Experience Nature'. The 'Experience Nature' section includes a paragraph about the preserve's vision and location, and a 'Learn More' link.

**BLUE SPRINGS NATURE PRESERVE**

HOME ABOUT PLAN SUPPORT NEWS CONTACT

## EXPERIENCE NATURE

**View the Site Plan**

Blue Springs Nature Preserve is the result of a public-private collaboration between National Cement Company of Alabama, and citizens and elected officials of Ragland and St. Clair County, Alabama. [View the plan here](#)

**Photo Gallery**

See the beauty of Blue Springs from your desktop by browsing our photo gallery. Coming Soon!

**Experience Nature**

The vision of Blue Springs Nature Preserve is to transform former farmland into an outdoor classroom for students and a playground for families to enjoy nature in its purest form.

Located in rural St. Clair County at the junction of Blue Springs Fork and Trout Creek, Blue Springs Nature Preserve consists of more than 140 acres of rolling meadows, pristine streams, life-sustaining wetlands and majestic, wooded hills. A variety of wildlife, including birds, deer, butterflies and wildflowers, make their home at Blue Springs Nature Preserve.

[Learn More](#)

*Please take a moment to visit the page and let us know what you think. Email us at [info@bluespringspreserve.com](mailto:info@bluespringspreserve.com) with any feedback.*



Blue Springs Nature Preserve  
2000 SouthBridge Parkway  
Suite 600  
Birmingham, AL 35209