

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 38, February 2, 1971

In the last NEWSLETTER we asked you to concentrate your effort on matters that will face the State legislature. In this one, we are adding some urgent regional and national matters to your workload. We hope that each member will tackle at least two items mentioned in each of these two NEWSLETTERS.

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1. THE JOYCE KILMER ROAD PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED

Perhaps you are as confused as are some of our newspaper writers by what's happening on the question of the Tellico Plains - Robbinsville road. There was some jubilation a few days ago at a U.S. Forest Service announcement that the road would not go through the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. This was hailed as a victory for conservationists by those to whom conservationists had somehow failed to make clear the real problem -- which is not merely to move the road out of Joyce Kilmer, but to keep it from separating Joyce Kilmer from the Slickrock Creek area (together with which it could qualify for wilderness designation under the 1964 Act). Yet in announcing its Joyce Kilmer decision, the USFS also stated its "final", plans -- merely to move the road a few hundred yards north over the top of the crest into the Slickrock Creek drainage. The plans are not final, e.g. the Federal Highway Administration has not yet cleared them; and, even more important, conservationists can still indicate that the manner in which the USFS proposes to "save" Joyce Kilmer is no real solution at all. We are enclosing a brochure that acquaints you with the problem. Please follow its recommendations.

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2. ALASKA PIPELINE EMERGENCY

America's last frontier, the vulnerable Alaska wilderness, is about to be destroyed, unless conservationists everywhere join in the battle for its protection. The Dept. of Interior's (USDI) Environmental Impact (102) Statement on the proposed 800-mile trans-Alaska hot oil pipeline was released about 2 weeks ago. While acknowledging the probability of serious damage to the arctic ecology, USDI tentatively concludes that the exploitation is justifiable in the interest of "national security". Since last April, when three conservation groups (EDF, FOE, Wilderness Soc.) obtained a preliminary court injunction against the pipeline haul road, USDI had denied the conservationists access to reports of relevant studies; while, at the same time,

maintaining close contact with the pipeline sponsors. Hearings on the pipeline issue will be held in Washington, D.C. February 16 and 17. The hearing record will remain open until March 8 for written statements.

A few arguments may here be listed:

- a. The 4-ft steelpipe would be subject to breaks, especially from earthquakes (the route traverses an earthquake region), from erosion and floods (it crosses 350 streams), and from buckling due to melting of the permafrost where buried (oil temperatures would be 150-180°F). The 102-statement acknowledges the probability of spills "even under the most stringent enforcement". It also admits that such spills could wipe out entire species.
- b. Above-ground construction would form a barrier to important animal migrations.
- c. The construction, under arctic conditions, would cause practically non-healable scars. Vehicle tracks made in the tundra 20 years ago have not yet disappeared, and re-vegetation may not be possible.
- d. The haulroad would open untouched wildland and wild waters -- one of the few as yet unspoiled major ecosystems left on earth -- to mineral and timber exploitation and to settlement.
- e. Alyeska Pipeline Co. (the 7-oil-company combine) states "The environmental disturbance will be avoided where possible, held to a minimum where unavoidable and restored to the fullest practicable extent" (ad in The New Yorker). How does this augur for environmental safety?
- f. The USDI report states that we need the Alaska North Slope oil in order to lower our dependence on the Middle East. However USDI figures show that, even with the Alaska oil, we expect to increase Middle East imports from 530,000 barrels/day in 1970 to 6,000,000 in 1985. North Slope oil has been estimated as enough for only a few years of America's needs. Its use will aggravate the continent's pollution and congestion problems.
- g. We need a comprehensive Alaska land-use and conservation plan before rushing into a potential ecological disaster.



What you can do:

- a. Write to President Nixon, White House, Washington, D.C. 20500. Most important: Send a copy of your letter to your newspaper.
- b. Send a statement to the Director, Bureau of Land Management, Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, and ask that it be included in the hearing record.
- c. Inform your friends and other groups on this issue and suggest that they take action.

3. THE TIMBER RAID ON OUR NATIONAL FOREST IS ON AGAIN: VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IGNORED

A year ago, the united voice of conservation groups throughout the country led to the House of Representatives' overwhelming refusal to consider H.R. 12025, the Timber Supply bill, which would have greatly increased logging in National Forests (see NL 30). More recently, this people's decision was overridden when the

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President, by executive order, put into effect the provisions of the rejected law. Congressman John P. Saylor writes: "The Congress....maintained our national policy of protecting the public forests from the ravages of the timber cutting industry as previously established by the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960. The lumber interests wanted this reasonable policy scrapped entirely. Failing with Congress, the lumber lobbyists went to the White House for help."

