Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning

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Taking Care of Wild Places

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Shaded box or star means "Action Needed." Don't be overwhelmed -- check the ACTION SUMMARY on p. 2

10. ACTION SUMMARY

¶No.	Issue	Contact	"Message!" or Action
2A	TN Wilderness in Cherokee NF	Both senators; Rep. Roe	"I strongly support TN Wilderness bill!"
3A	Oil & gas regs for BSFNRRA	Sec. Zinke	"Do not rescind or alter NPS's good 9B rules!"
5A	Nat'l monuments; Antiquities Act	Sec. Zinke	"Do not abolish or shrink any of our national monuments!"
5B	LWCF reauthorization & funding	Sen. Alexander Sen. Corker	"Thank you for cosponsoring S.569!" "Please cosponsor LWCF reauthorization & funding!"
5C	NPS maintenance backlog	Sen. Alexander Sen. Corker	"Thank you for cosponsoring S.751!" "Please cosponsor S.751!"
5E	Protecting oceans from oil spills	US senators	"Support Markey-Menendez bill
6A	Methane-waste rule	Sen. Alexander	"I am disappointed you failed to oppose HJR.36!"
6E	Vehicle emission standards	EPA Admin. Pruitt	"Leave fuel standards alone!"
7A	WOTUS rule	Your newspaper	Write an op-ed or letter to the editor

Senator John Doe United States Senate Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	The Hon. John Doe U.S. House of Representatives House Office Building Washington, DC 20515	Pres. Donald Trump The White House Washington, DC 20500 202-456-1111 (comments); 456-1414 (switchbd); Fax 456-2461 www.whitehouse.gov/contact	Governor Bill Haslam State Capitol Nashville, TN 37243-9872 615-741-2001; Fax 615-532-9711 bill.haslam@state.tn.us
Dear Senator Doe Sincerely yours,	Dear Congressman Doe Sincerely yours,	Dear Mr. President Respectfully yours,	Dear Gov. Haslam Respectfully yours,

Sen. Bob Corker Ph: 202-224-3344; FAX: 202-228-0566 e-mail: http://corker.senate.gov/public/ Local: 865-637-4180 (FAX 637-9886) 800 Market St., Suite 121, Knoxville 37902	Sen. Lamar Alexander: Ph: 202-224-4944; FAX: 202-228-3398 e-mail: http://alexander.senate.gov/public/ Local: 865-545-4253 (FAX 545-4252) 800 Market St., Suite 112, Knoxville 37902	Rep. Chuck Fleischmann: Phone: 202-225-3271 FAX: 202-225-3494 Local (O.R.): 865-576-1976 https://fleischmann.house.gov/contact-me

To call any Repr. or Senator, dial Congressional switchboard, 202-224-3121. To find out about the status of bills, call 202-225-1772.
URLs: http://www.house.gov/lastname/ and http://lastname.senate.gov/ General contact info: http://www.lcv.org
With mail to Congress still slow following the anthrax scare, consider faxing, phoning, and other modes of communication.

You can find contact information in our Political Guide. It's on TCWP's website (http://www.tcwp.org), as are some current "take action" alerts
You can also choose to receive e-lerts by contacting Sandra Goss (see below).

WHAT IS TCWP?

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.

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

1. NOW WE CAN CELEBRATE: THE CUMBERLANDS RIDGE LINE IS SAFE FROM MINING!

Late in November 2016, the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation (OSMRE) issued its final Record of Decision, approving the Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition (LUMP) submitted in September 2010 by the State of Tennessee, under Gov. Bredesen (NL 330 ¶1). Under the approved alternative, certain ridge lines and connecting corridors are designated as "lands unsuitable for mining." This means that surface mining will not occur within 600 feet on either side of ridgelines within the 269 square miles of two areas: (a) the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area, which stretches NE from Frozen Head, past La Follette, and (b) the Emory River Conservation Easement, much of which abuts the northern boundary of Frozen Head State Natural Area, -- about 75,000 acres in all. (Note: the drainage from these areas goes into the New River and the Clear Fork, so the protection against mining protects water quality of the Big South Fork Cumberland River.)

There was a big reason we were constrained from celebrating: the Congressional Review Act (CRA), which has been applied with great abandon by the current Congress to undoing regulations passed under the Obama Administration. The CRA provides an expedited legislative process (a Joint Resolution) for Congress to overturn any regulation issued by a federal agency within the previous 60 legislative days (NL332 ¶4). To our great joy, the deadlines for passing, AND for introducing, any such resolution have passed.

So, let us celebrate the beautiful Cumberlands ridgeline, and thank all those who worked so hard at getting it protected, especially NPCA's Don Barger!!!

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2. OTHER TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. The Tennessee Wilderness Act is reintroduced

On April 27, Tennessee's Senators Alexander and Corker, and Rep. Phil Roe (R-1) reintroduced (for the fifth time) the Tennessee Wilderness Act. The Senate version of the legislation, S.973, designates nearly 20,000 acres of the Cherokee National Forest as wilderness area, while the House version designate nearly 7,500 acres in the First Congressional District. Wilderness designation is the highest level of conservation protection for federal land. The Senate version creates the 9,038-acre Upper Bald River Wilderness and adds a total of about 11,000 acres to five existing Wilderness areas (see NL324 ¶2A for details).

