

The Alabamian

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION



Natalie Norman, CPRP
Executive Director
Alabama Recreation and
Parks Association

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from the **President**

Greetings to my ARPA Family,

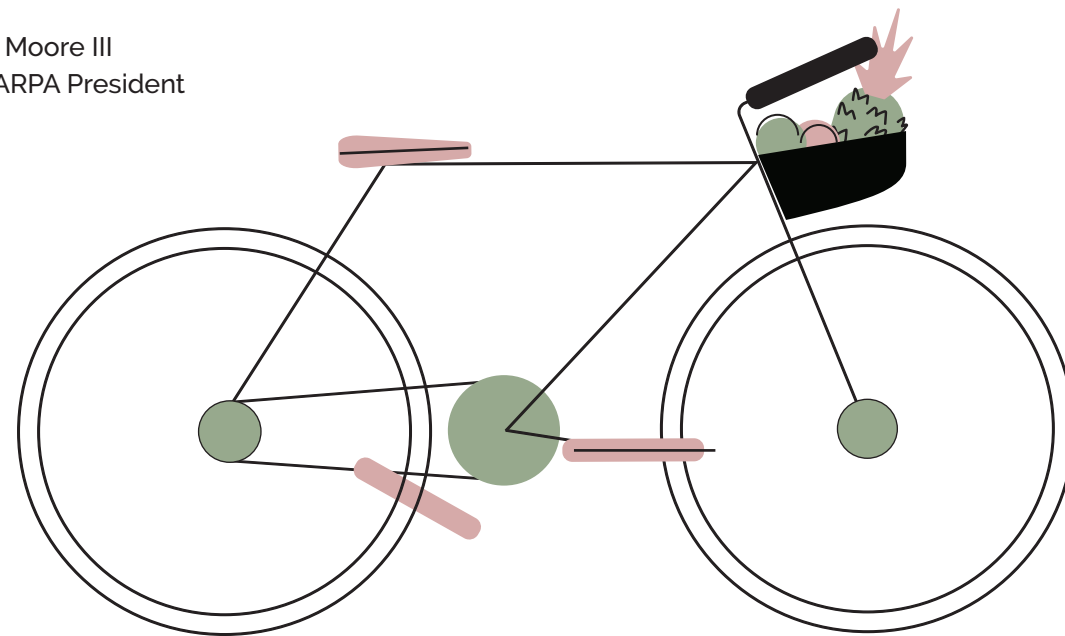
It has been a great summer full of activities and fun. We've had good ARPA Softball and Swimming competitions. I would like to encourage all of you to continue to participate in all activities. With the fall season approaching, we're looking forward to our annual COPP Golf Tournament in Montgomery in October. The fall workshop will be held on September 27-29 in Orange Beach. This is a great opportunity for our members to grow with good leadership skills by putting emphasis on how essential parks and recreation is in our communities. The "You Make the Difference Alabama Tour" follow the fall workshop.

As a reminder, here are some important state events that will be coming up, they are as follow:

September - Fall Workshop, October - COPP Golf Tournament, "You Make the Difference Tour", November - Soccer/Archery/Volleyball tournaments, LEAD Program, NFL Flag Football.

Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. Steve Brown, our Government Affairs Representative, for his service and all that he does for ARPA. To all of you, I would like to leave you with this - whatever the cause, your commitment to it will fuel your passion. It is the driving force behind your passion. You will never be passionate about what you are not committed to. Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplish without passion. It is your passion that empowers you to be able to do the thing that you were created to do.

Willie Moore III
2022 ARPA President



Hello ARPA Members!

With Fall approaching and temperatures lowering, outdoor activities continue to grow and provide us with great beauty.

Make sure you slow down for a few minutes and enjoy the beautiful weather and scenery that Alabama has to offer this time of year. On a trail, in a park, or catching a largemouth bass, enjoy the beauty. Whatever your choice, don't forget to take care of yourself while you take care of others.

On an educational note, please join us in Orange Beach for the annual Fall Workshop, to soak in the beauty of the gulf and great educational and networking opportunities. This will also kick off the You Make THE Difference Alabama Tour, with Ian Hill.

Please make every effort to attend. We're looking forward to a great event, delivering strong educational opportunities to our membership! For registration information visit our website at www.arpaonline.org

We want to say a big thank you to our Summer Recreational Sports host sites: Valley for hosting State Softball, Opelika for hosting State Swimming & Diving, and Dothan for hosting State Archery. Thank you for providing wonderful environments for our folks to play!

Thank you also to all that attended our annual TR Fall Camporee! What a great event!

