

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 24, August 13, 1969

HEADLINES

- The TCWP-coordinated Washington visit of 92 conservationists leads to more congressional and editorial support and to hope that, "in 15-18 months," the Department of the Interior will find a solution to the 1943 Agreement that will not involve destruction of wilderness in the Great Smoky Mts. National Park.
- Secretary Hickel's new policy guidelines for the National Park system include restrictions on major park road constructions and directives for speed-up on wilderness studies.
- TCWP has incorporated; is tax exempt, contributions deductible.
- There is a delay in federal studies on the Obed, but the Big South Fork study is progressing on schedule.
- Oak Ridge school system guarantees TCWP-supported participation of ten 5th-grade classes in resident Environmental Education program in Smokies.
- Environmental Studies course at ORHS is about to become a reality but will require further TCWP help.
- To prevent even more unjustified dams from being authorized, action is required to prevent adoption of even laxer procedures for calculating benefit-cost ratios.
- TCWP represented at Dept. of Conservation meeting on natural areas legislation.
- TCWP's greenbelt foot trails publicized in LWV hike.

WASHINGTON TRIP BY SMOKY MOUNTAINS DELEGATION A SUCCESS

The much discussed meeting with Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel, concerning wilderness and roads in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (see NEWSLETTER Nos. 21, 22, 23) finally took place on June 23. TCWP coordinated the efforts of organizations and individuals and assembled a delegation of 92 persons who were members of 88 organizations, officially representing 38 of them. They came from 7 states in this region, and they travelled to Washington at their own expense, the bulk of them in two chartered buses. Eleven representatives of the delegation first met for 45 minutes with Secretary Hickel, National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog, Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks, Dr. Glasgow, and two other members of the Dept. of Interior staff. Another small group had already met with Undersecretary Russell Train. Following these conferences, at which we discussed our point of view and presented the Department with much written and pictorial material, Secretary Hickel, Director Hartzog, and Dr. Glasgow met with the rest of the large delegation.

Secretary Hickel announced that he had directed Mr. Hartzog to make a thorough new study of ways of settling the 1943 Agreement, and to report his recommendations in from 15 to 18 months. Members of the delegation felt hopeful that a solution would be found that did not involve destruction of the wilderness in the Park.

The entire morning and the portion of the afternoon remaining following the meeting at the Department of the Interior were filled with visits to Congressmen and government officials. Each member of the delegation made 4-5 visits; each group, ranging from 5 to 40, had a leader who had prepared a presentation, was equipped with visual and other material, and followed up with correspondence. In addition, TCWP later thanked each person visited and sent post-visit editorials as well as lists pertaining to the

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delegation. Altogether 35 visits were made, encompassing all of Tennessee's and most of North Carolina's Senators and Representatives, several key members of the House and Senate Interior Committees, and the Bureau of the Budget.

The response has been gratifying. Three Tennessee Congressmen--Brock, Fulton, and Blanton--clearly endorsed our position. Even while we were in Washington, Repr. Brock wired to Secretary Hickel: "I wish to express my strongest support for the conservation group meeting with you today in regard to the transmountain road across the Smokies..." Repr. Fulton later wrote to us: "I want to assure you that I will support the TCWP in their opposition to the proposed road..."; and Repr. Blanton had earlier written, "I...feel that your recommendations are excellent. Please be assured...I will support your views." We feel that the remainder of the Tennessee Congressional delegation has become more aware of, and perhaps somewhat more sympathetic to our point of view. Many stated that they were impressed by the informative nature and thoughtfulness of our presentation, and by our obvious conviction.

It should also be noted that, following our return, three major area newspapers (The Knoxville Journal, Knoxville News-Sentinel, and Oak Ridger) editorially endorsed our position. We had previously had the support of only one of these.

HICKEL ANNOUNCES POLICY GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

On June 18, Secretary Hickel transmitted an 11-point policy directive to NPS Director Hartzog, supporting (with one exception) the policies of former secretaries and adding new guidelines. The single policy change is to direct the NPS, rather than concessioners, to operate campgrounds. Emphasis in the new guidelines is placed on bringing "Parks to People" through establishing park and recreation lands in large urban centers and by making existing parks more meaningful through improved and expanded programs. Two points in the guidelines will be of particular interest to TCWP members. First, Sec. Hickel notes "that the private automobile is impairing the quality of the park experience....In this connection, before major park road construction is initiated in the future in any natural area, I wish a thorough study to be made of alternative methods of access and transportation" [mass transportation is specifically recommended in this connection]. Second, Mr. Hickel states, "I am also deeply interested in preserving the wilderness of the National Park System. In this connection, I note that you are behind schedule in your wilderness studies of roadless areas of the National Park System. It is important that we get this program on track." The full text is available on request from the TCWP editor.

Note: Although this may be coincidence, it is of interest that the Dept. of Interior released the 11-point directive on June 22, that is on the day before the delegation of 92 conservationists visited Washington to discuss wilderness and roads in the Great Smoky Mts. National Park.

TCWP INCORPORATES, IS TAX EXEMPT

We have applied for and received from the Secretary of State for Tennessee a charter of incorporation which authorizes TCWP to operate under the laws and rules of domestic general welfare corporations. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that TCWP is exempt from Federal income tax, and that contributions made to TCWP are deductible by donors, as provided in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

FEDERAL STUDIES ON OBED AND BIG SOUTH FORK SYSTEMS

Severe budget cuts have delayed initiation of studies required under the provisions of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act on the Obed system (including Clear Creek and Daddys Creek). Unless the staff of the BOR regional office is further reduced, it is, however, hoped that a task force will start work early in the spring. TCWP, whose membership is

most anxious for speedy inclusion of this river system in the national act, will keep in close contact with BOR on this matter.

