TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 10, January 15, 1968

NEXT MEETING

TIME: Thursday, February 1, 1968, 8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, corner of Oak Ridge Turnpike and Lafayette Avenue. (Note: this is a change from our usual meeting place.)

TOPIC: Needed State legislation to preserve the esthetic assets of Tennessee's lands and waters.

The Tennessee Assembly convenes in mid-February, and we hope that our deliberations may lead to the introduction of certain legislation. We have asked several of our legislators to be present at the meeting and to examine the problems with us. Outlining the topics and making suggestions for specific action will be Mack S. Prichard, Parks Naturalist, Tennessee Department of Conservation; and Robert A. Miller, President of the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association.

The subjects to be discussed will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following.

(a) Possible improvements in the stripmine law and its administration: by adoption of strengthening amendments; and by Tennessee's joining an Interstate Compact.

(b) A proposal for a Tennessee Scenic Rivers System. (This is being prepared by TSRA in specific detail, with estimated acquisition costs for the initial set of rivers to be included).

(c) Abatement of stream pollution possibly by restoring pollution-control enforcement funds cut previously.

(d) Initiation of a Tennessee trail system ("strip parks"). The first two to be considered are the hike-bike trail from Knoxville to the Smokies (see Newsletter No. 9); and a trail proposed to go from Pickett State Park to Morgan Forest (suggested name: John Muir Trail).

(e) Wilderness preservation in State Parks.

In addition to the presentations by Miller and Prichard, and the statements by legislators, we expect to have ample opportunity for questions and free discussion. Coffee and cookies will be served. The meeting is being organized by Sara Berg.

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SMOKIES

The Transmountain Road is dead. Secretary Udall's announcement of December 10 was the best Christmas present many of us had. But while we should rejoice, we cannot relax until a Wilderness Plan has been adopted by Congress that gives permanent legislative protection in place of the constant possibility of changing administrative decisions.

We are still backing the alternate road proposal developed by the Carolina Mountain Club and endorsed by the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. According to this, the Blue Ridge Parkway extension, coming through Bryson City, crosses the Lake east of Noland Creek (the present end of construction) and continues westward to Fontana on the south-shore, i.e., outside the Park (see map sent with Newsletter No. 5). Note, however, that the NPS has re-affirmed plans to continue on the northshore to Monteith Branch, and that Congress has appropriated over $3,000,000 for this purpose. The Carolina Mountain Club is hoping to meet with representatives from Bryson City to discuss whether either the Club or the NPS road proposals would be accepted in fulfillment of the 1943 agreement. Until the problem of this agreement is resolved, we recognize that the NPS cannot come out with a firm wilderness recommendation on the Hazel and Eagle Creek drainages. This, however, should not be allowed to hold up adoption of the remainder of a good wilderness plan. Hopefully, the disputed areas can be added later.

We therefore consider it important that you write to your Representatives and Senators, and to Secretary Udall, urging the speedy adoption of a Wilderness Plan and again strongly endorsing the conservationists' proposal (Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, etc.) originally presented at the hearings in June 1966.

RIVERS

Obed. From what did not happen at the November 25 annual meeting of the Emory River Watershed Development Association (see Newsletter No. 9), and from various rumors that we believe are solidly based, it appears that the proposal for the high "Nemo" dam (at approximately Obed mile 3) may have been dropped. There is, however, talk of sub-stituting several "upstream" dams on the Obed, Clear Creek, and Daddys Creek. We wrote Mr. Wagner (Chairman, TVA Board of Directors), but he would not commit himself on locations, or, in fact, on existence of the proposal in the first place, saying only that studies are in progress (a report was scheduled for completion in December). Upstream dams on the Obed or tributaries could be extremely damaging to the beautiful rivers and we shall work to keep the free-flowing system intact.

South Fork of the Cumberland. The Corps of Engineers is restudying the Devil's Jump dam particularly from the point of view of recreational justification. The BOR has completed, but not yet released, a new study, comparing recreational opportunities of the free-flowing stream and the proposed reservoir. It looks as though we'll have to work hard to preserve this magnificent river.

Upper Duck. TVA is working on the Normandy report that will probably recommend impoundment of the most scenic part of this river. Please get in touch with Mrs. H. E. Collier, Box 292, Route 2, Tullahoma, Tennessee 37388, if you want to help with efforts to preserve a scenic free-flowing Upper Duck.

A NATIONAL PROBLEM

The San Rafael Wilderness proposal is a classic one in that it is the first to add an area to the National Wilderness Preservation System under the Wilderness Act of 1964. An important principle is now at stake, as follows.

At public hearings, citizen conservationists proposed a 2000-acre addition to the U.S. Forest Service proposal. There are excellent reasons for this addition (details on request), but the U.S.F.S. has adamantly stuck with its original plan and has prevailed on a House-Senate Conference Committee to oppose acceptance of the House Bill that approves the addition. The House can now reject the Conference report, if sufficient Congressmen are alerted.

This is a major test to determine whether the people's voice will prevail or that of a government bureau; or, as the Wilderness Society puts it "whether the great investment of time and energy by citizen conservationists in building a strong hearing record will result in the accomplishment of our objective through the Congressional review procedures that the Wilderness Law spells out".

Write to your Representative (House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C.) and urge that the House reject the House-Senate Conference Committee report which would give up the important addition to the San Rafael Wilderness. The floor vote is expected soon after February 1.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

Ernest Dickerman, as vice president, is in charge of "indoor" programs for the year. Tentative plans include one on State Parks; one (toward the end of the year) to review how the Stripmine Law is working; and possibly others.

Charles DuBois has accepted the job of outings chairman and will soon be calling for help with specific trips.

We are happy to have the following advisors to the Board. Political advisor: R. A. McNees, Oak Ridge City Council, formerly mayor, and president of Tennessee Municipal League. Ecology advisor: Prof. E. E. C. Clebsch, Botany Department, University of Tennessee.

Elizabeth Kelly will continue in charge of publicity, Minnie Duncan as librarian, and I as editor.

Over 40 new members have joined since December and these come from 11 cities throughout the State. Our total membership is over 200.

We gratefully acknowledge large donations to TCWP from Jack and Mary Ann Gibbons of Concord, Dr. G. R. Mayfield of Columbia, and the Rev. W. G. Pollard of Oak Ridge.

REPORT OF LAST MEETING

Although the Grand Canyon movie did not arrive (it was apparently never sent out), the other two movies together with the Peelle's slides and commentary made a stimulating and moving program attended by about 80 people. Now that Congress has reconvened, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs is expected to hold hearings shortly on a Redwoods National Park. Please contact Mr. or Mrs. R. W. Peelle, 130 Oklahoma Avenue, Oak Ridge, 483-8974, if you wish to take action.

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The two Sierra Club movies "Zero Hour in the Redwoods" and "Glen Canyon" were shown to all children at the two Junior High Schools and to about 500 students at the Oak Ridge High School. We are grateful to the principals and to Jo Henderson, Bob Lefler, and Rod Davis for arrangements. According to reports, the students were most attentive and were moved (some to tears) by the Glen Canyon movie. There was subsequent class discussion with application to local problems (proposed impoundment of some of Tennessee's beautiful streams).

DUES

If you have not yet paid your 1968 dues*, please send them as soon as possible to H. G. Smith, 103 Walton Lane, Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830. Single membership, $3; couple, $5. (For other membership classes see last newsletter.)

Lee Russell, Editor
130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, 482-2153

***this is indicated by a membership blank enclosed with this Newsletter**