And save the date - ARPA State Conference will be in Orange Beach January 29-31, 2023.

Thank you for all that you do each day!

Natalie Norman
Executive Director



from the **Executive Director**

BAMA Rock Garden

A Nature Park for the Future

About 59 acres of small cliffs and towering rock formations that are part of the most southwestern Appalachian foothills could soon be turned into a public park in Vance. The Tuscaloosa County Commission unanimously approved purchasing the former Bama Rock Gardens property for \$200,000 with the intent to open it as a nature park managed by the Tuscaloosa County Park and Recreation Authority.

In the mid-20th century, the property was used as a park, but was privately owned. Visitors could pay admission to the Bama Rock Gardens and explore the park's nature path through the rocks or swim in the park's swimming pool. It was a site

that was popular for picnics and school field trips.

Unlike some of the rock formations around Lake Tuscaloosa, the rock formation in the Bama Rock Garden are made of harder sandstone that is ideal for rock climbing, said Gary Minor, executive director of PARA. The formations are made of a Boyles Sandstone that is about 315 million years old, according to PARA. It's the same type of rock that makes up Chandler Mountain, where Horse Pens 40 is located in North Alabama. What makes the Bama Rock Garden Unique, however, is that the rock formations are nearly horizontal.



Bowers Park Pool Opens with Record Breaking Year

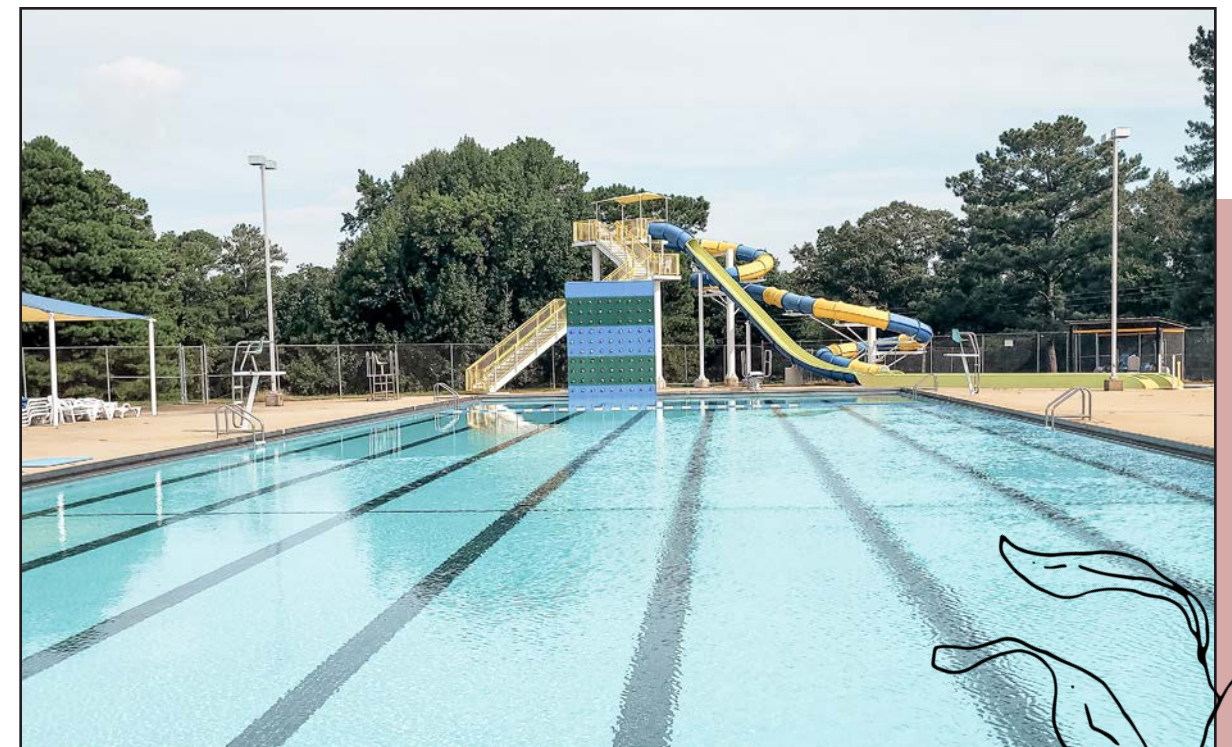
The Tuscaloosa County Park & Recreation Authority(PARA) opened Bowers Park Pool(Nancie Blewitt Swim Complex)this year and had a record-breaking season! After being closed for two years the City of Tuscaloosa granted PARA \$350,000 to restore the Olympic size pool. Major improvements were made using these funds including completely resurfacing with a waterproof Marcite coating, replacing the LED lights in the pool and on the pool deck, and repairing some major plumbing issues.