According to a Sierra Club Environmental Alert, the timber lobby has now enlisted not only the Administration but also the Forest Service in its effort to force up the logging rate. The vehicle this time, will probably not be another Timber Supply Act, but an attempt to increase appropriations to the Forest Service for its "Environmental Program for the 70's". This program calls for a 60% increase in logging! (There are better ways to obtain more timber, including the halting of our huge exports of logs.) While other USFS uses would also benefit from the increased appropriation, the LOSER with this approach would be the one resource that does not need money to survive: wilderness. The contemplated increase in cutting would virtually eliminate the chance that de facto wilderness areas within National Forests would ever survive to be included in the National Wilderness System.

* What you can do: (a) Inform the President that the USFS's "Environmental Program for the 70's" will remain unacceptable until there are specific measures to prevent logging on all unprotected wilderness areas. Ask for a moratorium on such logging until these areas have been reviewed by Congress. (b) Write in a similar vein to your congressman and senators. Also, urge them not to vote any increase in appropriations for the Forest Service which would increase allowable cut. (c) For a scientifically well-documented indictment of bad USFS practices, ask your senator for a copy of the Bolle Report -- "A University View of the Forest Service" - prepared by the School of Forestry, U. of Montana.

4. ANOTHER SST EFFORT IS NEEDED

The battle against the environmentally disastrous, and wasteful, SST drags on. Conservationists must not weary but continue in a stronger-than-ever united effort against the substantial forces of not only the aero-space industry and labor unions, but also the Administration. In case you got lost in the year's end Congressional maneuvering this may bring you up to date. The Senate filibuster against a conference committee decision that had restored almost full funds to the SST (in spite of the earlier Senate rejection of these funds) was called off after Senator Proxmire won the following pledges and action from Congressional leaders: (a) both houses will take fresh votes on the DOT appropriations bill (which includes the SST funds) early in 1971; (b) until then, a "continuing resolution" provides funding for the SST through 3/30/71 at the level specified in the conference report (i.e. 1/4 of \$210 million); (c) if the two houses disagree on their SST vote, the conference committee, instead of accepting a compromise, must refer the SST back to the House and Senate "in disagreement". This would allow the SST issue to be considered independently of the rest of the DOT bill.

* The House vote will come first, on an amendment by Rep. Yates to strike all SST funds from the DOT bill. This may happen any time; therefore NOW is the time to contact your Representative. Then write to Senators Baker and Brock. Send copies of your letter to your local paper. Ask friends and friendly organizations to take similar steps. To refresh your memory: check NL 35 for environmental and economic arguments against the SST. Additional information is available from George Alderson, Coalition Against the SST, Room 602, 917 - 15th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

5. CONTROLS FOR TENNESSEE'S OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION NEEDED

* The Tennessee Oil and Gas Board (composed of the Commissioners of Conservation and of Revenue, the State Geologist, and the Attorney General) is seeking a change in the state law that pertains to the operation of oil and gas wells. Recent operations in the Oneida oil field have been marred by sloppy practices leading to stream and air pollution, hazardous conditions, and waste. Under the present law, the Board cannot exert any control until production reaches 50,000 barrels per day (it is now about 3000 barrels/day in the Oneida field). The Board proposes a change in the law that eliminates this limiting provision. We endorse the Board's recommendation and suggest that you contact your state legislator to ask for elimination of Sect. 60-105 of the Tenn. Code Annotated, as well as for various more minor changes that will give greater definition to the Law.

6. RECENT BIG SOUTH FORK DEVELOPMENTS

- (a) * Senator Baker has stated in a letter, "I share your view that development along the lines of a national park or recreational area would be of greater long-term value to the area than would the construction of a high dam at Devils Jumps." You may wish to thank the Senator.
- (b) Lee Russell, representing TCWP, and Col. Bell, representing the Corps of Engineers, appeared on opposite sides of the Devils Jumps dam question before the National Directors' meeting of the Izaak Walton League at Gatlinburg, January 9. It became apparent from some of the Colonel's off-the-cuff remarks, in response to the TCWP talk, that the Corps' now 13-months-overdue re-study of the Devils Jumps project is allowing 35% for recreation benefits and the remainder probably for power benefits. If so, the BOR recreation evaluation, which we have in our possession and which allows zero recreation benefits for the project, would probably serve to make the dam economically unjustifiable. There were indications that the Corps may therefore be trying to sidestep this BOR evaluation. A subsequent TCWP phone call to BOR revealed that no re-evaluation had been requested by the Corps and that BOR will stick to its original, analysis.
- (c) * A stripmining operation was started in the gorge just below Leatherwood Ford and caused bad landslides into a tributary of the Big S. Fork. Friends in Oneida alerted TCWP. The Division of Strip Mining and Reclamation has denied permit on the grounds of stream pollution. You may wish to thank Director Delony (Tenn. Dept. of Conservation, 2611 West End Ave., Nashville TN 37203).
- (d) We are endeavoring to obtain the Corps' Environmental Impact Statement on the Devils Jumps project. We shall support legislation to be introduced by Sen. Frank Church that would require Corps projects to be authorized on an individual basis, rather than as a package in the "omnibus" rivers and harbors bill (in which many extremely marginal projects squeeze by).

