



**Tennessee
Citizens for
Wilderness
Planning**

ISSN 1089-6104

Newsletter No. 355

January 20, 2021

Taking Care of Wild Places

- 1. Oak Ridge Newsp. 2**
 - A. Update of Proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack**
 - B. Odd Timing on EMDF, RFP, and no ROD**
 - C. Manhattan Project NHP Needs Volunteers**

- 2. Tennessee Newsp. 2**
 - A. Primacy Update**
 - B. Pigeon River Permit**
 - C. New Section on the Cumberland Trail**
 - D. Frozen Head S.P. Champion Foye Armes Has Passed**
 - E. Another Darter Faces Extinction**
 - F. Mack Prichard Foundation Established**

- 3. National Newsp. 4**
 - A. Biden's Cabinet Picks Bode Well**
 - B. Habitat Defined for E.S.A.**
 - C. Solar Power in Tennessee Valley**
 - D. GSMNP and CNF Receive Grant to Build Mountain Bike Trail**
 - E. BSF and Obed Seeking Volunteer Trail Keepers**
 - F. New Trail in Obed WSR to Norris Ford**

- 4. TCWP Newsp. 6**
 - A. Upcoming Activities**
 - B. Recent Activities**
 - C. Friends and Members in the News**
 - D. Farewell Betty and Jerry Olson**
 - E. Available Position with Tennessee RiverLine**

Editor: Sandra K. Goss, P. O. Box 6873 Oak Ridge, TN 37831 865-583-3967 sandra@sandrakgoss.com

A Member of Community Shares

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Update of Proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack

The Horizon Center, site of the proposed racetrack in Oak Ridge, must be rezoned to accommodate such a business. Oak Ridge Planning Commission and staff are addressing such zoning. The City Council must approve the new Special Recreation Zone. There will two votes on this issue. If the new zone is approved, the City Council will have to vote to approve the zoning for the Horizon Center, again with two votes on the designation.

There is strong sentiment on both sides of this issue. An informal count of Oak Ridge City Council members' likely votes indicates that a majority favors the racetrack. The Oak Ridge League of Women Voters has issued a letter of concern about the racetrack. Among the League's concerns are degradation to heretofore protected natural areas, noise levels and traffic congestion for residents, and the harm to west Oak Ridge neighborhoods.

To voice opinions on this issue, one can write the Oak Ridge City Council (CityCouncil@oakridgetn.gov).

1B. Odd Timing on EMDF, RFP, and no ROD

Last month the Department of Energy issued the final Request For Proposal for the next 5- to 10-year environmental cleanup contract worth an estimated \$8.3 billion. The scope of work includes design, construction, and operation of the controversial Environmental Management Disposal Facility, even though no Record of Decision has been issued for it. The long-anticipated ROD has been deferred to July. For more info, <https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/seb/orrc/rfp/rfp.php>.

1C. Manhattan Project NHP Seeks Volunteers

We're seeking volunteers to assist our operation. Opportunities include staffing the visitor contact station at Children's Museum of Oak Ridge and meeting and greeting visitors while providing information about the park. Opportunities to provide informational programs may also exist. Volunteers usually work in four-hour blocks but can vary depending on the availability of the volunteer. Prospective volunteers should be interested in providing information to visitors from all over the country in an indoor setting. No money handling will be required, and volunteers will receive training about the Manhattan Project and World War II history, as well as National Park Service operations.

For more information about becoming a National Park Service volunteer at Manhattan Project Oak Ridge site, please call Effie Houston at (423) 569-9778, or at effie_houston@nps.gov.

2. TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. Update on Primacy

On a recent conference meeting, several Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation staffers and several representatives of environmental/ conservation groups met to discuss the status of Tennessee taking primacy on coal mine permits and enforcement.

For many years, the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) has been the permitting and enforcement agency for Tennessee coal mines. In April, 2018, the Primacy and Reclamation act became Tennessee law. The law dictated that TDEC develop a program to administer coal mining regulations and enforcement.

Program development was contingent on money from OSMRE. That money became available December 2019 and TDEC sought an informal review of the program from OSMRE. That informal review garnered feedback from OSM that highlighted some insufficiencies and statutory inadequacies.

After many meetings between TDEC and OSM, as well as meetings among TDEC, OSM and the Governor's office, it was determined that a regulatory fix is necessary. A bill will likely be introduced this upcoming legislative session to remedy the insufficiencies. It was noted that the new Primacy program must have stringent SMCRA regs much like the current federal program and also meet funding requirements.

TDEC has done a cost estimate of \$2.14 million dollars a year to run the program. Through September '22, congressional startup money will fund program design.. After that, the state will be responsible for the costs. It is estimated that \$870,000 will need to be appropriated from the general fund to make up this gap, starting in 2023.

2A. New Section of the Cumberland Trail nears Official Opening

The Cumberland Trails Conference (CTC) trail building crew has just completed a six-mile section of the Cumberland Trail (CT). It connects two favorite outdoor destinations, Black Mountain and Ozone Falls. Building trail for the Cumberland Trail State Park is a primary activity of the CTC.

The State Park will soon officially open this section of trail for hikers. The CT is a long-distance trail about 300 miles running from Chattanooga to Cumberland Gap at the KY and VA. More than 200 miles are already completed. For more information on this new section and the entire CT go to the CTC website, Cumberlandtrail.org. In particular check out the November Newsletter there. *Larry Pounds*

2B. Frozen Head State Park Champion William ("Foye") Armes Has Passed

William E. ("Foye") Armes, 93, passed on Sunday, November 1, 2020 at his home near Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area. He is survived by his wife of 74 years, Juanita Shannon Armes, and family.

Foye began caring for the area now known as Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area long before it became his job to do so. This was "family land" to him, as his ancestor Blecher Armes settled a land grant encompassing property that is now the Park and Natural Area in 1822; the family name is associated with several Park sites, such as Armes Gap. Foye vividly described early history of this land and people in his 2018 memoir *Tid Bits and True Tales of the Frozen Head Mountains* (available at the Park gift shop).

When Foye's father Kirlie Armes became (the first) Forester of the Morgan State Forest in 1942, his family moved to the cabin that had been the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp Superintendent's residence. Foye grew up there and later succeeded his father as (the second) Forester of the Morgan State Forest. When Morgan State Forest became Frozen Head State Park in 1971, Foye continued safeguarding the Park as Caretaker until a State Park Manager was named.

One of Foye's many courageous acts protecting the Park was to help preserve, intact, both the Flat Fork Watershed and the Frozen Head State Park Viewshed. The slopes and ridge across Flat Fork Creek as viewed from the Park Visitor Center front porch were once owned by a single land company that planned to perform mountaintop removal and contour mining of coal on Bird Mountain. The end result would have resembled a moonscape. Initial mine permits had been approved when Foye, Don Todd, Flat Fork Valley resident Mary Ann McPeters, and organizational allies Bob Lantz (Frozen Head State Park Association), Bill Russell (TCWP) and Will Skelton (Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club) signed a Petition to the Department of Interior Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) requesting designation of the Flat Fork Creek Watershed and portions of the Mud Creek Watershed as "Lands Unsuitable for Mining." The date was September 25, 1985.

At that time, to stand up for the land in East Tennessee was dangerous. Foye became a target when he signed that

Petition, and was soon paid a personal visit by the owner of the company contracted to stripmine Bird Mountain. The company owner attempted to intimidate Foye into withdrawing his name from the Petition; Foye refused, and continued to stand fast through the following years of proceedings. In March 1990, OSMRE agreed with the Petitioners and declared the area "Lands Unsuitable for Mining."

Thus, when the Bredeesen Administration found funds in 2007 to acquire property as part of the "Connecting the Cumberlands" initiative, there was an intact and well-forested watershed to purchase and add to the Park.

So, thank you, Foye, for speaking truth to power and keeping the long view. We are all the richer for it. *Annetta Watson, Vice-President, Friends of Frozen Head State Park. Excerpted from a longer article and photo published on the TCWP website at <https://tcwp.org/frozen-head-state-park-champion-william-foye-armed-has-passed/>*

2C. Another Darter Facing Extinction

We all remember the snail darter (*Percina tanasi*), still considered threatened, that for a time halted construction of Tellico Dam on the Tellico River. Now another, the sickle darter (*Percina williamsi*) that inhabits the Tennessee River system, has been proposed for threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The small slender fish is already considered vulnerable and decreasing under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, the most comprehensive inventory of the world's threatened species. In addition, the darter is listed as threatened by the states of Tennessee and Virginia, making it unlawful to take the species or damage its habitat without a state permit. The sickle darter is also identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Tennessee and Virginia Wildlife Action Plans, which outline actions to promote species conservation.

Prior to 2005, the sickle darter could be found in the Emory, Clinch, Powell, Little, French Broad, North Fork Holston, Middle Fork Holston, South Fork Holston, and Watauga rivers. In addition, the darters were discovered in the Sequatchie River in 2014. However, because of habitat changes, sickle darter populations in the French Broad, South Fork Holston, Powell, and Watauga rivers have vanished, leaving just six streams where the sickle darter still lives.

Conservation Fisheries, Inc, a nonprofit conserving aquatic species in the Southeast, has tried to propagate the fish under contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While they have released about 25 juvenile darters into the Tellico River, they've found that breeding the fish in captivity can be difficult.

The proposed ESA listing resulted from a petition by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and other organizations in April 2010 to list aquatic, riparian, and wetland species, including the sickle darter, as endangered or threatened species under the Act. In response, the FWS issued a finding that the petition contained substantial information indicating that listing may be warranted for numerous species, including the sickle darter. However, nothing happened.

So, in February 2015, the CBD filed a complaint that the FWS failed to complete a 12-month finding for the sickle darter in accordance with statutory deadlines. Subsequently the FWS and the CBD filed a stipulated settlement in the District of Columbia, agreeing that the FWS will submit a finding for the sickle darter no later than September 30, 2020. The finding was completed on time, with the FWS concluding, "Our review of the best available scientific and commercial information indicates that the sickle darter meets the Act's definition of a 'threatened' species." The goal of both the listing under the ESA and captive propagation is to stabilize the existing populations and prevent extinction.

The FWS has accepted comments on its proposed listing; the comment period ended on January 11, 2021. If the sickle darter is listed, requirements of the ESA will then take effect, which include a recovery planning process that identifies actions necessary to halt or reverse the sickle darter's decline by addressing the threats to its survival and recovery. The designation of "critical habitat" will be proposed later following the official listing as threatened. The next steps are for the FWS to review the submitted comments and evaluate whether to modify its recommendation.

For more information:

Benton, Ben, "Tiny Fish Found in Sequatchie River and Other Water Bodies Proposed for Protection," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, November 16, 2020.

Proposed darter listing:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FWS-R4-ES-2020-0094-0001> Russ Manning

2D. Mack S. Prichard Foundation Established

The late Mack Prichard, State Naturalist for many years, was well known for his thousands of pictures taken all over the state. Thousands of Tennesseans saw his exceptional pictures in presentations by Prichard that built support for conserving waterfalls, trails, special lands and waters. Prichard was instrumental in facilitating the acquisition of over 40 sites that became Tennessee State Parks.

In October, 2019, the Mack S. Prichard Foundation was founded. The mission of the 501c3 organization is "to

engage in activities to protect and conserve the natural environment in Tennessee." The objective is to provide scholarships to students for environmental science-related degrees or those who wish to become a State of Tennessee Park Ranger, support public television and radio programming that promotes protection of the environment, seek donations for purchasing land for conservation and to provide programming and education opportunities to encourage youth participation at Tennessee State Parks.

Tax deductible contributions to the Mack S. Prichard Foundation may be sent to 226 Cherry Avenue, Cookeville, Tennessee 38501. For more information email macksprichard@gmail.com.

3. NATIONAL NEWS

3A. Biden's Cabinet Picks Bode Well

Many of President-Elect Biden's Cabinet nominations are welcome news for the conservation community. Some have ties to environmental groups and so provide evidence of Biden's commitment to tackling climate change. Now that Democrats have won the two senate runoff races in Georgia, Biden has a good chance of getting his selections confirmed by the Senate. Here are a few (not all require confirmation):

- John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate—Former Senator, Secretary of State under Obama, and an architect of the Paris climate accord.
- Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor—EPA Administrator during Obama's second term and currently head of the National Resources Defense Council.
- Jennifer Granholm, Secretary of Energy—Currently Michigan Governor, has spoken against both the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines and advocated for shifting investment from oil and gas to renewable energy solutions.
- Michael Regan, EPA Administrator—Started his career at the EPA during the Clinton Administration and spent eight years at the Environmental Defense Fund before becoming Secretary of North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality.
- Brenda Mallory, Council on Environmental Quality—Worked several years at the EPA, and more recently, as general counsel for the CEQ; currently Director of Regulatory Policy at the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>

- Deb Haaland, Secretary of Interior—Perhaps the most exciting nomination; will be first Native American cabinet secretary; member of the [Laguna Pueblo](#) and a 35th-generation New Mexican; will oversee the department that more than any other impacts Native American ancestral lands; currently New Mexico Representative, one of the first two Native American women elected to the U.S. Congress; supports the movements to [abolish ICE](#) and to implement the [Green New Deal](#); perhaps we'll see reinstatement of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments.

For more information see:

<https://buildbackbetter.gov/nominees-and-appointees/> RM

3B. "Habitat" Defined for Endangered Species Act

In December 2020, the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a rule that provides a regulatory definition of "habitat" for the Endangered Species Act. The ESA requires critical habitat to be determined for a species once it has been listed as threatened or endangered. While "habitat" did not have a specific definition, "critical habitat" is defined as

(i) the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species, at the time it is listed ..., on which are found those physical or biological features (I) essential to the conservation of the species and (II) which may require special management considerations or protection; and (ii) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species at the time it is listed ..., upon a determination by the Secretary that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species.

The new rule resulted from the U.S. Supreme Court's 2018 decision in *Weyerhaeuser Co. v. U.S. FWS*. In that case, the Fish and Wildlife Service's designation of 1,500 acres of land as critical habitat for the dusky gopher frog was challenged because the land was not occupied by the frog, and improvements to the land would be needed in order for it to become occupied. The Supreme Court remanded the case to the Fifth Circuit (where it was later dismissed), but noted that it must first be shown that the land is "habitat" before it can be designated as "critical habitat."

Common usage of the two terms implies that critical habitat is a subset of a species' habitat. For example, the habitat of the grizzly bear might be considered much of the western U.S. where the bear was historically found. However, the much smaller critical habitat is "specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species, ... essential to the conservation of the species."

Rather than relying on common usage, the Trump Administration took this opportunity to provide a regulatory definition of "habitat":

For the purposes of designating critical habitat only, habitat is the abiotic and biotic setting that currently or periodically contains the resources and conditions necessary to support one or more life processes of a species.

The new rule goes on to say:

... the definition excludes areas that do not currently or periodically contain the requisite resources and conditions, even if such areas could meet this requirement in the future after restoration activities or other changes occur.

Under this new definition and with the above clarification, grizzly bear habitat is only where current conditions exist to support this species, and therefore critical habitat, as a subset of habitat, cannot include areas that must be restored. Nor can critical habitat include areas that will become suitable in the future after "other changes occur"—here read "climate change." The definition essentially ties the hands of the Interior Secretary in determining other "such areas are essential for the conservation of the species."

The Center for Biological Diversity captures the problem: "Under the rule, protections are limited to areas that could *currently* support the species — but not areas that were previously occupied and could be restored, or to areas that will provide additional habitat for future recovery as climate change shifts where species can live. ... Most endangered species, however, have lost extensive areas of their historic range to habitat loss and fragmentation, and thus need habitat restoration to recover."

In September 2020 when the rule was proposed, 100 members of Congress issued a letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service: "We are alarmed by this proposed rule ... This onslaught of environmental rollbacks that threaten the survival of our nation's wildlife must stop. The proposed definition, if finalized, would limit the ability of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conserve and restore important habitat based on the best available science for the recovery of ESA-listed species."

The new rule took effect January 15, 2021. Perhaps this is another attack on the environment that can be rolled back under the leadership of Biden's nominee for Secretary of Interior, Deb Haaland.

For more information:

Final Rule:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/16/2020-27693/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-regulations-for-listing-endangered-and-threatened>

Supreme Court 2018 decision:

<https://www.environmentallawandpolicy.com/2020/08/definition-of-habitat-proposed-for-the-esa/>

Center for Biological Diversity:

<https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/trump-administration-finalizes-rule-limiting-habitat-protections-endangered-species-2020-12-15/>

Congressional letter:

<https://debbiedingell.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2684> RM

3C. Solar Farms in Tennessee Valley

In the latest move away from carbon-based fuels to renewables in Tennessee, Google is partnering with solar developer Origis Energy to build a 705-acre, 100-megawatt solar farm in Obion County to supply Google data centers in Alabama and Tennessee. The partnership is part of Tennessee Valley Authority's Green Invest program, which recently earned the 2020 Green Power Leadership Award for Green Power Market Development from the Center for Resource Solutions.

Green Invest creates public-private partnerships that pair large customers with solar developers through a competitive bid process. According to TVA, "this ensures that when businesses choose to partner with TVA they receive low-cost pricing and TVA's brand assurance to deliver renewable energy through long-term agreements." Green Invest is available to local power companies and business and industrial customers across TVA's service territory.

TVA has also completed other major Green Invest deals in 2020 with General Motors, Vanderbilt University, Knoxville Utilities Board, and Facebook. Two KUB agreements in 2020 commit the Knoxville utility for a total of 502 megawatts of new-to-the-grid solar power, an amount equal to 20% of KUB's annual electric load. To date, this is the largest commitment of any business in the TVA program.

While the Green Invest program should certainly be lauded, TVA has however been slow to develop solar for its own energy needs. According to the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, TVA has built fewer solar farms for its own generation than neighboring utilities. Less than 2% of its power now comes from solar. For a step in the right direction, though, TVA's long-range power plan calls for 14 gigawatts of additional solar generation by 2040, about 20 times the amount of solar generation now in the Valley.



Sign-up for
e-mail alerts on
our website at
<http://www.tcwp.org>

For additional information, see:

Flessner, Dave, "Tennessee Solar Farm to Power Google Data Centers through TVA Green Invest Program," *Times Free Press*, November 14th, 2020

<https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregional/story/2020/nov/14/solar-farm-power-google-data-centers-through-tva/536005/> RM

3D. GSMNP Receives Bike Trail Grant

Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Cherokee National Forest have received a \$6 million grant to create 50—75 miles of mountain bike trails to the top of Hall Mountain. Some of the trail will be on Foothills Parkway, through Sevier and Blount counties. Awarded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the grant will also fund a shuttle to take bikers to the top of the Hall Mountain.

3E. Trail Keeper Volunteers Sought at Big South Fork and Obed.

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area and Obed Wild and Scenic River are seeking trail keepers for both parks. Trail keepers are expected to traverse their adopted trail at least four times during the year, pick up any trash, and submit a trail report after each visit. Trail keepers do not perform heavy trail maintenance nor use power equipment. To learn more about the Trail Keeper program, email the parks' volunteer coordinator at effie_houston@nps.gov or call (423) 569-9778.

3F. New Official Hiking Trail Offers Access to the Obed River

An important acquisition of land was made at the end of last year. A very thin strip of land was needed to provide access to Norris Ford. The new Norris Ford Trail will be about a mile long. TCWP Program Committee is working to plan an outing on this new addition to the park. Look for details in upcoming newsletters.

4. TCWP NEWS

4A. Upcoming Activities

[TCWP's Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We will practice social distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between participants. This will limit the amount of interpretation that can be done.
- We will organize activities into groups of 10 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring a mask and wear it when around others.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning to activities instead of carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancelation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

Safe Passage: Wildlife Crossings in the Smoky Mountains – Thursday, January 28

Join us for this educational virtual program Thursday, January 28, at 7 p.m. TDOT recently installed new bear crossing signs on I-40 near the North Carolina line on a section often considered a death trap for wildlife. Jeff Hunter, senior program manager with National Parks Conservation Association in Asheville, will speak on the collaborative effort to provide safe passage options for wildlife.

As our world warms, wildlife populations need to expand northward. Highways are formidable barriers to this movement. Hunter facilitates the work of nearly 20 federal, state, tribal, and non-governmental organizations collaborating to make a 28-mile stretch of I-40 near the Smokies permeable for wildlife and safer for people.

Hunter's work includes issues related to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. He also led the Tennessee Wild wilderness campaign focused on permanently protecting nearly 20,000 acres in the Cherokee National Forest, including 4.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The signing of the Tennessee Wilderness Act into law in December 2018 marked the completion of this project.

Registration is required for this free online event, cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society. The format for this program will be Zoom. To register, go

to utarboretumsociety.org. Registrants will be sent a link for program access in their confirmation emails. *Michelle Campanis*

Alley Ford Workday – Saturday, February 13

A day of trail work and hiking will take place on the 2.5-mile section of the Cumberland Trail at the Obed Wild and Scenic River between Nemo Picnic Area and Alley Ford adopted by TCWP in 1998. Participants should dress appropriately for winter weather, wear sturdy shoes or boots, and bring work gloves, loppers, small bow saws or folding saws, shovels and grubbing tools, as well as a lunch and plenty of water. Cumberland Trail State Park personnel will provide some tools that will be available at the event.

