

ADEM UPDATE

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Children Enjoy Earth Day Event at the Zoo



The Earth Day Safari at the Montgomery Zoo was a huge success

The theme of Earth Day 2023 was “Investing in our Planet & Future.”

ADEM marked the annual event with many activities including a day-long Earth Day Safari at the Montgomery Zoo on April 21.

A large number of ADEM employees celebrated Earth Day at the zoo to bring attention to the need for everyone to do their part in looking after the environment. The event helped to raise public awareness of the actions of children and adults in environmental stewardship.

ADEM staff set up booths and interactive exhibits on various environmental topics such as air quality, recycling, fish tissue monitoring, and waste disposal. Officials at the Montgomery Zoo and the adjacent Mann

Wildlife Learning Museum estimated that more than 2,000 people attended the event.

“Earth Day is a tradition we look forward to each year,” said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. “It’s an opportunity to engage with the community, provide educational information, and encourage people to take an active role in safeguarding the environment.”

The Department continues to strengthen external communications and increase environmental awareness by participating in events like these. Both zoo officials and ADEM staff participated in interviews with Montgomery television media to celebrate Earth Day.

Telework Training Held for ADEM Supervisors

All of ADEM’s supervisors attended telework training earlier this year. The courses were held at the TechnaCenter in Montgomery and taught by Neal Kelley at Auburn University at Montgomery.

The training session was entitled “Establishing and Managing Outcomes for a Remote Workforce.” It was designed to equip supervisors to manage a remote workforce in order to help ADEM operate more efficiently and effectively.

Two training sessions were held to accommodate various work schedules. Each telework training session lasted more than four hours and involved power point presentations along with small and large group discussions to help ADEM supervisors learn the best practices for engaging their staff and operating under remote workforce models.



ADEM supervisors at Remote Workforce Training

Selma Launches Community Recycling Project



Hundreds of students participated in the Selma Recycling Festival

In conjunction with Earth Day 2023, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the City of Selma hosted a large, outdoor recycling education event.

It took place on May 2 at historic Bloch Park in Selma with hundreds of elementary students in attendance. The children learned about the benefits of recycling from hands-on activities, presentations, and exhibits. Students also received educational handouts such as backpacks, rulers, coloring books, pencils and pens.

In addition to celebrating Earth Day, the event marked to kick-off of a new recycling program in Selma. Mayor James Perkins Jr. attended the festival and spoke to the students about the importance of recycling, and other Selma officials believe their new recycling program will be a win for everyone in town.

“This event gets people geared up for recycling

and what types of items you can recycle,” said Danielle Wooten, director of Selma’s Planning and Development Office. “It’s so good to see the kids get the hands-on experience, to learn things that a lot of them were not aware of before this event.”

The goal of Wooten’s office is to impact the quality of life of all ages through identifying and supporting economic development ventures, promoting sustainable neighborhoods, and facilitating an environment that supports life-learning opportunities. Selma is working with ADEM and other organizations on land use, preservation, revitalization and development. The recycling festival featured 22 different stations with a fun treat or activities - or cool facts about the environment and recycling. A large number of ADEM employees participated from various programs including Recycling, Scrap Tire, Brownfields Redevelopment, Non-Point Source, and Meteorology.

“We are reaching out in many ways to people in the Black Belt,” said Jerome Hand, Chief of ADEM’s Public Relations Unit. “We try to get the kids when they are younger, so they will develop an interest in recycling, and math, and science, and they will know they have a role in protecting the environment.”

The theme for Selma’s 2023 Earth Day Recycling Festival was “Investing in our Planet & Future.”

ADEM Conducts Water Quality Monitoring at Public Beaches

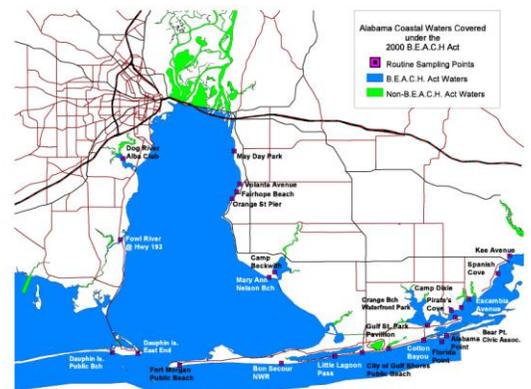
Water quality information for Alabama’s Gulf Coast public beaches is available to help people make informed decisions about their recreational use of coastal waters.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has initiated the enhanced summer monitoring associated with its 2023 Coastal Beach Monitoring Program, and resumed its weekly collection and analysis of water samples at 25 public beaches in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

ADEM conducts water quality sampling and testing to establish overall water quality data from each public beach. The enhanced monitoring efforts will stretch through Labor Day with water samples being collected weekly, or more frequently if necessary, at each of the public beach locations.

Beach selection and sampling frequency are determined using a risk-based evaluation and ranking process that considers the amount of beach use, the level of risk, and any specific factors associated with each location.

ADEM has signs at the beaches to inform the public of the condition of the water. The signs contain information to direct people to news and updates with a link to the Department’s website where the latest water quality information can be found along with any recent changes, and feature a QR code that can be scanned to easily access this information.



Working Group Formed to Examine Response Efforts

The Alabama Department of Environment Management along with several state and local agencies and associations have formed a working group to assess if changes are needed in laws, regulations, and the allocation of resources in the future.

The working group was established following the response to a fire at a vegetative waste disposal site near Moody in St. Clair County. The fire revealed shortcomings in the ability and authority of state and local governments to respond to situations outside the scope of their regulated activities, but events that still pose risks to the public. The working group will examine the response to the fire and make recommendations for improving the ability of state and local agencies to respond to future emergencies.

“The underground fire was an unprecedented event that unfortunately affected numerous residents,” ADEM Director Lance LeFleur said at a news conference at ADEM’s headquarters earlier this spring. “No agency in the state had the resources or expertise to extinguish such a fire, and it showed gaps in the authority and ability of agencies to respond and effectively deal with it. What we hope to do with this working group is determine what we need to do to be better prepared and able to respond more effectively should a similar situation happen in the future.”

In addition to LeFleur, the working group includes: • Jeff Smitherman, Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency • Rick Oates, with the Alabama Forestry Commission • Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama • Greg Cochran, Executive Director of the Alabama League of Municipalities • State Sen. Lance Bell, Pell City • State Rep. Danny Garrett, Trussville.

The public is encouraged to participate and may submit comments to the working group by emailing moodyworkgroup@adem.alabama.gov.



ADEM Director Lance LeFleur discusses the working group

ADEM Participates in Water Workshop in Idaho



ADEM's Scott Ramsey makes presentation in Idaho

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management continues to work both in state and out of state to help safeguard Alabama’s natural resources. A number of ADEM staff are involved in national and regional organizations to help build strong connections with other states and to identify areas for improvement.

In May, Scott Ramsey from ADEM’s Water Division participated in the National Pretreatment Coordinators Workshop in Boise, Idaho. The meeting was coordinated by the Association of Clean Water Administrators that was established in 1961.

The ACWA sponsors workshops every year with several state in attendance and regulators from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The purpose of the

meeting is to help support state environmental agencies and the EPA to identify challenges and barriers related to water pretreatment programs. The workshop highlights opportunities for program improvement and enhancement as well as to showcase new innovations and support systems.

Ramsey’s presentation in Boise was on Alabama’s Environmental Permitting and Compliance System (AEPACS), which enables facilities to apply for, and maintain permits and submit applications, registrations, and certifications to ADEM. Most of this is done online through the e-Gov link on the Department’s website.

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. 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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