The task force report for the three-agency study of alternatives to Devils Jumps Dam on the Big South Fork of the Cumberland has gone to their editorial committee. After review (probably starting in early October) by a Washington steering committee, the report will be available for citizen perusal. TCWP hopes to examine the report on the earliest possible occasion. See NEWSLETTER No. 22 for TCWP recommendations submitted for the task force report.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. The NEED program at the Tremont Center in the Smokies.

National Environmental Education Development (NEED) is a National Park Service program to foster environmental awareness and involvement in the individual child. A curriculum has been developed under contract to the NPS and space for a week in residence "on-site" is provided in a natural area which is under NPS jurisdiction. The former Tremont Job Corps Center became tentatively available for this purpose--provided operation, maintenance, and staffing could be guaranteed through the participation of several school systems. TCWP urged the Oak Ridge School Board to give favorable consideration to this proposal, and several TCWP members spoke up for it at the last school board meeting. We are happy to report that the Oak Ridge school system has committed itself to the participation of ten 5th-grade classes during the coming school year. For further information, call Tee Brichetto 482-2667.

2. Environmental Studies course at Oak Ridge High School.

This course, proposed by us last year (see NEWSLETTER #19) is about to become a reality, after many meetings with school officials. Small teams of students will do research on current problems of our East Tennessee environment, each student in a team concentrating on a different aspect of the problem. The work will involve library research, field trips, interviews, etc., and each team will be directed by an ORHS faculty advisor as well as by an outside advisor. In addition, weekly seminars will be held which will draw heavily on outside speakers. The TCWP committee that worked on the planning of the course will also provide outside advisors (willing to supervise research of a student team for a period of at least 9 weeks) and seminar participants (willing to provide one talk, demonstration, field trip, etc.). Any volunteers should get in touch with Claire Nader, 483-7077.

PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR BENEFIT-COST RATIO CALCULATIONS COULD LEAD TO MORE DAM "JUSTIFICATIONS": ACTION NEEDED

The Federal Water Resources Council recently released a special task-force report advocating evaluation procedures for Federal water projects (dams, etc.) that--if adopted--would result in approval of even more economically unjustified projects than under the present procedures. The recent recommendations, by abolishing the differentiation between "secondary benefits" (which most economists regard as largely illusory) and "primary benefits" (which they recognize), would result in even more apparently favorable benefit-cost ratios than do the present procedures. The task force report furthermore ignores earlier recommendations by economists and conservationists that would have led to more stringent computations of benefit-cost ratios; one of the most important recommendations ignored being that economic evaluations of dams and other water projects be carried out by independent agencies, rather than by those that would build them.

Those anxious to improve, rather than worsen, the basic evaluation procedure may wish to urge the Water Resources Council to reject the task force report, and to authorize, instead, a new study of revisions of Senate Document 97 (which outlines the present procedures) by a group including academic economists knowledgeable in the water resources field.

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* (Note that 3 of the 4 authors of the present task force report represent the 3 Federal agencies most heavily engaged in water-related public works projects.) Submit your statement for the record, by September 19, to the Executive Director, Water Resources Council, 1025 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. (Or, if you can, attend an August 22 hearing in Louisville, Ky. (Call Water Resource Council for details.) Further information, particularly suggestions for improvements in Senate Document 97, can be obtained from Alan Carlin, 627-J San Vicente Blvd, Santa Monica, Calif. 90402.

TENNESSEE STATE LEGISLATION

On July 8, Col. Slayden, Assistant Commissioner of Conservation, conducted a meeting in Nashville on the subject of House Joint Resolution No. 88 (Victor Ashe, chief sponsor), which directs the Department to study the need for recognition, classification, and preservation of natural areas and to recommend adequate legislation to accomplish these ends. Representatives of other state agencies and of conservation groups attended by invitation. TCWP was represented by L. B. and W. L. Russell. Although no action was taken, several suggestions concerning the legislation to be recommended were discussed. Representative Ashe will be seeking the further assistance of TCWP in connection with this legislation.

Following the meeting, the TCWP representatives consulted with Max Young, who recently joined the Department of Conservation to work on state scenic rivers, and who appears to be approaching his new job with intelligent energy.

GREENBELT TRAILS

We have had many enthusiastic comments on TCWP's program for developing simple foot trails in the extensive Oak Ridge greenbelt, and on our obtaining the blessings of the City Council for this project. On July 30, the League of Women Voters sponsored a "Go-See Hike" to acquaint its members with our first trail. Lily Rose Claiborne, who led this excursion for TCWP, reports a most favorable response from the approximately 35 people who turned up.

MEMBERSHIP, DUES, EVENTS

* We hope to circulate a list of our approximately 400 members with our next NEWSLETTERS. This is an extra reason to bring your dues up to date, if you are behind. We are grateful for two recently added lifememberships--Herman Baggenstoss and Frances Pleasonton--who join lifemembers Phin and Anna Rachel Whiting, Jack and Mary Ann Gibbons, Helen Mason, Dr. G. Mayfield, and the many others who have helped so generously.

* Please note that, according to our bylaws, new members joining after July 1 of any year shall be assessed only half the year's dues. Only \$1.50 will buy a new 1969 membership to TCWP!

Although TCWP has scheduled no meetings or outings for the month of August, we have been asked to announce a canoe and kayak competition on the beautiful Hiwassee River, sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club on Sunday, August 31. Information sheets, as well as entry blanks, are available from the editor of the NEWSLETTER.

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