These improvements to PARA's largest outdoor aquatic facility saw a 37% increase in daily visits since it was last opened in 2019. Pool memberships increased by 184%, almost tripling the membership numbers since 2019. The season's very warm weather, having plenty of sunshine, and these improvements, made Bowers Pool a huge success this summer.

The pool also features amenities such as a rock climbing wall in the pool, a Minnow and a frog slide for the kiddos and the giant Super Slides for those thrill seekers over 48 inches tall. There are several shade structures around the pool for those seeking some shade, and plenty of deck space for those that like to enjoy some rays.

Overall, Bowers Park Pool had a very successful summer and ended the year with the best ever participation and greatest attendance numbers in its history.

More details on PARA's pools, including group and package deals, can be found at tccpara.org/programs/aquatics-pools.



Van de Graaff Arboretum and Historic Bridge Park

Van de Graaff Arboretum and Historic Bridge Park is the first "nature park" of its kind for PARA to feature recreational nature at its best. While this rustic, semi-primitive style park is still under development, many amenities are available including fishing, hiking and camping.

With the benefit of being close to a population hub, this 141-acre property provides a taste of the great outdoors close to home. It is defined by 33 acres of multiple open freshwater ponds created by its former usage as a gravel pit and fed by Mill Creek. Although the park does not touch the Black Warrior River, the creek flows through and eventually feeds into the river. Ten acres of the park are classified

as wetlands and support swamp, marsh, and bogs. This unique wetland ecosystem combines aspects of land and water to create a distinctive habitat where certain plant and animal species are protected and can flourish.

The most notable historical and architectural feature of the park is a single span of the 1882 King Bowstring Bridge. It is one of four spans that crossed the Black Warrior River from 1882 – 1896.

Friends of Historic Northport Inc. leased the 141-acre property to PARA for \$1 per year for 99 years in 2014 under the stipulation that PARA be responsible for developing and maintaining the land for recreational and educational use.



Come explore one of Alabama's most iconic natural wonders, Noccalula Falls! Located in the City of Gadsden in Etowah County, Noccalula Falls Park attracts thousands of visitors every year.

The Coosa River and Neely Henry Lake are not the only places to fish in the #GreaterGadsden area. Anglers can fly fish in the gorge at Noccalula Falls.

Noccalula Falls



Pickleball

Opelika Parks and Recreation

Opelika Parks and Recreation completed construction on the Point Broadband Pickleball Facility. The Point Broadband Pickleball Facility is located adjacent to the original pickleball facility and houses 12 additional tournament regulation courts. Each court is individually fenced and resides under a large canopy covering. The facility features LED lighting that is available for 24-7 use.

The addition of the Point Broadband Pickleball Facility brings the total number of courts to 24. The addition of these courts will provide space for additional recreational play, clinics, workshops and team building activities. They will also allow the City of Opelika to host tournaments with 800-1,000 players, up from the current 300 player capacity. Bringing in larger tournaments has the potential to double the economic impact pickleball is already generating for the City of Opelika.

Caroline Dean

Wildflower Trail

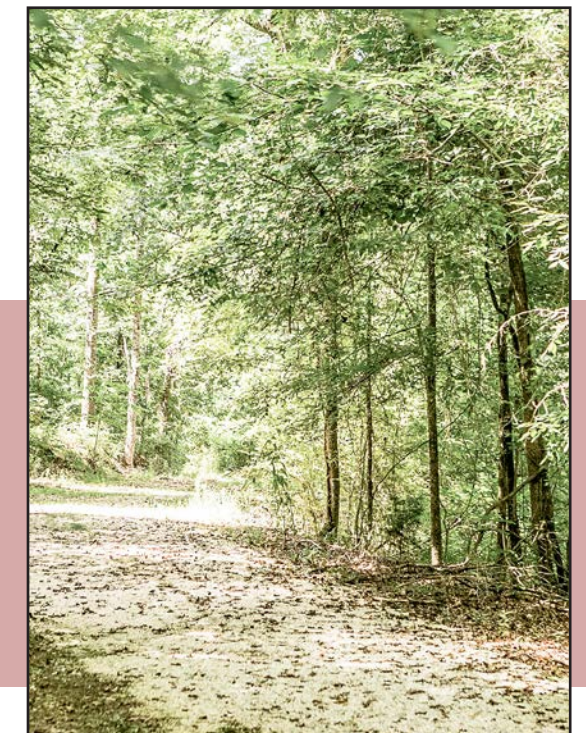
Located between Opelika's Municipal Park and Miles Thomas Field, Opelika residents can take a walk through the Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail, a teaching garden made up of native plants. The Salem Shotwell Covered Bridge connects the trail from the road as it spans Rocky Brook Creek. The trail is maintained by the Lee County Master Gardeners.

