

Making a Difference for Wildlife

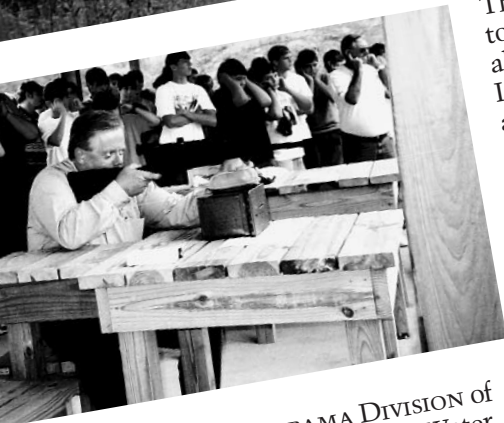
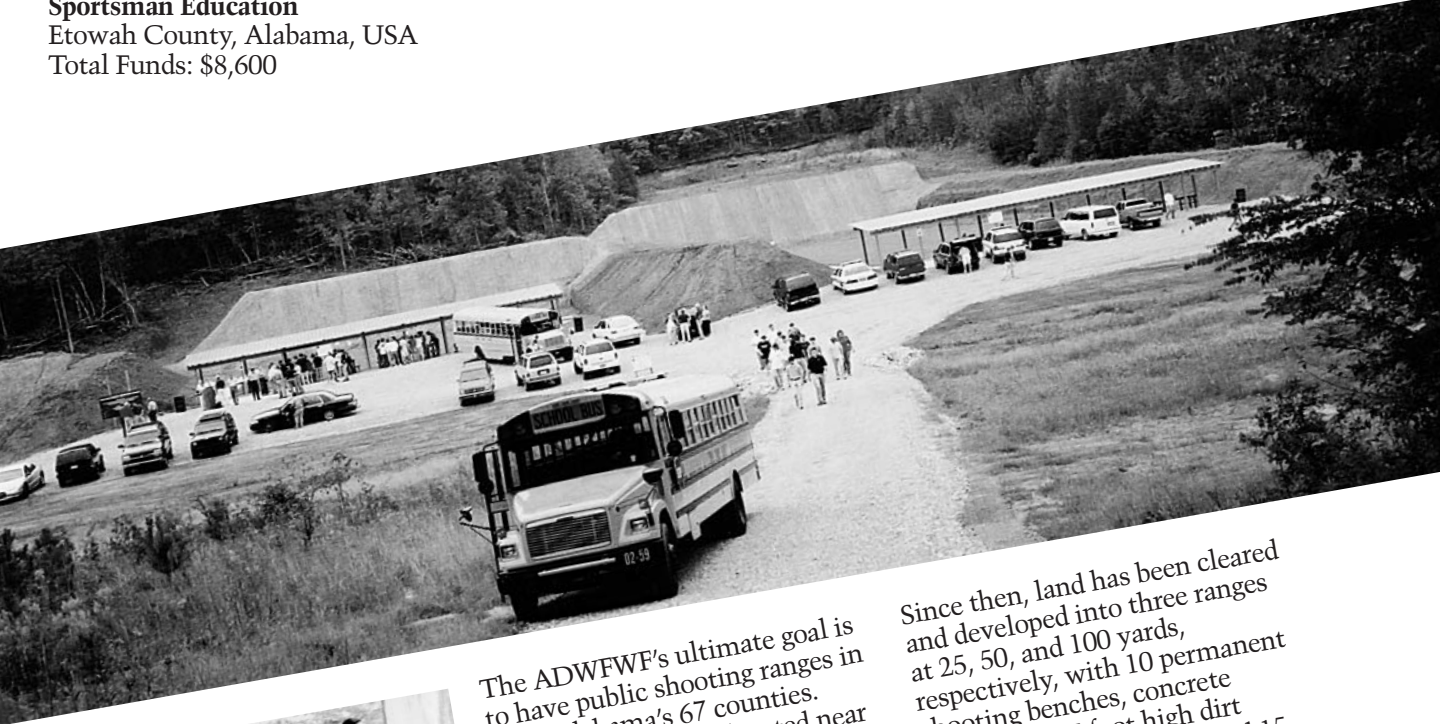
Hundreds of local conservation projects are undertaken annually by SCI Chapters. They are reinforced by many notable conservation initiatives funded by the SCI Foundation.



Sportsman Education

Etowah County, Alabama, USA

Total Funds: \$8,600



The ADWFWF's ultimate goal is to have public shooting ranges in all of Alabama's 67 counties. Ideally, each will be located near a metropolitan area.

In one of the first steps toward this goal, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources purchased 112 of 120 acres owned by the Goodyear tire company in Etowah County, near the city of Gadsden, that had served as a private range for company employees, using state funds.

The final eight acres were purchased and then deeded to the Etowah County Sheriff's Department, which had previously agreed to develop, maintain and provide an overseer for the property.

In July 2001, to raise the \$8,600 needed for purchasing the last eight acres, Ray Metzler, Alabama's hunter education coordinator, contacted SCI's Alabama Chapter and the Alabama Chapter of the Friends of the NRA, each of which raised half of the needed funds.

Since then, land has been cleared and developed into three ranges at 25, 50, and 100 yards respectively, with 10 permanent shooting benches, concrete walkways, 27-foot high dirt embankment backstops and 15-foot-high dirt dividing banks. The facility also sports an education building to teach the good shooting and hunting practices that are integral to sportsmen's contributions in effective wildlife conservation programs.

Future plans for the facility include a pistol qualifying course and a tactical range to train law enforcement officers, as well as ranges for trap shooting and distances greater than 100 yards.

THE ALABAMA DIVISION of Wildlife and Fresh Water Fisheries has had a firearms range development program in existence for some time, with eight ranges on wildlife management areas already in use.

However, no shooting ranges were outside these areas. As an answer, sportsmen need more locations where they can improve shooting skills while learning about hunting ethics, outdoor safety, and their role in sound wildlife management techniques.