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Contact Senators Alexander and Corker, and Rep. Roe (addresses on p.2) in support of the TN Wilderness bill. If you can write an op-ed or letter to the editor, contact Sandra (sandra@sandrakgoss.com) for talking points and specific information.

2B. What happened in the General Assembly?

It's all over for this year; the General Assembly adjourned last week, though the session will continue in 2018. Many of the bad things didn't happen (not yet, anyway), but the few good things didn't either.

The *Forever Green Tennessee* initiative failed

In March, a coalition of conservation groups (including TCWP) supported introduction of a budget amendment to provide non-recurring funding of $35 million (from the General Fund) for the *Forever Green Tennessee* initiative.

The funds would be used for conservation of riparian areas of important waterways ($25 million), farm-land preservation through purchase of conservation easements from willing sellers ($5 million), and purchase of imperiled historic sites ($5 million). The total amount represented only 1/10 of 1% of our State's $34 BILLION budget.

Although the amendment failed, the proposal was a good first step to building an organization and constituency for the initiative in 2018. At that time, it is hoped that the vehicle will be a bill to establish the *permanent* ongoing funding that is needed to accomplish the *Forever Green Tennessee* objectives.

The stripmine primacy bill, (SB0686/HB0571) was left in committee

The Senate bill was taken off notice in the Finance Ways & Means Committee; the House bill, amended, did not even get to Finance.

When we contacted, Rep. John Ragan (R-33) and urged him to oppose the bill because of its high cost to taxpayers, he responded that the cost would be negligible because of an amendment that decreed several basic application and amendment fees, and an annual acreage fee. The coal industry made the dubious claim that the increased demand for mining permits would generate the required fees and severance taxes. Reality is that coal mining has been steadily declining in TN due to market forces and the poor quality of Tennessee coal.

The attack on common-sense storm-water mitigation rules (SB.0295/HB.0362) was not funded.

This bill would prohibit TDEC from issuing any permit that has not been reviewed by the General Assembly.

The CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) bill (SB.899/HB.1017) was passed and signed.

This bill scraps the requirement for obtaining a permit for constructing or operating a CAFO. A House amendment delays implementation to March 1, 2018.

2C. Friends of Frozen Head State Park, Inc., is launched during the Wildflower Pilgrimage

[Contributed in part by Annetta Watson, Lucinda Burnham, and Jimmy Groton]

The newly incorporated Friends of Frozen Head State Park, Inc., was announced by Lucinda Burnham at the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Frozen Head State Park Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage on April 7. A brochure containing a membership form and information about the

Friends and the Park is available at the Park Visitors' Center or by contacting Lucinda, Jimmy Groton, or Annetta Watson, who all worked together to charter and establish this new Friends group. A website is being developed but you can visit the Friends group on Facebook now, https://www.facebook.com/friendsoffrozenhead/. Regular Individual memberships are $25; Family memberships, $35; student memberships, $15. All funds raised by the Friends will stay in FHSP-NA and used directly to support Park activities.

The Friends group is a non-profit volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving, conserving, and protecting the natural, cultural, and scenic riches of the Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area (FHSP-NA) through education and engagement, as well as providing direct support and assistance to the Park.

FHSP-NA, named for a 3,224 ft peak, encompasses 24,000 acres of Cumberland Mountains wilderness. It is a vestige of the densely-forested mountain splendor once common to the Cumberlands, but now altered by timbering, mining, drilling, and other developments. Over 80 miles of hiking and backpacking trails provide access to many of the Park's natural features. In addition to a 20-site campground, there are several group and backcountry campsites. The Park sponsors special events – seven in 2017, including a Wildflower Pilgrimage and a Mountain Laurel Trek.

2D. Cumberland Trail: land donation provides paddler access

[Information from TSRA]

George Lindemann, a farmer, businessman, and kayaking enthusiast donated 1,034 acres around the Soak Creek in Rhea County to the linear Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park.

The addition is an especially attractive one for outdoor enthusiasts, providing access to Soak Creek, a pristine mountain waterway that seasonally includes Class III and IV rapids.

2E. Newly Formed Tennessee State Parks Conservancy Aims to Enhance Park System

[Information from TDEC website]

Established in 2016, the Tennessee State Parks Conservancy (TSPC), a nonprofit partner of Tennessee State Parks, was created to allow corporations, foundations, and individuals to support the Tennessee State Parks system as a whole. Funds raised through the TSPC will go towards educational programs like field trips and outdoor classrooms, health initiatives like playgrounds, and special park projects like museum exhibits.

Modeled after the National Park Foundation, the TSPC will make donated funds available to Tennessee's 56 state parks on a grant-based system. For more information on the Tennessee State Parks Conservancy, visit http://tnstateparks.com/conservancy/who-we-are.

