



— Integrated Marketing Communications —



CAHABA
BIODIVERSITY CENTER

MARKETING STRATEGY

The University of West Alabama
INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Master Thesis Marketing Project

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OVERVIEW

The University of West Alabama Cahaba Biodiversity Center is home to one of Earth's largest natural resources for biological diversity. Located in Bibb County, Alabama, the Cahaba Biodiversity Center contains waterfront property that overlooks the bio-diverse Cahaba River. The Cahaba waterway includes an immeasurable amount of undiscovered flora and fauna along its riverbanks and contains more species of fish than any other river of its size in North America. Global and international organizations consider this region of the country to be especially significant for its beauty and important to conserve for its biodiversity.



The Cahaba Biodiversity Center offers a massive 2153 acre outdoor classroom for biology, phytology, zoology, ecology, and archeology. For the University of West Alabama, the Cahaba Biodiversity Center provides world-class research and learning opportunities that are unparalleled for the study of natural, environmental, and biological sciences. Although biological sciences are currently the primary focus, the Cahaba Biodiversity Center also offers unique opportunities for the study of water quality, forestry technology, property management, and land conservation.

OUR MISSION

The University of West Alabama established the Cahaba Biodiversity Center through the generosity of William D. Hubbard. Mr. Hubbard, an exploration geologist and geophysicist, had a vision for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center to provide a million teachable moments. For the University of West Alabama, our mission is to build on Mr. Hubbard's vision by providing a world-class learning experience. Through education, research, and development, the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will serve as a teaching tool and learning center for the posterity of the property. The possibilities, opportunities, and resources available at the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will provide environmental education, outdoor curricula, and immersive experiences for many generations. With the University of West Alabama's mission and William Hubbard's vision, The Cahaba Biodiversity Center will provide a million teachable moments with a **world-class education experience.**



OUR VISION

*P*ROVIDE A MILLION **TEACHABLE** MOMENTS.

-William "Bill" Hubbard
(1944-2022)





THE SITUATION

The Cahaba Biodiversity Center is establishing a comprehensive communication plan for the 2022-2023 University of West Alabama academic calendar. This plan will implement an online presence for each major social media platform, a landing page for their website, and collateral material to deliver branded messages to reach their audience.

COMPANY ANALYSIS

Property: The Cahaba Biodiversity Center is located on 2,153 acres of waterfront property in Bibb County, Alabama. With nearly five miles overlooking the Cahaba River, the property also includes two major streams, along with marked trails running through deciduous forest. Natural landmarks include boulders, caves, and natural spring wells.

Facility: Facilities for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center include a large vaulted 3,500 square foot Sandstone Lodge with second floor, a 3,500 square foot research facility barn with upper floor dormitory, and a 900 square foot machinery implement utility shelter for equipment.

Faculty/Staff: The Cahaba Biodiversity Center is directed by Dr. Brian Keener and Professor Joan Rundles from the University of West Alabama. The University of West Alabama Foundation has established a committee to manage staff, maintenance, and oversight.

Geographical location: The Cahaba Biodiversity Center is located at 5252 Birmingham Road, Centreville, Alabama. This is about a 1-hour drive south of the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport and 45-minute drive east of the Tuscaloosa National Airport.

Regional Climate: The Cahaba Biodiversity Center averages 210 sunny days per year which is slightly higher than the national average. It averages 57 inches of rain per year which is significantly higher than the national average of 38 inches per year. July is the hottest month with an average of 91 degrees and January is the coldest month with an average low of 33 degrees. The average comfort index is 7.3 with 10 being the best (bestplaces.net).

Community: The Cahaba Biodiversity Center is surrounded by a small community in Centreville, Alabama that has a population of 2.65k. There are more than ten schools and ten churches within a 15-mile radius of Centreville. Local dining and fast-food options are available for visitors.

Lodging: The Cahaba Biodiversity Center has a limited lodging capacity of 20 visitors on site. Local lodging options are also limited in Bibb County with only one motel listed in nearby Brent, AL.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Students: The primary consumer for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will be university students from multiple fields of study. Students from local community colleges and high schools will also use the Cahaba Biodiversity Center for field trips and workforce study.

Teachers: Professors, instructors, and teachers from multiple departments on campus and institutions off campus will use the Cahaba Biodiversity Center to support and develop new curricula for their students.

Visitors: Study Clubs, organizations, and community groups will use the Cahaba Biodiversity Center to host various events and seminars throughout the year.

Tourists: International science groups, national conservation groups, and regional tourism departments will schedule trips and visits throughout the year.

Local Community Groups: The Nature Conservancy Birmingham, Pratt's Ferry preserve (nature.org), local study clubs, workforce development, civic groups, conservation groups, foresters, fishing clubs, and hunting clubs.

Local Government: Local government includes Centreville City Hall, West Blocton City Hall, Bibb County Chamber of Commerce, Cahaba River Wildlife Management, and the Bibb County Cooperative Extension.

Sponsors: Sponsors and supporters for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center include UWA institutional sponsors, grantors, donors, online supporters, and local volunteers.