Participants can meet for caravanning in Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's) in time to leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m. Eastern, or can join the crew at Nemo Picnic Area or Rock Creek Campground at 10 a.m. We expect to return to the trailhead by around 3 p.m. (NOTE: If the weather is uncooperative--excessive rain or snow and ice—we will reschedule for February 20.)

Participants will need to sign a National Park Service volunteer form (parent's or guardian's signature required for minors). Forms can be requested in advance from TCWP, or NPS representatives will also have forms available at the event.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, March 6

The Oak Ridge Cedar Barren will again be the site of exotic invasive plant removal as we conduct our first cleanup of 2021. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, the Barren is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. The area is one of just a few cedar barrens in East Tennessee, and is subject to invasion by bushy lespedeza, leatherleaf viburnum, privet, autumn olive, mimosa, Nepal grass, multiflora rose, and woody plants that threaten the system's prairie grasses. Our efforts help to eliminate invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sunlight.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School Parking lot at 9 a.m., with sturdy shoes, loppers, gloves, and water. For more information, contact Tim Bigelow at 865-607-6781 or Bigelowt2@mindspring.com.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from the COVID-19 virus. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. This event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Hike at Head of the Sequatchie – Saturday, March 20

On March 20, Tennessee State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath will lead a hike at Head of Sequatchie, a part of the Cumberland Trail State Park admired for its serenity and beauty.

“The Head of Sequatchie is an extraordinary area,” Randy says. “It is the start of a striking 100-mile valley that is so prominent it can be recognized from space. It includes Devilstep Hollow Cave, a sacred site for Native Americans, and the emergence of a river that collects water from Grassy Cove, a huge sinkhole valley just to the north.

“The area is beautiful and fascinating. In late March, there will be abundant wildflowers along our two-mile, moderate walk.”

Hikers can meet for caravanning in Oak Ridge at the Gold’s Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita’s) in time to leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m. Eastern time, or can join the caravan at 9:05 Central time at Homestead Baptist Church (4427 Highway 127 South, Crossville), across from the Cumberland Mountain State Park entrance. We expect to arrive at Head of the Sequatchie by 9:30 a.m. Central. Wear sturdy shoes, and bring a lunch and water.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

**Support TCWP by donating,
joining, or renewing
your membership
at <http://www.tcwp.org>**

4B. Recent events

Norris Watershed Hike – Saturday, November 14

On November 14, 10 hikers walked a four-mile loop in the Norris Watershed through various forest types, up and over hills on forest roads and single-track trails. We saw old and new forests in the watershed, which is managed by sustainable yield forestry.

Although the fall colors were not spectacular, it was a beautiful day to be in the woods. Any day in nature is indeed a blessing. *Joe Feeman*

Virtual TCWP Holiday Party – Thursday, December 3

Our 2020 Holiday party was held on Zoom, breaking a years-long tradition of gathering at Jenny Freeman and Bill Allen’s home in Oak Ridge. Although party-goers were fewer than usual and provided their own snacks and beverages, we had an enjoyable evening of conversation and holiday toasts, with TCWP President Mark Bevelhimer greeting the group and making a few comments.

Whites Creek Workday – Saturday, January 9

On January 9, five TCWP volunteers braved the cold and a few snow flurries to spend a winter day doing trail maintenance at TVA’s Whites Creek Small Wild Area on Watts Bar Reservoir in Rhea County. We mostly brushed the trail and removed some smaller trees with handsaws. ATVs continue to access our property at the northwest corner and ride on the old road along the ridge on the west side.

TCWP has partnered with TVA since 1983 to enhance and protect natural resources at the Whites Creek SWA and many other places on public lands throughout East Tennessee as part of our ongoing stewardship efforts. *Jimmy Groton*

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

4C. Friends and Members in the News

The November 20 *Oak Ridger* had a letter to the editor from Mick Wiest about preserving the Oak Ridge outdoor pool.

Anne Child’s letter to the editor of the November 20 *Oak Ridger* opposed the proposed Oak Ridge racetrack.

Frances Figart’s article about wild turkey appears in the November 22 *Asheville Citizen Times*.

Katelyn and Lauren Mayes were mentioned in a November 27 *Oak Ridger* article about Girl Scout Troop 21158.

The November 27 *Oak Ridger* carried an announcement of the December 1 Oak Ridge League of Women Voters meeting with featured speaker Robert Kennedy talking about the proposed Oak Ridge racetrack.

Colleen Iversen, Richard Norby, and Peter Thornton were mentioned as some of the world's most cited researchers as reported in the November 28 *News Sentinel*.

COVID-19 relief legislation was topic of Anne Child's November 30 letter to the editor of the *News Sentinel*.

Ray Garrett penned an op-ed column about the proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack in the December 8 *Oak Ridger*.

Tennessee Environmental Council (a valuable sister organization to TCWP) CEO Jeffrey Barrie penned an article about threats to our state's environment in the December 9 *Tennessean* and December 10 *News Sentinel*.

The January 1 *News Sentinel* carried a letter to the editor by Cindy Kendrick about the proposed Knox County Board of Health Advisory Board dissolution.

Jeff Mellor wrote a letter to the editor of the January 11 *News Sentinel* about President Trump

4D. Fare Thee Well, Betty and Jerry Olson

Long time TCWP members Elizabeth "Betty" Olson and husband Jerry have died within days of each other: December 26 and January 5, respectively. They each had long careers, Betty at Y-12 and Jerry at Oak Ridge National

Lab. In late retirement, they divided their time between their rural land in Roane County and Knoxville.

This writer recalls many chats with Jerry and sometimes with Betty at TCWP Holiday Parties. Jerry was a raconteur, drawing on a wealth of research experiences here and abroad. Betty was a beam of warm acceptance and lighthearted-ness.

Only later did I learn that Jerry's research was well-respected. He was interested in botany, sand dunes, global ecology and a host of other topics. Memorial in Jerry's name may be sent to TCWP, thanks to daughters Karen and Martha.

4E. Funding Strategist/Grants Manager position with Tennessee RiverLine Available

This is a full-time staff position in the University of Tennessee School of Landscape Architecture with 100% appointment to the Tennessee RiverLine initiative. The Funding Strategist and Grants Manager will play a formative role in the early stages of this multi-generational initiative by collaborating with diverse stakeholders to develop and successfully execute a comprehensive funding strategy that supports the Tennessee RiverLine's public outreach and vision delivery initiatives.

Additional information and application requirements can be found on

https://ut.taleo.net/careersection/ut_system/jobdetail.ftl?job=210000000T.

Review of applications will begin February 1 and will continue until the position is filled. The desired hire date is March 1, 2021.

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP's strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive and Membership-Development Director: Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967 Sandra@sandrakgoss.com

Outreach & Membership Coordinator:

Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

TCWP website: <http://www.tcwp.org>

**TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR
WILDERNESS PLANNING**

P.O. Box 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

www.tcwp.org
865-583-3967



Taking
Care of
Wild
Places

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

UPCOMING EVENTS

Board of Directors

Mark Bevelhimer.....President
Michele Thornton.....V. Pres.
Carol Grametbauer.....Secretary
Tim BigelowTreasurer
Michelle Campanis.....Director
Anne Child.....Director
Johnny Cosgrove.....Director
Christopher DeRolph.....Director
Jimmy Groton..... Director
Larry Pounds.....Director
Hannah TippetDirector

*January 28 - Safe Passage: Wildlife Crossings in the Smoky Mountains
program by Jeff Hunter, NPCA*

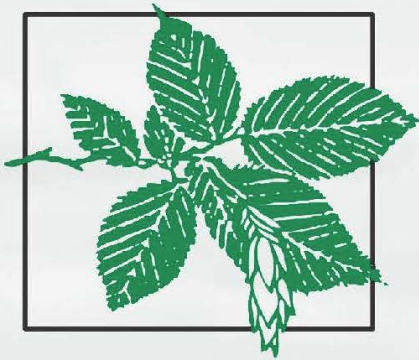
February 13 - Alley Ford Workday

March 6 - Spring Cedar Barren cleanup/Weed Wrangle®

March 20 - Hike at Head of the Sequatchie with Randy Hedgepath

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.

BREAKING NEWS Zoom Presentation on the Oak Ridge Racetrack by Virginia Dale and Ellen Smith, Thursday, February 4. Sponsored by TCWP, Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation, and Oak Ridgers for Responsible Development. There's an important vote on Feb 8.



**Tennessee
Citizens for
Wilderness
Planning**

ISSN 1089-6104

Newsletter No. 356

March 9, 2021

Taking Care of Wild Places

- 1. Oak Ridge Newsp. 2**
 - A. Racetrack Status**
 - B. iNaturalist and Oak Ridge Cedar Barren**
 - C. Clinch River Nuclear Reactor proposal available for comment**
- 2. Tennessee Newsp. 3**
 - A. Coal Primacy**
 - B. Cumberland Trail/Frozen Head State Park Connector Trail Under Construction**
 - C. UT's Working Woodlands Inventory**
 - D. Paper Mill asks for permit renewal to discharge into Pigeon River**
 - E. Volunteer Day on Black Mountain**
- 3. National Newsp. 4**
 - A. Biden Signs Executive Orders: Environment and Conservation Bolstered**
 - B. TVA Gets BAD GRADE on Climate Change Efforts**
- 4. TCWP Newsp. 5**
 - A. Upcoming Activities**
 - B. Recent Activities**
 - C. Friends and Members in the News**
 - D. Farewell Tom Thornburg**
 - E. Boxes, boxes, boxes!!**
 - F. New Record Keeping Implemented**

Editor: Sandra K. Goss, P. O. Box 6873 Oak Ridge, TN 37831 865-583-3967 sandra@sandrakgoss.com

A Member of Community Shares

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Oak Ridge Racetrack subject of City Council Work Session March 16

Oak Ridge City Manager was quoted as telling the Planning Commission that the City Council will consider the new Special Recreation District recently devised to add to Oak Ridge zoning. The SRD designation was developed to accommodate the Racetrack proposed at the Horizon Center.

There are several concerns related to the racetrack:

- Destruction of a beech-maple grove
- Blockade of wildlife corridor
- Obliteration of a stream's riparian area

To communicate your views to Oak Ridge City Council, email CityCouncil@oakridgetn.gov.

1B. Tracking Biodiversity at the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens

TCWP would like your help in tracking the biodiversity of the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens. As many of you know, the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens is a unique habitat in the region. One that TCWP works to preserve. By tracking the species that are found there, TCWP will have a better understanding of the survival of rare species as well as the presence and proliferation of invasive species.

Using the iNaturalist app, we are asking users to take photos of their observations in the Cedar Barrens and upload them for identification. The app will help with the identification if you are not sure. Additionally, once observations are uploaded, other users and experts may suggest changes to the identification you have chosen.

If you want to include digital photos taken with a camera, that can be done online at iNaturalist.com.

Check out TCWP's iNaturalist Cedar Barrens project at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/oak-ridge-cedar-barrens> To learn more about iNaturalist, check out <https://iNaturalist.com>.

To learn more about using the iNaturalist app, check out this video: <https://vimeo.com/162581545>

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>

The iNaturalist app can be found in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

This will be an ongoing project and we are looking for observations year 'round. We are also considering similar projects for other TCWP stewardship areas and will let you know once those are available. – Ken Mayes

1C. Clinch River Nuclear Reactor Project Comments Sought by TVA

The long proposed nuclear reactor(s) at the former Clinch River Breeder Reactor site is the subject of a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Programmatic refers to any broad or high-level National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) review that "assesses the environmental impacts of proposed policies, plans, programs, or projects for which subsequent actions will be implemented either based on the Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) or Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)" per the National Institute of Justice.

Comments, accepted through March 19, can include alternatives, information, and analyses that would be relevant to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of a site that includes the new types of nuclear reactors. TVA said it plans to evaluate a variety of alternatives, including a no-action alternative.

Detailed information is available at www.tva.com/nepa. Comments must be received or postmarked by March 19 online at <https://www.tva.com/nepa>; or by email to nepa@tva.gov. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and available for public inspection.

2. TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. Update on Primacy

Efforts continue within the Tennessee Department of Conservation and Environment to develop successfully a program to administer coal mining regulations and enforcement. This is in accordance with the 2018 Primacy and Reclamation Law. According to reliable sources, a new bill is being prepared to remedy insufficiencies in the 2018 Act.

Representatives from TCWP and other environmental and conservation groups have been working together to

develop a fact sheet for our state legislators. Among the most incredible facts:

- According to state reports, NO coal was mined in Tennessee the last 3 quarters of 2020.
- TDEC has estimated that the state budget will pay \$870,000 annually starting in 2023 to administer a program that the Office of Surface mining Reclamation and Enforcement currently handles.

It is hoped that the fact sheet will be completed and posted on the TCWP website by mid-March. Please prepare to call your state legislator to bring this unnecessary expense to his or her attention.

2B. Frozen Head-Cumberland Trail Connector Project

The Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail and Frozen Head State Park have recently been awarded an Appalachian Regional Commission Grant to connect 4 miles of the Cumberland Trail in Morgan County. The Frozen Head-Cumberland Trail Connector Project will construct a foot trail connection between downtown Wartburg and Frozen Head State Natural Area, employing local adults and hiring, training, and educating Morgan County high school students, for the larger purpose of economic development and protection of natural and cultural assets in Morgan County.

This 2-year project will allow the Cumberland Trail to hire a Backcountry Trail Crew to construct trail 5 days a week on Bird Mountain. Also, the grant funds a high school-age Trail Leaders Team to engage with resource management professionals, and receive education, training, and job experience in trail construction, educational programming, and leadership.

The FH-CT Connector Project is a collaborative effort supported by several local, state, and federal partners such as: Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Tennessee State Parks, Morgan County High Schools, City of Wartburg, Morgan County Executive's Office, Lone Mountain State Forest, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Emory River Watershed Association, Friends of Frozen Head, Friends of the Cumberland Trail, Morgan County Tourism Alliance, and the Morgan County Chamber of Commerce. - *Jacob Ingram*

2C. UT's Working Woodlands Inventory to Be Completed in 2021

Toward the end of 2019, the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture signed an agreement with The Nature Conservancy to manage the university's forested research properties under the highest standards for forest

management and also for selling carbon credits. UTIA is the first academic institution to enroll in TNC's Working Woodlands Program, which was established in 2009 to encourage landowners to sustainably manage their forestlands. This also represents the first time a university forest has become a registered carbon offset project.

The agreement with TNC covers UTIA's ~11,400 acres of forested properties in four counties. These properties are grouped in four units. The Cumberland Forest Unit was established in 1947 and consists of 8,361 acres in Morgan and Scott counties. The 860-acre Highland Rim Forest, established in 1960 in Franklin County, is known as the "barrens" where research is ongoing to increase forest productivity on such sites. The 250-acre UT Arboretum in Anderson County is a well-known favorite of Oak Ridgers and surrounding communities for hiking and tree identification and for research. The Oak Ridge Forest Unit's 1,954 acres virtually surround the Arboretum; both were established in 1964. The agreement does not impact current public use of these lands.

During 2020, the partnership engaged forest-consulting firms to inventory UT's forest to collect baseline data on tree species and size and other characteristics to guide development of a management plan to meet Forest Stewardship Council certification, the highest standard for conserving working forests. In addition, the collected data will enable calculations for predicting forest growth and carbon sequestration rates.

TNC will help to develop the carbon-offset project on the UT forests to market carbon credits to buyers on the carbon market. The revenue generated will help ensure that UTIA can provide space and resources for future forestry, wildlife, and land management research. The forest inventory is nearing completion and the carbon-offset project will be developed in 2021.

For more information:

"University of Tennessee AgResearch and The Nature Conservancy to Partner on Working Woodlands," <https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/university-of-tennessee-working-woodlands/>

"Partnership In Action, A landmark agreement will benefit Tennessee forests," <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/tennessee/stories-in-tennessee/university-of-tennessee-partnership/>

UT Forest Units, <http://taes.tennessee.edu/recs/forestry/CUForest.html> - *Russ Manning*

2D. Blue Ridge Paper Products Permit to Discharge into Pigeon River Up For Renewal

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality Division of Water Resources (DWR) will conduct an online public hearing on April 14 to hear public input about renewing Blue Ridge Paper's NPDES permit. The permit is for its facility located at the Blue Ridge Paper Products Wastewater Treatment Plant, located off Highway 215 (175 Main Street) in Canton.

Permit revisions include changes in current monitoring requirements at the Fiberville Bridge and removal of a color variance. DWR agrees with the removal of the color variance, based on improved stream conditions noted during a reevaluation, including significant improvements to instream concentrations of color in the Pigeon River. DWR concludes the variance is no longer necessary. DWR also agrees with the proposed renewal of the federal 316(a) temperature variance.

Water advocacy groups in Tennessee say the new draft permit, which is overdue for renewal, calls for "no improvements to water quality." The state of Tennessee lists the Pigeon River as 'impaired' due to color, foam, taste and smell from the mill's discharge for the first 5 miles downstream of the TN/NC state line at Waterville into Hartford, TN, a popular spot for both commercial and recreational whitewater rafting.

The hearing will be held Wednesday, April 14 at 6 p.m. One must preregister by noon on April 14 at: <https://ncdenrits.webex.com/ncdenrits/onstage/g.php?MTID=e6dd914ab0c9b2593dbb23321a36af245>. Comments are being received through April 30, 2021. Public comments may be emailed with "Blue Ridge Paper Products" in the subject line to publiccomments@ncdenr.gov.

Comments will be considered in the final determinations of permit issuance and provisions, and variance removal. Comments previously submitted will be considered.

2E. April 10 is Volunteer Day at Black Mountain on Cumberland Trail

Volunteers are invited to join Park Ranger Mike Croley on Saturday, April 10 at 10:00 am CT and help with light trail maintenance and graffiti removal. Participants should bring gloves, plenty of water and a lunch. Be sure to dress for the weather and wear closed-toed shoes appropriate for light hiking.

Register for the event at <https://reserve.tnstateparks.com/register/volunteer-day-black-mountain->. This activity is subject to change/cancellation due to weather or lack of participants - it will be announced on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/cumberlandtrailSST/>. For more information, contact Ranger Mike Croley at 615-651-4401 or michael.croley@tn.gov. - Johnny Cosgrove

3. NATIONAL NEWS

3A. Biden Signs Executive Orders

The number of Executive Orders and Memoranda signed by President Biden in his first weeks is astonishing, not only for their number but also for their focus on the environment in addition to addressing the pandemic. Here are some of the Executive actions on the environment:

- Directs OMB to develop recommendations to modernize regulatory review and undoes Trump's regulatory approval process that required two regs to be canceled for every new one
- Stops construction of border wall
- Revokes permit for Keystone XL pipeline and directs agencies to review for reversal more than 100 Trump actions on the environment, including the reduction of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments
- Places a moratorium on oil and gas leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as well as on other federal lands and waters (does not nullify existing leases)
- Rejoins Paris climate accord
- Elevates climate change as an essential element of US foreign policy and national security and kicks off development of a new emissions reduction target.

In addition, the President issued executive actions pertaining to racial and gender justice. Environmental quality and racial/gender justice are inextricably linked—from drilling and mining on Native American land to the siting of polluting industries in or near communities of color.

- Recommits federal agencies to "engage in regular, robust and meaningful consultation with Tribal governments"
- Fortifies DACA after Trump's efforts to undo protections for undocumented people brought into the country as children
- Launches an initiative to advance racial equity and ends the bogus "1776 Commission"
- Acknowledges the rise in discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the past year because

Correction

In the TCWP Newsletter 355, January 2021 in Biden's Cabinet Picks Bode Well, Jennifer Granholm was described as the current governor of Michigan. She was governor of Michigan from 2003-2011. We regret the error.

of the pandemic and directing the Department of Justice to combat hate crimes and harassment

- Combats discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity
- Creates task force to reunite migrant families separated at the border.

For a complete list through February 24:

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/all-of-president-bidens-key-executive-orders-in-one-chart-2021-01-21> - RM

3B. TVA Gets an “F” on Climate Action

The Sierra Club recently issued a report, The Dirty Truth About Utility Climate Pledges, in which they released their evaluation of how various utilities are doing on meeting their commitments to go green. The study examined the plans of 79 utility companies (as of December 1, 2020) to determine how well they will meet three criteria in the coming pivotal decade: retiring coal, no longer building new gas plants, and building clean energy. The study found that out of a possible score of 100, utilities that have made a net-zero climate pledge (a state in which greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal from the atmosphere) scored an average of 20, while those with no pledge scored 14, showing that public commitments to clean up their act made little difference in actual plans to do so. The term “greenwashing” has been coined to characterize the practice of talking green to the public while doing little to change current practices.

The 79 companies studied generated 655 million MWh of electricity from coal in 2019, or 68 percent of the national total. These companies have only committed to retire 25 percent of their coal generation by 2030 (165 million MWh). By not retiring the remainder of their coal generation by 2030, these companies are exacerbating the climate crisis and continue to impact the health of people who live near generating plants.

