



FRESHWATER
LAND TRUST



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For more information, contact:

Wendy Jackson

Freshwater Land Trust

(205) 226-7900

www.freshwaterlandtrust.org

Freshwater Land Trust and Bass Pro Shops Partner to Protect Cahaba Tributary

Birmingham, AL. — When visitors enter the gates to the new Bass Pro Shops store in Leeds, they will travel along Bass Pro Boulevard through a beautiful forest that is the Freshwater Land Trust's newest conservation property: the Freshwater Land Trust / Bass Pro Shops Forest Preserve.



Freshwater Land Trust Executive Director Wendy Jackson and Bass Pro Shops Leeds Store Manager Harley Willis on the new Bass Pro Shops Forest Preserve.

This nearly 8-acre forest is home to a small tributary of the Cahaba River, and it will also soon be home to public hiking trails as well. The property was protected with a conservation easement which guarantees that the Forest Preserve will be held as green space for the protection of the stream and the enjoyment of visitors and local citizens.

"The new store in Leeds is the only Bass Pro Shops in the nation that is adjacent to a nature preserve. The drive along Bass Pro Boulevard through the forest really enhances the visitor experience, so it was only natural for us to partner with a local conservation group, the Freshwater Land Trust, to highlight our commitment to land conservation," says Harley Willis, Leeds Store Manager.

"The Freshwater Land Trust / Bass Pro Shops Forest Preserve is a beautiful piece of property," says Wendy Jackson, Executive Director of the Freshwater Land Trust. "By protecting this forested land, not only have we insured that a small tributary of the Cahaba River remains clean, but we also showcase a classic bottomland hardwood forest."

Future plans for the Preserve are the construction of low impact hiking trails and signs that highlight the property's plants and wildlife. The site is home to over 23 tree species and a wide variety of plants and animals including small fish, reptiles, amphibians, deer, small mammals, and many species of birds, including raptors.

The Freshwater Land Trust / Bass Pro Shops Forest Preserve was protected by using a conservation easement, which is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that permanently limits uses of the land to protect its conservation values. It allows a landowner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it. When a conservation easement is donated to a land trust, a landowner gives up some of the rights associated with the property. Any future owners are also bound by the easement's terms. The role of the land trust is to insure that the easement's terms are honored in perpetuity.

In addition to the conservation easement, Bass Pro Shops has incorporated other environmentally-friendly practices in and around the store. One such feature is the landscaped bioswales around the parking lots which help to remove silt and automotive pollution from surface runoff water before it flows to the Cahaba River. Another feature is the "living walls" along the entrance and exit roads. To prevent erosion, Bass Pro Shops installed soil-filled netting along the road cuts. Wildflowers and other plants grow through the netting, making the netting invisible while making for a spectacular flower show.

"We are so proud of our partnership with Bass Pro Shops and their commitment to conservation," says Jackson. "We look forward to seeing store visitors enjoying the outdoors on the Forest Preserve and learning that land conservation can be incorporated in any good store design."



Bass Pro Shops Forest Preserve

About the Freshwater Land Trust:

The Freshwater Land Trust is a nonprofit conservation organization located in Birmingham, Alabama. The Freshwater Land Trust's mission is the acquisition and stewardship of lands that enhance water quality and preserve open space. The Freshwater Land Trust acquires, conserves, and connects open spaces that are critical for the protection of rivers and streams and provide recreational opportunities for the community.

About Bass Pro Shops:

Award-winning in their concept and design, Bass Pro Shops retail stores are rated high as tourist-destination picks. More than 100 million people visit the stores annually. Headquartered in Springfield, Missouri, Bass Pro Shops currently has 53 retail locations in 26 states and Canada. Their newest store in Leeds is opening on Wednesday, November 19th with an "Evening for Conservation" from 6 to 9pm.

The Freshwater Land Trust · Box 549071 · 900 Arkadelphia Road · Birmingham-Southern College ·
Birmingham, Alabama 35254 P 205.226.7900 F 205.226.7904

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