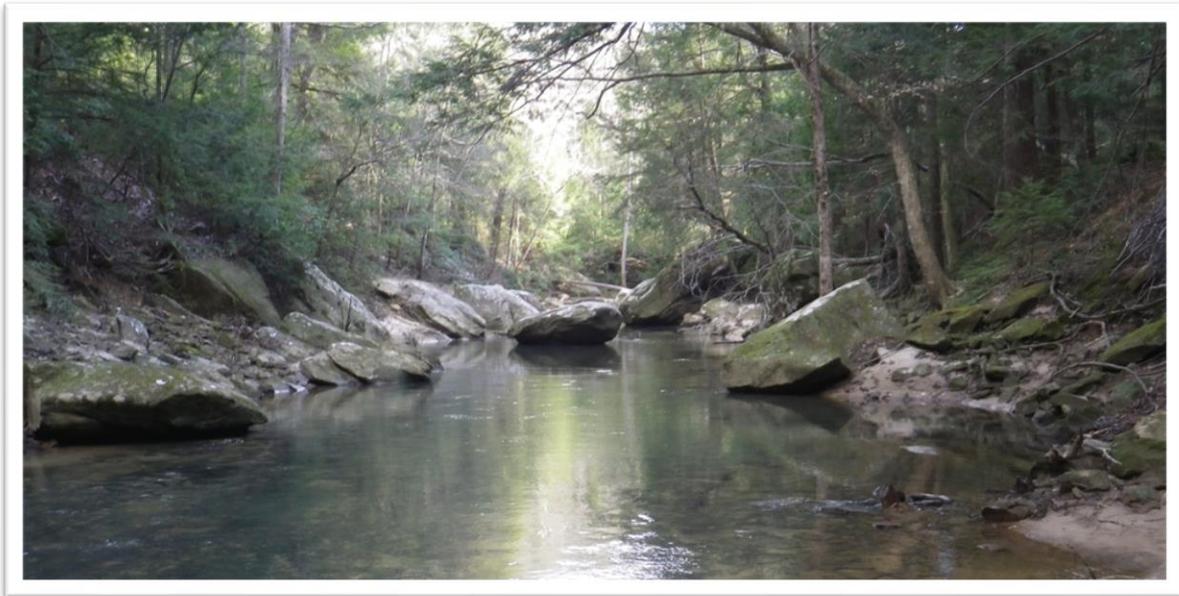


2022
Southeastern Bat Diversity Network
Bat Blitz

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



Bankhead National Forest
Double Springs, AL
August 1-5, 2022

Welcome to the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network 2022 Bat Blitz. We return to the beautiful Bankhead National Forest in Alabama, site of the 2008 SBDN Bat Blitz. This is a very special occasion. We look forward to reuniting with familiar faces as we reboot Bat Blitz in the post-COVID era. The Alabama Bat Working Group will celebrate 20 years of Bat Blitzes, and by replicating the 2008 Blitz, we will collect post-WNS data to compare with the pre-WNS data.

OVERVIEW

Location: **Bankhead National Forest, AL**

Ranger District Office: 1070 Hwy 33 North, Double Springs, AL 35553, (205) 489-5111

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/alabama>

https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/alabama/about-forest/districts/?cid=fsbdev3_002553

Headquarters, housing, and meals:

Camp McDowell

[105 DeLong Rd, Nauvoo, AL 35578](https://www.google.com/maps/place/105+DeLong+Rd,+Nauvoo,+AL+35578)

34.014718, -87.362365

<https://campmcdowell.org/>

(All times are central daylight savings time)

Start: Monday, August 1, 2022 at 6:30pm: Social Event

While the Monday night social is optional, for planning and financial reasons, we request that you please plan to stay for the duration of the blitz, Tuesday – Friday morning.