The Tennessee Valley Authority turns out to be one of the top offenders. TVA ranked third in the list of operating companies with the most remaining coal generation (22 million MWh) without a 2030 retirement commitment. And TVA ranked second in operating companies with plans to build new gas capacity by 2030 (~3.8 gigawatts). While the studied companies plan to add 250 million MWh of new wind and solar energy to the grid between 2020 and 2030, this is equivalent to only 19 percent of their current coal and gas generation and clearly inadequate to address our climate crisis.

The study presented an overall score for each operating company based on how well they plan to meet the three criteria. TVA scored an embarrassing 9 out of 100. The study states that to maintain a livable planet, U.S. utilities need to phase out coal and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at

least 80 percent by 2030. Nearly all the companies had a failing grade.

For more information: <https://coal.sierraclub.org/the-problem/dirty-truth-greenwashing-utilities>

What You Can Do: Tell the TVA Board that the utility must decarbonize their grid by 2030.

<https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/National?actionId=AR0317899>

4. TCWP NEWS

4A. Upcoming Activities

TCWP’s Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We will practice social distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between participants. This will limit the amount of interpretation that can be done.
- We will organize activities into groups of 10 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring a mask and wear it when around others.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning to activities instead of carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancellation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

“Gaining Ground for Clean Waterways: How a Tennessee Smart Yard Can Help” – Thursday, March 11

In this Zoom presentation, Dr. Andrea Ludwig, Associate Professor of Ecological Engineering in the Biosystems Engineering and Soil Department at the University of Tennessee, will discuss how you can create a

“Tennessee Smart Yard.” The program, co-sponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society, will begin at 7 p.m.

Residential areas are a significant part of our Tennessee landscapes, and it is important to make residents a critical stakeholder group in watershed management strategies. The University of Tennessee Extension, along with its partners, is empowering residents with information on how to nurture a healthy, ecologically sound landscape that provides benefits both for humans and our environment.

Dr. Ludwig is co-director of Tennessee Smart Yards, a sustainable landscaping educational program that seeks to certify private property across the state as Tennessee Smart Yards. She has worked as the State Stormwater Management Specialist for UT Extension since 2010.

“Our latest efforts have created an online platform for residents to learn from our experts from the comfort and safety of their own homes and at their own pace,” Dr. Ludwig said. “With each certified Tennessee Smart Yard, the benefits compound towards greater protection of our valuable natural and water resources in Tennessee.”

Registration for this free online event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues. Michelle Campanis

Hike at Head of Sequatchie – Saturday, March 20

On March 20, Tennessee State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath will lead a hike at Head of Sequatchie, a part of the Cumberland Trail State Park admired for its serenity and beauty.

“The Head of Sequatchie is an extraordinary area,” Randy says. “It is the start of a striking 100-mile valley that is so prominent it can be recognized from space. It includes Devilstep Hollow Cave, a sacred site for Native Americans, and the emergence of a river that collects water from Grassy Cove, a huge sinkhole valley just to the north.

“The area is beautiful and fascinating. In late March, there will be abundant wildflowers along our two-mile, moderate walk.”

Hikers can meet for caravanning in Oak Ridge at the Gold’s Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita’s) in time to leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m. Eastern time, or can join the caravan at 9:05 Central time at Homestead Baptist Church (4427 Highway 127 South, Crossville), across from the Cumberland Mountain State Park entrance. We expect to arrive at Head of the Sequatchie by 9:30 a.m. Central. Wear sturdy shoes, and bring a lunch and water.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Obed River cleanup from kayaks – Saturday, March 27

Kayakers are encouraged to join TCWP, in cooperation with the National Park Service, for a whitewater clean-up trip on the Obed River on Saturday, March 27. The Park Service will staff a raft to be used for garbage collection.

Weather and river conditions are unpredictable, and decisions about the nature of the trip will likely be made the evening before the event. If water levels do not permit collecting trash from the river, there will be mini-cleanups at various put-ins. Participants should wear wicking fabric, not cotton clothes, and will need to bring lunch and water.

Participants will meet at 9 a.m. Eastern at the Obed Wild and Scenic River Visitors Center in Wartburg. For more information, contact Sandra Goss at (865) 583-3967 or via email at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 10

The Greenway behind Oak Ridge's Rolling Hills Apartments (formerly known as the Garden Apartments) is one of the best wildflower trails in Anderson County, but it is threatened by garlic mustard, a very invasive exotic that crowds out native plants. TCWP and Greenways Oak Ridge have been making headway in recent years in ridding the trail of this harmful plant. Volunteers are needed to help with the effort again this year.

We will meet at 10 a.m. at the rear parking lot (near the woods) behind 101-135 West Vanderbilt Drive. Wear sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothes, and bring water, food/snacks, and a digging spike or similar tool if you own one. TCWP board member Jimmy Groton will help with wildflower identification.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage at Frozen Head State Park – Saturday, April 17

This will be a joint outing for TCWP and the Tennessee Native Plant Society. We will have an excellent opportunity to see spring wildflowers. The first mile is ideal for those with rather limited hiking capabilities; the trail is wide and flat. It is a loop with quick return to the parking area (Interpretive Trail). For those continuing, the next two miles are steeper and rougher but still moderate (Judge Branch and S. Old Mac Trails).

We'll meet at the Frozen Head State Park office parking area at 10 a.m. Eastern time. Bring water, a lunch, and bug spray.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Reservations are required and can be made by contacting Larry Pounds at 865-705-8526 or at PoundsL@aol.com. Larry Pounds

Stinging Falls Fork to Piney River – Saturday, April 24

This will be a joint outing for TCWP and the Tennessee Native Plant Society. We will caravan from our meeting place to the Lower Piney River Trailhead to start a shuttle, leaving some cars there. We'll then carpool to the Stinging Fork Falls Trailhead and hike back to the Piney River Trailhead.

This section of the Cumberland Trail was completed in the fall of 2018. Which spring flowers we will see is hard to predict, but the route is definitely scenic. The trail is up and down with many steps. Total walking distance will be about six miles, if you choose. As an alternative, people are welcome to head back early to the Stinging Falls Fork Trailhead. They will need to have a car there, or otherwise will have to wait until the shuttle is completed in the afternoon. Those who choose this alternative could drive back from the Stinging Fork Trailhead to the Piney River Trail Head, then walk along the flat trail by Soak Creek to meet the rest of the group as they reach Soak Creek.

We'll meet at the Rocky Top/Exxon/McDonald's on U.S. 27 in Spring City at 10 a.m. Eastern. Bring a lunch, water, and bug spray.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Reservations are required, and can be made by contacting Larry Pounds at 865-705-8516 (cell) or via email at PoundsL471@aol.com. Larry Pounds

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

4B. Recent events

"Safe Passage: Wildlife Crossings in the Smoky Mountains" – Thursday, January 28

On January 28, an audience of more than 300 virtually attended an information program by Jeff Hunter, senior program manager with National Parks Conservation Association in Asheville, on the collaborative effort to provide safe passage options for wildlife along a 28-mile stretch of I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge in East Tennessee and western North Carolina. The program was cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society.

Hunter said nearly 57,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions occurred along this stretch of I-40 in 2017-19; one million to two million animals are killed in collisions annually. To address this issue, NPCA is partnering with Wildlands Network, the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, and other wildlife and conservation groups to identify key areas of concern and strategies to mitigate collisions, focusing specifically on black bear, elk, and white-tail deer.

The partners have mapped mortality hot spots, which coincided with proximity to public lands—Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Pisgah National Forest, and the Cherokee National Forest. They're currently analyzing their data, with the goal of having recommendations later this year for the TN and NC Departments of Transportation regarding how and where they mitigation solutions can be created. "Safe Passage: I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project" has been created as an opportunity for individuals and organizations to contribute to funding for overpasses, underpasses, fencing, and other projects. More information is available at <https://www.smokiessafepassage.org>.

Hunter's program was recorded, and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/I3xjcrZ4KaE>

**Support TCWP by donating,
joining, or renewing
your membership
at <http://www.tcwp.org>**

Alley Ford Workday – Saturday, February 13

On February 13, TCWP, the National Park Service, Frozen Head State Park, and the Cumberland Trail State Park sponsored a workday on the Alley Ford and Emory River Gorge sections of the Cumberland Trail State Park and Obed Wild and Scenic River. We met at Rock Creek campground near Nemo Bridge on the Emory (Obed River) on a cold morning (with temperatures hovering just below freezing and frozen fog in the treetops!). There were 22 people total, including nine or ten volunteers (including two Webb School seniors), several National Park rangers, two Cumberland Trail State Park rangers, and four interns with Frozen Head State Park Trail Leaders Program.

We divided into several groups to focus on particular segments of the trail. Each group worked on grading to rehabilitate the trail tread and clearing brush away from the trail corridor. We were able to work on the entire Emory Gorge Section (about 1.3 miles) and the 2.7-mile section between Rock Creek Campground and the Catoosa Wildlife Management Area boundary. It was a little too wintry for early spring wildflowers, but the signs of spring were all around us. including emerging flower buds on trailing arbutus.

TCWP adopted this 2.5-mile section in 1998 as part of our ongoing stewardship efforts to support the Cumberland Trail State Park. The Park Service has requested that we extend our adopted trail section approximately 1.6 miles to Breakaway Bluff on Catoosa Wildlife Management Area. That would increase the length of our adopted trail to about 3.8 miles. They also requested that we include the newer 1.3-mile section of the Emory River Gorge Section that will eventually extend all the way to Wartburg. This section begins at Nemo Picnic Area and ends at a small waterfall just past the top of the train tunnels. - *Jimmy Groton*
Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.



Sign-up for
e-mail alerts on
our website at
<http://www.tcwp.org>

4C. Friends and Members in the Print Media

A letter about the Oak Ridge League of Women Voters' deep concern about the proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack written by Harriett McCurdy appeared in the *Oak Ridger* on January 19.

The January 29 *News Sentinel* carried a letter from Anne Child about COVID 19 and needed relief efforts.

On February 8 and 9, Eileen Neiler's letter to the *Oak Ridger* editor about the proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack appeared.

Norris Watershed's partnership with UT Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife Class was the topic of an article authored by Joe Feeman in the February 11 *Norris Bulletin*.

The March/April *Tennessee Conservationist* carried an article about the Norris Dam Challenge written by Veronica Greear.

4D. Sad News About Tom Thornburgh

Former TCWP Board member Tom Thornburgh died last month. A geologist by training, Tom brought a scientific sensibility and a gigantic sense of dignity to the table; TCWP's work was enriched by his help. Thank you, Tom, for being a good citizen and a Tennessee Citizen for Wilderness Planning.

4E. TCWP Board Members Lend a Hand

In early December, several board members moved more than 20 boxes of files from the late Dr. Liane "Lee" Russell's house and to the TCWP office. The boxes contained files on past TCWP efforts including the Obed River, Big South Fork, and Great Smoky Mountains. We appreciate Dr. Russell's family for contacting us about the files and we look forward to reviewing and preserving them.

It's a good thing that Archive Volunteer Eileen Neiler and Executive Director Sandra K. Goss had been working may month prior to COVID to clear unnecessary papers from TCWP files. - KM

4F. TCWP shines a Little Green Light on Membership data

TCWP recently upgraded its membership data from a Google Sheets spreadsheet to an actual membership & donor database called Little Green Light. With over 600 current and former members managing information on a spreadsheet had become cumbersome.

Little Green Light will allow TCWP to keep better track of members and contributions. We have already integrated an online form that will allow members to join or renew online. This information gets fed straight into our membership database. Additionally, all PayPal donations feed into the database for review and matched with donor information.

The database has already allowed us to identify and include more than 40 organizations to our newsletter mailings. These organizations had been excluded at some point in the past, mostly likely due to the limitations of data queries as it was stored in a spreadsheet.

After researching several donor/membership platforms, Little Green Light was chosen due to its ease of use, ability to integrate with applications TCWP already uses (PayPal and MailChimp), reporting capabilities, level of security and cost.

In the future the database will allow us to target lapsed memberships, past donors, and track volunteer hours. These efforts will help TCWP advance its mission by securing the financial resources it needs to operate and continue the legacy of protecting natural lands and waters.. - KM

5. CALENDAR; RESOURCES

5A. CALENDAR

(For details, check the referenced NL item; or contact Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967, or Sandra@sandrakgoss.com)

- March 11, “Gaining Ground for Clean Waterways: How a Tennessee Smart Yard Can Help” (see ¶4A, this NL)
- March 16, Oak Ridge City Council work session on Oak Ridge Racetrack (see ¶1A, this NL)
- March 19, Comment Deadline on Nuclear Reactor Project (see ¶1C, this NL)
- March 20, Hike at Head of the Sequatchie with Randy Hedgepath (see ¶4A, this NL)
- March 27, Obed River cleanup from kayaks (see ¶4A, this NL)
- April 10, Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk (see ¶4A, this NL)
- April 10, Volunteer Day at Black Mountain (see ¶2E, this NL)
- April 14, Online Public Hearing on renewing Blue Ridge Paper’s NPDES permit (¶2D, this NL)
- April 17, Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage at Frozen Head State Park (see ¶4A, this NL)
- April 24, Stinging Fork Falls to Piney River (see ¶4A, this NL)

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP’s strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive and Membership-Development Director: Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967 Sandra@sandrakgoss.com

Outreach & Membership Coordinator:

Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

TCWP website: <http://www.tcwp.org>

**TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR
WILDERNESS PLANNING**

P.O. Box 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

www.tcwp.org
865-583-3967



Taking
Care of
Wild
Places

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

UPCOMING EVENTS

Board of Directors

Mark Bevelhimer.....President
Michele Thornton.....V. Pres.
Carol Grametbauer.....Secretary
Tim BigelowTreasurer
Michelle Campanis.....Director
Anne Child.....Director
Johnny Cosgrove.....Director
Christopher DeRolph....Director
Jimmy Groton..... Director
Larry Pounds.....Director
Hannah TippetDirector

March 11, "Gaining Ground for Clean Waterways: How a Tennessee Smart Yard Can Help"

March 20, Hike at Head of the Sequatchie with Randy Hedgepath

March 27, Obed River cleanup from kayaks

April 10, Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk

April 17, Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage at Frozen Head State Park

April 24, Stinging Fork Falls to Piney River

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.

TCWP Newsletter

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Proposed Motorsports Complex Seeks New Location

On April 6th, Rusty Bittle announced that his plans for Oak Ridge Motorsports Park would need to find a new location. His decision was made after the Department of Energy (DOE) concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be necessary before deciding on the request for the transfer of three natural areas at the Horizon Center. The process could take many months and much money with no guarantees that the end result would favor Bittle's racetrack proposal.

DOE concluded that the EIS was necessary because "changing the land-use restrictions at the Horizon Center for the proposed activity may pose a risk of potential significant impact to the DOE natural areas and other conservation land holdings in close proximity." Additionally, the Deed transferring the DOE land at Horizon Center requires DOE to approve land-use changes and requires the landowner to be responsible for expenses associated with mitigating actions in situations where activities cause or have the potential to cause significant adverse impact to the sensitive zones in the Natural Areas on DOE's abutting land.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

An EIS is a document required by the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and for major actions that could have significant impact on the environment. The EIS looks at short-term and long-term effects and considers possible measures to reduce or mitigate those effects.

Why was an EIS not performed on the Horizon Center when the land was transferred?

NEPA can involve different levels of analysis including the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the EIS. When the land was transferred to the IDB, an EA was conducted with a determination that there is No Significant Impact.



Inside this issue

1. Oak Ridge News	1
A. Proposed Motorsports Complex Seeks New Location	
B. AForR seeks Board of Directors Candidates	
2. Tennessee News	2
A. 500 Acres Added to Big South Fork	
B. Interim State Legislative Report	
C. TN to Subsidize Coal Companies at Taxpayers' Expense	
D. Safe Passage Thru Pigeon River Gorge	
E. Lindemann Donates 2,000 acres for Conservation Research	
F. A License to Fund Conservation	
3. National News.....	4
A. Rep. Cohen Introduces Bill to Ensure Safe Disposal of Coal Ash	
B. Biden Nominates DOE Science Director and TVA Board Members	
4. TCWP News.....	6
A. Upcoming Activities	
B. Recent Activities	
C. Friends and Members in the News	
D. Full Heart, Good Tiding: A Note From Sandra	
5. Calendar; Resources.....	11

1A. Proposed Motorsports Complex continued...

Why would an EIS be needed to accommodate the proposed Motorsports complex?

Because the natural areas that were set aside for the proposed land use of the Horizon Center would be affected by the new proposed land use, a more thorough review of the impact on the environment would be needed to assess the short and long-term effects on the environment. - *Ken Mayes*

1B. Board of Directors Candidates Sought by Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation

Seeking person or persons with curiosity, interest in science, and appreciation for wild lands and waters. Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR), a 22-year old membership organization, supports preservation of the natural resources of the Department of Energy's 20,000-plus-acre Oak Ridge Reservation Research Park—for the long-term benefit of DOE, the local community, and national and international interests.

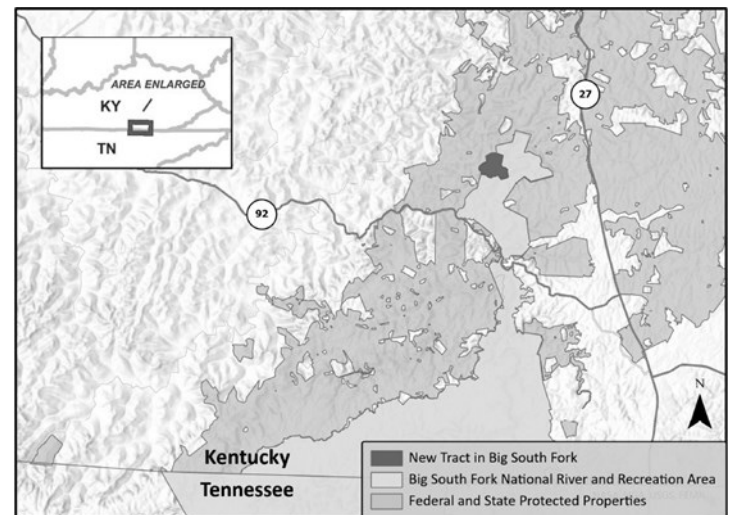
AFORR Board service provides opportunities to collaborate, analyze and/or communicate with other savvy thinkers on such projects as the late unlamented racetrack project or currently proposed hazardous waste landfill on the reservation. For more information visit aforr.info.

2. TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. 500 Acres Added to the Big South Fork

The National Park Service had long wanted to add a 500-acre inholding within the legislative boundary of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in Kentucky. However, funds were lacking for purchase of this property. So The Nature Conservancy stepped in to acquire the property and hold it until funds became available. That finally happened as a result of the passage last year of the Great American Outdoors Act, which included permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

With funds from the LWCF, the NPS purchased the inholding for addition to the BSFNRRA. The 500 acres are at the northwestern end of the park's legislative boundary, to the north of KY State Route 92 after crossing to the west side of the Big South Fork on Yamacraw Bridge.



Map provided by TNC's Hayley Lynch

By providing no-cost financing to TNC, The Wyss Foundation made purchase of the property possible until it could be transferred to the NPS. TNC's Kentucky chapter led the effort to preserve this land. "This is a new partnership and our first transaction with the National Park Service," says Dian Osbourne, director of protection for the Kentucky chapter. "This inholding was a large hole in the park's land, and NPS ownership will make management more efficient and effective and provide better opportunities for hiking, paddling, camping, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors."

See the TNC news release: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/kentucky-big-south-fork-addition/> - *Russ Manning*

2B. Interim State Legislative Report

The 2021 session of the Tennessee General Assembly adjourned earlier this month. Advocates for conservation and sustainability actually enjoyed some key successes! TCWP, along with others:

- helped stop erosions of the open meetings law for local governments and utilities agencies
- helped pass the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resilience Act which is a significant step forward for clean energy in Tennessee
- helped stop the reduction of stormwater fees paid by property owners which would have hurt local governments ability to properly manage stormwater

We are less happy about:

- The backward-looking actions designed to promote more coal-mining in a state where coal is no longer an appropriate or possible way to meet energy needs and which will cost taxpayers a huge amount over time (see below)
- The failure to make progress on the CLEAN Act, which would have incentivized litter prevention in a tangible way and removed litter now polluting waters and habitats.

Be on the lookout for a more comprehensive report about the status of bills we cared about this year after the legislative staff have prepared their report on what happened and have put newly passed bills into the appropriate Public Chapter format. - *Stewart Clifton*

2C. Tennessee to Subsidize Coal Companies at Taxpayers' Expense

The 2021 Tennessee Legislature moved to subsidize coal companies when Governor Lee signed HB90/SB742 amending the Primacy Act passed on party line votes. (Interesting House debate on the vote can be seen at http://tnga.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=610&clip_id=24835&meta_id=605573).