Spring Villa

Spring Villa a 350 acre park with an antebellum house, an outdoor volley-ball court, horseshoe pit, campground with hookups for 30 spaces, restrooms, a campground lodge, outdoor band stand, nature trails, open play area, picnic tables and grills among the wooded areas, picnic shelters, and the caretakers home.

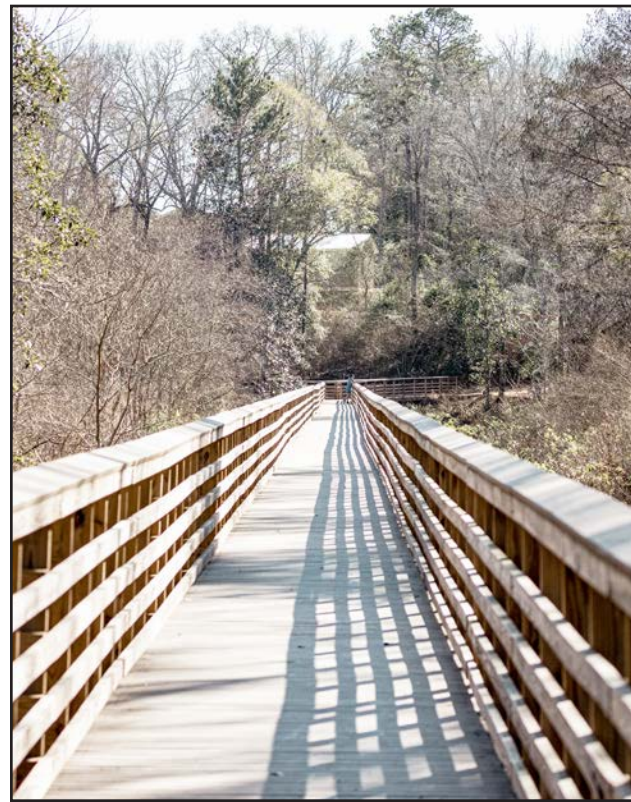
The antebellum home was built in 1851 by William Penn Yonge. The property was beautifully landscaped and featured a 30-acre spring-fed lake. The estate changed hands several times through the years until 1927 when the City of Opelika purchased the property for use as a water supply.

The Spring Villa property has a rich history that includes many mysterious, paranormal events.



Dothan's Forever Wild Trail & Park

Dothan's Forever Wild Trail and Park is a 400-acre oasis nestled inside the city limits of Dothan just outside the main traffic of Ross Clark Circle. The park features 14 miles of trails that are optimized for mountain biking, hiking, and trail running as well as nearly a mile of bridges and boardwalks that connect all trail sections. It can be accessed from three different trail heads...one of which is located on Flowers Chapel Rd. with the other two being located on Fortner St. Each trail head can be reached from any of the others due to the connectivity design of the trails and bridges. The Forever Wild Trail was a collaborative effort between the City of Dothan and the Alabama State Lands Division's Forever Wild Initiative. The trails were professionally built with Recreational Trails Project grants and the bridges and boardwalks were built with a grant from the Wiregrass Foundation. The park is a hit amongst locals and is also a big draw, regionally.