End: Friday, August 5, 2022 at 12:00 noon

Registration/Check-in

<https://sbdn.org/2022-bat-blitz/>

Monday, August 1, 2022 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 8:00am – 11:00am

DISEASE: COVID-19 – Rabies – WNS – Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

We are taking steps to ensure this is a safe, inclusive, disease-free event. The safety of Blitz participants AND wildlife is of paramount importance. We will follow the most recent guidance from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature regarding SARS Co-v2 and wildlife. All participants will be required to show proof they are “Up to Date” with COVID-19 vaccination as defined by the CDC. Upon arrival for registration, participants will be required either to bring a Covid test and take it on-site or show proof (e.g. photograph) of a negative Covid test within 24 hrs. Free tests are available here - <https://www.covid.gov/tests>. Participants should be aware that the event is being held at a facility open to other groups. Staff, employees, and visitors may not be vaccinated. As with any travel, follow CDC recommendations such as masking in areas of substantial transmission, physical distancing, avoiding indoor and crowded spaces as much as possible, handwashing and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.

Participants who wish to handle bats must show proof of a current (within 2 years) rabies

vaccination/titer. All participants within 6 feet of bats will wear an N-95 mask. We will follow current USFWS WNS decontamination protocols (see below for details). Bankhead is home to majestic hemlock stands. The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) that has devastated hemlocks in the eastern US has not made it to Bankhead. Clothing, footwear or netting equipment that has been used in a HWA infected area should be decontaminated prior to arrival at the Blitz.

LOCATION

The Bankhead National Forest, located in Winston, Lawrence, and Franklin Counties in Alabama, is approximately 182,000 acres of the Southern Cumberland Plateau. Known as the land of 1,000 waterfalls, it is moderately to strongly dissected with broad nearly level and narrow strongly sloping ridges leading into steep gorges with rock bluffs. The Sipsey Wilderness Area, in the heart of Bankhead, is one of the largest Forest Service Wilderness Areas east of the Mississippi. Bankhead is home to Alabama's only Wild and Scenic River, the Sipsey Fork of the Black Warrior River. Lewis Smith Lake, a Southern Company reservoir, lies on the southern portion of Bankhead and is a popular destination for RV camping, striped bass fishing and motorized boating. Bankhead's biodiversity is simply amazing with everything from longleaf pine woodlands to hemlock cove forests. Bankhead is in the TAG region and holds around 120 caves and many other bluffs and rockhouse grottos. (Recreational caving is closed on the National Forest.) Many rare and unique plants and animals are found on Bankhead, and it is the last refuge for some, such as the Black Warrior Waterdog, Alabama Streak-Sorus Fern, Fleshy-fruit gladeceess, Flattened Musk turtle, Rush Darter, and the list goes on. Confirmed bat species of Bankhead include Indiana, tricolored, Northern long-eared, evening, gray, red, big brown, silver-haired, seminole and hoary. We hope to confirm Rafinesque's and Southeasterns this Bat Blitz too!

HEADQUARTERS

Camp McDowell is a ministry of the Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Alabama and is open to all. It is one of the largest Episcopal Camp and Conference Centers in the US. It began in 1923 and was relocated to the Southern portion of the Bankhead National Forest in Winston County, Alabama in 1947. Like the Bankhead, it consists of breathtaking canyons, waterfalls and forests, and is known as the Beautiful Queen of Clear Creek. Camp McDowell has a wonderful culture of welcoming acceptance and has established a reputation for being an outstanding destination built upon simple elegance and attention to service and enjoyment. McDowell offers Summer Camp, Special Sessions, the McDowell Conference Center, the Alabama Folk School, the McDowell Environmental Center and the McDowell Farm School. We expect a lovely time at Wonderful Wonderful Camp McDowell.

CAMP McDOWELL RULES AND INFO

- Face coverings are required when in all the dining halls, unless you are seated at your table.
- Cell phone service is limited here but we do have WiFi in all meeting areas and dining halls.
- No pets are allowed on Camp property.