3. BIG SOUTH FORK and OBED NEWS

3A. Another threat to recently improved oil & gas regulations concerns BSFNRRA

The Big South Fork NRRA has the dubious honor of including 28% of the *entire* national park system's oil and gas operations. Our latest Newsletter (NL332 ¶1A), and our website, alerted you to the legislative threat against the recently vastly improved oil & gas (o&g), so-called 9B, regulations for national parks.

A few weeks ago, an administrative threat was added to the legislative one. On March 28, Pres. Trump ordered Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to review the National Park Service 9B regulations, giving Zinke the option to suspend, revise, or rescind the carefully crafted rules that replace the badly outdated 1978 version.

The Secretary of Interior has the responsibility to keep our national parks protected from potentially harmful developments. The updates to the National Park Service 9B rules were developed after seven years of an open, transparent public process that generated a large amount of support. The rules strike an important balance that protects national park air, water, and wildlife without unduly burdening energy development.

Two months ago, a spokesperson said that Sec. Zinke had no intention of weakening standards for drilling inside national parks. We hope he'll keep that promise.

v**WHAT YOU CAN DO**: Ask Sec. of Interior Ryan Zinke not to rescind, suspend or revise the National Park Service 9B rules. They protect park resources without unduly burdening energy development, and are fine just the way they are. (Phone Sec. Zinke at 1-202-601-3839; or e-mail at exsec@ios.doi.gov

. Identify yourself as a Tennessean and a lover of the BSFNRRA. Our beautiful park must be protected.

3B. Obed benefits the local economy

[From NPS e-Newsletter, May 2017]

A new NPS report shows that 231,389 visitors to the Obed WSR in 2016 spent $4,089,300 in communities near the park. That spending supported 50 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of $3,893,600.

3C. *Obed outdoor program for schools*

The award-winning Obed climbing and paddling program for all Morgan County 6th graders is continuing for a 6th year. This is a truly important initiative that will make citizens proud of their resource.

3D . Superintendent's duties expanded

Big South Fork NRRA/ Obed WSR superintendent Niki Nicholas has an additional job. She has become the Site Director for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. This had previously been an interim appointment.

3E. Obed celebrates festival, May 20

[From NPS e-Newsletter, May 2017]

In celebration of the annual Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival in Wartburg, rangers will lead a hike along the Point Trail on Saturday, May 20. This 3.8-mile moderate-to-strenuous hike, which leads to the confluence of Clear Creek and Obed, is nestled deep within the hush of the hemlock-forest canopy that will boast the bountiful beauty of the white and pink blooms of mountain laurel. Meet at 10 a.m. (ET) at the Lilly Overlook parking area.

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4. TVA

TVA starting Adopt-a-Trail program

TVA is looking for volunteers who'll agree to monitor a trail, or trail section, four times per calendar year. Volunteers fill out Condition Assessment forms when they walk the trails, and e-mail their report and any accompanying photographs or notes to a designated volunteer coordinator.

TVA supplies training, support, and resources. The Volunteers get a nice vest to wear and are entertained at a recognition picnic at the end of the year. To learn more, visit www.tva.gov/volunteer or call 1-800-882-5263.

TCWP is signing up as Stewards for the trail on TVA's Whites Creek Small Wild Area.

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5. PUBLIC LANDS (and oceans)

5A. Crunch time for National Monuments and Antiquities Act

Starting with Teddy Roosevelt, 16 presidents have used the 1906 Antiquities Act to protect some of our most important landscapes, as well as unique Native American and other cultural sites as national monuments, for the enjoyment of ALL people. Many subsequently became national parks (e.g., the Grand Canyon, Acadia, Zion).

The Trump administration is now intent on abolishing these protections and attacking the process. On April 26, Pres. Trump ordered Interior Secretary Zinke to review all lands and waters designated as national monuments by the past three presidents, going back to 1996. Dept. of the Interior has released a list of 27 monuments under review. Experts believe that the initial targets are areas that the fossil-fuel industry has been wishing to exploit, especially Bears Ears, designated during the last weeks of the Obama presidency, and Grand Staircase-Escalante, protected by Pres. Bill Clinton in 1996.

Beyond these specific targets, what is at stake is the valuable Antiquities Act, which has been respected and well-used by presidents for more than a century. Now we have an administration and Congress intent on fossil-fuel development on public lands and waters, and a supreme court that might allow what has never even been requested; the de-listing of national monuments.

Time is limited. The order gives Sec. Zinke 45 days to file an interim recommendation, and 120 days to issue suggestions, (a) for legislation, and/or (b) for Trump to revoke or shrink any monuments that cover 100,000 acres or more that were created under the Antiquities Act.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: The Antiquities Act is among our most important conservation tools; we cannot afford to have it destroyed or altered. Without delay,

(1) call Secretary Ryan Zinke at 1-202-601-3839 (or e-mail at exsec@ios.doi.gov). Tell him that our national monuments were created with overwhelming public support, and must remain protected. Any attempt to abolish or shrink our national monuments is an assault on our natural, historical, and cultural heritage.

(2) Contact your Members of Congress with the same message.

5B. Effort to keep the Land & Water Conservation Fund alive and robust

For more than half a century, the LWCF has been the essential source of funding for land acquisition that protects our natural areas. Its funds, capped by law at $900 million annually (though almost always appropriated at a lower level), derive from royalties from offshore oil & gas leases. When the LWCF's authorization expired in 2015, Congress, after a struggle, renewed it for three years, though at only $450 million.

