

Development and Implementation of Freshwater Species Recovery Efforts in Alabama

In 2005 the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) created the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center (AABC) to address conservation needs of Alabama's rarest aquatic species. Initial program accomplishments have focused on the renovation and construction of new facilities to house the program and completion of planning documents to guide recovery efforts. Once construction is complete in late 2009, operations will focus on the propagation of several of the states rarest freshwater species. Alabama is home to 80 federally listed or candidate aquatic species and contains the richest freshwater mollusk and crayfish species assemblages in the world. Recent ADCNR planning efforts have identified an additional 165 at risk freshwater fish and mollusks in the state. To promote recovery efforts the AABC is partnering with several other federal, states, university, and private conservation groups in Alabama. Specifically the Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA) will work cooperatively with the AABC to provide habitat monitoring, water quality, in a print and GIS database format. The Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP) will serve to link species information (AABC) with habitat and water quality information (GSA) to critical partners and agencies to promote on the ground recovery work in critical watersheds. The AABC's recovery efforts will be guided by several plans detailing the conservation activities such as the controlled propagation, reintroduction and augmentation of freshwater species. These plans represent the efforts of multiple federal and state natural resource agencies to coordinate and guide recovery efforts.

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