Passage of this bill obligates Tennessee taxpayers to pay about one million dollars each year to subsidize the collapsing coal industry, an industry that produced no coal in Tennessee during the last three quarters of 2020.

Since 1984, regulation of coal mining in Tennessee has been performed by the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) at no direct cost to the State of Tennessee. Among the misguided comments that legislators have made about Tennessee assuming enforcement and permitting responsibilities are:

Passage of this act will result in a resurgence of the coal industry.

TVA will buy our coal if this bill is passed.

Coal mining can provide rare-earth elements (REEs) needed by computers and phones.

It is widely accepted that coal will not be a primary energy source again. TVA has announced plans to phase out coal power by 2035. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, coal accounted for 19% of utility scale electricity generation in 2020. There is research underway in Kentucky to determine the prevalence of REE's in coal and coal mining by-products. The economics of extracting REE's need to be studied.

More alarming is the fact that assuming this regulatory authority will burden Tennessee taxpayers with reclaiming the lands associated with forfeited coal mining permits. This has become a common occurrence throughout the nation as coal company bankruptcies continue. Adding insult to injury, the bill also requires taxpayers to pay many of the coal companies' engineering costs required for new permit applications. One can easily imagine Tennessee citizens shouldering the costs of the mining industry's past work.

Free Books from the Library of Jerry Olson

Several books on a wide variety of topics (ecology, climate change, Appalachia, general travel) in the late Jerry Olson's library need a new home. If you or someone you know is interested in some of these books get in touch with daughter Martha (865-577-1234) or assistant Emily Shane (ekshane1@gmail.com) to pick up the books at the downtown Knoxville condo's storage unit. There are many folks receiving word of this opportunity and it would be good to take advantage of it quickly.



Did you know that you can support TCWP while shopping at amazon.com?

Simply start at smile.amazon.com and choose Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning as your charity to support.

AmazonSmile will donate .05% of your eligible purchases.

2D. Safe Passage Thru Pigeon River Gorge

It's risky just to drive I-40 through Pigeon River Gorge. But it's deadly for animals attempting to cross this interstate that bisects public land—Cherokee National Forest on the northern stretch in Tennessee and Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina, with Great Smoky Mountains National Park just to the west. This undeveloped public land provides a critical link in the Wildlands Network's "Eastern Wildway" that extends up the Appalachian Mountains all the way into Canada. But migrating animals can use this wildway only if they can safely across the many roads fragmenting the landscape, especially in our region the I-40 corridor.

In 2017, Jeff Hunter with National Parks Conservation Association convened a group of people concerned about the increasing numbers of animals killed by vehicles along the section of I-40 through Pigeon River Gorge. Others soon joined and coalesced into a group representing nearly 20 federal, state, tribal, and non-governmental organizations, which is now called "Safe Passage: The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project."

The project focuses on black bear, elk that have been reintroduced to GSMNP, and white-tailed deer, with a goal of identifying key areas where these animals cross along a 28-mile section of I-40 and developing strategies for helping them to cross safely. These megafauna were selected for study because mortality is easier to document and the economic impact from vehicle collisions can be quantified. And as sometimes discovered in such efforts, if the megafauna of an ecosystem are protected, many of the lesser creatures that follow in their wake are protected as well.

The data being gathered from such techniques as mortality counts, accident records, and monitoring cameras will be used to provide recommendations to Departments of Transportation for safe crossings. For example, planned replacement of bridges in the Harmon Den area (the I-40 exit you take if you're headed to Max Patch) provides a prime opportunity to introduce safe passages in the planning. While DOTs are receptive to the idea of incorporating wildlife crossings (over and/or under the interstate), the additional funds required are often not available. To help achieve the necessary resources, a Safe Passage Fund has been established to accept donations, with the Wildlands Network serving as the fiscal sponsor.

The hope is that safe passages across I-40 in Pigeon River Gorge not only reduce the danger to wildlife and motorists alike, but also strengthen connectivity so wildlife populations may be free to migrate in search of food and home, especially with impending climate change.

For Further Information:

A Senior Program Manager with NPCA, Hunter serves as facilitator for Safe Passage and, in that capacity, presented a virtual program on The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project earlier this year that was sponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society; you can access on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3xjcrZ4KaE>

Hunter also has an excellent podcast with National Parks Traveler: <https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/podcast/2021-03-14-national-parks-traveler-episode-109-great-smokys-wildlife-corridors>

Safe Passage website: <https://smokiessafepassage.org>

To donate to the project: <https://wildlandsnetwork.org/safepassage-donate/> - RM

2E. George Lindemann Gives Nearly 2,000 Acres of Land to TennGreen for Conservation Research

George Lindemann recently donated ~2,000 acres of mosaic habitat, including forested streams, grassland and open space, and upland wooded areas suitable for forest management to TennGreen Land Conservancy ("TennGreen"). This property, known as the Soak Creek Farm, is located in Rhea and Bledsoe Counties and abuts the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park (the "Cumberland Trail").

The Soak Creek Farm has more than 16 miles of streams—including Dunlap Creek, Evans Branch, and Shingle Mill Branch—that flow to the Piney Creek watershed. This watershed includes significant recreational areas, such as Soak Creek, which was designated a State Scenic River in 2017, the first such designation since 2001. Piney Creek River is the most recent river to earn Tennessee's State Scenic River designation. George Lindemann was instrumental in both the Piney and Soak Creek designations.

Mr. Lindemann and TennGreen's long-term goal is to establish the Soak Creek Farm as a research station, evaluating habitat management techniques and medicinal plants. TennGreen will identify partners in higher education for research projects and potential management of the land. Before transferring the Soak Creek Farm to new ownership, TennGreen will place a conservation easement on the property to ensure it remains undeveloped, other than a research station.

This generous, nearly 2,000-acre donation expands TennGreen's successful history of conservation in the region. Since 2001, TennGreen and its partners have conserved more than 13,000 acres within ten miles of the Soak Creek Farm. In 2017, Mr. Lindemann donated a 1,034-parcel to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to establish the Soak Creek section of the Cumberland Trail.

The region continues to be an area of focus for TennGreen due to its significant conservation resources, such as its large forested tracts, rich biodiversity, and the ample recreational opportunities that the Cumberland Trail provides. - *Honey Rand*

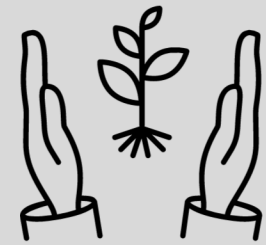
2F. A License to Fund Conservation

Did you know that TWRA receives a majority of its funding through the sale of hunting & fishing licenses? Each license sold is met with federal dollars and those funds support the conservation of all species of plants and animals in the state of Tennessee.

Not a hunter or fisherman? No problem. TWRA offers a Friends of Wildlife license for \$22. That \$22 will return more than \$30 of federal funds to TWRA for its conservation efforts.

To purchase a license and support TWRA's conservation effort, go to <https://gooutdoorstennessee.com>.

To learn more about TWRA and its programs, check out <https://www.tn.gov/twra>. - *KM*



Support
TCWP

by donating,
joining, or
renewing

your membership
at tcwp.org



Newsletter Changes

As you can see, we are trying something new with the newsletter. We hope these changes make the newsletter more readable and aesthetically pleasing. Tell us what you think about the new format and bear with us while we fine tune the new format.

Ken Mayes

3. NATIONAL NEWS

3A. Rep. Cohen Introduces Bill to Ensure Safe Disposal of Coal Ash

Tennessee Representative Steve Cohen (TN-09) has introduced Ensuring the Safe Disposal of Coal Ash Act (HR 2396). This bill to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act, which was weakened during the previous administration, will strengthen the requirements for safely storing and disposing of ash from the combustion of coal.

Congressman Cohen states, “I have been acutely aware of the dangers of coal ash contamination because of the disastrous 2008 coal ash spill in Kingston, Tennessee, and the unacceptably slow clean up of the contaminated groundwater beneath coal ash pits at TVA’s Allen Fossil Plant in my own district. This plant is now identified as one of the most-contaminated sites in the country. The measure I am introducing strengthens protections outlined in the (EPA) 2015 Coal Ash Rule and protects communities by mandating safer and faster disposal of this dangerous waste product of electricity production.”

HR 2396 will direct the EPA to strengthen requirements necessary to protect human health and the environment from coal ash. It will require power plants to ensure they can pay for cleanup costs in the event of disasters or hazardous spills, prohibit the continued operation of unlined impoundments, and require full regulatory oversight of any EPA-approved state coal ash programs. In addition, it will add provisions to ensure public participation, address legacy coal ash dumps, prohibit dangerous use of unencapsulated coal ash, and require protection of low-income communities, communities of color, and other disproportionately impacted populations.

The Act was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, which passed it on to the Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change. The next step will be for a legislative analyst in the Congressional Research Service to analyze the text of the legislation. The analysis will be provided to the Subcommittee for evaluation and decision making. See Congressman Cohen’s press release: <https://cohen.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressman-cohen-introduces-ensuring-safe-disposal-coal-ash-act> - RM

3B. Biden Nominates DOE Science Director and TVA Board Members

Pres. Biden has nominated Asmeret Asefaw Berhe to head the DOE Office of Science, which supports energy research initiatives and oversees 10 of the nation’s 17 national laboratories, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea in northeast Africa, Dr. Berhe is currently a professor of soil biogeochemistry at University of California, Merced, a fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the Geological Society of America, and a member of the U.S. National Academies New Voices in Science, Engineering, and Medicine. She previously served as chair of the U.S. National Committee on Soil Science at the National Academies. (See her 2019 TED Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/asmeret_asefaw_berhe_a_climate_change_solution_that_s_right_under_our_feet).

In addition, Biden appointed four to the TVA Board, including two from Tennessee:

- Beth Prichard Geer is Chief of Staff to former Vice President Al Gore and serves as a member of Nashville Mayor John Cooper’s Sustainability Advisory Committee. She resides in Brentwood, Tennessee.
- Robert P. Klein is a lifelong resident of Chattanooga and began his professional career at the Chattanooga Gas Company before continuing at the Electric Power Board of Chattanooga where he worked in the Overhead Line Department. He later became a Line Foreman supervising the building and maintaining of the power distribution system.
- Kimberly Caudle Lewis of Huntsville, Alabama, is the Chief Executive Officer of PROJECTSYZ, Inc., a business that provides services and products in the areas of engineering, logistics, technical services, manufacturing, and international foreign military sales. She leads a workforce that supports federal and commercial customers across several diverse subsidiaries and at locations across the US and the world.
- Michelle Moore currently serves as CEO of Groundswell, a nonprofit that builds community power through community solar, clean energy, and resilience programs that share power, savings, and economic opportunity with more than four thousand families. Her accomplishments range from building the global green building movement as a senior executive with the U.S. Green Building Council to leading the sustainability and infrastructure delivery teams for the Obama Administration. - RM

4. TCWP NEWS

4A. Upcoming Activities

TCWP's Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We will practice social distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between participants. This will limit the amount of interpretation that can be done.
- We will organize activities into groups of 10 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring a mask and wear it when around others.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning to activities instead of carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancelation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

"Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!" – Thursday, May 27

Birding is an activity that can bring joy and empowerment to everybody, but not everybody is able to go birding easily. Birdability is a non-profit organization focused on removing barriers to access for birders with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, intellectual or developmental disabilities (including autism), mental illness, being deaf or hard of hearing, and other health concerns; and bringing the joy of birding to people with disabilities and other health concerns who aren't yet birders.

On May 27, TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society will cosponsor a 7 p.m. program by Freya McGregor, Occupational Therapist and Birdability Coordinator. She will explain why accessibility to birding should matter to you (even if you don't have an accessibility challenge), ways to be a more welcoming and inclusive birder, the Birdability Map (and how to submit a Birdability Site Review), and resources for birders and potential future birders with accessibility challenges.

McGregor has been a birder since childhood. Her "dodgy" knee often creates an accessibility challenge for her. With a background in blindness and low-vision services, she is passionate about enabling all birders and potential future birders to enjoy birding and nature as much as she does.

Registration for this free online event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues.

Help the North Ridge Trail on National Trails Day – Saturday, June 5

North Ridge Trail Steward Ray Garrett reports that the seven-mile trail is in good shape. Occasionally a blow-down will block the trail. Thanks to Jon Hetrick and the Oak Ridge Parks and Recreation staff, those are generally cleared away.

The very steep, frequently slick slope just west of the Walker Lane connector junction needs some help. Starting at 9:00 am on Saturday, June 5, we will work to install a "rail" on the first 28 feet. The rail will be made of cable or rope, connected between trees. There will be a bit of trail rerouting.

Volunteers will meet at the Walker Lane trail entrance (off Outer Drive). Please wear appropriate clothes and shoes as well as insect repellent. Sandra Goss

East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup - Saturday, June 12

TCWP and partners Clinch Valley Trails Alliance and Oak Ridge Greenways are sponsoring the second annual trash cleanup and hike on the East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway. This wonderful new trail, developed by CVTA and Greenways Oak Ridge, was recently completed along the banks of East Fork Poplar Creek in west Oak Ridge. The trail meanders through a nice riparian woodland along the creek.

This trail is subject to occasional flooding, and help is needed to remove litter left behind by the water. There are also a lot of old tires and other debris that have washed from places upstream. TCWP and CVTA will provide plastic bags and some pick-up tools for participants. Please bring gloves and wear mud-friendly shoes.

We plan to start at the Jefferson Avenue intersection with the Turnpike at 9 a.m. We'll cover up to a mile downstream, and possibly some upstream if there is time. Park next to the Boys and Girls Club a short distance from the turnpike. We anticipate the temperature will be much more hospitable than when we did the last cleanup, in February 2020. Contact Tim Bigelow 865-607-6781 or bigelowt2@mindspring.com with questions. - *Jimmy Groton*

"Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S." – Thursday, June 24

Anyone who spends time outdoors in warm weather needs to be aware of diseases that can be transmitted by ticks. According to the CDC, tick-borne illnesses doubled in the U.S. between 2014 and 2016. Because ticks are so small, people might not even notice when they've been bitten by one.

On June 24, TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society will cosponsor a 7 p.m. Zoom program by Dr. Richard Gerhold, an assistant professor of parasitology in the Department of Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences at UT's College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Gerhold holds a B.S. in wildlife science and a DVM from Purdue University, as well as M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in veterinary pathology from the University of Georgia. He completed a two-year National Science Foundation-funded post-doctoral fellowship at UT's Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries Department, researching Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases.

Registration for this free online event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues.

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

4B. Recent events

Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, March 6

We had 42 participants on a cool, dry, sunny morning, probably the largest number in memory. In addition to TCWP volunteers, several groups of UT students from Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity and others working on a civil engineering crosswalk and bicycle rack design project helped out. Other volunteers, from ORNL and the community, learned of the activity through the VolunteerETN website.

After a safety talk by Jimmy Groton and a description of some of the cedar barrens and some invasive species by Larry Pounds, volunteers removed small trees around the periphery of the ellipse area, removed invasive small woody plants from the open areas, cut and weed-wrenched out invasives like privet and bush honeysuckle from the surrounding wooded area, and trimmed along the trail.

The group inspected and toured the front Triangle area and around the pond. The barrens are ready for spring and summer! Volunteers found significant damage to the wood signs, possibly from woodpeckers. The replacement cedar rail fences from the City of Oak Ridge are holding up.

Thomas Fraser and photographer Anna Lawrence of the online newsletter Hellbender Press joined the workday, and wrote an excellent article about the activities and the ecology of cedar barrens. The article can be read at: <https://hellbenderpress.org/news/being-fire-volunteers-help-preserve-a-classic-east-tennessee-cedar-barren?highlight=WYJOY3dwll0=> - *Tim Bigelow*

“Gaining Ground for Clean Waterways: How a Tennessee Smart Yard Can Help” – March 11

An audience of more than 200 joined a Zoom presentation by Dr. Andrea Ludwig, Associate Professor of Ecological Engineering in the Biosystems Engineering and Soil Department at the University of Tennessee, who discussed how to create a “Tennessee Smart Yard.” The program was cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society.

Dr. Ludwig is co-director of Tennessee Smart Yards, a sustainable landscaping educational program that seeks to certify private property across the state as Tennessee Smart Yards. She has worked as the State Stormwater Management Specialist for UT Extension since 2010. In her presentation, she discussed the watershed concept and the fact that more than 4,000 miles of Tennessee streams have impaired water quality due to developed land, then focused on our role as property owners.

Dr. Ludwig described Tennessee Smart Yards as “protecting our natural resources one yard at a time.” The program (see www.tnyards.utk.edu) helps homeowners identify opportunities and actions for improvement. As an example of an action to reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants, Dr. Ludwig showed photos of the recently installed Rain Garden at the UT Arboretum, which uses native plants in a shallow bowl in the landscape to catch runoff.

The March 11 program can be viewed at https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/SC9hjFAKrimsulwVghNas6gKIHTIUS_alROqTkyvqOt-l6zVG72A1IEAklt-6Js.ucZCCsnTxS8lxFj_?startTime=1615505285000 - *Carol Grametbauer*

Hike at Head of the Sequatchie – March 20

More than 30 people took advantage of clear skies and State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath’s leadership to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Head of the Sequatchie on March 20. It had rained a lot before that day, and the various streams that become the Sequatchie River were full. The waters reached the area from Grassy Cove, which drains under the mountain range to the Sequatchie Valley.

A wide variety of wildflowers were on view, including this writer’s favorite, fields that were carpeted in wildflowers. Thanks to Randy Hedgepath for showing us the park, along with Cumberland Trail Ranger Leigh Gardner and Assistant State Naturalist Holly Taylor. - *Sandra Goss*

Clear Creek cleanup from kayaks – Saturday, March 27

On Saturday, March 27, TCWP and Obed Wild & Scenic River NPS staff sponsored a river cleanup on Clear Creek from Barnett Bridge to Lilly Bridge. East Tennessee Whitewater Club kayakers joined TCWP and OWSR staff, who provided rafts and rowers to haul trash. TCWP usually provides raft passengers to help with the cleanup, but because of COVID, TCWP participation was limited to a few brave kayakers.

After waiting out a big thunderstorm prior to launch, seven kayakers and three park staff remained to launch at Barnett Bridge at a flow of around 900 cfs. Because of the morning’s downpour, the group was treated to many normally non-existent waterfalls and rushing tributary creeks. A few bags of trash and two car tires were collected in the six-mile stretch to Jett Bridge, but the river was generally clear of trash.

By the time the group arrived at Jett Bridge, the river flow had tripled. The two rafts and four of the kayakers decided to continue to Lilly Bridge, but by then the riverside trash was covered or washed on downstream by the high water, so we all just enjoyed one of our favorite stretches of river from a somewhat new perspective. By the time we took out at Lilly Bridge, flows had climbed to 3800 cfs. Of course, post-cleanup beverages were enjoyed at the nearby Lilly Pad Hopyard Brewery. - *Mark Bevelhimer*

Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 10

For many years TCWP and Greenways Oak Ridge have sponsored a spring event on the Wildflower Greenway in Oak Ridge. This year was no exception, and 16 folks joined in to enjoy the wildflowers, yank the invasive garlic mustard (24 bags!), and dodge the occasional raindrop.

Greenway Steward Roger Macklin and well-known naturalist and TCWP Board member Jimmy Groton were there to lend their expertise on garlic mustard identification as well as the wide range of wildflowers. - SG

Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage at Frozen Head State Park – Saturday, April 17

TCWP and TNPS joined Frozen Head State Park for their wildflower pilgrimage outings. Kris Light led a group of Girl Scouts. Larry Pounds organized and shared leadership of a group of 14 with several plantfolk.

The day threatened rain, but after an early sprinkle, the weather was fine. We walked the Interpretive and Judge Branch Trails. Some highlights were large-flowered trillium, spotted mandarin lily, southern pinkster bush (a native azalea), and a group of deep purple dwarf crested irises. Meredith Clebsch called our attention to bird calls. At the end of the walk, on a whim, we went looking for Bartonias in a wet area where it is known to grow. No luck—it was probably too early for it to be up. - Larry Pounds

Stinging Fork Falls to Piney River – Saturday, April 24

The forecast was for 100% chance of rain, and that's what happened. I had decided that rescheduling would be too difficult, so Jimmy Groton and I headed for Spring City. Despite the soaking conditions, Bettina Ault met us there. We were a party of three on a hypothermia-inducing day.

We toughed it out long enough to see many wildflowers, including a large-flowered yellow lady's-slipper and a population of gaywings. We then turned back to eat lunch in my vehicle. I turned the heater up to 79 and we were soon feeling better. Warmed up, we headed to another trailhead. We got out and the wind was blowing. We went a few steps, then quickly got back in the vehicle. Nope, we were not getting chilled again. - LP

4C. Friends and Members in the Print Media

The February 16 Oak Ridger carried a letter about the proposed Oak Ridge racetrack from Chuck and Nancy Coutant.

Anne Child wrote a letter that appeared in the February 16 Oak Ridger about child tax credit.

Frances Figart wrote a column in the March 6 Asheville Citizen Times about a children's book she authored titled A Search for Safe Passage, now on sale at Smoky Mountains National Park bookstores.