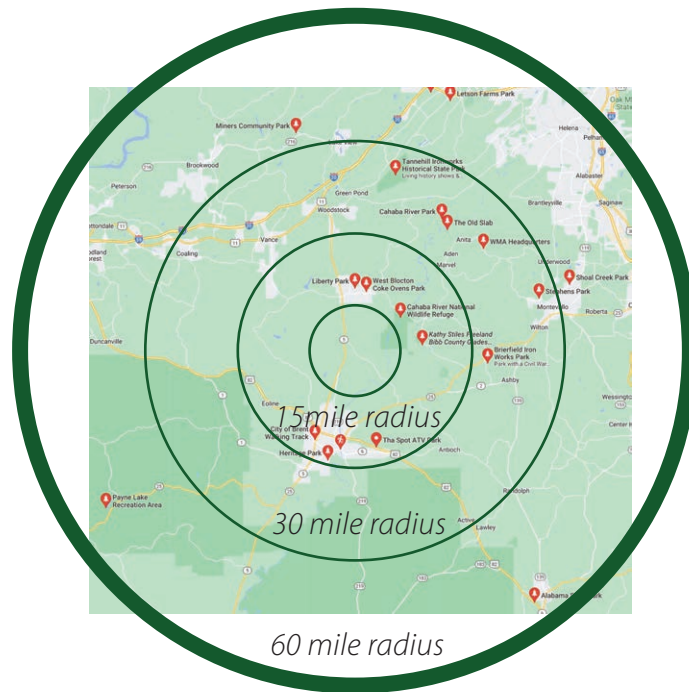
Community College: Regional community colleges considered collaborators include Shelton State Community College, Lawson State Community College, Jefferson State Community College, and Central Alabama Community College.

Regional Grade Schools: Regional elementary, middle, and high schools near Cahaba Biodiversity Center in the Bibb County School District include Brent Elementary, Randolph Elementary School, Indian Rivers, Cahawba Christian Academy, Centreville Middle School, Bibb County High school, Bibb County Career Academy, West Blocton Attendance Centers, McCulley Hill Christian School, Porta Cras School, Vance Elementary School, Woodstock Elementary School, Brookwood Middle School, and Boyd School Inc. These do not include Tuscaloosa or Birmingham district schools.

Online Collaborators: The University of West Alabama, Alabama Plant Atlas, iNaturalist.org, and alabamawildlife.org/alabama-nature-center.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Competitors include local sites, waterways, and parks competing for support and resources. These include the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge, Cahaba River Park, Cahaba Riverwalk and Canoe Launch, Heritage Park, Brent Walking Track, Briarfield Iron Works Park, Kathy Stiles Freeland Bibb County Glades, West Blocton Coke Ovens Park, Liberty Park, Shoal Creek Park, The Old Slab, Tannehill Ironworks Historical Park, and the Birmingham Zoo.



Universities offering competing programs of study include the University of Alabama, Auburn University, and Jacksonville State University.



Jacksonville State University
Little River Canyon Field School



Auburn University
School of Forestry and Wildlife



University of Alabama
College of Arts and Science

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Cahaba watershed provides access to the most bio-diverse region in the United States.
- Over 2000 acres of deciduous forest.
- Access to 4-miles of river frontage.
- Access to fiber internet.
- Outdoor pavilions, seating, and tables.
- Property mapping, signs, and system of trails.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to provide world class learning for biodiversity.
- Opportunity for new curricula related to environmental sustainability.
- Opportunity to provide largest outdoor classroom in region.
- Opportunity to provide community with workforce study.
- Opportunity to provide endless educational content on social media.
- Opportunity to collaborate with local government, businesses, and sponsors.
- Opportunity to collaborate with multiple departments, organizations, and social clubs at the University of West Alabama.



WEAKNESSES

- Relatively remote location.
- Limited facilities for lodging and accommodation.
- Limited equipment for transportation (bikes, atvs, scooters.)
- Limited staff to host events (field trips, seminars, fundraisers, etc.)
- No set fee schedule for visitors.
- Inactive social media and web presence.

THREATS

- Local weather conditions can affect outdoor events.
- Local government and ordinances could limit development.
- Local parks, reserves, and public recreation lower community support and interest.
- Regional universities with competing programs of study reduce student interest.
- Political, social, and economic conditions could affect events on site. (COVID, Travel, etc.)
- Remote location along with limited facilities, equipment, and staff could reduce opportunity for visitors.

MARKETING PLAN



GOALS

- Provide experiential educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, and the general public
- Provide research opportunities for biologists, geologists, archaeologists, and others
- Provide logistical support for resident researchers
- Promote conservation of the natural and cultural resources of Alabama, especially the Cahaba River Basin
- Promote stewardship and best practices among landowners for the natural and cultural resources on their properties
- Establish partnerships with other public and private organizations with similar missions
- Develop fiscal sustainability through external funding



OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness, interest, credibility, and desirability of total available market.
- Increase market action-ability with student registration, requests for information, and event registration sign-ups.
- Increase reach, frequency, and engagement with total available market.
- Increase educational value offered to students, professors, scientists, and visitors.
- Increase informational value offered to community, followers, and online supporters.
- Increase total value offered to local schools, community, and online supporters.
- Increase funding and financial support for building, maintenance, and projects.