Fortunately, three bipartisan LWCF bills have already been introduced in Congress, HR.502 (Grijalva), S.896 (Burr), and S.569 (Cantwell). All provide permanent reauthorization for the LWCF. S.569, the Land & Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act, permanently reauthorizes the program at *full* funding, $900 million annually. Tennessee's Sen. Alexander is a co-sponsor of that bill.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: The LWCF is one of our most important conservation tools. Commend Sen. Alexander for his co-sponsorship of S.569, and urge Sen. Coker to also become a co-sponsor. Addresses on p. 2.

5C. Addressing NPS's maintenance backlog

Due to years of chronic underfunding, the National Park Service has a $12 billion backlog in deferred and overdue maintenance for properties such as trails, campgrounds, bridges, roads, electrical systems, etc., etc. (The Great Smoky Mountains National Park has a maintenance backlog of $232 million.) At the end of March, Sens. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) and Rob Portman (R-OH) introduced

S.751, a bill to create the *National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund (NPS-LRF)*, which would reduce this backlog by allocating $500 million annually (until 2047) from existing revenues the government receives for oil and natural gas royalties. Tennessee's Sen. Alexander is a co-sponsor. A House companion bill is expected in the coming weeks.

The funds would be allocated as follows: 80% for key assets, such as historic structures, visitor facilities, recreation, etc.; and 20% for transportation-related projects (roads, bridges). Funds must not be used for land acquisition or recurring facility operations and maintenance needs.

Some have questioned whether passage of the Warner/Portman bill might interfere with meeting the needs of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), used mainly for land acquisition. The funding for both would derive from the same source – oil & gas royalties. NPCA and the LWCF Coalition, however, make the following points.

- There is plenty to go around. Currently, the combined offshore and on-shore oil & gas revenue is $7.2 billion. After subtracting various disbursements required by law, plus $900 million for the LWCF, this leaves $3.7 billion – greatly in excess of the $500 million needed for the NPS-LRF.
- To defend their non-support of LWCF appropriations, some politicians argue that land acquisition should be delayed until maintenance on existing holdings is better addressed. This is a false choice. Often, park inholdings and other lands secured by the LWCF ensure efficiencies that produce management savings; they enhance park resources and preclude threats and degradations that could result in far greater costs down the road.

We must also be prepared to contradict politicians who use their support for the NPS-LRF as an excuse for not supporting renewal of, or funding for, the LWCF -- claiming that their support for national parks has already been demonstrated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Our National Park System units, including some located in Tennessee, have huge, maintenance needs, accumulated over years. Commend Sen. Alexander for his co-sponsorship of S.751, and urge Sen. Coker to also become a co-sponsor. Addresses on p. 2.

5D. Public lands defense

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

The Wilderness Society (TWS) has a Public Lands Defense Organizer, Elizabeth Henderson. In this new position, Henderson will be working to safeguard our national parks, monuments and forests, defend federal conservation funding, and oppose harmful energy policies favoring corporate interest. The Tennessee native will collaborate with others (including TN Wild) to support TWS efforts across the state.

5E. Our oceans too, face loss of protection

At the end of April, Pres. Trump signed an Executive Order to undo permanent protections in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans and redo the 2017 - 2022 Outer Continental Oil and Gas leasing program. He also ordered a review of regulatory safeguards and measures that protect our ocean and shorelines. The order calls on the Interior Department to consider leasing federal waters that President Obama put off-limits. It would affect the Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans

The Alaska Wilderness League reports that for the fragile Arctic Ocean, scientists have projected that a (very likely) oil spill could coat the shores of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in less than 90 days – where seals pup and polar bears come to seek food after their long winter fast. Drilling in the Arctic ignores the science and the sentiment of most Americans who understand that we shouldn't irresponsibly drill in our special places. The federal government—by its own estimate—has said that there is "up to a 75% risk of a major spill if drilling were to move forward in the Chukchi Sea in Alaska."

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Urge your members of Congress: support the Markey-Menendez bill, which would prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from revising the approved oil and gas leasing program for 2017 to 2022.

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6. ENERGY; CLIMATE CHANGE

6A. Victory: Senate defeats CRA resolution that would have gutted the methane-waste rule

It's hard to believe that anyone would oppose a sensible rule (NL 331 ¶7E) against the wasteful practices of venting and flaring in natural-gas operations on public (mostly BLM) lands. Venting is the intentional release of gas into the atmosphere; flaring is the burning off of gas – practices that waste $330 million worth of the valuable product and put huge quantities of the potent greenhouse gas methane into the atmosphere. Nonetheless, the House of Representatives recently passed a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution, HJR.36, that would not only block the BLM methane rule, but would prevent any substantially similar rule limiting methane waste from ever being put in place (without an Act of Congress).