The March 11 Oak Ridger carried a letter from Mick Wiest about the demolition of the Brannon House.

The value of the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement was the topic of an essay written by Robert Kennedy in the March 22 Oak Ridger.

Judi Roitman's letter to the Crossville Chronicle about Medicaid expansion appeared in the March 23 edition.

The March 25 Norris Bulletin had a picture of Harry Shatz and his birdfeeders on the front page.

Public school funding was the topic of a letter to the editor of the April 4 issue of the News Sentinel that was written by Lance McCold and several others.

The April 9 Oak Ridger carried a story about the cancellation of the Motor Sports Park Center included quotes from Robert Kennedy and Don Barkman and a picture of Jimmy Groton.

Jeff Mellor wrote a letter to the editor of the News Sentinel about Republican lawmakers. It appeared in the April 9 issue.

Lance McCold is quoted in an article about the Knox County Bd of Education budget in the April 28th News Sentinel.

4D. Full Heart, Good Tidings

Note from Sandra K Goss, Executive Director

This temperate season is filled with gorgeous flowers, interesting weather, and good news. Our beautiful Tennessee abounds with wildflowers and seasonal waterfalls. The proposed Oak Ridge racetrack project has been scotched.

There have been two 50th anniversary celebrations. Cumberland Trail authorizing legislation was signed on April 30, 1971. The Tennessee Natural Areas Act was signed on May 4, 1971. TCWP had a role in the passage of both these acts, and was represented at the anniversary celebrations.

Among the people seen at the Head of the Sequatchie during the Cumberland Trail celebration were Park Manager Bob Fulcher, Natural Areas staffer Roger McCoy, retired Cumberland Trails Conference staffer Nora Beck, TCWP members Chuck Estes and Rob Harrison, and many others. This writer and Bobby Fulcher recorded an hour of conversation about the Cumberland Trail and the Cumberland Mountains.

It's a pleasure to reflect on the conservationists and advocates who precede us and to take pride in the ongoing efforts of all of us. Some of the nicest and smartest people one can meet are members of the conservationist/environmentalist community. How lucky are we?

Much of our work is slow going and takes years to come to fruition. The Cumberland Trail is an example of this. The trail is still being built, still being improved, and its full benefits will not be realized for decades. As Bobby reminded me in the wide-ranging conversation, people will enjoy the fruits of our labors 50 years from now and beyond. Roger McCoy observed that our growing population needs more natural areas. Our work continues! Thanks for your support.

5. CALENDAR; RESOURCES

5A. CALENDAR

(For details, check the referenced NL item; or contact Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967, or Sandra@sandrakgoss.com)

- May 27, "Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!" (see ¶14A, this NL)
- June 5, Help the North Ridge Trail on National Trails Day (see ¶14A, this NL)
- June 12, East For Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup (see ¶14A, this NL)
- June 24, "Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S." (see ¶14A, this NL)

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP's strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive and Membership-Development Director: Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967 Sandra@sandrakgoss.com

Outreach & Membership Coordinator:

Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

TCWP website: <http://www.tcwp.org>

**TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR
WILDERNESS PLANNING**

P.O BOX 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

Board of Directors

Mark BevelhimerPresident
Michele Thornton V. Pres
Carol GrametbauerSecretary
Tim Bigelow Treasurer
Michelle Campanis Director
Anne Child Director
Johnny Cosgrove Director
Christopher DeRolph Director
Jimmy Groton Director
Larry Pounds Director
Hannah Tippet Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 27, "Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!"
- June 5, Help the North Ridge Trail on National Trails Day
- June 12, East For Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup
- June 24, "Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S."

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.



TCWP Newsletter

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Reservation Hazardous Waste Landfill Proposal Still in Play

In recent weeks, there has been a frequently heard refrain—The draft Record of Decision (ROD) on the Oak Ridge Operations Environmental Management Disposal Facility will be released in July. At press time, no draft ROD had been released.

From a recent letter to Department of Energy Secretary Granholm from Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation and the Sierra Club: “The proposed site for the new landfill is in an area of the ORR that the OREM End Use Working Group (a federal-state-local community partnership, see <https://www.energy.gov/orem/downloads/end-useworking-group-report>) designated to be kept uncontaminated, while other areas were stipulated to be permanently sacrificed to contamination. This site has shallow and upwelling groundwater (hydrology unsuitable for waste disposal), is in a watershed that has been relatively unaffected by past federal nuclear activities, and supports mature forest and wetlands. Because the proposed landfill is classified as a remedial action under CERCLA (Superfund), it would be built and operated without the prescriptive regulatory oversight that applies to ordinary landfills. Furthermore, OREM will request waivers from some substantive environmental regulations. More information can be found at <https://aforr.info/hazardous-waste-landfill-emdf/> and specifically at <https://aforr.info/wpcontent/uploads/2021/03/Radioactive-and-hazardous-waste-disposal.pdf>.

Recently, representatives from Southern Environmental Law Center, Sierra Club, Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation, and TCWP met with EPA staffers to discuss these concerns and others. It is hoped that such exchange of information can continue as the long-term effects of such a project are more fully considered.

A big shout-out to our friends at Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation: Thank you for standing up for Tennessee’s water quality in regard to the project. We Tennesseans deserve pure drinking water as well as best practices in waste disposal.

Inside this issue

- 1. Oak Ridge News 1
 - A. Reservation Hazardous Waste Landfill Proposal Still in Play
- 2. Tennessee News 2
 - A. The Declining Coal Industry
- 3. Obed/Big South Fork News 3
 - A. Comments Sought: Plan to Increase Petroleum Production Includes Injection on Obed
 - B. TVA Proposes Kingston Fossil Plan Closure
- 4. National News..... 4
 - A. Americans Eating Less Meat
 - B. Mississippi River Initiative to be Introduced
- 5. TCWP News..... 6
 - A. Upcoming Activities
 - B. Recent Activities
 - C. Members in the News

2. TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. The Declining Coal Industry

During the 2020 legislative session, the Tennessee legislature passed, and the Governor signed a bill to assume authority for regulating coal mining in the state. Reasons given for this bill being necessary include reversing the decline in coal production and jobs. In addition, Rep. Powers stated on the house floor, that “Kentucky should never be beating us at coal mining...” and obtaining primacy would put Tennessee on the road to bringing back the coal industry in Tennessee.

Given the current state of the coal industry, are these reasonable expectations? After all, the decline in the coal industry is hitting coal communities hard with disappearing severance taxes.

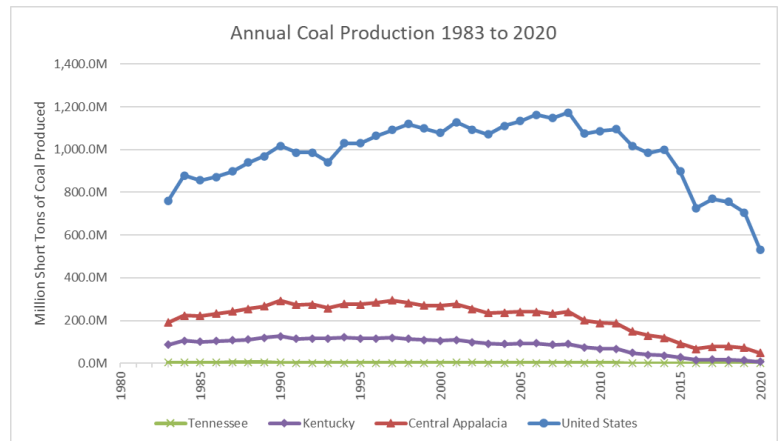


Figure 1: Comparison of National, Central Appalachia, and Tennessee coal production from 1983 through 2020 showing the relative magnitudes of the annual production and production declines.

In 1987, Tennessee produced just shy of 5 million short tons of coal.* Never again has the state produced as much. By 2020, Coal production had decreased from this peak by 98 percent to just 91,000 short tons with no production in the last three quarters of 2020. Over the same time, coal jobs decreased from a 1518 to just 40.

Putting the declines occurring in Tennessee into context, nationally, coal production peaked at 1,172 million short tons in 2008 before decreasing 55 percent by 2020 while Jobs decreased from 86,000 to 42,000 over the same time. Meanwhile, in Central Appalachia, coal production and jobs were already decreasing. Coal production peaked in 1997 at 296 million short tons before declining by 84 percent by 2020. Job declined from 36,000 to 12,000 in 2020. When Tennessee was producing 5 million tons at its peak in 1987, Kentucky produced 109 million short tons. Like Tennessee, Kentucky’s coal production has decreased over 90 percent from its peak. Tennessee has always been a minor player in the coal industry. The only coal race with Kentucky that Tennessee looks likely to win is a race to the bottom.

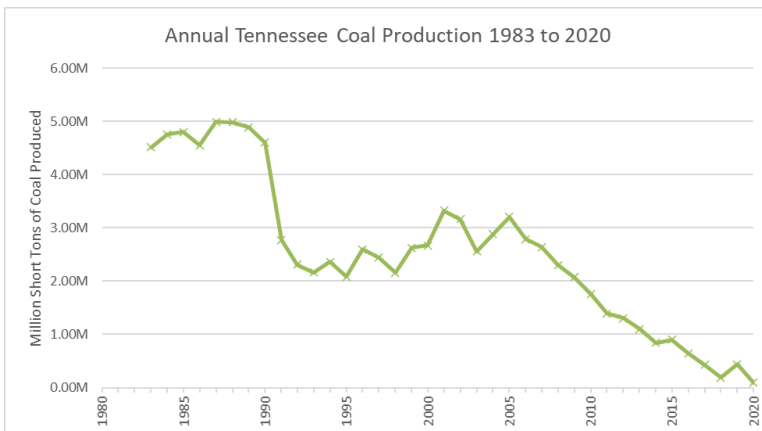


Figure 2: Expansion of the annual Tennessee coal production from 1983 through 2020.

The coal industry nationally, regionally and within the state has been in decline for decades, though the peaks in production occurred at different times. The cost of coal production is the likely overarching reason for the earlier decline in Central Appalachia and Tennessee coal production. With the advent of larger surface mining equipment requiring fewer employees and larger mines, mining the large western mines became more cost effective than mining the smaller, more labor intensive Appalachia mines. Nationally the number of coal jobs peaked in 1984 at 180K. Later, inexpensive natural gas coupled with increased regulations and public pressures to address climate change drove the national coal production declines.

The thermal coal industry will continue to decline as electric utilities continue to close aging costly and polluting power plants as TVA is doing in the Tennessee Valley. These power plants cost more to operate than it costs to build utility scale solar. Tennessee does not have the coal reserves necessary to compete with the large western mines nor even the larger eastern mines on a cost basis. — *Dan Firth*

*All production and jobs data obtained from [OpenSourceCoal.org](https://www.opensourcecoal.org)

3. OBED/BIG SOUTH FORK NEWS

3A. Comments Sought: Plan to Increase Petroleum Production Includes Injection on Obed

An Environmental Assessment for ENREMA, LLC to enhance the production of its mineral rights within the Obed Wild and Scenic River, around Clear Creek, was released the first of this month. The EA, with July 30 comment deadline, can be viewed at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/showFile.cfm?projectID=102992&MIMETType=application%252Fpdf&filename=ENREMA%20EA%2016June20212%2Epdf&sfid=484703>.

ENREMA plans to utilize a natural water flood injection technique through existing functioning wells, which are located outside the boundaries of OWSR, to increase production on these wells. Some of the wells on which ENREMA plans to use the enhanced recovery techniques reside around Clear Creek land that is managed by the NPS.

For this EA, six park resources, values, and concerns for evaluation are considered: air quality; fish and wildlife; federally and state-listed Species; vegetation; soils and geology; water quality and hydrology. With the proposed “natural water flood injection” there will be impacts to the hydrology of the area. As John Muir observed, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” The hydrology changes will change geology and so on.

TCWP will be sending comments on this proposed action on behalf of our members. Thanks for being on our team!!

3B. TVA Proposes Kingston Fossil Plan Closure

TVA announced its intentions to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the impacts associated with the proposed retirement of the nine coal-fired units at the Kingston Fossil Plant (KIF) and the construction and operation of facilities to replace the retired generation. The electricity generation replacement is one of three alternatives in the upcoming EIS: (A) construction and operation of a Combined Cycle Combustion Turbine (CC) Gas Plant at the same site; (B) investment in local and regional transmission, and construction and operation of Simple Cycle Combustion Turbine (CT) Gas Plants at alternate locations; (C) construction and operation of Solar and Storage Facilities, primarily at alternate locations.

All retirement options will also include the demolition of the current plant. Of concern to TCWP is the plant’s proximity to Obed Watershed, and placement of any natural gas pipeline that might be involved.

TCWP submitted comments on the scope of the EIS addressing the current lack of detailed information about pipelines’ sites.

Contributors

Tim Bigelow Steward of Oak Ridge Cedar Barren and member of Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Electrical engineer with focus on fusion energy.

Michelle Campanis Board member of the Tennessee Bluebird Society, a facilitator for the Project Learning Tree program and the planning board for Oak Ridge’s Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival. Education coordinator for the UT Arboretum.

Dan Firth Works on energy, mining and water quality issues with the Sierra Club, Appalachian Voices, Appalachian Citizens Law Center and others.

Carol Grametbauer TCWP Program Committee Chair and published poet. Retired public affairs manager for Lockheed Martin and BWXT Y-12.

Jimmy Groton President of Emory River Watershed Association and board member of Tennessee Invasive Plant Council. Works on environmental issues (wetlands, threatened and endangered species management and exotic species control) with a Knoxville environmental consulting firm.

Larry Pounds Botanical consultant, particularly for TVA and ORNL. Ph.D. in plant ecology. Member of the TCWP Program Committee and Tennessee Native Plant Society

Russ Manning well known outdoors and science writer for many years. Many Tennessee trails have been reviewed in his guide books.

Sandra Goss, Editor

Ken Mayes, Layout and design.



Sign-up for e-mail alerts on our website at <http://www.tcwp.org>

In living color!

Starting with this issue, TCWP Newsletter will begin appearing with color and active links for those who opt for electronic delivery.

Still want snail mail? No prob! Til we hear otherwise, you'll continue to receive TCWP Newsletter through the U. S. Postal Service.

Ready to get your newsletter electronically with live links and color? Email tcwp.contact@gmail.com

amazon

smile

Did you know that you can support TCWP while shopping at amazon.com?

Simply start at smile.amazon.com and choose Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning as your charity to support.

AmazonSmile will donate .05% of your eligible purchases.

4. NATIONAL NEWS

4A. Americans Eating Less Meat

In a Gallup poll reported in 2020, nearly one in four Americans (23%) said they were eating less meat than previously. The primary reason reported was for good health. Women, non-whites, city residents, and Democrats lead the reduction in meat consumption in their respective demographics. Smaller portions and plant substitutes are ways of reducing meat consumption, in addition to simply eliminating meat from a meal.

The poll did not distinguish between eating red meat vs. chicken or fish. However, an older study by the National Resources Defense Council specifically looked at beef consumption and found a significant reduction that corresponds to a reduction in carbon emitted.

While health was the reason most often given in the Gallup poll for reducing meat consumption, the environment and animal welfare were also prominent reasons. Water use is a serious environmental impact. The USGS estimates a quarter pound of beef requires about 460 gallons of water to grow grain, forage, and roughage to feed a cow. Water is also needed for drinking as well as for servicing the cow. In addition, habitat loss is a serious environmental impact as forests are felled and prairies are plowed under to grow grass for livestock. For example, the scourge of "chaining" on arid BLM lands in the west is specifically to plant non-native grass for cows.

Additionally, concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) pose a health threat with their pollutants. According to the CDC, manure contains plant nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, pathogens such as E. coli, growth hormones, antibiotics, chemicals used as additives to manure or to clean equipment, animal blood, silage leachate from corn feed, and copper sulfate used in footbaths for cows. CAFOs are also no fun for the animals.

So in addition to reducing our consumption of meat for health and the environment, especially beef, we can also ensure our meat and animal products come from animals raised on "free-range" farming operations ("cage-free" could still be a CAFO). Free-range not only benefits the animal, in a small way it also steers the economy away from CAFOs.

- The Gallup poll: https://news.gallup.com/poll/282779/nearly-one-four-cut-back-eating-meat.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axiosam&stream=top
- NRDC study: <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/less-beef-less-carbon-ip.pdf>
- Water usage: <https://water.usgs.gov/edu/activity-watercontent.html>
- CDC report: https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/docs/understanding_cafos_nalboh.pdf

—Russ Manning

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>

4B. Mississippi River Initiative to be Introduced

Minnesota Congressperson Betty McCollum will soon introduce the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative (MRRRI) in the U.S. House of Representatives. The “Great River” not only serves as a source of drinking water for 20 million Americans and as a corridor of commerce, but also hosts one of the great migrations of North America—the Mississippi Flyway.



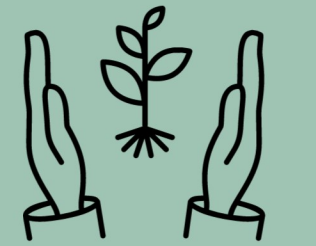
Originating in the northern breeding grounds of the Prairie Pothole Region of the Northern Great Plains and also the Western Boreal Forest of Canada, Mississippi Flyway birds migrate south come fall, following the river through the Mississippi Valley to reach wintering grounds along the Gulf of Mexico and in Central and South America before returning north in spring. Astonishingly, more than 325 bird species, including 60 percent of migratory waterfowl, migrate along the Mississippi Flyway, perhaps the most important flyway in the world. However, pollution, runoff, flooding, wetland loss, and a changing climate threaten the health of the river.

This year’s omnibus funding bill already includes language to establish a national strategy for the MRRRI. This new legislation will formally authorize the EPA to get started. The MRRRI will use a non-regulatory approach by providing grant opportunities for state and local governments, tribes, and nonprofit organizations working for the health of the river. The MRRRI will provide critical funding, research, and coordination to improve water quality, protect species habitat, enhance flood resilience, and combat aquatic invasive species.

The Mississippi River Network, a coalition of organizations, instituted the 1 Mississippi program to work for protection and restoration of the Mississippi River. “We all count on the river,” they ask, “but can the river count on us?” The program’s name evokes the children’s device for counting seconds (one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three...). 1 Mississippi encourages citizens to sign up as River Citizens to take action to protect the river—from volunteering for river cleanups, tree plantings, and restoration workdays to encouraging Congress and local elected officials to enact policies that protect the river from pollution and provide funding for habitat restoration. MRN/1 Mississippi is leading the advocacy for the MRRRI by gathering petition signatures prior to the bill’s introduction.

- To sign the petition: <https://mississippirivernetwork.salsalabs.org/msriver2021petition/>
- 1 Mississippi: <https://1mississippi.org>
- MRRRI editorial: <https://www.startribune.com/keeping-it-mighty-the-mississippi-river-needs-us/600066937/>

— RM



Support
TCWP

by donating,
joining, or
renewing

your membership

at tcwp.org



Newsletter Changes

As you can see, we are trying something new with the newsletter. We hope these changes make the newsletter more readable and aesthetically pleasing. Tell us what you think about the new format and bear with us while we fine tune the new format.

Ken Mayes

5. TCWP NEWS

5A. Upcoming Activities

TCWP's Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants practice social distancing, maintain at least 6 feet of separation between themselves and other unvaccinated participants.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants continue to wear a mask especially when social distancing is not possible.
- We will organize activities into group of 20 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning for unvaccinated participants, rather than carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancellation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

Hike on Cumberland Trail in New River Valley – Saturday, July 24

In this joint event with the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, we will caravan or carpool from Oak Ridge to the Norma Road trailhead of the Cumberland Trail in the New River valley. We will hike southwest along the New River then tributary Lick Creek, then climb to the top of the ridge and hike out to the Lick Creek overlook for views of the New River valley and surrounding mountains.

If there is interest in the party, we will drive back a different route up to the headwaters of the New River and look at a few historic railroad and coal mining sites and Brushy Mountain penitentiary along the way. The hike will be eight miles round trip, rated moderate. The drive is 80 miles round trip.

We'll meet to carpool or caravan at 8 a.m. at Golds Gym/Books-a-Million parking lot along Illinois Ave in Oak Ridge, on the end near Salsarita's. For more information contact Tim Bigelow, 865-607-6781, Bigelowt2@mindspring.com. – *Tim Bigelow*

"Ranavirus: What It Is, and Why It Matters to Our Box Turtles in East Tennessee" – Tuesday, August 17

Ranavirus can cause severe infections in amphibians, reptiles (including box turtles), and fish. It has a mortality rate of 90% to 100%, and there is currently no treatment. On August 17 Dr. Matt Allender, director of the Wildlife Epidemiology Lab at the University of Illinois, will discuss his work in connection with the ranavirus in a free Zoom program cosponsored by TCWP, the UT Arboretum Society, and the Clinch River Environmental Studies Organization of East Tennessee (CRESO).