STRATEGIES

- Establish branding that is consistent with the mission and vision of the Cahaba Biodiversity Center and University of West Alabama.
- Establish online and virtual presence that is consistent with the University of West Alabama Cahaba Biodiversity Center brand.
- Develop advertisement campaigns to promote the University of West Alabama Cahaba Biodiversity Center.
- Develop communication strategies to connect with the target market.
- Develop content strategy based on educational and information value.
- Develop itinerary and event schedule for programs of study.
- Develop fee schedule for visiting residents, researchers, and students.
- Develop budget and funding accounts allocated towards specific project goals.



TACTICS

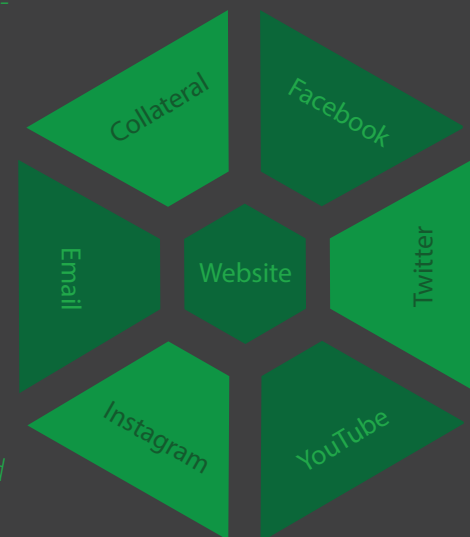
- Create a color theme, logo, slogan and establish a general voice and tone for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center Brand.
- Create a website homepage and branded social media account on each major platform.
- Create branded advertisements to post on each relevant social media account.
- Create educational and informational content to post on each social media account.
- Create social media calendar to remain consistently active and engaged.
- Create event calendar for community involvement and fundraising.
- Create stationery, collateral, and information guides.
- Create a fee schedule based on subscriptions and memberships.
- Set up a transparent funding account that shows progress of donation goals.

MEDIA PLAN

For the Cahaba Biodiversity Center, all media communications will serve a purpose that aligns with the values, mission, and vision of the Cahaba Biodiversity Center. All communications will be targeted based on the media channel, target audience, and timeliness of the message. Our overall goal with communications is to maintain a consistent stream of content that will build a following and keep the audience engaged.

Each media message will serve a purpose to persuade, educate, inform, or entertain. Although each message will be cross-promoted to multiple channels and platforms, the primary use for each platform will be as follows:

- *Facebook - The primary purpose for Facebook is to persuade with advertisements and promotions and to inform with news, blogs, and calendar events.*
- *Instagram - The primary purpose for Instagram is to educate and entertain with quality photography and short story form video blogs.*
- *Twitter - The primary purpose for Twitter is to educate and inform with micro-blog posts.*
- *YouTube - The primary purpose for YouTube is to provide educational and entertaining live streams and video lectures from events.*
- *Email - The primary purpose for email is to educate and inform with newsletters and blogs.*
- *Collateral - The primary purpose for collateral is to provide information and print schedules.*
- *Website - The primary purpose for the website is to act as a central hub for all news, events, and information regarding the Cahaba Biodiversity Center.*



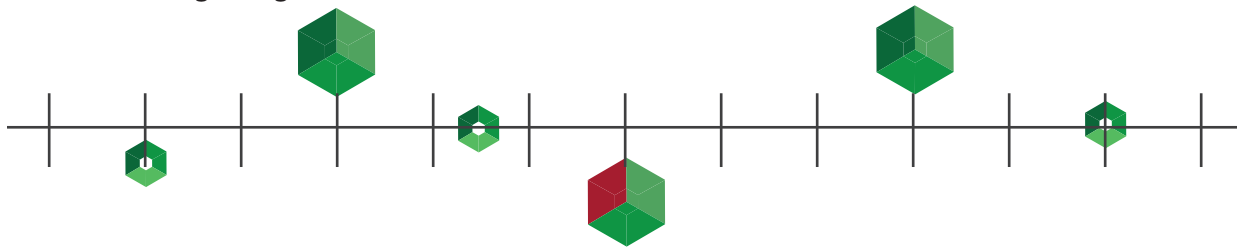
Since our mission is to provide a world class education experience with a million teachable moments, the primary base for all messaging across each channel will focus on education.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for each message will be divided based on the message appeal (persuade, educate, inform, entertain). Persuasive advertisements will primarily target prospective students interested in pursuing a career in Biological and Environmental sciences for Conservation and Field Biology and Conservation Enterprises under the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Educational posts will target everyone in the total available market. Informational posts will primarily target current followers and members. Entertainment messages will primarily target current students and younger demographics in K-12 market.