Last week, in a victory for the planet, the Senate voted AGAINST this CRA Resolution. Thanks to three Republicans who voted with all Democrats (Sens. Susan Collins [ME], Lindsey Graham [SC], and John McCain AZ]), HJR 36 failed 49:51. The administration may still try to diminish the methane-waste rule administratively.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Contact Sen. Alexander and express your disappointment in his failure to oppose HJR 36.

6B. Data on climate change are being scrubbed

[Information from
Center for Biological Diversity]

The Trump administration's efforts to bury the irrefutable science of climate change include removing masses of information from the internet. The Dept. of Interior's website, for example, formerly included detailed information about how human activities are the primary cause of climate action, the consequences of climate change, the federal government's strategies to respond to climate change, and the consequences of inaction. Not only that website, but those of multiple agencies within DoI have been largely scrubbed, including those of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the US Geological Survey. We have earlier reported on EPA (NL332 ¶5C). The official agency position is that science around climate change isn't settled.

Fortunately, there has been an effort to save the scrubbed information (NL332 ¶5D) and to make it publicly available. Dr. Stuart Pimm, a Duke University professor of ecology (formerly at the University of Tennessee), and the Center for Biological Diversity, have invoked a little-used provision of the Freedom of Information Act to ensure that the lost data are made electronically available to the public once again. The City of Chicago announced that it has saved webpages and data from the EPA for the use of citizens and the city's sustainability program, and has invited other cities to follow suit.

6C. Agencies dismiss scientific advisers

Several Republican Members of Congress have for some time been wanting to change the way the government applies science to the evaluation of regulations. Now they're getting help from the Administration. Both EPA and the Interior Department are overhauling numerous scientific advisory boards that are charged with assessing the scientific underpinnings of policies and that sometimes recommend more stringent measures. Early in May, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt dismissed half the members of the agency's Board of Scientific Counselors. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is "reviewing the charter and charge" of more than 200 advisory boards, committees and other entities both within and outside his department.

6D. The 'Endangerment Finding' is still in place – for now

The Clean Power Plan has a firm legal foundation in the 2007 Supreme Court finding that carbon dioxide is a pollutant. EPA's resultant 2009 'endangerment finding,' which declares that greenhouse gas emissions threaten human health and welfare, makes EPA legally responsible for regulating them. Administrator Scott Pruitt has so far resisted pressures to revoke this Endangerment Finding, arguing that the legal hurdles would be massive.

6E. Trump Administration is attempting to roll back Obama's vehicle emissions standards

In mid-March, President Trump announced that he was reopening the review of the 2012 federal fuel efficiency standards, i.e., a 54.5 mile-per-gallon auto fleet by 2025. Automakers agreed to comply with these standards in exchange for a formal review in 2018. But the EPA under Obama completed that review in January 2017 and confirmed the soundness and feasibility of the standards.

About four out of five Americans supported them. The following are among points in their favor:

- Manufacturers have beaten the standards in each of the past four years, while setting new sales records.
- Americans have already saved nearly $35 billion at the pump because of these standards.
- The auto industry added nearly 700,000 good jobs since 2009.
- Large amounts of planet-heating carbon emissions are prevented, as are other emissions that damage human health.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Tell EPA Adm. Pruitt (see Polit. Guide) to do what's best for the American people and the auto industry: leave the fuel standards alone!

6F. Propaganda aimed at a young target group

[From PBS *Frontline*, 3/28/17]

The Heartland Institute is a think tank supported by fossil-fuel interests. Heartland has recently published a book, *Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming,* that rejects the human role in climate change and argues, instead, that rising temperatures have been caused primarily by natural phenomena. The Institute is mailing this book and an accompanying DVD to large numbers of teachers.

About 25,000 have already received the package. The material will be sent to an additional 25,000 teachers every two weeks until every public-school science teacher in the nation has a copy. The campaign aims to reach more than 200,000 K-12 science teachers.

The book argues that, even if human activity *were* contributing to climate change, this "would probably not be harmful, because many areas of the world would benefit from, or adjust to, climate change."

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7. OTHER NATIONAL NEWS

7A. Pruitt trying to demonstrate support for killing WOTUS rule

The Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, put forth jointly by EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers in the spring of 2015, was intended to clarify authority for applying the 1972 Clean Water Act protections. These apply not just to major rivers, but to smaller bodies of water, constituting 60% of the nation's stream miles and millions of acres of important wetlands. Such protections safeguard the

drinking water of many millions of Americans – 20 million in the Southeast alone.

The Trump Administration has been doing its best to undo the protections imposed by the WOTUS rule. Under the authorization of an Executive Order "to alleviate unnecessary regulatory burdens placed on the American people," EPA's Office of Water recently opened a comment period for suggestions about what water-quality regulations it should gut. According to preliminary reports, EPA has, instead, been getting an earful *in support* of the WOTUS rule. The comment period has just closed (May 15).

Some groups have, indeed, attacked the rule ever since it was being developed. It has come under fierce attack from certain business groups like farmers, property developers, fertilizer and pesticide makers, oil and gas producers, and golf-course owners, which contend that it will stifle economic growth and intrude on property owners' rights. Some of these groups, led by the American Farm Bureau Federation, instituted legal action. The Trump Administration's attempt to delay a court ruling that would eventually decide the case was denied by the Supreme Court in April.

