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For more information, contact: Jonathan Harling, 803-637-3106.

Dec. 14, 2004

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Alabama Landowners Eligible for Right of Way Management Dollars

Private property owners in Alabama that have transmission power lines crossing their land could be eligible for habitat help dollars through Alabama Power Company's Wild Power program.

The program helps landowners create land management plans and helps fund brush removal and plantings that attract, shelter and feed wildlife on the power company's rights of way.

The program is a collaborative effort between Alabama Power, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service and local soil and water conservation districts.

"This is a win-win for our company, for landowners and for wildlife," said Alabama Power's Jim Oden. "This program lets us work with property owners to maintain rights of way in an environmentally friendly way. It also helps us to continue providing customers with reliable electric service."

The company accepted 40 landowners into the program this year. These landowners will receive help managing more than 325 acres of rights of ways for wild turkeys, grouse, deer and other wildlife species.

Electronic applications are accepted through May and ranked on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit www.alabamawildpower.com for more information about applying.

Alabama Power's work for wildlife doesn't end with its Wild Power program. Since 2001, the company has been a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Energy for Wildlife program, a membership-based program for certifying public utilities that strive to manage their property to improve habitat for wild turkeys and other wildlife.

"It's really a breath of fresh air to see Alabama Power take the initiative to help landowners improve wildlife habitat. They put forth the effort to work with landowners to give back into our natural resources," said Jay Jordan, the NWTF's Energy for Wildlife coordinator. "Properly managing power line rights of way not only improve wildlife habitat but makes our forests safer, improves our homes, businesses and the economy."

In addition to their Energy for Wildlife membership, Alabama Power is a sponsor of the Federation's program for sportsmen and women with disabilities, Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF. The Alabama Power Foundation has donated \$5,000 a year for the past three years to the Wheelin' Sportsmen Ultimate Team Up event. Alabama Power employees also volunteer their time, serving as staff at the event.

"The Alabama Ultimate Team Up is one of our longest running Wheelin' Sportsmen events," said Kirk Thomas, national coordinator of Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF. "The weekend offers a packed schedule of events. We do a lot of field activities in between the deer hunts, and there's always plenty of entertainment in the evenings, and we really had some great hunting stories by the end of the weekend."

With the help of Alabama Power, field activities included fishing demonstrations, ATV operating courses, shotgunning, archery and still-target shooting. The weekend of hunting also offered the little things that add sentimental flavor - a big southern breakfast on Sunday morning, live music on Saturday evening, socials and laid-back dinners, auctions and prizes.

About the NWTF: In 1973 when the National Wild Turkey Federation was founded, there were an estimated 1.3 million wild turkeys and 1.5 million turkey hunters. Thanks to the work of wildlife agencies and the NWTF's many volunteers and partners, today there are 6.4 million wild turkeys and approximately 2.6 million turkey hunters. Since 1985, more than \$186 million NWTF and cooperator dollars have been spent on over 27,000 projects benefiting wild turkeys throughout North America.

The NWTF is a nonprofit organization with nearly 525,000 members in 50 states and 12 foreign countries. It supports scientific wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport. For more information on the National Wild Turkey Federation, call (803) 637-3106, check out our web site at www.nwtf.org or e-mail questions to nwtf@nwtf.net.