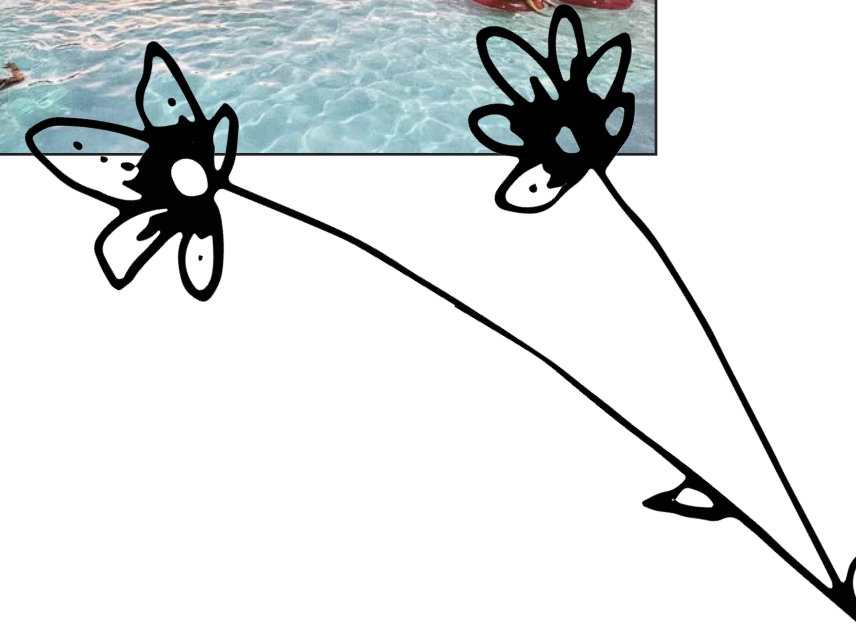
Alabamian Lake Beauty

Dothan Leisure Services purchased kayaks to use with our summer camps at our Eastgate Park. We had previously offered the sport to our Therapeutics and Adventure camps. We introduced our summer camps, that had an Under the Sea theme, to kayaking. These camps were Camp Choctaw, Wave Runners, Triton, Sea Dragons, and Sea Guppies. To ensure the safety of all, we had a lifeguard on the shore and the water. The "beauty of the water" on a country lake was the first introduction for many of our participants to the wonderful world of kayaking.



Witnessing the unique beauty and awe of each sunset over Water World Water Park in Dothan, Alabama, is one of our favorite things. Pictured are two 2022 sunsets over the wave pool, the Kids Cove, and the Twister Slides.

Website: waterworlddothan.com
Facebook: [@waterworlddothan](https://www.facebook.com/waterworlddothan)
Instagram: [@waterworld_dothan](https://www.instagram.com/waterworld_dothan)
Email: waterworlddothan@dothan.org



City of Enterprise Parks and Rec

City of Enterprise Parks and Recreation department manages various facilities, parks, and landscapes throughout the city. We take great pride in the work we do. We work hard to make sure our parks and facilities are kept clean, organized, well-manicured, updated, safe, and accessible.

We have seven different parks within the city: Johnny Henderson Family Park, Donaldson Park, Enterprise Skate Park, Gibson Park, Westside Community Park, Ouida Park, and Alfred Peavy Park. You will see images of Alfred Peavy Park, Gibson (Carroll Street) Park, and Johnny Henderson Family Park attached. Alfred Peavy Park has a baseball field, soccer fields, restrooms, a pavilion, and a playground. Gibson Park has a newly renovated playground, picnic tables, a shaded pavilion, and public restrooms. Johnny Henderson Family Park (Neil Metcalf Road) involves several amenities – covered pavilions and seating areas, playgrounds specific to age, a comfort station, a softball complex, a walking trail, a dog park, and Disc Golf.

Our parks and facilities draw in lots of patrons throughout the week/weekend. However, it's the hosting of various events within our parks that draw in thousands. Those events include Festival in the Park in May, Baseball State Tournaments in July, and Spooky in the City.



Eufaula Parks and Rec

Eufaula WaveRunners State Team:

The Eufaula WaveRunners finished 4th overall in small team's division at the 2022 State Meet held in Opelika. We are so proud of this team! The time & effort the swimmers put in, and the dedication that the coaches provide to them, is admirable!

p.s. A special thanks to Coach Carrie Smith who is retiring and said her final goodbyes at this meet. She is an awesome coach and built this team from the ground up. We are honored to have had her as our coach & wish her a wonderful retirement on the beach!

2022 Kids' Fishing Rodeo:

The Action Marine Kids' Fishing Rodeo held at Old Creek Town Park on July 22nd was a huge success! We had an awesome turnout, great prizes & the kids had a blast! We thank our sponsors, volunteers & staff for their dedication in making this event so successful.

2022 6U State Tournament:

Eufaula welcomed 16 teams at the 6U State Tournament held at Old Creek Town Park this summer. The department received overwhelming positive feedback regarding the hospitality received, organization of the tournament, condition of the fields & the fun had by all. We count this as a WIN! Congratulations to Enterprise on winning the 6U Division I South State Championship & South Dale on their Division II victory.





9th Annual Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt:
 This free event, sponsored by local businesses each year, allows youth ages 3-10 to meet the Easter bunny, hunt eggs with their flashlights and win TONS of FABULOUS prizes! This year was no exception-the kids really enjoyed themselves & they can't wait until next year!

1st Annual Souper Bowl Competition:
 It was a huge HIT! Locals stopped by the Community Center, had lunch with their friends, and sampled 13 different soup entries. The Cajun Corner took the trophy for favorite local soup with their "Who Dey" Crawfish Etouffee, making them the 2022 Souper Bowl Champions! Tickets were SOLD OUT & a fun time was had by all!

