



128 years...

Dollarhide

An Alabama Icon

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Riding with current Dollarhide club president, Rex Zeanah across miles of improved woods roads, that snake between the towering mature hardwood bottomlands and skirt the cool murky river swamps, it's clear that this is indeed a special place with a legendary history. Just mention "Dollarhide" to many Alabama sportsman and they will give a knowing nod of the head that they have heard of this place of legend and outdoor lore. I would equate it to discussing the Augusta National Golf Club, most have never walked on its famous turf, but everyone knows that it is hallowed ground.



"The Casino" is one of the most popular rooms in the Dollarhide camp. Members gather here for fellowship as well as business meetings.

Dollarhide Camp, Inc *Since 1888*



Now, consisting of a little over six thousand acres, “Dollarhide” has been nestled along the Black Warrior river in Greene County Alabama, since 1888 when it became one of Alabama’s earliest organized hunting clubs. In 1891, the club incorporated with fourteen members and purchased approximately 3,635 acres in the Dollarhide swamp, primarily for duck hunting. The original membership has always believed in wildlife conservation and in fact, successfully proposed legislation to preserve game animals and birds in Greene County by setting hunting seasons, protecting nests and ending the commercial market use for wildlife in 1889. This is believed to be the first legislative act taken to conserve wildlife in Alabama and probably was the inspiration for future conservation regulations in Alabama, which didn’t take place until 1907 when the “Statewide Game Law” was enacted. The club was briefly out of existence due to a decision sell the property in 1904, but resurfaced quickly in 1913 as the “New Dollarhide Hunting Club” and rented the land they previously owned. In 1942 the “Dollarhide Conservation and Realty Company” was formed with forty stockholders and they again purchased the property which has since then given them long term stability, but also allowed the club to step up wildlife conservation efforts since they now controlled the land management. This was also when its Board of Trustees was created and club bylaws were created, which are credited as a key to the success and longevity of the organization. The membership is still limited to 40 and the organization of the board of trustees and decision making process has remained the same for almost seventy-five years.

During the 1940’s the membership took several steps that are still benefitting the club today. Land improvement projects included water control enhancements that created better duck hunting and fishing, but also allowed for flood control, road improvements and better access. After World War II began, the resources of the country were strained to support the war effort. It was common practice for the government to ration many things like food, fuels, steel, etc. Concerns that lumber resources would be depleted spurred the government to initiate a program to create a reserve of timberland for future needs of the war effort. Dollarhide was granted “Auxiliary State Forest” status under these programs and is the only property with this designation in modern day Alabama. The original four room camp house was enlarged and modernized to accommodate larger groups of sportsman,

MEMBERS OF DOLLARHIDE



HANK CRISP



WU WINSLETT



JEFF COLEMAN



RIGGS STEPHENSON

ENSHRINED IN
*The Alabama Sports
Hall of Fame*



JOE SEWELL

Several members had been celebrated athletes at The University of Alabama. Hoyt “Wu” Winslett was President of Dollarhide for over 40 years.

but also made camp life more enjoyable which created an atmosphere of fellowship. In 1948, a separate cabin (named “The Love Nest”) was constructed near the Black Warrior River that provided a camp with a special view of the waterway and some overnight privacy if members wanted to bring spouses to enjoy the club.

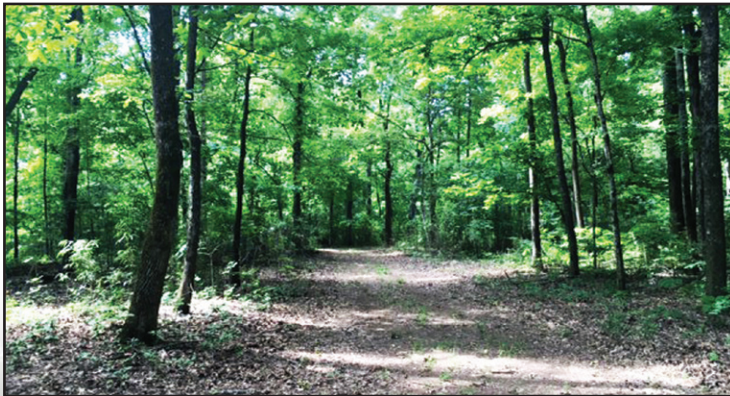
For most of this period in Dollarhide history, the key leadership of the club fell on the shoulders of Hoyt “Wu” Winslett who was elected President in annual elections from the mid 1940’s into the 1980’s. He had been a star athlete for the Alabama Crimson Tide football team in the mid 1920’s and is recognized as Alabama’s first Associated Press All-American. He played on teams that won several Southern Conference Championships and was on the 1926 National Championship team. After football, he was a successful businessman in Tuscaloosa and had been invited to visit Dollarhide as a guest on several occasions but was leery of going since he had heard it was expensive to join the club and he was just beginning his business career. However, the invites continued and the lure of exceptional duck hunting eventually persuaded him to accept. The night before the hunt, he won \$85 in a game of chance and promptly signed up as a new member of Dollarhide. For somebody to be elected president of a hunting club



The “Love Shack” was built along the Black Warrior river, to offer private accommodations for members bringing spouses and families to enjoy the property.

every year for that many decades is a clear testament that he was doing great things for the organization and was instrumental in making the club what it is today. To be sure new members understand the club history, there are hundreds of pictures hanging on the clubhouse walls and stories repeated around the campfire. Inside you will find a shrine to Wu Winslett, where he has appropriately been named “Mr. Dollarhide”.

The club continues to thrive in modern times. Duck hunting is still actively pursued, but members enjoy some of the best white-tailed deer hunting in the southeast. Four “drive” hunts are still carried out every season to celebrate the sporting tradition and to enjoy the social method of deer hunting along with the swinging of the paddle during the kangaroo court that deals with the issues of missed shots or breaking the minor rules of the hunt. Turkey hunting and small game hunting



Good access is key to quality hunting and the club works hard to maintain roads.



New bunkhouse, built in 2005 to provide more rooms for members to use the camp.

are also relished by club members, as the bays from hunting dogs echo through the open hardwoods in the pursuit of raccoons, squirrels or rabbits. Membership remains full, with a healthy list of sportsman waiting for an opportunity to join the Dollarhide tradition. Another key element in the clubs success has been welcoming the children of members to join the club functions. They feel a commitment to not only introduce youth to the outdoors, but to teach them the history and traditions of the legend of Dollarhide. When you look at the surnames of the members of the club when the property was re-purchased in the 1940’s, many still remain on the roster albeit two or three generations later. The goal of that original group from the 1800’s was that Dollarhide could be a place for many generations of sportsman could gather and enjoy good hunting and good fellowship. They have certainly accomplished this and the future looks better than ever. 🌲



Dollarhide member, Tandy Nicholson, enjoying the property with his son and grandson. Part of the clubs success is passing on the traditions of Dollarhide.