Dr. Allender is a zoo and wildlife veterinarian who received his DVM from the University of Illinois in 2004, and completed a residency in Zoological Medicine at the University of Tennessee and the Knoxville Zoo. He then joined the faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois and jointly completed a PhD, studying the epidemiology of ranavirus in free-ranging turtles. He currently teaches, performs research, and provides clinical service for free-ranging and captive wildlife, and also volunteers for CRESO.

Registration for this event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues. – *Carol Grametbauer*

Cory Holliday, Karst Topography in East Tennessee – August 24

Cory Holliday, Cave & Karst Program Director of The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee, will speak on Karst Landscapes of East Tennessee: Linking Water, Woods, and Wildlife at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 24.

The Advocates For the Oak Ridge Reservation are sponsoring the program, which is free and open to the public.

Summer Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, August 28

This will be the second of our three annual workdays at the Oak Ridge Cedar Barren. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, the barren is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, the State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. One of just a few cedar barrens in East Tennessee, the area is subject to invasion by Chinese lespedeza, Japanese privet, autumn olive, mimosa, Nepal grass, multiflora rose, and woody plants that threaten the system's prairie grasses. Our spring, summer, and fall cleanups help to eliminate invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sun. The late-summer workday is optimum for viewing prairie wildflowers that flourish at the barren.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School parking lot at 9 a.m.; wear sturdy shoes, and bring loppers, gloves, and water. For additional information, contact Tim Bigelow at Bigelowt2@mindspring.com or at 865-607-6781.

“Against the Current: Paddling Upstream on the Tennessee River” – Thursday, September 9

On September 9, TCWP, the UT Arboretum Society, and the East Tennessee Whitewater Club will cosponsor a 7 p.m. free online Zoom by Maryville College professor Kim Trevathan based on his latest book, **Against the Current: Paddling Upstream on the Tennessee River**.

Trevathan has taught journalism, creative nonfiction, and fiction at Maryville College for more than 20 years. In the spring of 2018 he paddled the length of the Tennessee River—652 miles—going upstream, with his 10-month-old puppy Maggie, then wrote a book about their experiences. His earlier books are **Paddling the Tennessee River: A Voyage on Easy Water** (2001), **Coldhearted River: A Canoe Odyssey down the Cumberland** (2006), and **Liminal Zones: Where Lakes End and Rivers Begin** (2013). All three books were published by the University of Tennessee Press.

Registration for this event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues. – CG

Cumberland Mountain Wildflower Walk – Saturday, September 11

This is a joint outing for TCWP and the Tennessee Native Plant Society. We will have an opportunity to see fall wildflowers and views on the Cumberland Mountain ridgetop. As usual, hikers may turn around at any point, but most flowers will be on top. We will hike from a trailhead (Sarvis) that is about halfway up the mountain. The hike is about four miles round trip on a good trail, but with a steep climb of about 1,000 feet from the trailhead to the top.

We'll meet at the Dollar General on TN 63 east of LaFollette at 10 a.m. Eastern time. It's located on the southeast side of a crossroad with Greene Lane to the north and Calhoun Rd. to the south (115 Calhoun Rd.), and is about an hour's drive from Oak Ridge. Bring water, a lunch, and bug spray.

For information or to make reservations (not required, but helpful), contact Larry Pounds at 865-705-8516 or PoundsL471@aol.com. – Larry Pounds

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

5B. Recent events

"Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!" – Thursday, May 27

On May 27 TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society co-sponsored a virtual presentation by Freya McGregor, occupational therapist and a coordinator for Birdability, a nonprofit organization focused on removing barriers to access for birders with mobility or health challenges. McGregor pointed out that "time spent in nature is good for us," and that birding, which has the potential to be both inclusive and accessible, can be the gateway to that experience.

She described some of the problems encountered by physically challenged people in the outdoors, such as parking, gates, restroom facilities, steps and curbs, and railing heights, and how these might be addressed to give them better access. "No one can predict what a person with a disability can or cannot do," McGregory told her audience. – CG

North Ridge Trail Improvement Installed on Nat'l Trails Day

With the leadership of North Ridge Trail Steward Ray Garrett and the help of 13 NRT fans, 80 feet of chain rail were installed, and 85 feet of trail rerouted on June 5. The work was done on a very steep slope on the main trail west of the Walker Lane access in honor of National Trails Day.

The North Ridge Trail and its access trails provide a lengthy path through woodlands with creeks, rocks, and wildflowers. Running east-west, the main trail is accessible at various places along the way.

The North Ridge Trail was built years ago by volunteers organized by event sponsor Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning. It has been maintained by volunteers since then.

East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup - Saturday, June 12

We had a good turnout for this joint effort to clean up the new trail, with about 14 people participating in a very productive outing on a warm day. This trail follows the East Fork of Poplar Creek west of Illinois Avenue a little way south of the Oak Ridge Turnpike. Joining TCWP were the Clinch Valley Trail Alliance and Greenways Oak Ridge. CVTA was instrumental in getting the trail built, and Greenways OR has included the trail in the greenway system.

East Fork Poplar Creek occasionally floods its banks and washes all sorts of trash into the creek. This was the second workday held since the trail was built, and a large amount of trash was picked up and carted off. Items found included mostly old tires, various car parts, and other trash. The warm weather and cool water made it much more comfortable to rescue items from the creek, especially many of the tires which were buried in the sediment. CVTA brought a tire hook, and a motorized trail work buggy to haul the tires and other heavy items back to a central location. This year Jon Hetrick, Oak Ridge Recreation and Parks Department Director, provided a dump truck for the trash and arranged for the City to dispose of the tires. We filled the truck to capacity.

The crew did a great job, working as far west as the fire station where the trail currently ends. There are several large logjams in the creek where lots of floating debris gets trapped, so another workday will be needed to clear these and retrieve several more tires still in deeper water. – *Jimmy Groton*

"Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S." – Thursday, June 24

This Zoom program was co-sponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society; 190 people registered for the program. Dr. Gerhold gave us a thorough overview of ticks' lifecycle and ways we can protect ourselves and our pets in the outdoors.

Dr. Gerhold emphasized the importance of wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks, and making a thorough tick check daily rather than relying only on insect repellents. He confirmed that Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme disease are established in East Tennessee and that the prevalence of ticks carrying Lyme has greatly increased in

Tennessee in the past five years, so there is a need for the medical community to catch up with their diagnostics and treatment plans.

The Zoom program recording is available for 100 days at:

<https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/wL9dNQ2cXZSV3U65PqRUdw3wofoOSxKuRPzSdE8Mq6lvi-Y55dmwMMTGKHY-bB6r.jvGs8yt-jFSc-hr7?startTime=1624573850000> - Michelle Campanis

5C. Members in the Print Media

A guest column about expanding Medicaid written by Neil McBride appeared in the April 21 Oak Ridger.

Chuck Coutant and David Adler are quoted in a May 4 News Sentinel article about the Aquatic Ecology Lab of Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Lance McCold co-signed a letter to the editor of the May 5 News Sentinel about education funding.

The May 7 News Sentinel carried a letter from Anne Child about expanding rental assistance.

Jeff Mellor wrote a letter about Liz Cheney. It appeared in the May 16 News Sentinel.

Roger McCoy, Director of State Natural Areas Division, is quoted and pictured in an article about the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Natural Areas Preservation Act in the May 16 News Sentinel.

The May 17 News Sentinel carried a column about the Energy Innovation Act that was co-authored by Jan Berry.

A Search for Safe Passage, a book authored by Frances Figart, was reviewed in the June 1 Erwin Record as well as the Summer, 2021 issue of the NPCA Magazine.

Joe Feeman authored an article about invasive exotic plants in the June 3 Norris Bulletin.

The June 10 Oak Ridger and the June 14 News Sentinel included Anne Child's letter to the editor about global education.

The results of the Norris Urban Forest Questionnaire were the subject of an article by Chuck Nicholson in the June 10 Norris Bulletin.

Frances Figart's letter to the New York Times editor about infrastructure for safe wildlife crossings appeared in the June 21 edition.

Government investment was topic of Jeff Mellor's letter to the June 25 News-Sentinel- editor.

Don Barkman's letter to the editor of the NPCA magazine about the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal appeared in the Summer, 2021 issue.

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP's strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive and Membership-Development Director: Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967 Sandra@sandrakgoss.com

Outreach & Membership Coordinator:

Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

TCWP website: <http://www.tcwp.org>

**TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR
WILDERNESS PLANNING**

P.O BOX 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

Board of Directors

Mark BevelhimerPresident
Michele Thornton V. Pres
Carol GrametbauerSecretary
Tim Bigelow Treasurer
Michelle Campanis Director
Anne Child Director
Johnny Cosgrove Director
Christopher DeRolph Director
Jimmy Groton Director
Larry Pounds Director
Hannah Tippet Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 24, Hike on Cumberland Trail in New River Valley
- August 17, "Ranavirus: What It Is, and Why It Matters to Our Box Turtles in East Tennessee"
- August 24, Cory Holliday, karst topography in ET
- August 28, Summer Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle®
- September 9, "Against the Current: Paddling Upstream on the Tennessee River"
- September 11, Cumberland Mountain Wildflower Walk

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.

55th Anniversary TCWP Annual Meeting At Cove Lake State Park



Guest Speaker:
Bobby Fulcher

*manager of the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland
Trail State Scenic Trail State Park*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23
9:30 AM COFFEE & MINGLE; 10:00 AM KICK-OFF

COVID-19 precautions will be encouraged. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

TCWP will hold its 2021 Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 23, at Cove Lake State Park Pavilion 3 in Caryville with Bob Fulcher, manager of the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail State Park, as our keynote speaker. The meeting will include a business meeting to elect TCWP officers and board members for 2022, lunch, and a birthday cake to celebrate the 55th anniversary of TCWP's founding. After lunch Bob, who is also a folklorist and musician, will play a few tunes. He invites any meeting attendee who plays an instrument to join in!

Registration is \$17 per person and begin at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and bagels; meeting will kick off at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will be pork barbecue sandwich, slaw and pickle or Falafel wrap with cucumber salad.

COVID-19 precautions will be encouraged. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

RSVP with the below form or online at tcwp.org.

Annual Meeting RSVP

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Attendees: _____ Lunch Preference: _____ Barbecue Sandwich _____ Falafel Wrap

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING NOMINEES for OFFICERS and DIRECTORS for 2022

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Mark Bevelhimer - After 30 years as an aquatic ecologist/fish biologist in the Environmental Sciences Division of ORNL Mark retired in 2019. For years he researched the effects of environmental stressors from hydropower dams, coal fired powerplants, and toxic contaminants on fish and aquatic ecosystems. He has been filling his retirement with lots of whitewater kayaking, hiking, camping, fishing, spending time at his cabin on Watts Bar, and TCWP!

VICE PRESIDENT: Michele Thornton - GIS Analyst at ORNL with the Environmental Sciences Division. Master's degree in Biology with an emphasis in stream ecology. BS in Biological Sciences. Taught secondary science in public schools in Michigan and natural science programs in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. Michele spends her free time hiking, biking, and shuttling and volunteering within her children's various interests.

SECRETARY: Carol Grametbauer - Retired public affairs manager for Lockheed Martin and BWXT Y-12. TCWP member since the early 1970s. Chairs the Program Committee. Served as one of TCWP's representatives to the Alliance for the Cumberlands. An amateur naturalist, values wilderness, enjoys hiking and the outdoors.

TREASURER: Tim Bigelow - - Electrical Engineer working on fusion energy at ORNL. Serves on the Program Committee and as the Oak Ridge Barrens Steward. Interested in land preservation, exotic species control, hiking, camping. Also, an active member of Smoky Mountains Hiking Club and supporter of Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation, Foothills Land Conservancy, Cherokee Forest Voices.

DIRECTORS:

Michelle Campanis - Michelle, degreed in Agriculture and Natural Resources, and longtime Belmont University staffer, is education coordinator for the UT Arboretum. She is on the board for the Tennessee Bluebird Society and a facilitator for the Project Learning Tree program as well as the planning board for Oak Ridge's Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival. Michelle loves all things outdoors and when not at work can be found hiking, cycling, camping, or kayaking.

Anne Child - After growing up in Oak Ridge, was software engineer in Austin, Texas until retirement. As Texas Master Naturalist volunteered in trail maintenance and invasive removal. Serves as a regional coordinator for RESULTS, lobbying Congress to end U.S. and global poverty. Member and officer in Toastmasters.

John Cosgrove - Avid hiker, biker, fisherman and general outdoorsperson and conservationist. Passionate about the preservation and conservation of our outdoor resources, environment, and public lands. Supporter of several local, regional, and national conservation and advocacy groups, including National Parks Conservation Association, Tennessee Clean Water Network, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation.

Chris DeRolph - Geospatial Scientist at ORNL in the Environmental Sciences Division. M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences. B.S. in Environmental Science. Certified GIS Professional. Enjoys mountain biking, small stream fly fishing, hiking, paddling, and laughing.

Jimmy Groton - Works on environmental issues (wetlands, threatened and endangered species management and exotic species control) with a Knoxville environmental consulting firm. Worked for National Park Service for six years. Has M.S. in forestry; B.S. in natural resources. TCWP Board member since 1993; President 1999-2002, 2006-2014; currently President of Emory River Watershed Association and board member of Tennessee Invasive Plant Council; served on O.R. EQAB for 18 years. Active on trails, water, program, Obed, and Cherokee National Forest issues. Enjoys hiking, paddling, and being outdoors.

Larry Pounds - Botanical consultant, particularly for TVA and ORNL. Ph.D. in plant ecology. Member of the TCWP Program Committee and Tennessee Native Plant Society

Hannah Tippett - Partner with Mostoller, Stulberg, Whitfield & Allen in Oak Ridge. Born and raised in Malawi, Africa, Hannah has loved nature from a young age. She has researched the effects of mountaintop removal mining on local communities and on the environment. Enjoys running, biking, hiking, camping, and basically just being outdoors.

2022 NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Anne Child, Harriett McCurdy,

TCWP Newsletter

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Bittle Racetrack Project finds a home in Cumberland County

In July, Flatrock USA, née Oak Ridge Motorsports Park, announced it will locate at the Plateau Park Partnership property near the I-40 Westel exit. The 773-acre tract, a joint economic development effort among Cumberland, Morgan, and Roane counties, is more than double the amount of land that project developer Rust Bittle had sought in Oak Ridge.

Bittle had originally identified the former DOE property now known as Horizon Center as the site for a racetrack and several amenities. That proposal was met with a mix of reactions, culminating in a Department of Energy decision that an Environmental Impact Statement (conducted at Bittle's expense) would be necessary before such use could be considered for approval.

Bittle began a new search for a more "shovel-ready" site. According to an article in the July 21 Morgan County News, such a site would already have zoning necessary to accommodate the motorsports park concept and offer at least 300 acres unencumbered by governmental bureaucracy. The property, located south of I-40 and west of Westel Road exit, lies on the edge of Cumberland County with ready access from I-40. Ground-breaking is projected for this year.

2. OBED/BIG SOUTH FORK NEWS

2A. Improvements Throughout the BSF Park Continue

Thanks to the Great Outdoors Act, funds became available to the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area to take care of some needed repair work. Staff re-decked the entire Tipple Bridge at Blue Heron and rebuilt the Gazebo at Blue Heron Overlook. Other projects include: rebuilding the porch at the Bandy Creek Visitor Center, rehabilitating Station Camp Creek Trail, replacing guard rails along the Blue Heron Road, and replacing safety railing along Mine 18 Trail.



Inside this issue

1. Oak Ridge News 1
 - A. Bittle Racetrack Project finds a home in Cumberland County
2. Obed/Big South Fork News 1
 - A. Improvements Throughout the BSF Park Continue
3. Tennessee 2
 - A. Park Service Seeks Input on Regulation of Smokies Helicopter Flights
 - B. Will you Support Mack Prichard's Legacy
 - C. A Bear-Raising Experience to Benefit East Tennessee Trail Association
 - D. Appalachian Public Interest & Environmental Law Conference on September 25
4. National News..... 4
 - A. National Park Service Director Nominated
 - B. Returning Bison to the Prairie
5. TCWP News..... 5
 - A. Upcoming Activities
 - B. Recent Activities
 - C. Members in the News
 - D. By-law Change Proposed, Vote Will Be at Annual Meeting

Insert - Annual Meeting and Board Nominations

3. TENNESSEE NEWS

3A. Park Service Seeks Public Input on Regulation of Smokies Helicopter Flights

A public input session has begun as part of a joint effort between the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Park Service to establish limited helicopter tour routes over Great Smoky Mountains National Park along with protocols geared to reduce the environmental and visitor impact of the flights.

The flights are already occurring, and have been for years; park service officials said in a news release that 946 flights per year would be allowed under the Air Tour Management Plan, in line with current levels of helicopter tours conducted each year by two operators outside the park.

The park service and FAA plan a virtual public meeting on the proposed tour routes at 4:30 p.m. Sept. 16. Public comment is accepted through Oct. 3, and can be entered into the record at the Smokies Air Tour Management Plan website, <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=100689>

"Great Smoky Mountains National Park is among 24 parks of the National Park System developing air tour management plans in cooperation with the FAA," park officials said in a press release.

"The agencies hope to complete all air tour management plans by the end of August 2022. The schedule is part of a plan approved by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit for the agencies to comply with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 within two years." - *Hellbender.org*

3B. Will You Support Mack Prichard's Legacy?

Mack Prichard spent his life working tirelessly to advocate for the preservation of Tennessee's landscapes and stories. If you've marveled at the deep rocky canyons, soaring cliffs, and big timber forests at South Cumberland State Park, you've done so thanks to the work of Mack Prichard.

Mack knew motivating others to care for Tennessee's natural places was an important step in securing their protection. He did so by presenting photographs and stories about the natural wonders he'd encountered with anyone who would listen. To continue Mack Prichard's legacy and inspire the next generation of conservationists, Tennessee State Parks is working with the Tennessee State Parks Conservancy to create a mobile exhibit about his life.

This exhibit will display objects Mack used to inspire the protection and preservation of Tennessee's essential places, such as his extensive photograph collection and text composed by people who knew him best. The exhibition will travel among Tennessee's parks, including places Mack worked to preserve, to ensure as many people see the exhibit as possible.

You can support Mack's legacy by donating at <https://tnstateparksconservancy.networkforgood.com/projects/136821-mack-prichard-legacy-exhibit>.

Contributors

Tim Bigelow Steward of Oak Ridge Cedar Barren and member of Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Electrical engineer with focus on fusion energy.

Michelle Campanis Board member of the Tennessee Bluebird Society, a facilitator for the Project Learning Tree program and the planning board for Oak Ridge's Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival. Education coordinator for the UT Arboretum.

John Beaudet Long time wilderness and hiking advocate, particularly Rocky Fork State Park and Cherokee National Forest

Marion Burger Nature enthusiast and long-time turtle whisperer

Carol Grametbauer TCWP Program Committee Chair and published poet. Retired public affairs manager for Lockheed Martin and BWXT Y-12.

Jimmy Groton President of Emory River Watershed Association and board member of Tennessee Invasive Plant Council. Works on environmental issues (wetlands, threatened and endangered species management and exotic species control) with a Knoxville environmental consulting firm.

Larry Pounds Botanical consultant, particularly for TVA and ORNL. Ph.D. in plant ecology. Member of the TCWP Program Committee and Tennessee Native Plant Society

Russ Manning well known outdoors and science writer for many years. Many Tennessee trails have been reviewed in his guide books.

Sandra Goss, Editor

Ken Mayes, Layout and design.

3C. A Bear-Raising Experience to Benefit East Tennessee Trail Association

East Tennessee Trail Association (ETTA) is a newly formed trail group in upper east Tennessee organized to provide trail maintenance work primarily on hiking trails in Cherokee National Forest that do not benefit from the work of any other volunteer organization. ETTA needs to raise some funds to purchase equipment like loppers, hand saws, weed eaters, and chainsaws.

As a fundraiser, ETTA's "sawyers" (folks who work with chainsaws) are carving a big ol' bear out of a white pine log to be sold to the highest bidder. This fundraiser will allow ETTA to incorporate into a nonprofit 501c3 organization and seek donations and grants to support trail work projects. Bidding starts at \$700 and ends at midnight on the autumnal equinox, September 22.

ETTA exists to promote an appreciation of nature primarily by building and maintaining hiking trails and promoting the proper use and management of those trails and the public lands they pass through. ETTA believes that, while the Appalachian Trail enjoys adequate care, and some secondary trails are adopted by various hiking clubs, many secondary trails do not have a caretaker other than the USFS and thus the region benefits from a service organization to provide needed assistance. ETTA seeks to achieve its purpose and fulfill its mission by recruiting and training a public volunteer force in the skills of general trail maintenance, trail rehabilitation, and trail construction and coordinate with Cherokee National Forest and other land management agency staff.



When finished, the ETTA bear will be displayed at ACE Hardware in Greeneville, TN, until someone buys it, and it is delivered to its new home. If you would like more information about the bear or are interested in volunteering as a trail maintainer with ETTA, you can email bodaciousat@gmail.com. - John Beaudet

3D. Appalachian Public Interest & Environmental Law Conference on September 25

The 12th annual APIEL Conference will be held on Saturday, September 25 via ZOOM. Among topics to be covered are Byhalia Pipeline, Environmental Justice, and the Law; Ethics and Environmental Regulation; Mass Toxic Tort Litigation; Promoting Social Change through Litigation; and Environmental Lobbying and Legislation.