- We have numerous places to swim, including pools, so don't forget your swimsuit.
- Our speed limit is 10 mph, and parking directions will be posted around the camp.
- In all our meeting spaces, we provide coffee and all the amenities to serve it.
- Camp McDowell is remote—it is part of our charm—the nearest towns are Jasper (17 miles) and Double Springs (10 miles).
- Ice can be located beside Pradat Hall
- Upon leaving, please turn off all lights and air conditioning in your room. Toss all sheets and towels down the laundry chute prior to 0900 on the day of your departure.

HOUSING

Unless you pay for a single room, limited to a handful and on a first come-first served basis, all rooms are double occupancy and you should expect to share a room. If you have a roommate preference, indicate so on the registration form, and we will do our best to accommodate.

Two different housing areas will be used during the blitz, Miller Commons and Parsley Commons. The facilities of the Camp are great. Motel style rooms are air conditioned and each room has two beds. We will make every accommodation possible to give you your room preference. <https://campmcdowell.org/overnight-accommodations>

Miller Commons consists of five lodges. Each lodge has 11 motel style rooms – six upstairs and five downstairs – and both a front and back porch. Each lodge has a common space with a full kitchen. Each room has two beds and a full bathroom. Linens and towels are provided.



Parsley Commons is similar to Miller Commons with lodges with 11 motel style rooms. Each room at has a full bath and two beds. Linens and towels are provided. Lodges at both Miller and Parsley have a common space with a full kitchen and place to gather. All lodges have porches, as well.

MEALS

Three meals a day will be provided Tuesday – Friday morning at Stough Dining Hall. Light finger-foods on Monday will be provided at the social. Vegetarian and gluten-free options will be available at each meal, but if you have other dietary options, you should bring your own food.

- Breakfast is served daily at 10:00am
- Hot dinner is provided at 4:00pm

- A boxed lunch will be available at dinner for you to take to the net site.

In an effort to reduce plastic disposal, please bring a refillable water bottle and coffee cup. Large zip style baggies and personal cooler may also be useful for the boxed lunches to be carried to the field each night.

Camp McDowell rules dictate that face coverings should be worn in the dining facility, unless you are seated at your table. No guests are allowed in the camp kitchen. If you need something, please ask one of the Camp McDowell staff, who will be happy to accommodate you.

SCHEDULE *Central Time Zone.*

Monday, 1 August *If staying Monday night, please arrive at the blitz prior to 6pm.*

3:00pm – 6:00pm	Registration – Pradat Hall in Miller Commons
3:00pm – 6:00pm	Public Events – Randall Commons
6:30pm – 10:00pm	Social – Pradat Hall in Miller Commons

Tuesday, 2 August

9:00am – 11:00am	Registration/Check-in – Pradat Hall
10:00am – 11:00pm	Breakfast – Stough Dining Hall
12:00pm – 1:00pm	MANDATORY Team Leader Meeting – Randall
1:00pm – 2:00pm	MANDATORY Participant Meeting – Randall
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Dinner – Stough (pick up boxed lunch after meal)
5:00pm – 5:30pm	Sign-up for Team – Pradat Hall
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Team Meet-up / Depart Pradat Hall
6:00pm – 2:00 am	Mist Netting on the Bankhead National Forest
2:00 am	DECON All participants must return nightly by 2am

Wednesday, 3 August

10:00am – 11:00pm	Breakfast – Stough Dining Hall
11:00am – 12:00pm	MANDATORY Team Leader Meeting – Pradat Hall
11:00am	Free Time – Activities optional (See Schedule/Sign-up at Pradat)
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Dinner – Stough Hall (pick up boxed lunch after meal)
5:00pm – 5:30pm	Sign-up for Team – Pradat Hall
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Team Meet-up / Depart Pradat Hall
6:00pm – 2:00 am	Mist Netting on the Bankhead National Forest
2:00am	DECON All participants must return nightly by 2am