Summer Swim Lessons:
 Because Eufaula is blessed with 640 miles of shoreline, swim lessons are one of the most important programs offered by our department. We proudly instructed 100+ lessons each week over the course of this summer.



District 7

Mobile
Dog River Park

Here are three things you can do at Dog River Park (2459 Dog River Drive N). Paddle out into the river in your Kayak, swing as high as you can on the Playground, and grab some snacks at the Concession Stand during a local game!

#WowWednesday #RiseUpJuly #MPRD #NRPA #WeAreParksandRec



ArtWalk

This month we didn't let the weather slow us down! ArtWalk celebrated National Tattoo Month by honoring the artform with Temporary Tattoos and a Local Tattoo Competition!

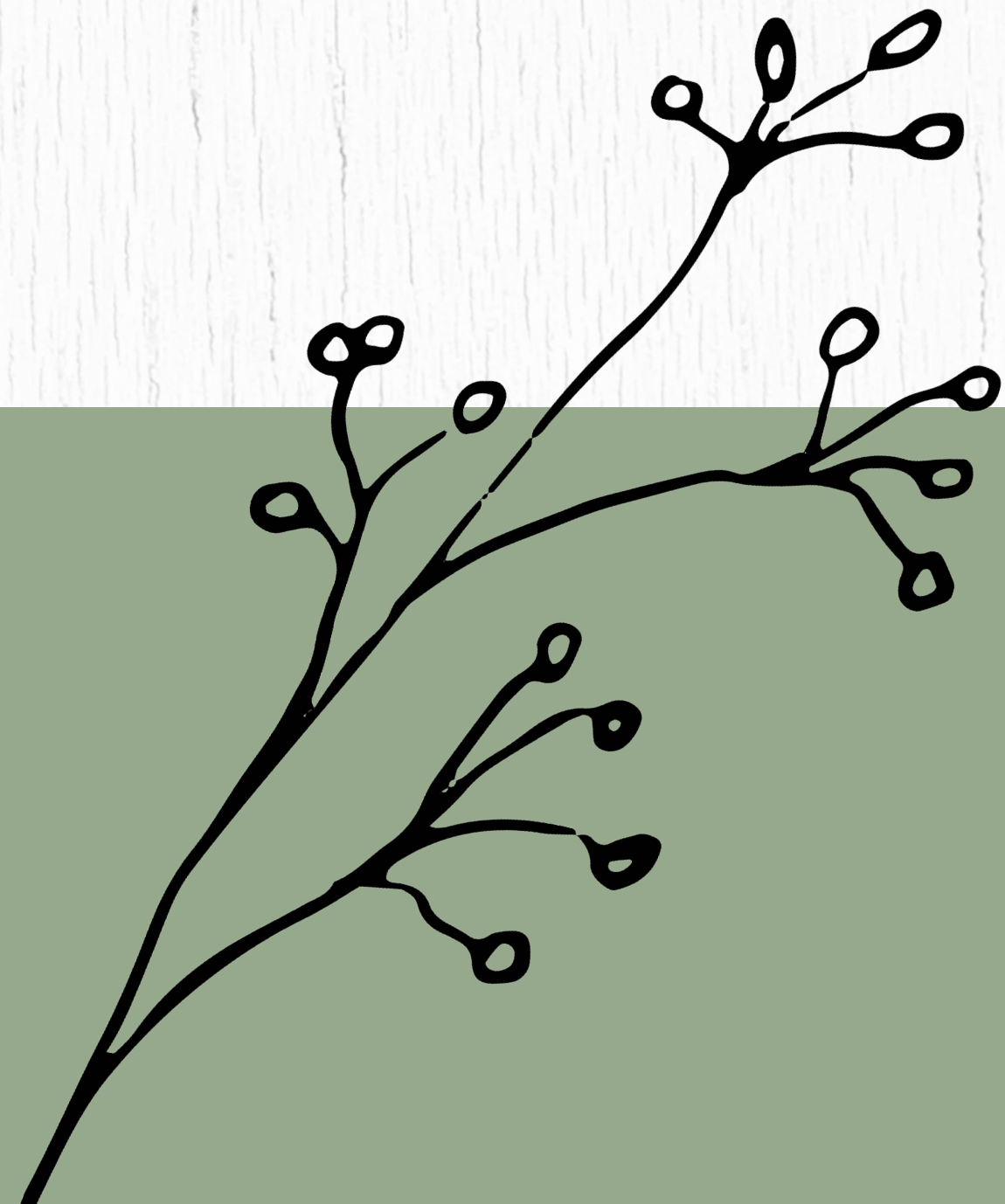
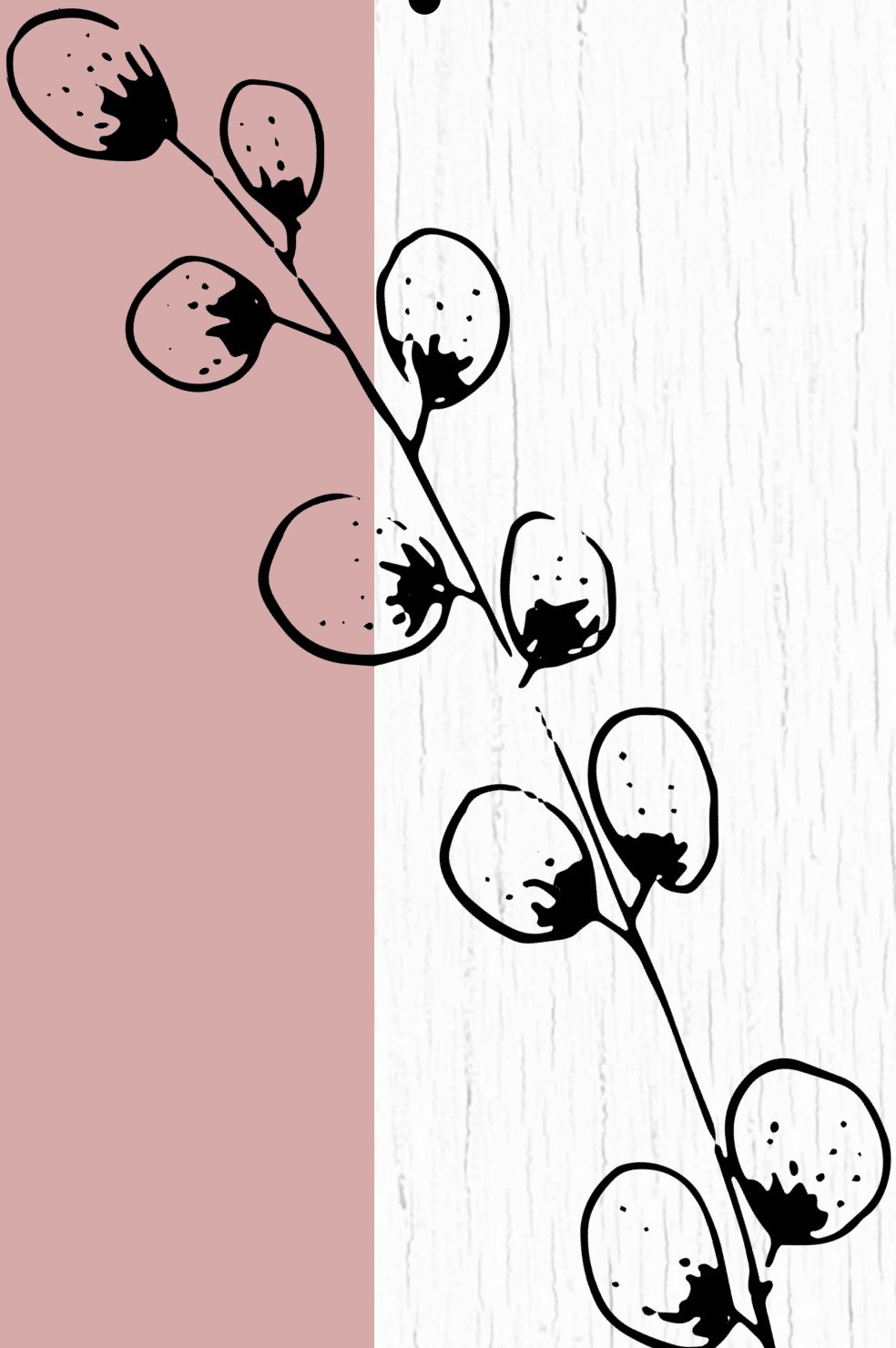
We also spent the evening crafting up some inspirational fun with Drop-A-Rock projects!

Trimmer Park

Here are three things you can do at Trimmer Park (3600 Alba Club Road Mobile, AL). Get your steps in on the Walking Trail. Let the kids have some fun on the new Playground. Cheer from the stands as your favorite local team plays on the Football Field.