The request for delay was an attempt from the Trump administration to use an Executive Order to short-circuit judicial review. The Executive Order improperly directs the EPA to consider using an overly narrow definition of waters subject to the Clean Water Act that would dramatically limit the Act's important protections. Because the WOTUS rule was finalized long before Pres. Obama left office, it cannot be simply undone with a stroke of the president's pen. A lengthy and complicated legal process is required to rewrite it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: EPA's comment period has just ended, but letters to the editor can be very effective in showing administrators and politicians how concerned and well informed the public is.

7B. The interim omnibus spending bill does less harm than expected

Just before the continuing resolution ran out on May 5, in order to avert a government shut-down, the House and Senate came to a bipartisan agreement on a FY17 omnibus spending package. This will fund the government until the end of the fiscal year (September 30). According to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Democrats got 160 GOP riders dropped from the bill, including most (but not all) of those that would have eliminated or eased environmental regulations. In general, the overall bill avoids the steep cuts for EPA and renewable energy programs sought by the Trump administration.

From an analysis by NPCA, here are a few highlights of what the bill does concerning national parks and other key conservation issues.

- Reduces EPA funding only 1% below current funding (as compared to the 31% cut proposed by the Trump budget).
- Provides a 2% increase for the operation of national parks, including increased maintenance funding
- Cuts the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) by about 11% overall, with National Park Service land-acquisition projects being cut by 35%
- Increases the Dept. of Energy budget by over 4%, including slight increases in the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, and the Office of Science
- While NOAA gets a slight reduction overall, the agency's Ocean and Atmospheric Research programs receive a small increase to $477.7 million, with climate research funded at $158 million.
- For OSM, abandoned-coal-mine funding remains at roughly the present level.

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8. TCWP NEWS

8A. Upcoming activities

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

National Trails Day Workday on North Ridge Trail - Saturday, June 3

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

North Ridge Trail Stewards Ray and Jo Ann Garrett announce a trail reroute effort scheduled for Saturday, June 3. The reroute is necessary because the trail is encroaching on privately owned property in three places.

Volunteers are asked to meet at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge at 9 a.m. Volunteers should wear sturdy shoes and bring bug spray, sunscreen, drinking water, and a hoe, mattock, or lopper if available. A pizza lunch will be provided at around noon.

Established by the American Hiking Society, National Trails Day is meant to connect Americans to trails.

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.

8B. Recent events

[Compiled by Carol Grametbauer]

Spring Cedar Barrens Weed Wrangle® – March 4

[Contributed by Tim Bigelow]

The morning of March 4 was cold, but nice and sunny, and a workforce of 12 turned out, including two AmeriCorps volunteers. To celebrate "wrangling weeds" along with several other groups across the state, the workers pulled, trimmed, treated and eliminated a large number of invasive species—but primarily, on this early-spring day, privet, bush honeysuckle, some autumn olive, and a few other species already green. The greatest effort was made in the area west of the

ellipse toward and along the fence, an area that has been harboring quite a bit of privet.

One interesting highlight, among many, was the discovery that we have help in our battle against privet: a small animal (probably rabbit-sized) had gnawed the bark of quite a few of the lower stems during the winter. Maybe this trend will continue, and stunt the growth rate of woody weeds in the Cedar Barrens area!

The workday ended with a pizza lunch and lively discussions.

Obed Rafting Trip with Trash Collection - March 25

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Obed Wild and Scenic River conducted a river cleanup trip at the end of March, with many kayakers participating in the effort to get trash off the river and river banks. TCWP recruited two volunteer outfitters, Bob Fowler and Chad Ward, as well as six raft riders to help with the event. Many bags of trash were collected.

Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 8

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Our annual Wildflower Greenway event, featuring garlic mustard removal and a walk on the greenway trail, was a big success. About 15 volunteers convened at the greenway midpoint and gathered many large garbage bags full of the very invasive exotic garlic mustard. The mustard must be taken to a landfill to prevent its spread.

Naturalist Kris Light identified many wildflowers for participants, and provided other interesting information about the flora. Thanks to recent rains, the stream provided a soothing backdrop for the outing. This project is a joint effort of Greenways Oak Ridge and TCWP; Roger Macklin is the Wildflowers Greenway Steward.

Rock Creek Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 22

[Contributed by Larry Pounds]

On this joint outing with the Tennessee Native Plant Society, nine of us braved the weather to make a loop that is part of the Cumberland Trail system. Amazingly, the rain stopped not long before we got onto the trail, and did not re-start for six hours.

Lunch was eaten beside a high-flowing Rock Creek. Purple rhododendron, shrubby buckeye, and southern pinxter azalea were highlights. When we encountered buffalo nut, Linda Mann told an interesting story showing how poisonous those nuts are. As we neared the parking lot, the sky got very dark, but our luck held, as we were back in our cars just as the hail started.

Piney River Wildflower Walk – Saturday, May 6

[Contributed by Larry Pounds]

In a second joint outing with TNPS about ten of us, plus three dogs, walked a remnant of road along Soak Creek in intermittent rain. Soak Creek was proclaimed a state scenic river last fall, and it lived up to its new title. The creek's roar made conversation difficult. Numerous cliffs along the route were dotted with Carey's saxifrage.