Thursday, 4 August

10:00am – 11:00pm	Breakfast – Stough Dining Hall
11:00am – 12:00pm	MANDATORY Team Leader Meeting – Pradat Hall
11:00am	Free Time – Activities optional
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Dinner – Stough (pick up boxed lunch after meal)
5:00pm – 5:30pm	Sign-up for Team – Pradat Hall
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Team Meet-up / Depart Pradat Hall
6:00pm – 2:00 am	Mist Netting on the Bankhead National Forest
2:00am	DECON All participants must return nightly by 2am

Friday, July 27

9:00am – 10:00am	DECON
10:00am – 11:00am	Breakfast – Stough Dining Hall
11:00am – 11:30am	Awards – Stough Dining Hall
11:30am – 12:00pm	DECON, Check-out and Depart

PACKING LIST

Camp McDowell and Bankhead National Forest are in a rural, remote portion of Alabama. Nearest services are in the small town of Double Springs or Jasper. While there are a few stores and gas stations in the area, generally, if you think you might need it, bring it with you. Winston County is a dry county, so do not expect alcohol sales with few exceptions.

Bedding and some towels are supplied at Camp. For double occupancy rooms, consider bringing an extra towel and wash cloth. Toiletries are not supplied and you must bring your own. Beds are full-sized. Room assignments have not been made at this time. Styrofoam of any kind (coolers, cups, plates, etc) is NOT allowed on Camp McDowell property. Camp McDowell strongly encourages the use of reuseable containers, such as water bottles and coffee mugs/thermos. Ice will be available. Coffee makers, coffee, powered creamer and sugar are provided at all lodges. There are many swimming opportunities available. Bring a beach towel.

FIELD EQUIPMENT

Please be sure to bring all equipment necessary for field work. Netting may require walking over rough terrain, across streams, carrying heavy loads, working in the heat and sun.

Suggested items include:

- Hiking boots/Rubber boots
- Waders
- Headlamp
- Water bottles
- Batteries
- Zip style bag for boxed lunch
- Chair
- Rain gear
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Personal cooler

Poison ivy, mosquitos, deer flies and ticks occur in the forests and around the ponds and will be present day and night. Long pants should be worn for field work. T-shirts are fine for fieldwork but you may want to bring a long-sleeve shirt for additional protection if the insects are bad. Bring insect repellent! Three species of venomous snakes occur where mist netting will occur, timber rattlesnake, cottonmouth and copperhead.

Remember that field clothing needs to comply with WNS protocols. (Please review the WNS protocol below) That is, you will be required to change into clean clothes in the field before re-entering the vehicle after netting bats. Bring enough clothing to make a change of outerwear each night in the field (no need to change your undergarments, only articles of clothing that were exposed to bats need to be changed.)

COMMUNICATION

Free wifi is available across the campus in all buildings. Cell phone reception is spotty at best throughout Camp McDowell and the Bankhead National Forest. AT&T works best and Verizon is spotty. Each net team will be accompanied by a Bankhead NF staff member equipped with a radio for coordination, logistics, and emergencies in the field.

HOSPITALS

Camp McDowell or southern/central portion of Bankhead:

Walker County Baptist Medical Center

3400 Hwy 78 East, Jasper, AL 35501

(205) 387-4000

Emergency Room Open 24 Hours

If working in the northern portion of Bankhead:

Lawrence Medical Center

202 Hospital Street

Moulton, AL 35650

(256) 974 2200

Emergency Room Open 24 Hours

NIGHTLY SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

- Sign-up for Teams following Dinner at Pradat Hall in Miller Commons
 - Please distribute yourself among team leaders
 - Note the leaving time listed by the team leader
 - While roles (e.g. experienced handler, data recorder, etc) do not have to be strictly followed, they allow us to assure the necessary skills are present.
- Decontamination at Miller Commons
 - Assure you are 'clean' whenever entering a vehicle
 - You are responsible to decontaminate your personal gear
 - Help Team Leaders decontaminate communal gear such as mist-nets and ropes
 - Cornhole/Socializing at Miller Commons
- Bat Handling
 - Team leaders are ultimately in charge at net/trap sites
 - All handlers must be rabies vaccinated and have an acceptable titer reading in the last 2 years.
 - Gloves must be worn whenever handling bats.
 - N95 masks will be provided and must be worn near bats.