7. ACTIVE DUCK RIVER PRESERVATION GROUP FORMED

Off and on for three years, we have brought you news (most recently in NL# 34, 32, 31, 27) of TVA's double project (Normandy and Columbia dams) to impound the highly scenic and scientifically valuable Duck River. The benefit-cost ratio is only a marginal 1.2/1.0, and TCWP has claimed that an impartial calculation would drop the ratio to less than 1.0/1.0. Most of this fiscal year's appropriation by Congress has been impounded by the Office of Management and Budget, but TVA has begun land acquisition procedures.

An active group, the Duck River Preservation Association, has now formed in the Duck region to oppose the dams. They are looking seriously into the possibility of legal action, and TCWP is actively supporting them. Look for an important announcement in the near future.

8. CONSERVATION GROUPS VISIT COMMISSIONER JENKINS

Two conferences were held with Conservation Commissioner Jenkins and Deputy Commissioner Russell on January 28: (a) general meeting at which 11 representatives of seven groups briefly discussed a number of different topics; and (b) a meeting arranged by TCWP for specific discussion of plans for the Big South Fork of the Cumberland system. Commissioner Jenkins graciously gave 1-1/2 hrs of his time for the two meetings (which were held in tandem with the whole first group staying on for the Big S. Fork meeting). Groups represented were: TCWP, TSRA, TTA, Sierra Club, SMHC, Greater Knoxville Area Audubon, Assn. Southeastern Biol. Conserv. Comm. We discussed (a) the following matters of state legislation and administration: the scenic rivers system, scenic trails system, natural areas preservation, and strengthening of stripmine legislation; and (b) the following matters of federal-state cooperation: national status for Obed and Buffalo, Smoky Mtns. National Park, Big S. Fork. The Commissioner is an attentive listener, was already acquainted with some of the topics and welcomed, we feel, the opportunity to become more familiar with all. We left written summaries and a variety of other materials for his perusal. Visits were also made to Planning Div. Chief Walter Criley, and to Stripmine Div. Chief Chase Delony.

9. SUGGESTED READING

- a. The Public Land Law Review Commission Report appeared a few months ago after 5 years' work and \$7 million. Few of us have time to read this 342-page document, but one of those who has wonders whether it should not be titled "A Blueprint for Corporate Takeover of 724.4 Million Acres of Land Which Now Belongs to All the People of the U.S." The Natural Resources Council has sponsored a book analysing the PLLRC document. It is entitled "What's Ahead for Our Public Lands?" and may be ordered from H. K. Pyles, Natural Resources Council of America, 1025 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 1105, Washington, D. C. 20005. The paperback edition is \$2.50.
- b. "The Voter's Guide to Environmental Politics", edited by Garrett DeBell, FOE/Ballantine, 95¢. Effective, sophisticated nitty-gritty for working within the system for environmental sanity.
- c. Along somewhat similar lines is the article "Battle Tactics for Conservationists (January 1971 issue of READERS DIGEST).
- d. Congr. Henry S. Reuss has assembled a "Handy Kit for Fighting Polluters". Free from the Congressman at 2159 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515.
- e. The Atlanta office of BOR has kindly sent us a large number of the new brochure "Wild and Scenic Rivers". Yours for the request.

10. CALENDAR

Feb. 9 TCWP Stripmine Meeting, U.T. Student Center, 7:30. Come, and invite your legislator to attend..

Feb. 12-14 "The Eagles: Revisited." A Field Naturalist Workshop to observe bald and golden eagles wintering in Land Between the Lakes. Brochures available from TCWP.

Feb. 16, 17 Alaska Pipeline hearings. (See item 2).

March 8 Deadline for written testimony for Pipeline hearings. (See item 2).

March 9, 10, 11 TV program "Mission: Possible" shown 7:8 p.m. on PBS-affiliated stations. (1) They Care for a City; (2) They Care for the Land; (3) They Care for a Nation.

March 13-14 Conasauga River float, TSRA. Call Bill Mitchum, Nashville 269-9759.

March 19 Dr. Elvis J. Stahr, pres., National Audubon Soc., will speak in Chattanooga, Tivoli Theater, 8 p.m. under the auspices of several groups. Contact Mrs. Bradley Currey, 821-4162.

"The cost of a thing is the amount of life it requires to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the future."

(Henry David Thoreau)