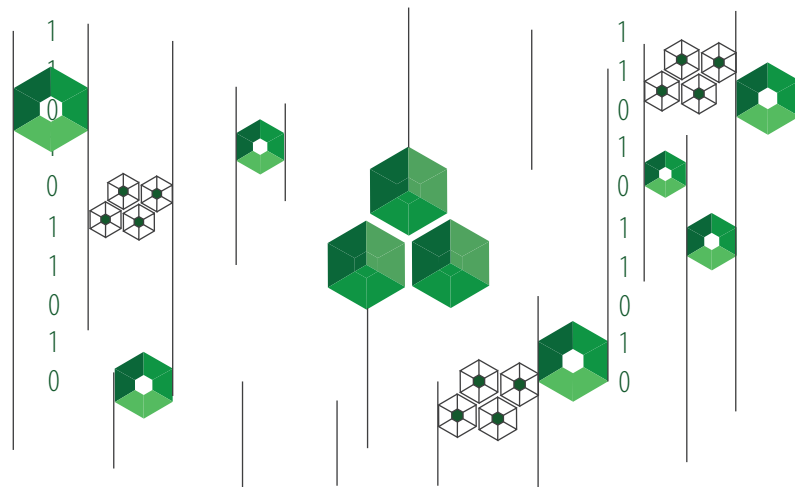
TIMELINE

All integrated marketing communications for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will follow a schedule that is based on the University of West Alabama academic school calendar. Each social media post will be relevant to current events, seasons, and trending topics. Each social media campaign and social media calendar will run for a duration of 30 days. At the end of 30 days, evaluations will be measured and necessary adjustments will be made that are appropriate to our goals and objectives. The first social media campaign following this plan will run from July 1st, 2022 through August 1st, 2022.



EVALUATION

Evaluation of this marketing plan will measure the effectiveness of our objectives. Awareness, interest, credibility, and desirability will be measured through sentiment analysis, web surveys, and social media analytics. Student registration, requests for information, and event registration will be measured through data analytics provided by the University of West Alabama and Cahaba Biodiversity Center. Reach, frequency, and engagement will be measured through website and google analytics. Educational, Informational, and total perceived-value will be measured through web surveys and sentiment analysis. Finally, funding and financial support will be measured through project fund account auditing.