WNS DECONTAMINATION GUIDANCE

This year's blitz will be held in a confirmed White-nose Syndrome (WNS)/ *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd) positive zone. As responsible scientists we must do our very best to ensure we do not become the unwilling vectors of white-nose syndrome and that we maintain the highest integrity at our field sites. Participants in the SBDN Bat Blitz will comply with the national WNS decontamination protocol:

<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/topics/decontamination>. In addition to that protocol, the following directions and guidance are stipulated. Summer decontamination procedures are known to limit the spread and exposure through equipment, and this document is designed to serve as clarification and guidance on the best practices for use during the bat blitz.

Required Decontamination Activities and Disclosure

- No gear previously used in a cave is allowed at the blitz.
- All gear and vehicles arriving at the blitz must be decontaminated prior to arrival. This includes tubs (inside and out) that could have come into contact with Pd; poles; nets; scales; and ropes, etc. While the Blitz is in a WNS-positive zone, we seek to minimize the potential of introducing or moving other potential Pd strains.
- The entire Bankhead National Forest will be considered one “site” during the Blitz, for the purpose of interpreting and complying with procedures of the national WNS decontamination protocol. Therefore, nightly decontamination of all gear, including nets, is optional and left to the discretion of individual Team Leaders. A decontamination station (hot water baths and burners, water hose, supplies) will be provided nightly. Field clothing should be bagged on the field site prior to placement in a vehicle and may be decontaminated or discarded upon returning to base or home.
- All gear, nets, poles, ropes, etc. leaving the blitz must be decontaminated.
- All gear and materials used at this blitz -- even if decontaminated -- will be considered equipment that has been used at a WNS-positive/Contaminated WNS Management Area site and SHALL NOT be used at an At-Risk WNS Management Area. Contaminated gear should only be used within an Endemic WNS Management Area or an Intermediate WNS Management Areas upon the direction of the responsible state/federal land management agency.

For Team Leaders—Decontamination Materials Provided by Blitz Organizers

- Latex and/or Nitrile Gloves
 - If latex or powdered gloves are used, notify field personnel who may have contact sensitivities.
- Ziploc bags for phones and electronics.
- Paper bat bags
 - For holding bats, team leaders may use paper bags or properly decontaminated and chemical-free cloth bags. Paper bags will be available for use.
 - A new, clean bag shall be used for each captured bat. No re-use of non-decontaminated bags. If team leaders opt to use cloth bat bags, they shall be decontaminated in hot water at nights-end, at the blitz headquarters.
- 70% Isopropyl Alcohol solution in spray bottles
 - Use for decontaminating work up equipment (rulers, scales, etc), nets poles, chairs, tables, and other non-porous items.
 - Can be used in conjunction with paper towels to form a ‘wipe’
- Hot Water Decontamination at Blitz Headquarters
 - Use for any soft gear that contacts bats, to ensure bats are not exposed to hazardous chemicals.
 - Use 55°C/131°F Water for 20 minutes.
- Clotheslines for drying porous gear.