APIEL planners have indicated that details are being finalized. An outdoor social event is slated for that Saturday evening. CLE's are available for this event. RSVP by following this link > <https://bit.ly/APIEL-2021-RSVP> or write apiel.info@gmail.com.




Did you know that you can support TCWP while shopping at amazon.com?

Simply start at smile.amazon.com and choose Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning as your charity to support.

AmazonSmile will donate .05% of your eligible purchases.

4. NATIONAL NEWS

4A. National Park Service Director Nominated

In August, President Biden nominated Charles “Chuck” Sams III to be the director of the National Park Service. Sams is a long-time tribal leader in Oregon and U.S. Navy veteran.

Sams would be the service’s first full-time director since the Obama administration. Former President Donald Trump’s nominees were never confirmed by the Senate, and the agency has been overseen by a series of acting directors for the past four years.

4B. Returning Bison to the Prairie



The American Prairie Reserve is asking for help in getting permission from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to return bison to nearly 70,000 acres of prairie on America’s public lands.

Prairie ecology is big—expansive grasslands are needed to restore habitat for bison, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, perhaps eventually grizzly bear, wolf, and mountain lion. In 2004, the Northern Plains Conservation Network, a collaboration of non-profit and tribal organizations working to preserve the plains, released a report, *Ocean of Grass*, that suggested “Areas as large as 3.2 million acres (5,000 sq mi/12,500 sq km) ... are necessary to sustain wild bison on ecologically meaningful scales.”

The non-profit American Prairie Reserve has taken up the challenge to reestablish a reserve of 3.2 million acres in northern Montana. The process is to purchase land and associated grazing leases on public land to assemble the prairie. The leasing of public land originates with the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, which was intended to control overgrazing of the land. Grazing districts were created that were treated like open range.

However, by the 1950s, with the influence of the ranching lobby, the open range districts morphed into individual plots of thousands of acres, fenced with taxpayer money, and each leased by a single rancher. These leases were attached to the land a rancher owned; so when a ranch is sold, the leases go with it. What had become an obstacle to public oversight of public lands, with little control of grazing, has now become an advantage for those with restoration in mind if one has the resources to buy a ranch with its leased acres.



American Prairie has done just that—raised the funds and purchased ranches that include leases to graze cattle on public lands. However, those leases do not include permission to graze bison, which is the goal of the organization.

In 2019, American Prairie submitted a revised proposal to BLM to expand bison grazing on some federal and state lands

where they have grazing privileges for cattle. Conducting an assessment (*American Prairie Reserve Bison Change of Use*, DOI-BLM-L010-2018-0007-EA), the BLM found that the grazing proposal will have no negative impact on the environment and will actually benefit local wildlife, improve land and water quality, and create new local jobs—all without impacting the value of the ranching economy.

It is anticipated that, with the introduction of bison, existing vegetation communities could experience improvements in vegetation community species richness and diversity ... Transition from cattle grazing to bison pasturing is thus not anticipated to result in measurable adverse effects on uplands, riparian areas, water quality, or habitats for native plant and animal species.

APR says, “It’s time to push this proposal over the finish line by demonstrating public support.” With the comment period ending on September 28th, “we need your help.”

What You Can Do:

Tell the BLM why you support American Prairie’s proposal, identified in the BLM’s assessment as ‘Alternative B.’ <https://www.americanprairie.org/supportbison>.

- Russ Manning

5. TCWP NEWS

5A. Upcoming Activities

TCWP’s Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants practice social distancing, maintain at least 6 feet of separation between themselves and other unvaccinated participants.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants continue to wear a mask especially when social distancing is not possible.
- We will organize activities into group of 20 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning for unvaccinated participants, rather than carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.

DON'T FORGET!



**TCWP
ANNUAL
MEETING**

OCTOBER 23
at Cove Lake State Park

*See insert for details
or online at tcwp.org*

In living color!

TCWP Newsletter is now appearing with color and active links for those who opt for electronic delivery.

Still want snail mail? No prob! Til we hear otherwise, you'll continue to receive TCWP Newsletter through the U. S. Postal Service.

Ready to get your newsletter electronically with live links and color? Email

tcwp.contact@gmail.com

- Activities are subject to change or cancellation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

National Public Lands Day Event at Worthington Cemetery – Saturday, September 25

On Saturday, September 28, the Worthington Cemetery Ecological Study Area will be the site of multi-events, including a program about the pre-Civil War cemetery and the Worthington family's life centuries ago, a tour of the ESA, and treating some pesky non-native, prolific buckthorn to a good Weed Wrangle®. This frequently-held annual event, co-hosted by TVA and TCWP, helps to eradicate wisteria, privet, and other pest plants and to heighten awareness of the historically and ecologically significant land.

Volunteers should meet at Oak Ridge's Elza Gate park at 9:00 a.m.; the event will end about noon. Bring loppers and/or clippers if available, and wear sturdy shoes and clothes. There likely will be insects and ticks in abundance. Take precautions.

BTW, ticks are arachnids, not insects. *Sandra Goss*

Three Bends Melton Lake/Pellissippi Blueway Scenic Paddle Trip and Cleanup Event – Saturday, October 9

TCWP and Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation are organizing another scenic paddle trip to promote and help maintain the Three Bends and Pellissippi Blueway on Melton Lake. We plan to paddle out from the cove and enjoy tranquil inlets, birds and other wildlife, early fall wildflowers, and the fabulous scenery the Three Bends area has to offer. We'll visit a portion of Solway Bend and Freels Bend. Along the way we'll do our part in cleaning up the shoreline by picking up and hauling back manageable trash we encounter.

Participants should meet at 9 a.m. at the gravel parking area by the lake just past the turnoff to Clark Center Park off Pumphouse Rd. Those needing a kayak or canoe can rent one from Adventure Outdoors (Adventureoutdoors.com); we will provide assistance in transporting boats to the put-in place.

Please bring a life jacket and wear it whenever you're in the boat! Be prepared for sun, and bring a lunch and water. For additional information contact Tim Bigelow, 865-607-6781 or Bigelowt2@mindspring.com. *Tim Bigelow*

TCWP Annual Meeting – Saturday, October 23

TCWP will hold its 2021 Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 23, at Cove Lake State Park in Caryville with Bob Fulcher, manager of the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail State Park, as our keynote speaker. The meeting will include a business meeting to elect TCWP officers and board members for 2022, lunch, and a birthday cake to celebrate the 55th anniversary of TCWP's founding. After lunch Bob, who is also a folklorist and musician, will provide entertainment. He invites any meeting attendee who plays an instrument to join in! (See insert for more information)

Norris Watershed Hike – Saturday, October 30

This year's hike in the Norris Municipal Watershed will explore the history of the Watershed at the time TVA purchased the property, in 1933. We'll begin the hike on Clear Creek Trail and travel up to Lower White Pine Trail, then up Upper White Pine to Hi Point Trail. We'll make a side trip up to High Point, the highest point in the area. A short hike down Hi Point will take us to Freeway Trail and then to Ridgecrest Trail. It is all downhill from this point, and we'll join Hi Point Trail again for a short distance to the pump house.

The hike will cover about 3.8 miles with a couple of hills and is rated easy to moderate (see Norris Watershed Trail map at: <http://www.cityofnorris.com/id336.html>). Along the way we'll see some old home sites, the original and still extant city spring, old water weirs put in by TVA, the site of a CCC camp, and more.

Participants will meet at 9 a.m. the Norris City Water Treatment Plant (pump house), located on Lower Clear Creek Road. (Turn right heading toward Norris Dam on US 441, turn right at the Rice Grist Mill, and go to the blue tower just up from the creek ford.) Those who would like to carpool or caravan from Oak Ridge can meet in the Gold's Gym/Books-a-Million parking lot in Oak Ridge (at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's). Wear sturdy shoes or boots, and bring water and snacks or a lunch. For more information, contact Joe Feeman at 865-457-8191 or jcfeeman@comcast.net.
- Joe Feeman

Fall Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, November 6

The Oak Ridge Cedar Barren will again be the site of exotic invasive plant removal as we conduct our fall cleanup, our third and final cleanup of the year. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, the Barren is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. The area is one of just a few cedar barrens in East Tennessee, and is subject to invasion by bushy lespedeza, leatherleaf viburnum, privet, autumn olive, mimosa, Nepal grass, multiflora rose, and woody plants that threaten the system's prairie grasses. Our efforts help to eliminate invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sunlight.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School Parking lot at 9 a.m., with sturdy shoes, loppers, gloves, and water. For more information, contact Tim Bigelow at 865-607-6781 or Bigelowt2@mindspring.com.

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

5B. Recent events

Hike on Cumberland Trail in New River Valley – Saturday, July 24

Nine hikers participated in this nice hike on a very warm day. The trail crosses the New River and turns upstream until it crosses, then follows, Lick Creek drainage. There were many plants to check out along the way, so the group ended up splitting into two groups. The trail was a bit overgrown so several downed trees and branches were removed and quite a bit of weed-whacking was done along the way.

Several ATV trails cross the path, which is fortunately fairly well marked with blazes. After crossing Lick Creek at a very pleasant small waterfall, the trail begins a slow then steep climb to the ridge top. After many stops for breath and more weed whacking the first group reached the top where the trail joins another ATV road. That road leads a short way to a wonderful view at the top of the New River valley and surrounding mountains. - Tim Bigelow

"Ranavirus: What It Is, and Why It Matters to Our Box Turtles in East Tennessee" – Tuesday, August 17

On August 17 we were treated to an expansive and fascinating Zoom program, centered on box turtles, by Dr. Matt Allender, University of Illinois wildlife veterinarian. Co-sponsors with TCWP were the UT Arboretum and Clinch River Environmental Studies Organization of East Tennessee (CRESO), where Dr. Allender collaborates regularly in studies of Tennessee's box turtle population and its condition.

The prevalence of ranavirus, its spread through wildlife populations, and methods of its diagnosis in individuals are critical aspects of Dr. Allender's investigations, as this virus has a 90% mortality rate within about three weeks from infection, and no treatment exists. He has developed bioassays for classifying individual turtles according to health status, i.e. normal vs. abnormal.

We saw pictures of a variety of fungal and other viral infections which afflict turtles, and heard about normal turtles' range of personalities. The species extends north to Cape Cod; individuals can live at least 60 years; each turtle spends its entire life in a one- to five- acre range. On a discouraging but familiar note: 90% of Tennessee turtles show resistance to antibiotics.
- Marion Burger

(Editor's Note: Dr. Allender said that box turtle gender can NOT be determined by eye color.)

Summer Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, August 28

Fourteen volunteers participated in our Summer Cedar Barren Cleanup, including some new volunteers and many seasoned veterans. We were able to remove much Chinese lespedeza, and trimmed flowers from most that were in bloom. The ground was moist enough that our weed wrenches could pull a good bit of the lespedeza roots, which in some cases are amazingly long. Several buckthorn trees around the perimeter area were removed, as well as the usual privet, bush honeysuckle, and autumn olive.

A yellow jacket nest was discovered by Ken Mayes, who received multiple stings but kept right on working! This is another type of invasive to deal with during a summer work day. The hive area was flagged for now. A small baby box turtle discovered by Harriet McCurdy.

Margaret Cumberland, a botanist from the NEON (National Ecological Observatory Network) Project, and her husband Riley participated in the work day. Margaret is working on a proposal to involve scientists and local users in a collaborative local program on ecology and would like to include the Cedar Barren. She described the program to other volunteers and also identified many plants.

Larry Pounds and Jimmy Groton led a wildflower walk to the front Triangle area. Purple blazing stars were just emerging. A small-leaved rose vine growing close to the ground was seen. Several more fire ant colonies have set up shop in the area.
Tim Bigelow/Oak Ridge Cedar Barren Committee

5C. Members in the Print Media

Peter Thornton was pictured and quoted in a June 22 Oak Ridger article about RamSat, a small student-built satellite that was launched from Cape Canaveral.

Joe Feeman was named 2021 Norris Lions Club Norris Day honoree as described in the July Norris Bulletin.

The July 12 issue of the Oak Ridger included an article about Mick Wiest's contribution of a leather-bound record of the Anderson County Fair and Stock Association to Anderson County archives.

Eileen Neiler's letter to the editor about the founding of the Children's Museum appeared in the July 15 edition of the Oak Ridger.

The July 22 Norris Bulletin quoted Chuck Nicholson and Harry Shatz in an article about the Norris Commons Elm tree.

Michelle Campanis was pictured and mentioned in an announcement of Stephen Lyn Bales presentation about screech-owl boxes.

A letter about the availability of COVID vaccinations was written by Anne Child to the August 2 News Sentinel editor.

The August meeting of Friends of Oak Ridge National Laboratory featured John Bates as speaker. This was announced in the August 6 issue of the Oak Ridger.

John Todd Waterman's letter to the editor (and to TVA) of the Oak Ridger about the future of the Kingston Steam Plant appeared in the August 6 issue.

The rural hospital crisis was the topic of letter to the August 15 News Sentinel that was written by Judy Roitman and others.

Frances Figart's column reported on a new podcast series about Black Appalachian music the August 24 Citizen-Times.

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>



Sign-up for e-mail alerts
on our website at
<http://www.tcwp.org>

5D: By-law Change Proposed; Vote Will Be at Annual Meeting

In order to align the by-laws more closely with our new membership records software, TCWP By-Laws need an amendment.

The by-laws currently read:

Article VII Section B

Membership dues shall be paid annually due on January 1. Members joining after July 1 of any year shall be assessed only half the year's dues. Dues include subscription to the Newsletter.

A change in the various membership categories and change in the amount of annual dues requires approval of at least two-thirds of the Board of Directors.

Proposed changes:

Membership dues shall be paid annually. Dues include subscription to the Newsletter.

A change in the various membership categories and change in the amount of annual dues requires approval of at least two-thirds of the Board of Directors.

In accordance with the Article on amendments & revisions (see at end of this article), four members (Michelle Campanis, Carol Grametbauer, Jimmy Groton, and Hannah Tippet) approved this amendment, and that was sent to Secretary Grametbauer on August 31.

This will be voted on at the October 23 Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS The Constitution may be amended or revised by a two-thirds vote of members voting at the Annual Meeting. The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of members present at the Annual Meeting. Proposed amendments must have the documented approval of at least four members, be submitted to the Secretary by September 1, and be communicated to the membership at least two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP's strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive and Membership-Development Director: Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967 Sandra@sandrakgoss.com

Outreach & Membership Coordinator:

Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

TCWP website: <http://www.tcwp.org>

**TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR
WILDERNESS PLANNING**

P.O BOX 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

Board of Directors

Mark BevelhimerPresident
Michele Thornton V. Pres
Carol GrametbauerSecretary
Tim Bigelow Treasurer
Michelle Campanis Director
Anne Child Director
Johnny Cosgrove Director
Christopher DeRolph Director
Jimmy Groton Director
Larry Pounds Director
Hannah Tippet Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

- September 25, National Public Lands Day Worthington Cemetery Cleanup
- October 9, Three Bends Melton Lake/Pellissippi Blueway Scenic Paddle Trip and Cleanup
- October 23, TCWP Annual Meeting at Cove Lake State Park
- October 30, Norris Watershed Hike
- November 6, Fall Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle®

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.



TCWP Newsletter

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Proposed Reservation Hazardous Waste Landfill (EMDF) Update

TCWP and sister organizations have written the EPA Administrator Michael Regen about the long-debated Environmental Management Disposal Facility that is proposed for the Bear Creek watershed. As the Department of Energy continues to clean up contaminated areas in the Superfund site, the disposal site that's currently in use is approaching maximum capacity.

DOE proposes to bury low-level radioactive material in the Bear Creek watershed and to discharge radionuclide pollutants. If the landfill is sited as planned, the health of communities that live downstream is at risk.

This proposal needs more public review and comment. Please email regen.michael@epa.gov to require DOE to issue a revised proposal for public comment. The at-risk community members deserve nothing less.

1B. Scientist(s) needed for new project at the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens!

Background: In 1998 TCWP registered the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens as a state natural area by agreement with the City of Oak Ridge and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). Due to its ecological history, the Barrens contains preserved areas of native prairie. At least 3 rare plant species grow there in abundance. Currently, there are three annual workdays at the Barrens, focusing on the removal of invasive pest plants, and encroaching native woody plants.

TCWP has managed the Barrens for over 30 years. The 2014 Oak Ridge Barrens Natural Area Management Plan outlined the need for comprehensive biological surveys to evaluate the site's importance and serve as a baseline and guide for future management. The plan also included a goal to publish a paper about the results of the surveys.

The local domain of the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) is partnering with

Inside this issue

1. Oak Ridge News 1
 - A. Proposed Reservation Hazardous Waste Landfill (EMDF) Update
 - B. Scientist(s) needed for new project at the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens
2. Obed/Big South Fork News 3
 - A. Gibbons property donated to TCWP
 - B. Obed/BSF Updates
3. Tennessee 3
 - A. TWRA Wants to Increase Quail Habitat on Bridgestone/Firestone property
 - B. Invasive Species Management Topic of Nashville Conference
4. National News 4
 - A. TVA Plants Among Top Ten for Single-Point GHG Emission in TN
5. TCWP News 5
 - A. Upcoming Activities
 - B. Recent Activities
 - C. Members in the News

AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) program to provide a framework for project collaborations between communities and scientists. It is the perfect opportunity to move forward with the management plan and utilize this exceptional area.

The Project: Working with a volunteer scientist, the TCWP will plan and implement comprehensive biological surveys and inventories of the plants and animals present in the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens Natural Area in 2022. A major focus will be on the plant species, but other biological surveys (bird, insect, herpetological) would only increase the value of this effort. The resulting data will be compiled and analyzed according to standard scientific methods to serve as a baseline for future survey comparisons, develop management plans, and provide the foundation for a publication in a scientific peer-reviewed journal.

Effective monitoring and survey techniques will be developed over the 2021-2022 winter season to be implemented in 2022. The data will be collected by volunteer specialists with assistance by volunteer students and other interested persons in the surrounding area.

For more details, go to <https://thrivingearthexchange.org/project/oak-ridge-tn/>

Scientist Wanted: We are looking for a scientist who is experienced in designing and conducting comprehensive plant surveys and compiling the resulting data. We think this would be the perfect opportunity to involve a lab with many interested students. For the purposes of this project, we are only interested in a broad statistical analysis of the data. However, we are open to this becoming a student project with further studies in the site.

We are also very interested in adding other biota surveys of the study site (i.e. bird, insect, herp, etc.). Any assistance in setting up a robust survey technique for any additional biota would be welcome.

In addition, while not within the scope of the project, we would like someone who may be interested in a scientific publication of the data.

Desired skills and qualifications

- Past experience with designing and conducting biological surveys
- Should be local to the region and able to visit the site in-person
- Experience and/or desire to participate in community education, outreach, and engagement
- Strong listening and collaboration skills
- Relaxed, easy-going personality with a good sense of humor
- (Optional) Experience with prairie and cedar barren/glade species of the Southeastern US

Thriving Earth Exchange asks all scientific partners to work with the community to help define a project with concrete local impact to which they can contribute as pro-bono volunteers and collaborators.

Interested in volunteering as a scientist? Contact Margaret Cumberland
mcumberland@battelleecology.org

We will be needing volunteers next year to help with these surveys, so look out for more opportunities in 2022! - Margaret Cumberland

DON'T MISS



TCWP HOLIDAY PARTY

*an outdoor affair
warm bonfire
friendly people
food & beverage
jolliness*

DECEMBER 2
6:30 - until
at the Oak Ridge
Unitarian Universalist
Church



2. OBED/BIG SOUTH FORK NEWS

2A. Gibbons property donated to TCWP

Many summers ago, TCWP held an old-fashioned picnic at the Gibbons place, near the Alley Ford on the Obed. Mary Ann Gibbons and her late husband John had bought the property years ago and enjoyed many summers sponsoring music events and other activities for young people. The property remained close to the family's hearts. Mary Ann set to work to conserve the property.

Over the years, various conservation options were discovered, explored and discarded. With this gift, the entire beautiful Gibbons farm will be conserved permanently. TCWP will hold the property until we can contribute it to a reliable conservation organization or agency.

Thank you, Mary Ann Gibbons and family, for your generous gift. It will benefit untold generations of people.

2B. Obed/Big South Fork Updates

Campers at Obed's Rock Creek Campground can now specify which campsite they reserve at www.recreation.gov

Wear Blaze Orange Out There. November is a wonderful time to go hunting in the Big South Fork and Obed. Know the rules and the various game seasons. This month in Tennessee it is Deer, Hog, and Small Game (grouse, squirrel, raccoon) season and in Kentucky it is Deer, Hog, Turkey, and Small Game (squirrel, raccoon) season.

