



Wildlife

WELCOME HERE

*By Joel D. Glover, Certified Wildlife Biologist
Alabama Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division*

Upon a high ridge in central Coosa County lies a TREASURE Forest known as Barton Ridge Plantation. As with many properties today, the primary objective on Barton Ridge is recreation. The recreation is based largely on the secondary objective, which is wildlife.

To say Barton Ridge is managed for multiple-use is a gross understatement. Property owners, Howard and Elizabeth Barton, made a wise move several years ago when they hired Brian Walker to manage their land. Brian is a certified wildlife biologist who now works for Black Ridge Land Company. Based on the owner's objectives, he and his staff have worked in conjunction with agency personnel to craft a wildlife and recreation showplace.

Great wildlife populations result in awesome recreational opportunities. To that end, the staff is managing extensively for quail, deer, and turkey habitat. Approximately 75 acres of cool

and warm season crops are planted annually, in addition to many acres of habitat that is maintained in natural vegetation.

Approximately 100 acres of pine is burned each year on a rotational basis. Recently, 48 acres have been planted in longleaf pine to enhance early successional habitat, and another 100 acres have been thinned providing multiple wildlife and timber benefits. A 50-acre kudzu-infested stand was clear cut, then the area was treated and replanted with loblolly pine. Additionally, two fish ponds have been built and stocked. These ponds are monitored and fertilized on a regular basis. Wood duck boxes have been erected on creeks and ponds; beaver and predators are being trapped.

Wildlife populations are closely monitored on Barton Ridge. After cooperating in the state deer management program for over ten years, the property staff continues to collect harvest data. Observation data for deer and turkey is recorded, and a census for deer and turkey is conducted each year. The Alabama



Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Wildlife Division also partnered with Barton Ridge staff members to conduct a five-year deer herd health and reproduction study.

The extensive habitat and harvest management employed on Barton Ridge has allowed the realization of the primary objective of tremendous recreational opportunities. Whether you want to hunt large white-tailed bucks in winter, sit on the porch of the rustic cabin listening to turkeys and enjoying the beautiful rhododendron-covered hillsides on a spring morning, or spend the day fishing for bass and bluegill, you can do it all on Barton Ridge. Plus, an extensive road system is maintained on the property that facilitates nature study as well as all terrain vehicle (ATV) adventures.

As the property is used exclusively for recreation, this includes many children taking their first deer or turkey. On a personal note, there is currently a fine buck mounted in my son Caleb's room. The deer, his first, was taken on Barton Ridge. Although the "boy" is now 6'5" tall and weighs 250 pounds with many deer to his credit, the memory of his first buck will forever be special and I will always thank the folks at Barton Ridge for making that happen.

In addition to promoting good stewardship, Barton Ridge is also a strong supporter of conservation educa-

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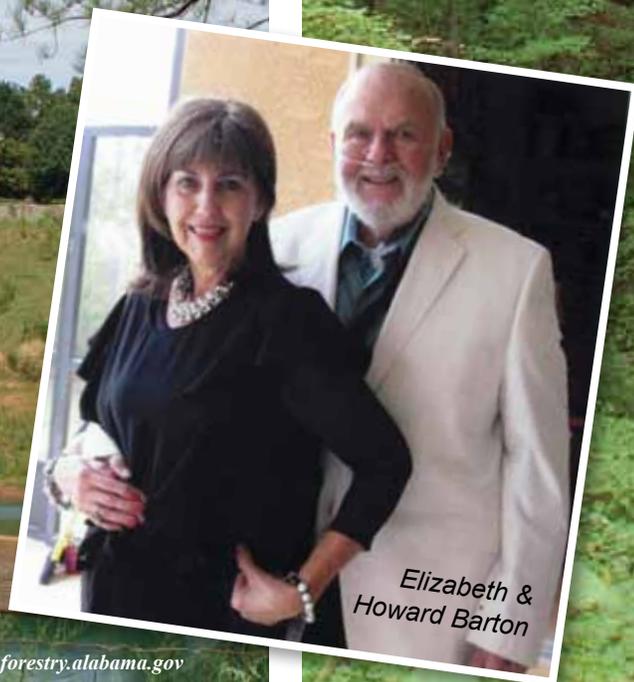
tion. The Bartons have graciously made the property available to numerous groups for nature study and educational programs. Local Boy Scout troops have held scouting weekends and campouts there. Local 4H teams have trained in forestry and wildlife management on the property. Although difficult to measure, this training was obviously effective evidenced by the multiple state and national championships the teams have garnered. Two “Rick Smith Bird Dog Training Seminars” have been hosted on the property, along with a deer co-op meeting.

Barton Ridge has also worked closely with the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee (CCFPC) in hosting TREASURE Forest landowner tours, as well as four Adopt-a-School programs where every fifth grade student in the county visited the property. Students receive instruction concerning the soil, erosion, forestry, wildlife, and water. For many of these children, it is their first “hands-on” trip to the outdoors.

As the 2010 winner of the prestigious Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award, Barton Ridge hosted the Alabama Central Region Forestry Field Day in 2011 with approximately 150 landowners from across the state touring the property. Although they left somewhat soggy, the tour was still considered a great success.

Barton Ridge has graciously shared their resources in an effort to promote natural resources stewardship in Coosa County and across the state. This type of mentoring is imperative for other landowners to learn practices and techniques they can put in place on their own property.

The dictionary defines a “treasure” as a precious or valuable possession. Through consultation with professionals and the implementation of their recommendations, the Bartons have developed their property into a place very deserving of the name TREASURE Forest. 🏡



Elizabeth & Howard Barton