Suggested Field Practices for Site Control, Pd Isolation, and Field Decontamination Setting up a Field Site and Preliminary Information

- Team leaders and participants should arrive at the site field-ready, with a change of clothes or an outer layer that can be shed prior to re-entering the field vehicle. Typically, a changing area at the field site is designated where changes of clothes are kept secure and dry in bags, including a change of shoes. Place spare plastic bags near your clean clothes so dirty clothes can be isolated and bagged once removed. Once clean clothes and shoes are put on, re-entry into potentially contaminated areas should be avoided. Therefore, all cleaned equipment should be loaded and the site “broken-down” prior to everyone changing into clean clothes.
- Prior to working in the field, consider disposable water bottles or expect that non-disposable bottles, along with coolers, will be decontaminated prior to re-entry into the field vehicle. Bring all drinks and supplies needed during sampling with you. Avoid accessing the field vehicle during sampling to minimize risk of contaminating the vehicle. Anything brought into the field needs to be decontaminated before entering the vehicle.
- Designate plastic bags for trash and leave out extra bags for bagging of any gear ropes, nets, etc) that may need to be transported to the blitz headquarters for decontamination. (The blitz designates black bags for trash and white bags for decontamination).
- Ensure that chairs brought to the blitz are properly decontaminated prior to and subsequent to use. Non-porous chairs are advised for spraying down or wiping with isopropyl alcohol. Plastic folding chairs are durable, easy to decontaminate.
- Consider setting up a tarp as a drying area to stage clean items such as poles and shoes that move from decontamination procedures to clean vehicles after site break-down. Ensuring a clean space where hard, decontaminated items may dry eliminates dirt and debris on equipment and ensures adequate disinfection of Pd spores.
- Consider using mesh bags to hold individual mist nets. This makes post-sampling decon easier. Nets can dry in the bags without having to stretch them out. A good source is here at about \$1 each: <http://www.papermart.com/net-shower-bag-with-loops/id=14330#14330>.
- Avoid processing any bats on the truck tailgate or near the vehicle. Use a non-porous table for field equipment and processing, as it can be easily sprayed or wiped. Park the vehicle an adequate distance from nets and bat processing areas to ensure the field vehicle remains clean.
- If possible, designate a “clean” person—who does not come into contact with bats—to enter data and retrieve any needed “clean” items from hard-sided tubs during netting. Keeping the processing table as clean as possible is the best method to avoid contaminating gear and/or data sheets.
- Do not use Lysol or Clorox wipes on your skin or hands—always use skin-safe products such as baby wipes. Do not apply Lysol or Clorox products to gloves or other items that may come into contact with bats.
- Consider placing your smart phone or other electronic equipment in clear plastic bags when not in use or text and read through the plastic bag. If accessing these items during

mist netting and processing, ensure that hands are clean to avoid contaminating the electronic device.

- Consider using a clothesline to hang bagged bats to keep the processing table free of occupied bat bags and guano during processing.
- Properly sized latex or nitrile gloves should be used when retrieving bats from the net and changed between bats. Note that team leaders or other handlers may deviate from this during situations where bats may be at risk of injury, such as multiple captures or during extreme entanglement. The bat's well-being should always be given priority.

Site Break-down and Field Decontamination

- Systematically deconstruct net hardware and move toward centralized field decontamination area.
- Collect and centralize soft items such as ropes, bat bags, and clothesline and place in mesh laundry bags for isolated transport to hot water decontamination at blitz headquarters. Place mesh bags in plastic garbage bags and move to "clean" area for staging and transport.
- Place mist nets in individual mesh bags and place bags in mesh laundry bag for isolated transport to hot water decontamination center at blitz headquarters. Place in clean garbage bags and move to "clean" area for staging and transport.
- Spray or wipe all non-porous items (rings, poles, table, chairs) with isopropyl alcohol and place on tarp to dry.
- Load tubs with cleaned, non-porous processing gear. Wipe down outside of tubs and move to clean area for staging and transport
- As items are cleaned, designate "clean" people to load clean items into clean vehicle. Clean people who load the vehicle should change their clothes and begin loading clean items, as directed. Clean people should not come into contact with dirty areas or dirty equipment. Dirty clothes should be bagged for isolation, then moved to clean staging areas for loading and transport.
- As all items are loaded and site is in final stages, the tarp should be loaded, the garbage bagged, and the final field crew changes clothes.