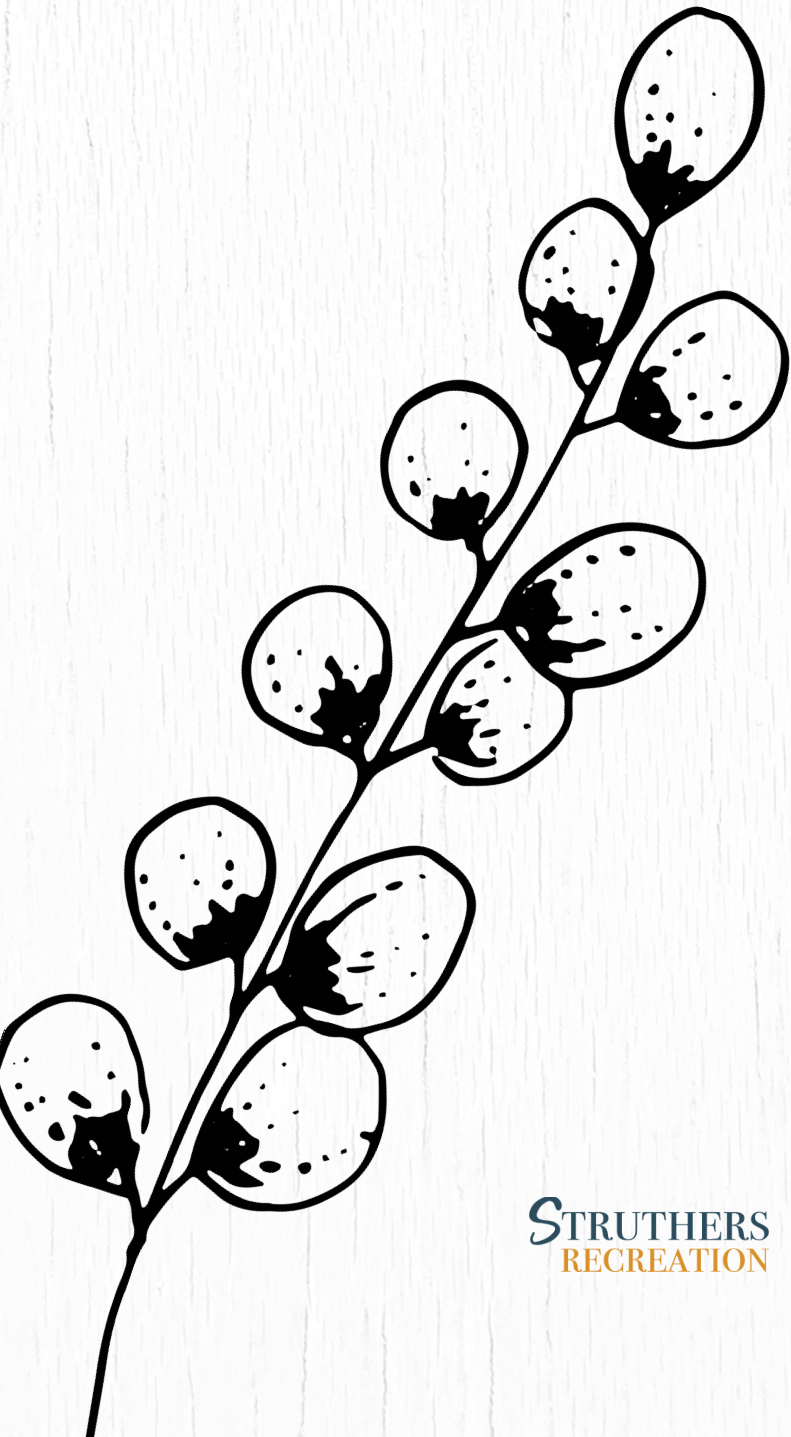
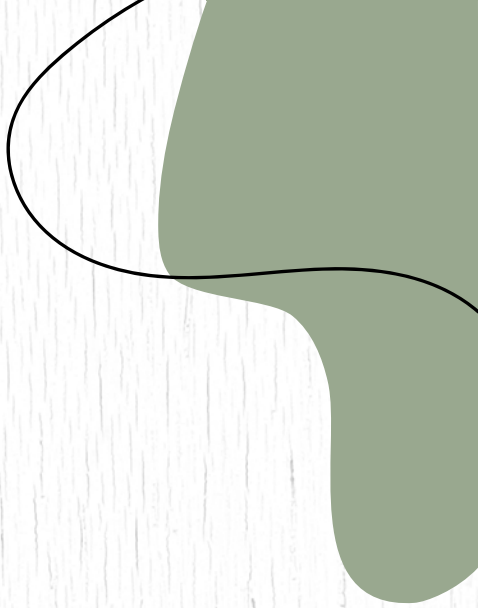
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Alabama Recreation & Parks Association

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