EXECUTION

BRANDING GUIDELINES

BRANDING EXAMPLES

OUTDOOR BRANDING

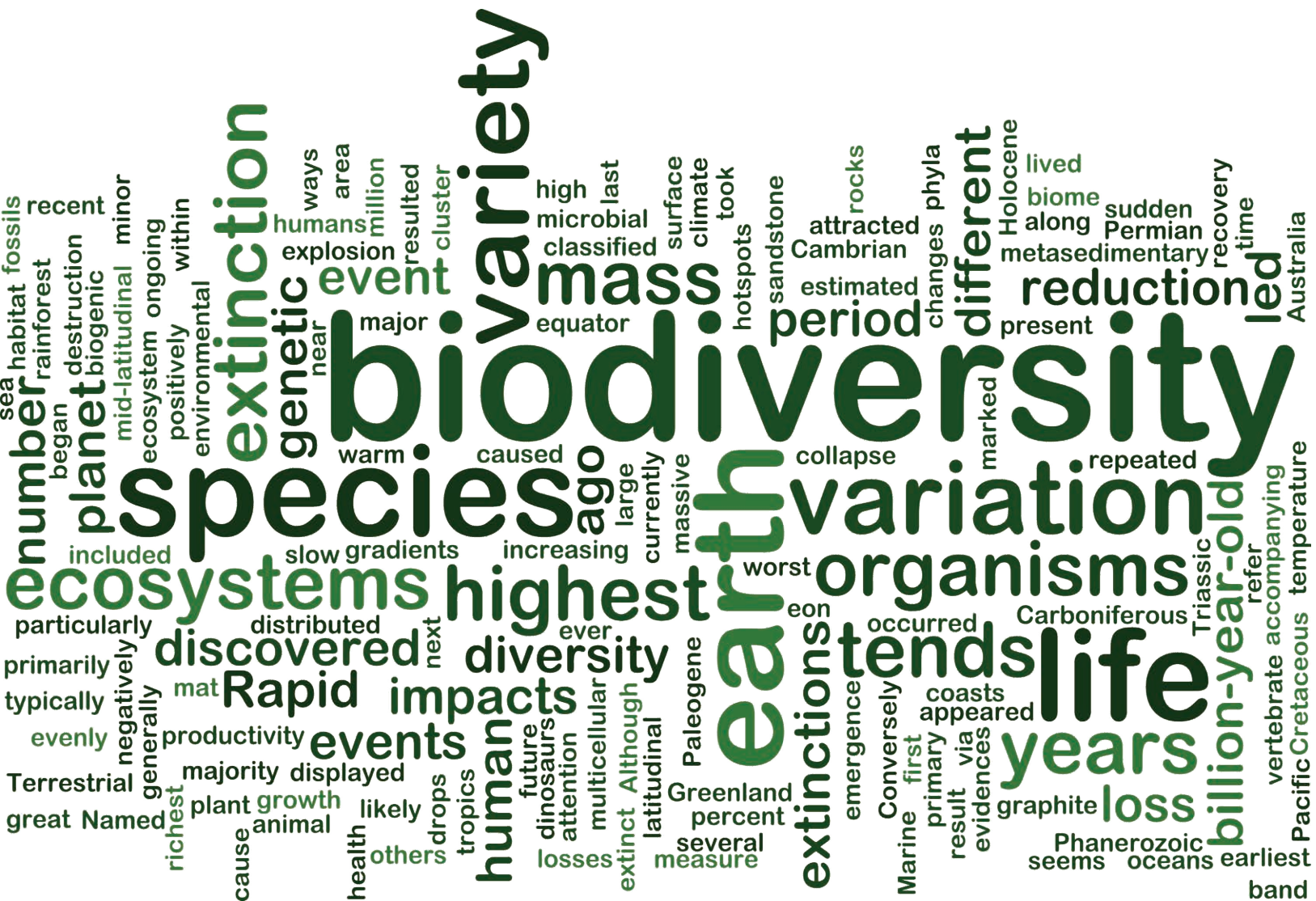
WEBSITE BRANDING

SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR

SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES

EVENT ITINERARY

EVENT POSTERS



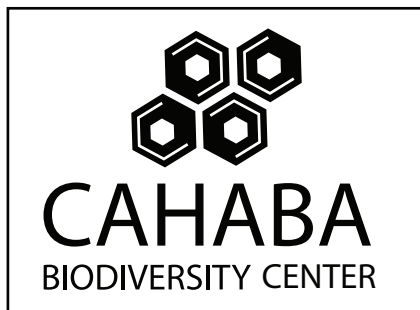
BRANDING GUIDE

Branding for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will include colors, logos, fonts, imagery, and a persona. Colors for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will be named “Cahaba Shades.” Cahaba Shades are monochromatic shades of green and are direct complements on the Adobe color wheel to the University of West Alabama branded colors. Cahaba Shades are green to represent life, growth, and sustainability.

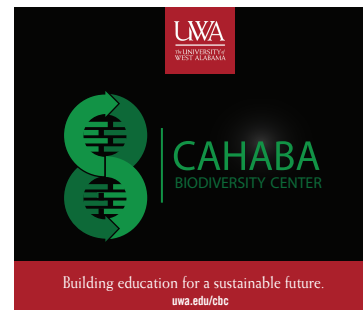


Logos for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will include an official logo, an unofficial logo, and an animorphic character logo. The official logo will be used on all digital and stationery media. The official logo will be a simple logo-mark and logo-type. Both the logo-mark and logo-type will be reflective of the brand when they are placed together or apart. The unofficial logo will be used for apparel, merchandise, and promotional fan art. The unofficial logo will be secondary to the official logo and it will have many variations and designs. Finally, the Cahaba Biodiversity Center will have a character logo to represent their persona. The character logo will act as an ambassador and spokesperson of the brand. The brand imagery will include everything in nature. The brand slogan will be: **“Building education for a sustainable future.”**

Candidates for the official logo:

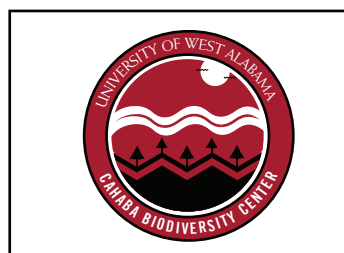
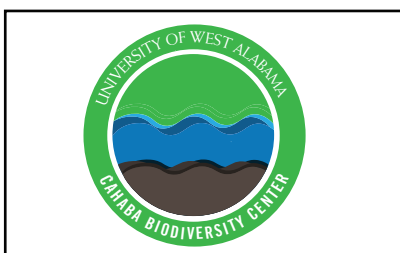


Combination mark with letters C, B, C integrated into molecule hexagon pattern found throughout nature



Combination mark with letters C, B, C integrated into double helix of DNA.

Examples of the unofficial logo:



These logos will be used for badges, seals, merchandise, apparel, and fan art.

Example of character logo:



Cahaba Creatures will be characters developed for the CBC brand.