Orchid expert Chuck Wilson started upslope away from the old road we were following. I asked if he was looking for yellow lady slippers, and he affirmed this. A minute or two later he was calling us to check out the object of his search: he'd found this orchid, despite never having been in this area before!

The route we walked is expected to become part of the Cumberland Trail as it swings west from Walden Ridge to Crab Orchard Mountain.

"Planting for Pollinators" – Thursday, May 11

About 25 people came out on May 11 to hear Jamie Herold, an ORNL plant ecologist who works in natural resource management for DOE's Oak Ridge Reservation, discuss landscape design and management techniques that help pollinators. Jamie is a former TCWP board member and currently serves on TCWP's Program Committee.

Jamie discussed the many species of pollinators, why they're important, how they're threatened by habitat loss, and how home gardeners can help by using some of the management practices that are used on the Reservation—techniques of design, management, and plant selection. She encouraged homeowners to plant more flowers, with an eye to all-season interest and variety; to create habitat by mowing selectively and leaving stems and fallen leaves in the garden; and to plant more native plants, which support many more pollinators than non-natives do. Her talk was followed by a lively question-and-answer period.

8C Special Shout Out of Thanks to OR UUC

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

The Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church conducts a Split-the-Plate program in which the church contributes half its monthly offering to various organizations. In May, the ORUUC will be donating to TCWP.

Additionally, ORUUC held an unconventional Easter Egg Hunt last month. As one of the church's Split-the-Plate recipients, TCWP had an opportunity to host a donation bucket at the event. Jimmy Groton and Michele Thornton were available to answer young people's questions about TCWP as they sought information about where their Easter Egg donations might go.

Virginia Dale, who nominated TCWP for the Split-the-Plate Program, notes "Of course, all are welcome to attend ORUUC at any time. The address for ORUUC is 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike in Oak Ridge, TN, and the Sunday morning services begin at 10 AM. Also see http://www.oruuc.org/."

TCWP deeply appreciates the honor of being an ORUUC Split-the-Plate recipient. The UU Easter Egg participants contributed just over $40 to the TCWP donation bucket. Thanks, kids!

8D. Thanks, and a tip of the hat

From Sandra Goss to . . .

-- Jean Bangham, Johnny Cosgrove, Jimmy Groton, Lise Neiler, Dick Raridon, Gary and Marti Salk, and Michele Thornton for helping with distribution of the *TCWP Newsletter* (#332).

-- Lee Russell, Larry Pounds, Phillip Clifton, David Lincicome, and Carol Grametbauer for their contributions to *TCWP Newsletter* (#332).

-- Melissa Muendel and Mark Trantanella for their contribution of an extension cord to TCWP's Presentation Kit.

-- Virginia Dale, Jimmy Groton, and Michele Thornton for their help with TCWP having a presence at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church Easter Egg Hunt and being a Split-the-Plate beneficiary.

-- Mary Lynn Dobson and Patsy Monk for contributing items for the Community Shares Circle of Change Silent Auction, garnering required "sweat equity" points for TCWP's continuing Community Shares membership.

-- Kris Harris Light and Roger Macklin for their leadership at the April Wildflower Walk/Garlic Mustard Pull.

-- Bob Fowler and Chad Ward for their rafting leadership and expertise during the March Obed River Cleanup.

-- Larry Pounds for his leadership and expertise during the Roaring Creek and Soak Creek/Piney River outings with Tennessee Native Plant Society.

-- Marese Nephew, Tim Bigelow, and Jan Lyons for their help with the TCWP exhibit at EarthFest and Earthday Oak Ridge.

-- Johnny Cosgrove for his help with website updates.

8E. Friends and members in the news

[Compiled by Sandra Goss]

-- Neil McBride was mentioned in a January 24 News Sentinel article about the YWCA of Oak Ridge.

-- Harriett McCurdy wrote a letter to the Oak Ridger editor about military spending on March 9.

-- Chuck Nicholson was mentioned and pictured in the March 8 Norris Bulletin in a story about Arbor Day.

-- Jimmy Groton authored an op-ed column on natural-gas waste rules in the March 11 News Sentinel.

-- Lee Russell and Dan Robbins were mentioned in a March 1 Oak Ridger article about the Oak Ridge Preschool site.

-- Donald Clark's letter to the Crossville Chronicle editor about privatization was published in the March 14 issue.

-- Joe Feeman's article about controlled burn in Norris Municipal Watershed was in the March 15 Norris Bulletin.

-- Robin Hill was pictured in a news story about Gatlinburg Wildfires Symposium in the March 17 News Sentinel.

-- John McFadden's article about 100K Tree Day appeared in the Crossville Chronicle on March 24.

-- Katherine Medlock's article about controlled burns appeared in the March 25 News Sentinel.

-- Louise Gorenflo penned a letter to the editor about federal budget cuts that appeared in the March 26 News Sentinel.

-- Dana Fox wrote a letter to the Morgan County News editor about camping fees at Frozen Head State Park on March 29.

