TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 16, August 10, 1968

NEXT MEETING

Date: September 26, 1968, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Place: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge Turnpike, corner of Lafayette Drive.
Topic: The Tennessee State Parks System: Needs for the Future.

Should the state acquire more scenic areas now, or instead spend its funds on developments within existing parks? How can we assure that wilderness will be preserved in the parks? Should the state encourage developments outside the parks rather than building accommodations within? Should we advocate a "natural areas act" for the park system? These and other topics will be discussed by a panel of three or four speakers: a member of the Department of Conservation, a legislator, and a citizen conservationist (names to be announced later). There will be time for open discussion. Mack Prichard, State Parks Naturalist, will show slides of outstandingly scenic spots that are, or should be in the State parks system. Tom Berg is in charge of the program.

NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERS BILL

The national scenic rivers bill, H. R. 18260, which, as we reported earlier, contains (in the category to be studied for possible future inclusion) the three Tennessee rivers we had asked for, went to the House floor on July 15. Because of the rush for adjournment, the bill came up at 11:00 p.m. under "suspension of the rules", i.e. no amendments allowed, and two-thirds majority required for passage. Completely unexpectedly there developed strong opposition from Pennsylvania (Congressman Saylor's, the sponsor's, own state) to inclusion of the Susquehanna River, and the bill failed to get the 2/3 majority of the small number of members present. The opposition was mainly due to a misunderstanding by Gov. Shafer, Pa., concerning length of the moratorium.

TCWP has been in touch with the Interior Committee, the Rules Committee, various national conservation organizations, and members of the Tennessee Congressional delegation. Because Congress has decided to reconvene after Labor Day, there is now hope that the bill may be brought back under regular rules. There is no bottleneck from the Rules Committee, and it will be up to Chairman Aspinall and the Interior Committee (who are not expected to seek a rule unless Gov. Shafer of Pa. recognizes his error). Because of the temporary setback, there is now the danger that amendments to remove rivers may crop up. Therefore, if the bill goes back to the floor, we must again let our Congressman know that we want the Obed, South Fork of the Cumberland and Buffalo to stay on the bill.

DEVIL'S JUMPS DAM

Although the House version of the rivers and harbor bill this year again omitted the Devil's Jumps project, the bill that emerged from the Senate Public Works Committee contained authorization for this dam that would inundate 82 miles of spectacular river gorges on the South Fork, Clear Fork, and New River. Because we had been warned that, this year, there was an all-out campaign underway to get the project authorized in the conference committee, we expended a great deal of effort on the House and Senate conferees and on our own Senators and Congressmen. We provided all of them with factual material on power costs, summaries of BOR studies, etc., sent editorial comments, and informed them of our petition (which now bears well over 3000 signatures). The compromise bill has now emerged, and it does not authorize the dam. Instead, it directs the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, and Chief of Engineers "to review and prepare such alternate plans as they determine feasible and appropriate for the use of the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River and its tributaries, Kentucky and Tennessee, and necessary contiguous areas, for recreational, conservation, or preservation uses of such area, and report to Congress no later than December 31, 1969.

REDWOODS NATIONAL PARK

Also under suspension of the rules (no amendments allowed), the House approved a shockingly slashed Redwood National Park. This would contain only 28,000 acres (as against the Senate's 64,000) and consist of two already-existing state redwood parks plus a quarter-mile fringe of trees along lower Redwood Creek. The conference committee was expected to begin discussions early in August, but a compromise report was not expected until after recess.

TCWP QUESTIONNAIRE

We are grateful to the large number of Newsletter recipients who have returned their questionnaires. For those who have not and are delinquent in dues, we are enclosing a second copy, and urge them, please, to take care of this matter.

COMMUNICATIONS

Occasionally, things happen so fast in Congress and elsewhere that action is required on very short notice. We are therefore organizing phone committees in all areas where we have large memberships (Helen Warren will head the one for Oak Ridge, Mrs. T. C. Swindell the one for Knoxville).

When there is no time for letters to Congressmen, the answer may be a public opinion telegram. This costs only 88 cents for 15 words. Should you wish to send a longer message, a nightletter may be the answer (50 words). As member Waldo Cohn points out, some of us would just as soon spend that sum for the privilege of being able to dictate on the phone instead of having to write a letter.

Tennessee Wilderness Action Council: Just after the last Newsletter went to press, Bruce Ketelle accepted the position of Fourth District representative on the Council. TWAC now has representatives in six of our nine congressional districts.

Lee Russell, editor

130 Tabor Road
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830