APPAREL BRANDING

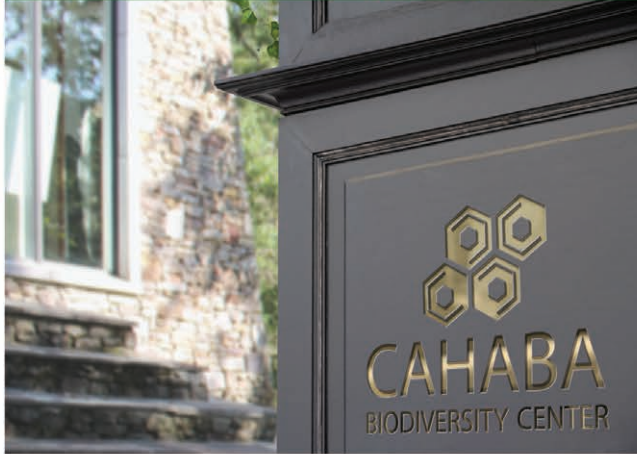


COLLATERAL BRANDING



OUTDOOR BRANDING

Outdoor Signage



Outdoor Study Areas



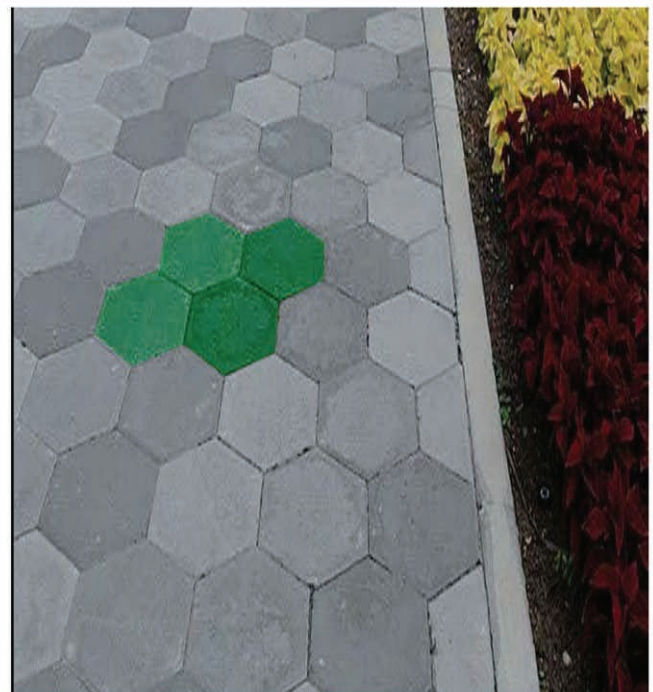
Branded Trails



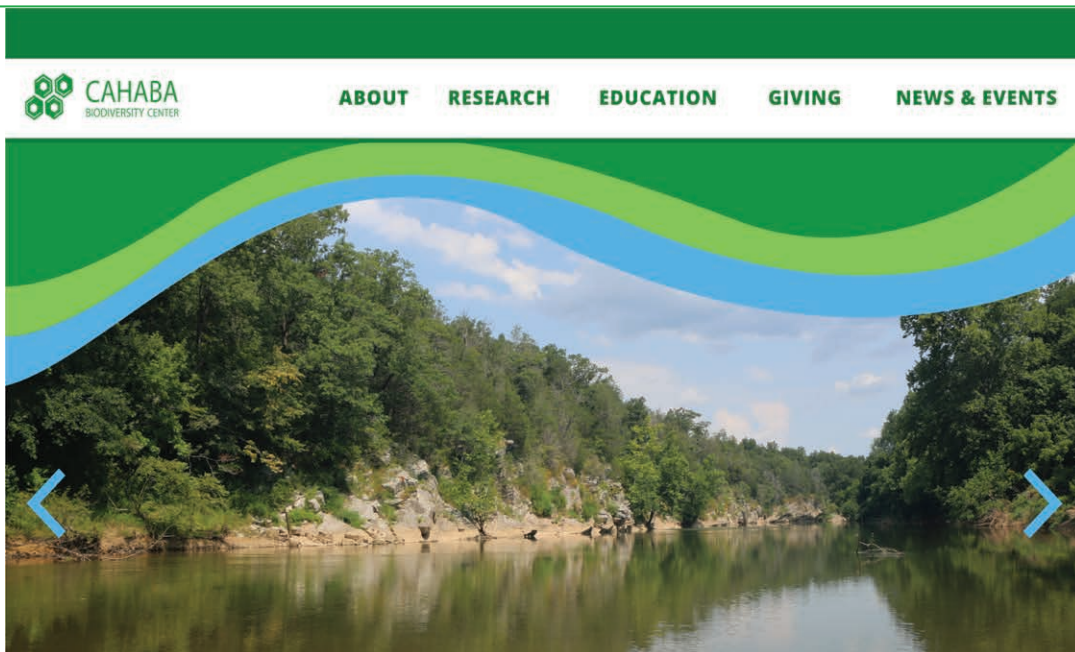
Outdoor Classrooms



Branded Sidewalks, Paths, and Walkways



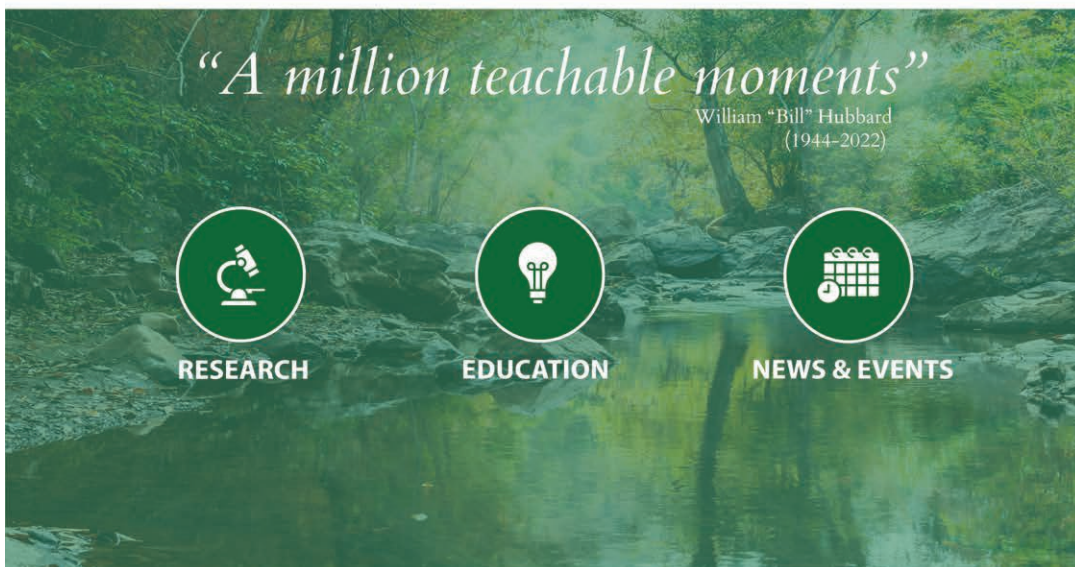
WEBSITE BRANDING



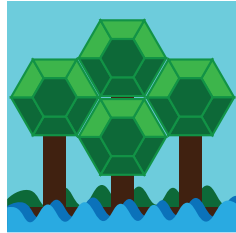
WELCOME

CAHABA BIODIVERSITY CENTER

The University of West Alabama Cahaba Biodiversity Center is home to one of Earth's largest natural resources for biological diversity. Positioned on two-thousand acres in Bibb County, Alabama, the Cahaba Biodiversity Center contains waterfront property that overlooks the biodiverse Cahaba River. The Cahaba waterway includes an immeasurable amount of undiscovered flora and fauna along its riverbanks and contains more species of fish than any other river of its size in North America. Global and international organizations consider this region of the country to be especially significant for its beauty and important to conserve for its biodiversity.



SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR



To establish a successful social media presence, pre-planning your content is essential. Below is an example of a Content Calendar filled with a month's worth of marketing content for the CBC (Cahaba Biodiversity Center) to use on their social media pages. When organizing a social media calendar each month, we recommend creating four marketing pillars establishing goals to accomplish when posting content. Examples include creating awareness for events and special holidays, educating your audience, forming community relationships, etc. Next, develop three to four content ideas that fall under each of your pillars. Now you have content ideas for each day of the week for an entire month.

In the example below you will see that your content is divided depending on where you will be posting it. Blue represents Facebook & Instagram and Red represents the CBC Website. We suggest starting out with these platforms to familiarize yourself with consistently posting and avoid becoming overwhelmed. Once comfortable with the system, feel free to introduce other sharing platforms, like Twitter and YouTube.

MAY.22

Educate our Audience

- Weekly Newsletter
- Tuesdays Teachable Moments
- Blog post or article share
- Plant Identification Post

Showcase our Community



- Mothers Day Event Info- May 2nd Recap- May 9th
- Accelerated STEM Camp Program -May 31st
- Accelerated STEM Camp Program -May 31st
- Local Schools Visiting
- AL Power Renew our Rivers

Celebrations/Holidays

- May Day of Play- May 1st
- Tourist Appreciation- May 6th
- Frog Jumping Day- May 13th
- Endangered species day- May 20
- International Day for Biological Diversity- May 22

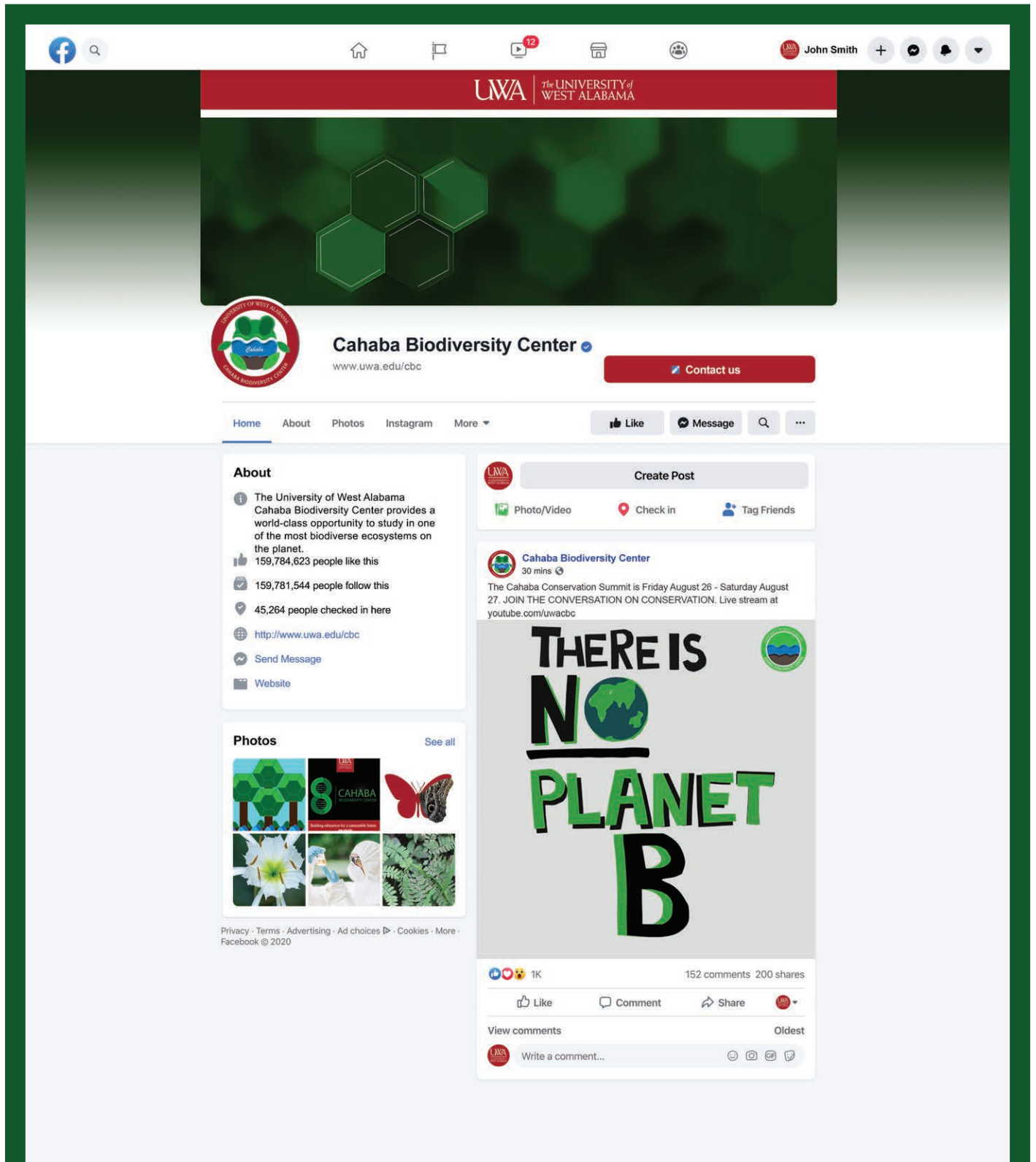
Showcase our work

- Final Biology Students' Projects Blog - May 4th - 5th
- Forrest Friends and Finds

