

Home of Rare Watercress Darter Enhanced with Partners' Help



Above Randy Tipton, John Milledge, and Jay McCullar of Action Environmental.



Above Tapawingo Springs, after the removal of home and outbuildings. The blue mulch socks prevent silt from entering the springs. Right The dilapidated home and outbuildings on the Springs, and on demolition day.



Thanks to the help of **Action Environmental**, a beautiful endangered fish has cleaner water and a better place to live.

In 2004, the Freshwater Land Trust purchased the last critical piece of property along Penny Springs (also known as Tapawingo Springs) between two properties the FWLT previously acquired. These springs are home to one of only four known populations of the federally endangered Watercress Darter. The Freshwater Land Trust purchased the land surrounding the springs to protect the fish from the increasing threats of urbanization and sedimentation in the Turkey Creek watershed.

The land purchase included a home and associated structures that were perched on the edge of the springs. These structures had flooded repeatedly and had significantly altered the streamside habitat and natural hydrology of the site. The FWLT saw this as an excellent opportunity to restore a sensitive streamside area and to enhance the habitat of the watercress darter.

The Land Trust was the recipient of \$27,500 in funds from Alabama Biodiesel and Black Warrior Riverkeeper's settlement agreement. All parties in that settlement agreed that the demolition of the home and outbuildings next to the springs would be an excellent use of the funds.

Action Environmental Inc., of Hanceville was

chosen to perform the asbestos sampling, abatement, and demolition of the structures. Action had previously removed the nearby Tapawingo Plunge swimming pool and infrastructure in 2002 for the Freshwater Land Trust through funding from a U. S. Fish and Wildlife grant.

Action began asbestos abatement work on November 17th. Due to the presence of asbestos-containing materials in the flooring and sheetrock, abatement costs were in excess of \$7,000, all of which was donated by Action Environmental. The house, outbuildings, pavilions, 3 cisterns, driveway, chain link fence, and walk bridges were all removed.

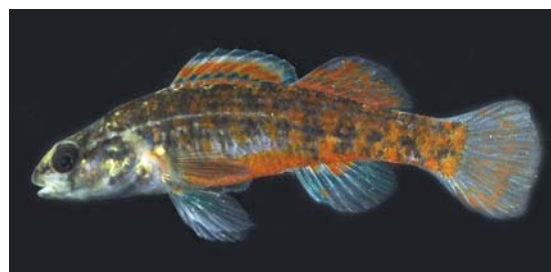
Due to a tight budget and increased haul-in fees by local landfills, Action separated the demolition materials and hauled approximately 400 tons of the heavier materials such as concrete back to their Hanceville office for recycling and usage as

rip-rap, resulting in a savings of \$12,000. Additionally, all of the windows in the house were removed and donated to local artist **Kristi Falligant**. Kristi creates wildflower art to benefit the **Crisis Center**, a local non-profit providing free counseling, crisis intervention, disaster relief, and educational outreach.

To further help protect the springs, the **Southern Environmental Center's Roald Hazelhoff** donated over 100 feet of blue "mulch socks." These mulch-filled tubes were installed around the springs to prevent silt from entering the water.

After all the work was done, Action Environmental removed over 500 tons of construction and demolition materials from the site, and they donated **over \$24,000** worth of services to the Freshwater Land Trust.

Huge thanks to **Action Environmental and the Southern Environmental Center** for making this project an extraordinary success!



Watercress darter (*Etheostoma nuchale*).
Photo courtesy of Dr. W. Mike Howell.