

# ADEM UPDATE

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## ADEM: Every day is Earth Day

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management worked hand-in-hand with the Montgomery Zoo and the Mann Wildlife Learning Museum to host an “Earth Day Safari” on April 26 to teach students valuable lessons about Planet Earth.

A large number of ADEM employees were at the zoo to bring attention to the need for everyone to do their part in protecting the environment. The annual event is intended to help raise awareness of the actions of children - and adults - in environmental stewardship, to help ADEM demonstrate the crucial functions their work does to protect Alabama’s natural resources, and to observe Earth Day.

ADEM staff had a number of tents and booths set up with interactive exhibits on various topics such as air quality, recycling, and fish tissue monitoring. According to officials at the Montgomery Zoo, an overflow crowd of more than 3,000 people attended the event.

Through the safari, students were encouraged to see multiple exhibits and interact to learn the important role they play in safeguarding the environment. Students were able to complete a form to earn prizes, and they also got to see many of the zoo animals, and learn the value of plants and animals to any ecosystem. ADEM Director Lance LeFleur and Deputy Director Jeff Kitchens were able to attend the event and interact with the children, parents, and ADEM employees.

“We look forward to this event every year,” said LeFleur. “It’s a great opportunity to engage with the community, provide educational information, and encourage people to take an active role in safeguarding the environment.”

The event helps ADEM continue to strengthen external communications and increase environmental awareness by participating in community activities. Montgomery Zoo officials and ADEM staff participated in interviews with local media promoting environmental awareness, and proclaiming that “every day is Earth Day at ADEM.”



Children enjoyed interactive exhibits at the Earth Day Safari

## Drinking Water Week Proclaimed in Alabama

In April, Governor Kay Ivey signed a “Drinking Water Week” proclamation, acknowledging the vital importance of drinking water in Alabama. In attendance at the State Capitol were representatives from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the Alabama Rural Water Association, and the Alabama Department of Public Health. Drinking Water Week was acknowledged from May 5-11.

Water is one of the most valuable natural resources, and drinking water serves a vital role in daily life, serving an essential purpose to health, hydration, and hygiene needs.

Gov. Ivey’s proclamation called attention to the value of drinking water. It also was designed to urge all Alabamians to be good stewards and work to protect source waters from pollution, practice water conservation, and familiarize themselves with the value of drinking water.



Gov. Kay Ivey signs proclamation in April

## ADEM Grant Paves the Way

A project in north Alabama is environmentally friendly and has improved roads at a state park. It has also demonstrated cooperation among state agencies.

Joe Wheeler State Park in Rogersville in Lauderdale County is the beneficiary of resurfaced roads that were paved with asphalt containing scrap tire materials.

ADEM provided a \$1.16 million grant to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to do the repaving. One dollar from the sale of each tire in the state goes into the state's Scrap Tire Fund, which is used to remove scrap tires from illegal dumps, along roadsides and other places, as well as promote the recycling of used tires.

ADEM along with the ADCNR held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in April to unveil the resurfaced roads that had not been repaved for more than 20 years. With the rubber composition of the new pavement, the roads are safer, stronger, smoother, and should last longer.

Asphalt made with recycled tires has a long list of advantages over traditional asphalt. In addition to lasting up to 50 percent longer and being less prone to potholing and cracking, rubber-modified asphalt reduces tire wear, improves fuel mileage due to lower rolling resistance, and is safer because of better traction.

"The smoother ride is definitely more pleasant for park-goers," said ADCNR Commissioner Chris Blankenship. "We are incredibly grateful to ADEM, especially knowing the material used in the asphalt will require less maintenance and should last longer by holding up better in a wide variety of weather conditions."

ADEM's grant helped cover the cost of repaving roads inside the park, including the long access road from U.S. Highway 72 to the park's lodge. The rubber-style pavement has also been used in projects at Lake Guntersville State Park and DeSoto State Park in recent years.



**ADEM Provided \$1.16 million for the project at Wheeler State Park**

## ADEM Committed to the Black Belt



**A new pier is under construction at the Selma Marina**

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is committed to the Black Belt.

ADEM recently awarded \$200,000 to help with the construction of a new boat docking facility at the Selma Marina on the Alabama River. The new pier considerably expands the available docking area for recreational boaters, anglers, and visitors. In fact, Selma officials say that upon completion it will accommodate more than 100 fishing boats for future tournaments and events.

Funding of the project has been a coordinated effort between ADEM, the City of Selma, the State of Alabama, and local businesses. The City of Selma contributed \$67,000, with \$25,000 provided by the State of Alabama, and \$30,000 coming from the Alabama Wildlife Federation from its annual wild-game cook off events around the state.

The Selma Marina is located on the banks of the Alabama River, just behind Bloch Park in Dallas County. Additional plans are in the works for the marina including adding areas for fishing, kayaking, picnicking, and hiking. A restaurant - the Sand Bar - is already located at the site.

ADEM's portion of the funding comes from Boating Infrastructure Grants through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program provides grant funds to construct, renovate, and maintain facilities with features for boaters, and to develop, produce, and distribute information and educational materials about the program.



## ADEM Holds Visible Emissions Certification Training



Smoke School was held in April

ADEM's Air Division held its semi-annual Visible Emission Certification program, also known as "smoke school," in April at the Chisholm Community Center in Montgomery. The school is open to employees in the regulated community and consultants.

Many facilities in Alabama produce varying levels of emissions from pollutants. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency along with ADEM require facilities to limit air pollutants within a specific visible emission range. In order to read these emissions, facilities must have a certified opacity reader onsite performing these tests. (Opacity is the degree to which light is blocked by an emission).

ADEM's Air Division holds the program in order to train and certify these facility employees to follow regulations. This program has two sessions: lectures and field examinations.

The lecture portion consists of regulations, pollutant information, field procedures and more. The field examinations take place outside for two days where attendees take a visible opacity test by reading smoke plumes. Most attendees participate in the field portion due to certification renewal every 6 months. Passing both the lecture exam and field exam is required for certification through ADEM.

## ADEM Hosts Stakeholders Listening Sessions

Earlier this spring, ADEM hosted two "listening sessions" to get input from stakeholders on a variety of subjects related to water quality. The work sessions were held in ADEM's Main Conference room on February 7 and April 10.

The meetings were designed to seek constructive input and obtain informal feedback on how to improve water quality in Alabama, to listen to the concerns of environmental groups and the regulated community, and to discuss future changes to water quality rules.

The listening sessions gave ADEM officials and stakeholders the forum to have open and productive dialogue. More than 55 people attended the events to get information and to give input or comments on what changes or enhancements - if any - could be made or considered in regards to water quality regulations.

ADEM staff also was able to answer questions from those in attendance, and build or strengthen existing partnerships, and to help identify all the issues that might be considered in potential rulemaking updates for water quality. The sessions also helped ADEM gather data from stakeholders on how to identify and replicate successful practices and incorporate new initiatives.



Water quality was discussed at ADEM's listening sessions

# ADEM UPDATE Available Online

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management publishes the *ADEM UPDATE* quarterly to inform Alabamians on the latest news and activities of the Department. As a cost-savings measure, the *ADEM UPDATE* is no longer printed. It is distributed electronically and available online through the publications link on the ADEM website at [adem.alabama.gov](http://adem.alabama.gov). The ADEM website also has links to videos related to the Department's programs, public hearings, and recent events of interest.



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