3. TENNESSEE NEWS

3A. TWRA Wants to Increase Quail Habitat on Bridgestone/Firestone property

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) has a plan to rebuild, manage, and monitor Northern Bobwhite. The Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) is the state game bird of Tennessee and an important part of the state's landscape and heritage. Northern Bobwhite populations have declined dramatically since the 1950s, primarily due to landscape-scale habitat conversion and loss.

Northern Bobwhite Management in Tennessee 2021-2026, A Strategic Plan for Northern Bobwhites in Tennessee can be found at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/twra/documents/birds/northern_bobwhite_plan.pdf

TWRA plans to harvest trees, many of which are hardwoods, on Bridgestone/ Firestone Centennial Wildlife Management Area adjacent to Virgin Falls. There is some opposition to this plan, citing the availability of land that doesn't have hardwoods, threats to views of various trails in the area, and the possibility of harmful sediment erosion that will degrade Caney Fork River.

Others endorse the idea of open lands on the plateau, a return to the historical landscape of ages past. There is also interest in boosting the quail populations through this effort.

It is widely believed that state legislators may visit this issue in the upcoming Legislative Session that starts in January.

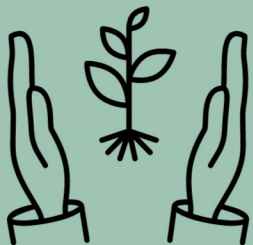
3B. Invasive Species Management Topic of Nashville Conference

Innovations in Invasive Species Management Conference and Training will be held in Nashville November 30 and December 1. Doug Tallamy, a central figure in a TCWP-cosponsored pre-pandemic screening of Wildlife in Your Backyard, will be a keynote speaker.

Registration information and the current agenda can be found at www.invasiveplantcontrol.com/conference21/

Citizens' Climate Lobby Holding Open House Every Thursday

Citizens' Climate Lobby
Regional Coordinator Jon
Clark is hosting a virtual
open house every
Thursday, 10:00—11:00
a.m. for the rest of the
year. Anyone with
questions or seeking
deeper info about carbon
pricing is invited to join
[https://
citizensclimate.zoom.us/
j/94055443382?
pwd=ZTZOcDE3eFJ3UEFJMnN
qYnZSNytkUT09#success](https://citizensclimate.zoom.us/j/94055443382?pwd=ZTZOcDE3eFJ3UEFJMnNqYnZSNytkUT09#success)



*Support
TCWP*

*by donating,
joining, or
renewing*

your membership

at tcwp.org

4. NATIONAL NEWS

4A. TVA Plants Among Top Ten for Single-Point GHG Emissions in Tennessee

Drought and wildfires in the West, hurricanes and flooding in the East. There's no question we have begun feeling the effects of climate change caused by the combustion of fossil fuels releasing carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. In Tennessee, the Tennessee Valley Authority's coal and natural gas plants are among the top ten of the largest single-point contributors to CO₂ emissions as well as smaller amounts of two other greenhouse gasses, methane and nitrous oxide.

The Environmental Protection Agency maintains a Facility Level Information on GreenHouse gasses Tool (FLIGHT) that provides data on greenhouse gas emissions from large facilities by state and even county. EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program requires facilities that emit above 25,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases to report their emissions. The numbers in FLIGHT do not represent totals because only about 50% of U.S. emissions are reported by large emitting facilities; the other 50% is emitted by smaller facilities and by suppliers of fossil fuels and industrial gases, which are reported separately. Even that total does not include emissions from agriculture and land use sectors.

The most recent data available (2020) shows that within Tennessee 126 single-point reporting facilities emitted 34 million metric tons (MMT) of greenhouse gases, down from 40 MMT in 2019. Eleven reporting power plants emitted 20 MMT (8.7% of large facilities emitting 59% of reported emissions). TVA's Cumberland Fossil Plant (coal) tops the list at 9.5 MMT, followed by Eastman Chemical Company at 3.7 MMT, TVA's Gallatin Steam Plant (coal, natural gas, oil) at 2.6 MMT, John Sevier Combined Cycle Plant (natural gas, oil) at 1.9 MMT, and Kingston Fossil Plant (coal) at 1.8 MMT. Three other TVA plants also rank in the top ten: Allen Fossil Plant (natural gas, 1.3 MMT), Lagoon Creek Combustion Turbine Plant (natural gas, oil 1.4 MMT), and Bull Run Fossil Plant (coal, 0.7 MMT).

Valero Refining Co. in Memphis also ranks in the top ten for overall emissions in Tennessee at 1.2 MMT. However, the company is tracked separately as a supplier of fossil fuel into the economy that, when combusted, released, or oxidized, results in GHG emissions. So in addition to the emissions at the Valero plant, the gasoline and other petroleum products they provide, once burned in the transportation sector, emit another 19 MMT, nearly equal to the total of all power plants in the state. And so the need to move rapidly to electric vehicles fueled by green power.

Included in the overall list of power plants, but not in the top ten, are TVA's Brownsville, Gleason, and Johnsonville natural gas plants. The eleventh power plant in the state is the Nashville District Energy System (natural gas, electricity). TVA also has the Shawnee Fossil Plant (coal) in Kentucky that emits 4.3 MMT as well as five natural gas plants in Mississippi, two in Kentucky, and one in Alabama.

While the Cumberland Fossil Plant ranks high for emissions nationwide, other plants emit even more. Texas, for example, has three fossil plants that emit more GHG than Cumberland, including the Oak Grove Fossil Plant at 13.1 MMT. On a state basis, Tennessee ranks in the middle for emissions from power plants. Those that are higher include Florida with 56 plants emitting a total of 93 MMT, and Texas has 129 plants emitting a whopping 186 MMT.



Previous-years data for Tennessee indicates TVA is headed in the right direction:
2016 – 35 MMT, 2017 – 33 MMT, 2018 – 27 MMT, 2019 – 25 MMT, 2020 – 20 MMT

Still, the amount of greenhouse gas emission in Tennessee is unacceptable as the earth continues to warm. Our state must do its part, especially a federally owned utility.

TVA is considering retiring the Cumberland and Kingston Plants and replacing production with natural gas or solar energy and storage systems. The utility commented on WPLN News (Nashville Public Radio), “Ultimately, we aspire to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and support broader national efforts to decarbonize the economy.” TVA retired the Allen coal plant in March 2018 and replaced it with a new natural gas plant, and it plans on retiring the Bull Run Plant by the end of 2023. In fact, TVA has stated it intends to close its other four coal plants by 2035.

While we need to hold TVA to its commitment of net zero by 2050 and especially its stated objective to close all coal plants by 2035, that is not enough. TVA should be working to reach the goal even sooner given the warnings of the new IPCC report (see sidebar). Replacing coal with natural gas does produce less pollution but still has CO2 emissions. Natural gas should also be retired.

Unfortunately, the TVA Board is currently not holding public listening sessions due to the pandemic, although such sessions could be held remotely. Written comments can be submitted but are not made public. In response, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy held a virtual “People’s TVA Hearing” on August 4th. SACE states:

There are so many urgent and important issues impacting all of us in the Tennessee Valley right now, from TVA’s plans to replace retired coal plants with new fossil gas plants to lingering issues with coal ash storage and disposal to the urgent need to move to 100% clean energy by 2030, ... we think it’s unacceptable that TVA’s leadership is insulating themselves from the public they serve by preventing customers from speaking directly to them.

What You Can Do: Make your voice heard: <https://www.tva.com/about-tva/get-involved-stay-involved>. We’ll have an opportunity to comment on the draft NEPA documentation being prepared for the future of the Cumberland Plant and also the Kingston Plant (see NL 358, 3B, 7/14/21). Both should transition to solar, not natural gas.

Sources:

- EPA FLIGHT database: <https://ghgdata.epa.gov/ghgp/main.do#/facility/>
- WPLN News: <https://wpln.org/post/tennessees-10-biggest-climate-polluters/>
- REUTERS: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/tennessee-valley-authority-plans-shut-coal-plants-by-2035-2021-05-03/>
- SACE: <https://cleanenergy.org/news-and-resources/the-peoples-tva-hearing/>



- Russ Manning

5. TCWP NEWS

5A. Upcoming Activities

TCWP’s Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants practice social distancing, maintain at least 6 feet of separation between themselves and other unvaccinated participants.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants continue to wear a mask especially when social distancing is not possible.

- We will organize activities into group of 20 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning for unvaccinated participants, rather than carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancellation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

TCWP Holiday Party – Thursday, December 2

Since it's not yet safe to resume indoor gatherings with lots of people, TCWP will host its annual holiday party outdoors, around a bonfire. Join us beginning at 6:30 p.m. December 2 at the fire pit/pavilion at the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike. Light snacks will be available, or party-goers who would like to are welcome to bring a dessert or hors d'oeuvre to share.

Whites Creek Workday - Saturday, January 8

TCWP will sponsor a day of trail maintenance work at Whites Creek Small Wild Area in Rhea County at 10 a.m. January 8 as part of our ongoing stewardship activities for this TVA Small Wild Area trail. The trail loops onto land that TCWP purchased from Bowater several years ago, thanks to the generous support of our members.

Participants should wear sturdy shoes or boots and bring work gloves, loppers, and small bow saws or folding saws. Some hand tools will be available at the event. Please be sure to bring clothing appropriate for weather conditions, water, snacks, and/or a lunch.

Participants can meet for carpooling or caravanning in Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot in Oak Ridge (at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's). We'll leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m., or volunteers can join the crew at the trailhead at 10 a.m.

We plan to spend three or four hours at the site, but volunteers may come and go as they wish. If the weather is uncooperative—excessive rain, or snow and ice—we will reschedule for the following Saturday.

For additional information, contact Jimmy Groton at 865-805-9908 or at groton87@comcast.net.

5B. Recent events

"Against the Current: Paddling Upstream on the Tennessee River" – Thursday, September 9

An audience of about 100 gathered virtually for this talk by Maryville College professor Kim Trevathan based on his latest book, ***Against the Current: Paddling Upstream on the Tennessee River***, released by University of Tennessee press earlier this year. He has taught journalism, creative nonfiction, and fiction at Maryville College for more than 20 years, and is the author of three previous books about paddling area rivers.

In the spring of 2018 Trevathan paddled the length of the Tennessee River—652 miles—going upstream, with his 10-month-old puppy, Maggie. In this program cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society, he (accompanied by Maggie) shared some of their experiences through photos and videos, within the framework of finding wilderness on "working rivers" such as the Tennessee.

This upstream trip marked the second time Trevathan has paddled the length of the Tennessee River; the first was 20 years

earlier, when he paddled downstream. Curious to know whether he could do the trip upstream at age 60, he started the trip in the area of Kentucky where he grew up. He pointed out that a working river still contains areas of wilderness, and it's worth protecting those places—a case in point being the Tennessee River Gorge, which is protected by the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. He made some observations on why we need wilderness.

Those who weren't able to watch the program, or who would like to see it again, can view it at this recording link: https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/play/LuzGe3_trsqEh9mPyUNZpa1cAlxLSA1txl1jwUSzvacFBqEGvxvWfm8n7wb2D3yVLN44Yh1GZsEJAQkY.b8Flo_Xqg9LbF9MX?autoplay=true&startTime=1631227194000. It will be available until December 9. - Carol Grametbauer

Cumberland Mountain Wildflower Walk – Saturday, September 11

We usually have a fall outing to enjoy the end of the flowering season. This year, on September 11, we climbed Cumberland Mountain east of LaFollette. We saw lovely yellow displays of sunflowers—*Helianthus microcephalus*, *Helianthus glaucophyllus*, and a close relative, *Heliopsis helianthoides*. A deep purple was added by clasping aster (*Symphyotrichum patens*).

We also found two types of fruit of interest. Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) fruit is normally hard to find, though this small tree is common. First, we found an unripe one; a few minutes later we got one with the fragrant smell for all to enjoy. Some people are attempting to commercialize this fruit. Next, we happened on two butternuts lying on the ground. The butternut or white walnut tree (*Juglans cinerea*) is rare, and rarer still is finding the nut. This tree is attacked by Butternut Canker fungus, leading to its rarity.

In planning for this trip, we tried to accommodate a variety of interests, length of time available, and physical ability. I felt good about how the outing worked for people. The 12 of us turned back at varying points, and we helped each other get past a landslide zone in the trail. For some the highlight of the trip was not the plants but the views from cliff tops. Thanks to Jimmy, Judy, and Ken for help with this. We enjoyed meeting new folks, Jack, Bruce, Linda, and Sarah.

Jimmy Groton and I did a small service project on the hike, gathering info on two rare plant populations found on top of the mountain. This data was hand-delivered to Todd Crabtree, our state botanist, to put in the state protected plant database.
—Larry Pounds

National Public Lands Day Event at Worthington Cemetery – Saturday, September 25

To kick off our NPLD event at Worthington Cemetery, Anne Hewitt Worthington provided an interesting program about the Worthington family, their travails and opportunities. Her information put life on the Worthington property into historical context during the Revolutionary War and later. Anne is the widow of direct descendant Jess Worthington. Her old photos of the Worthington ancestors and stories about the people added a lot to the day.

After Anne's talk, our group of about 20 volunteers began work on removing invasive plants from the Worthington Cemetery Ecological Study Area. One crew took on the invasive wisteria growing next to the cemetery. While not as dense as kudzu, this vine is a formidable foe, growing high into the trees and spreading across the ground, frequently anchoring itself firmly. Volunteers pulled and chopped with mattocks and loppers, and when all else failed, resorted to the massive Uprooter tool to yank the wisteria out of the ground. Piles grew, but the extent of the infestation dwarfed their efforts. Like the Worthington Civil War soldiers, they took on the battle but realized the war had not been won.

Another small group of volunteers resumed our efforts to eradicate the invasive Dahurian buckthorn near the cemetery, stopping first to look at the native Carolina buckthorn and to see how it differs, to avoid misidentification. Considerable progress was made, but there are lots of Dahurian buckthorn plants, and they are reproducing. We were not able to work on this last year due to COVID concerns.

During the event volunteers passed wetlands on both sides of the trail, then reached an area of dry rocks. Here we saw uncommon prairie plants. The prairie dock in particular was striking, with its huge vertical leaves and its bright yellow flowers more than six feet above the rocks. - Sandra Goss/Anne Childs/Jimmy Groton/Larry Pounds

Three Bends Melton Lake/Pellissippi Blueway Scenic Paddle Trip and Cleanup Event – Saturday, October 9

This excursion began with a foggy morning and very still water at the starting point in the cove off Pumphouse Road, where Solway Bend transitions to Freels Bend. Paddlers were greeted by Virginia Dale of Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR), who had information about the Oak Ridge/Three Bends Blueway concept and suggested participants write letters to Lt. Governor McNally about supporting the establishment of the Blueway with state help. (See <https://aforr.info/oak-ridge-blueway/>)

Ten paddlers participated, including a family of four kayakers. It was an enthusiastic group that enjoyed the early fall colors reflecting off the still water. The group paddled up and explored the many small inlets. Several sourwood trees were turning deep red early, while many were still covered in tassels.

The main cove area was checked for trash and found to be relatively clean; it had probably been taken care of earlier. On the main channel, both upstream and down, significantly more trash was found. Some of the items hauled out included an old grill, a TV monitor, a pink ball, old chairs, and plenty of cans, bottles, and other items that had been left onshore and floated into inlets. It was a large haul, and the participants did a good service keeping the area in a more natural state.

Despite the fog, some wildlife was spotted, including many interesting small snails found on rocks near the water plant. One osprey flew over, and a blue heron allowed a relatively close-up picture to be taken. - *Tim Bigelow*

TCWP Annual Meeting – Saturday, October 23

On a chilly but beautiful autumn day (after dense fog cleared), 28 people gathered for TCWP's Annual Meeting at Cove Lake State Park in Caryville. The meeting also marked the 55th anniversary of TCWP's founding by Bill and Liane Russell in 1966.

After registration with coffee and bagels, TCWP President Mark Bevelhimer gave a brief recap of the year's major activities, including our work to help the National Park Service expand its land holdings on the Obed. Most recently, TCWP has received the donation of 240 acres of property that we hope to turn over soon to the Park Service to become part of the Obed National Wild and Scenic River. TCWP has also been very active in a Rails-to-Trails project involving 41 miles of railroad being abandoned in the New River Valley in Anderson, Campbell, and Scott counties.

During a brief business meeting, Jimmy Groton gave the report of the Nominating Committee (consisting of Jimmy and Virginia Dale). All 2021 board members have agreed to serve in their present capacities again next year. Don Barger moved that the slate be approved as presented; Johnny Cosgrove seconded, and the motion was approved by voice vote. Jimmy reported that members of the 2022 Nominating Committee will be Harriett McCurdy and Anne Childs.

TCWP Membership and Outreach Coordinator Ken Mayes presented a proposed change to Article VII, Section B of the TCWP bylaws, designed to align the by-laws more closely with our new membership records software. The bylaws currently require that membership dues shall be paid annually due on January 1, and that members joining after July 1 of any year shall be assessed only half the year's dues. A required two-thirds vote by the board of directors has proposed that this be changed to reflect that membership dues shall be paid annually. Anne Childs moved that the change be approved; Jimmy Groton seconded, and the motion was approved by voice vote.

Following the business meeting, attendees heard from our keynote speaker, Bobby Fulcher, manager of the Justin P. Wilson State Scenic Trail State Park. Bobby has been involved with Tennessee State Parks since 1976, when he was hired as a seasonal naturalist at Pickett State Park and first perceived the Cumberland Plateau as "a thrilling landscape." He described for the group some extensive research he'd done recently in the Oak Ridge Public Library archives (including digitized versions of TCWP's newsletter going back more than 50 years), showing how the roots of TCWP and the Cumberland Trail were mingled in Oak Ridge in the 1960s. After lunch, Bobby—who is also a folklorist and musician—entertained the group with banjo music, accompanied by Mark on the guitar. - *Carol Grametbauer*

Norris Watershed Hike – Saturday, October 30

It was a dreary, drizzly day on October 30 when 10 hardy hikers walked in the Norris Municipal Watershed. Actually, it was not unexpected weather for this time of year, and there has been a history of this annual hike being cancelled because of rain, so it

was a little surprising that so many people came out. Everyone was prepared, though, with rain gear, boots, and a love of the woods.

We started at the Norris Water Treatment Plant (pump house) and hiked along Clear Creek, passing the creek gauging station that was built by the CCC in 1933, looking at an old grist mill site from the dug mill race that carried the water to turn the water wheel and at the spring that supplies the city's water. We then headed up Lower White Pine Trail and passed the creek bottom where John Robinson had a house and sheds when TVA bought the property for the Norris Dam Project. There were several 'weirs', two on the main stream and one on a side spring, that were used by TVA for various projects.

Along the former road that went up this hollow (Elliot Hollow), we passed old home sites recognizable only from the vegetation (forsythia, walnut trees, and other yard plants) and foundation stones from buildings or creek borders. Then we climbed Upper White Pine Trail, where there is a stark break in what was formerly pastureland and an older forest that exceeds 150 years. Once on Hi Point Trail, we walked down to Freeway Trail and on down to Ridgecrest Trail, passing a several-acre wildlife opening. It was downhill from this point, and we soon came to the site of a former CCC camp. We had looked at a couple of old photographs of the camp, and it was interesting to try to figure out exactly where it was situated.

Then we were back down to the parking area. No one melted and all stayed mostly dry. It was a great group of genuinely interested folks, and we had a good time talking about how the area must have been prior to TVA purchase. I think we all came away with a great respect for the people who lived in this small valley. It didn't hurt that the leaves had some color, and the sunless sky made them more prominent. As I was driving out, the rain came. - *Joe Feeman*

5C. Friends and Members in the Print Media

An article in the August 31 Oak Ridger that reported on Oak Ridge Planning Commission meeting quoted Charlie Hensley.

John Bates spoke to Friends of Oak Ridge National Laboratory about batteries, electric cars, other uses of lithium-ion batteries, and the future, as reported in the September 14 Oak Ridger.

An article about the Magic Wok in the September 22 Oak Ridger included a quote and picture from Mick Wiest.

Jeff Mellor's letter to the News Sentinel editor about Governor Lee and the Tennessee Legislature appeared in the October 4 issue.

Jan Berry and Mark Reynolds coauthored an essay in the October 6 New Sentinel about the importance of carbon pricing to address extreme weather events.

An article about Medicaid expansion in the Sunday, October 17 News Sentinel was coauthored by Judy Roitman.

George Lindemann penned an article about Tennessee's rural areas' economy, land management, and resource sustainability that appeared in the October 17 News Sentinel.

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP's strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive and Membership-Development Director: Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967 Sandra@sandrakgoss.com

Outreach & Membership Coordinator:

Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

TCWP website: <http://www.tcwp.org>

**TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR
WILDERNESS PLANNING**

P.O BOX 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

Board of Directors

Mark BevelhimerPresident
Michele Thornton V. Pres
Carol GrametbauerSecretary
Tim Bigelow Treasurer
Michelle Campanis Director
Anne Child Director
Johnny Cosgrove Director
Christopher DeRolph Director
Jimmy Groton Director
Larry Pounds Director
Hannah Tippet Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 2, TCWP Holiday Party
- January 8, Whites Creek Workday

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.