



For immediate release

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### **Weeks Bay Foundation purchases valuable Fish River property**

FAIRHOPE, AL – The Weeks Bay Foundation, a non-profit organization whose members work to protect the natural resources of coastal Alabama, recently purchased 25 acres along Fish River that will serve as a valuable buffer against increasing waterfront development in Baldwin County.

The undeveloped tract is located south of County Road 48 and Bohemian Park, between Fairhope and Silverhill, and includes more than 1,500 feet of frontage on Fish River and a boundary on the small tributary of Still Creek.

“In the fastest growing county in Alabama, waterfront property is a hot commodity,” Foundation Executive Director Yael Girard said. “Unfortunately, each time we build adjacent to our streams and rivers, we increase the likelihood of damaging those waterways. This can be through additional erosion, sedimentation, and nutrient and pollutant runoff.” Buffer lands like this one provide an area for stormwater to slow down and be reabsorbed into the soil.

The property, known as Rio Vista, was selectively timbered previously and needs a significant amount of restoration, Girard said. The Foundation will work with local experts on a restoration and management plan for the tract that will include the removal of invasive plants, addition of native plants, creation of foot paths, and installation of interpretative signage.

“With some work, Rio Vista has the potential to be a great educational site for the general public, school groups and visiting resource managers,” Girard said. “It’s also on a portion of Fish River that is popular with canoers and kayakers, so it will give boaters access to a natural park setting. By protecting this property and opening it up for educational opportunities, we hope to better connect community members with their watershed resources.”

The Foundation is currently seeking corporate and foundation partners and grants to help fund the restoration of the site and make these natural resources more accessible to the public. As an accredited land trust, it is part of the Foundation's mission to safeguard the area's most sensitive lands—and water—by purchasing property for preservation purposes. Individual and corporate donations, plus grants and the Foundation's annual fund raisers, provide the necessary capital to support the Foundation's projects.

For more information about supporting the Weeks Bay Foundation, contact Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator, at [diana@weeksbay.org](mailto:diana@weeksbay.org), or by calling 251-990-5004.

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*Formed in 1990, the Weeks Bay Foundation is a non-profit organization whose members work to protect the natural resources of coastal Alabama and to provide assistance and support for the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's goals and programs.*