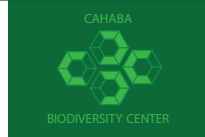
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Renew our Rivers dates	2 Mothers Day Event info Weekly Newsletter	3 Tuesday Teachable Moments	4 Student Research Project showcase	5	6 Tourist Appreciation	7
8	9 Weekly Newsletter Mothers day recap	10 Tuesday Teachable Moments	11 Protecting our beaches on summer vacation	12	13 Mascot post (what's it up too?)	14 
15	16 Weekly Newsletter	17 Tuesday Teachable Moments	18 Why old growth-forrest matter	19 Forrest Friends & Finds	20 Endangered Species Day	21
22 International Day for Biological Diversity	23 Weekly Newsletter Summer camp sign-up	24 Tuesday Teachable Moments	25 3 ways you can protect your local rivers	26 Memorial Day Picnic Info	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day Picnic Photos	31 Tuesday Teachable Moments				

-  Facebook/Instagram
-  Website

SOCIAL MEDIA MOCKUP



EVENT ITINERARY



Events for CBC

- Art & Photo Contest- Participants would submit photos, art, or videos about biodiversity in and around Bibb County. This could be something done with elementary or middle school aged children to introduce them to the program and began an interest in biodiversity.
- Poetry & Film Day at the CBC- This would cater to high school-aged students and potentially college aged students. Films could be shown that capture the essence of what biodiversity is and its importance. After showing films and having discussions, students can break into groups and create poems. A prize could be given to the group with the best poem. UWA swag may also be good items to giveaway.
- Monthly Outings- These outings could be from various groups to introduce the CBC and offer new surroundings for participants to become one with each other as well as nature! Some of these groups could include sports teams, church groups and interest groups.
- Kids Day at the CBC- These are summer programs that could be multiple and/or various days throughout the summer months for enrichment about the biodiversity.
- Adult Learning opportunities - (think continuing education)
- K-12 Teacher Professional Development Days – Alumni teachers of UWA Natural Science & Mathematics would be great to invite. As well as teachers who teach similar subjects in the surrounding areas.

Fundraising Ideas

The goal of fundraising is the help with raising money for enhancement of the education building, enhancing the current buildings on the property & stewardship/maintenance endowment. Some ideas are as follows:

- UWA Alumni events held at the CBC specifically geared towards graduates of the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics. Ideas for alumni could include Family fun day and Alumni teacher's retreat day.
- Active UWA Alumni Groups to consider are regionally close to CBC- Choctaw County, Sumter County, Wilcox County, Greater Birmingham, and Marengo County.
- Golf Tournaments
- Walk/Run/Bike-a-Thon
- Auctions
- Dunking booths where students pay to dunk staff
- Ultimately, with the education component and workforce development training opportunities, lobbying for state funding in a separate budget line item would assist in long-term sustainability, as the CBC needs multiple funding streams that combine private and public dollars.

Partnership Suggestions

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| • Alabama Rivers Alliance | • The Nature Conservancy |
| • Fresh Water Land Trust | • Alabama Humanities Alliance (Water/Ways) |
| • Coosa Riverkeeper, Inc. | • Black Belt Heritage Area |
| • Cahaba River Society | • Birmingham Audubon Society |
| • Black Warrior Riverkeeper | • The Fresh Air Family |

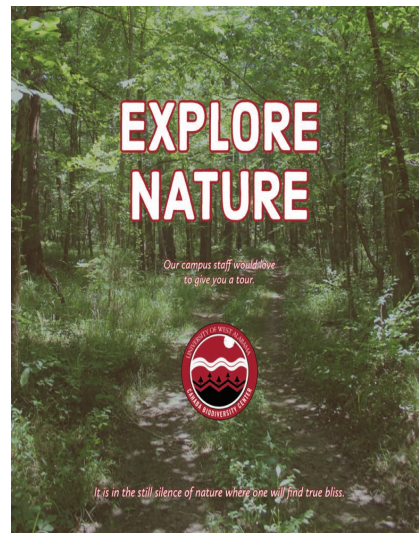
Cahaba Biodiversity Center
5252 Birmingham Road
Centreville, AL 35042

EVENT POSTERS



build your own
**ENTOMOLOGICAL
 COLLECTION**

The Cahaba Biodiversity Center offers a unique opportunity & experience for learning more about biodiversity through professors, graduate students, and staff. This space offers the ability to learn & grow not only with West Alabama, but nature as well.
 for more information please visit uwa.edu/cbc



THE END