-- Bob Richards was mentioned in a letter to the Knoxville Mercury editor on March 30.

-- David Nestor was quoted and pictured in an article about Norris Wildflower Hikes in the March 31 News Sentinel.

-- The April 3 News Sentinel ran an article about building the Cumberland Trail; it mentioned Bob Fulcher, Ray and Jo-Ann Garrett, the Charlie Klabunde endowment, and Rob Weber.

-- Allen McBride penned a letter to the April 4 News Sentinel editor about Homeland Security policy.

-- Eric Thornton was pictured with his Oak Ridge City Wildbots team in the April 4 Oak Ridger.

-- Hiram Rogers is pictured in the April 5 Morgan County News as he finished a loop of the Barkley Marathon.

-- The April 13 Oak Ridger carried a picture of Lee Russell attending an Oak Ridge League of Women Voters meeting.

-- Deni Sobek and John Beard were cited as mentors to students' science projects at their schools (Oak Ridge High School and Jefferson Junior High, respectively) in the April edition of the City of Oak Ridge Newsletter.

-- The April 19 News Sentinel had a picture of Marion Burger at the Oak Ridge Farmers Market.

-- Matt Hudson was quoted in an April 19 Morgan County News article about a rescue on the Obed River.

-- The April 23 News Sentinel included a letter to the editor about the April 29 Climate March written by Mary Headrick, Jennifer Jones, and Todd Waterman.

-- Lee Russell was pictured in the April 25 Oak Ridger article about the recent March for Science.

-- Gary McCracken was pictured at a State Outsourcing protest in the April 25 and the May 3 issues of the News Sentinel.

-- Jeff Mellor wrote a Letter to the editor of the April 24 News Sentinel about the Affordable Care Act.

-- Chuck Nicholson was cited as an expert birder in the April 26 Norris Bulletin column "Birdlady."

-- Matt Hudson is quoted in the April 28 News Sentinel in an article about the Spring Planting and Music Festival at Big South Fork.

-- Kris Light is featured in an April 29 Maryville Daily Times article.

-- Judy Roitman's letter to the News Sentinel editor was published April 30. The letter was about the Affordable Care Act.

8F. Executive Director's Column

Dear Fellow Conservationists and Environmental Advocates,

Many sentences start with "Working together . . ." It's a key factor in whatever success is gained in the constant struggle to keep Earth humanly habitable. I'm focusing my thoughts on a couple of key ideas:

(1) The statement "Saving the planet" has been ridiculed by some who point out that, whatever we do, the planet will continue to orbit the sun. To be more precise, our concern is about saving the wondrous life on Planet Earth -- life of a huge multitude of amazing species, including our own, human, species.

(2) "Working together" can't be a catchphrase; it must be the reality. Current events demand every one's voice, shouting to the roof-tops, insisting on adequate protection for our natural resources. Please commit to making three calls before the 4th of July to share your views with an elected official.

It has come to my attention that making those calls can be intimidating. It needn't be! Our officials have staff to receive these phone calls and to record the callers' views. The caller (YOU!) says: "I want to let Sen. Alexander know that I favor fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Please support Senate Bill (often abbreviated SB or S) XXX. My name is _____. I live in _____. Thank you."

It's that easy! Please, study the action alerts on page 2, and make a call today!!

On another topic, goodbye to April. I'll miss the weather and the blooms. On a recent hike along Soak Creek, a fellow hiker told me that there are 100+ kinds of sedge in Tennessee, and that sedge can grow in Antarctica. Sedge makes me think of brooms and broom sedge. Well, broom sedge IS NOT A SEDGE! This name business is complex. It's a pleasure to spend time with folks who know the names, regular and Latin, and willingly share their knowledge. Another example of working together!

We need more members!! Membership is available at reduced rate of $15/year. It's important in our comment letters. Doesn't "I'm writing on behalf of 1500 concerned members …" sound good? Help us make that happen, please! Send potential members to our lovely new website www.tcwp.org for more info and a way to join.

Sandra

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9. CALENDAR; RESOURCES

•• CALENDAR

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

- May 19, 8-10 p.m., frog calls and bat monitoring event (see Resources, below).
- May 20, Points Trail hike, Obed WSR, in celebration of Mountain Laurel Festival (see ¶3D, this NL).
- June 3, National Trails Day Workday on North Ridge Trail (see ¶8A, this NL).
- June 4, 1:30-4:30 p.m., Solway Bend, reptiles and amphibian inventory (see Resources, below).

•• RESOURCES

- The National Park Service issues a monthly e-Newsletter about Big South Fork and Obed activities and news. You can request one by calling 423-286-7275
- Through ORNL's Environmental Sciences Division (ESD), a series of nature walks are being sponsored on the Oak Ridge Reservation. Two are left for this season: a frog-call and bat-monitoring event on May 19, and a reptile and amphibian inventory on June 4. For information, contact Trent Jett of ESD, 865-574-9188 or jettrt@ornl.gov.

TCWP Newsletter 333 May, 2017

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Celebrate Trails! Join us for a trail reroute for North Ridge Trail on June 3. See inside for details!