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TCWP Newsletter

1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Proposed Motorsports Complex Seeks New Location

On April 6th, Rusty Bittle announced that his plans for Oak Ridge Motorsports Park would need to find a new location. His decision was made after the Department of Energy (DOE) concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be necessary before deciding on the request for the transfer of three natural areas at the Horizon Center. The process could take many months and much money with no guarantees that the end result would favor Bittle’s racetrack proposal.

DOE concluded that the EIS was necessary because “changing the land-use restrictions at the Horizon Center for the proposed activity may pose a risk of potential significant impact to the DOE natural areas and other conservation land holdings in close proximity.” Additionally, the Deed transferring the DOE land at Horizon Center requires DOE to approve land-use changes and requires the landowner to be responsible for expenses associated with mitigating actions in situations where activities cause or have the potential to cause significant adverse impact to the sensitive zones in the Natural Areas on DOE’s abutting land.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

An EIS is a document required by the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and for major actions that could have significant impact on the environment. The EIS looks at short-term and long-term effects and considers possible measures to reduce or mitigate those effects.

Why was an EIS not performed on the Horizon Center when the land was transferred?

NEPA can involve different levels of analysis including the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the EIS. When the land was transferred to the IDB, an EA was conducted with a determination that there is No Significant Impact.

1A. Proposed Motorsports Complex continued...

Why would an EIS be needed to accommodate the proposed Motorsports complex?

Because the natural areas that were set aside for the proposed land use of the Horizon Center would be affected by the new proposed land use, a more thorough review of the impact on the environment would be needed to assess the short and long-term effects on the environment. - *Ken Mayes*

1B. Board of Directors Candidates Sought by Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation

Seeking person or persons with curiosity, interest in science, and appreciation for wild lands and waters. Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR), a 22-year old membership organization, supports preservation of the natural resources of the Department of Energy's 20,000-plus-acre Oak Ridge Reservation Research Park—for the long-term benefit of DOE, the local community, and national and international interests.

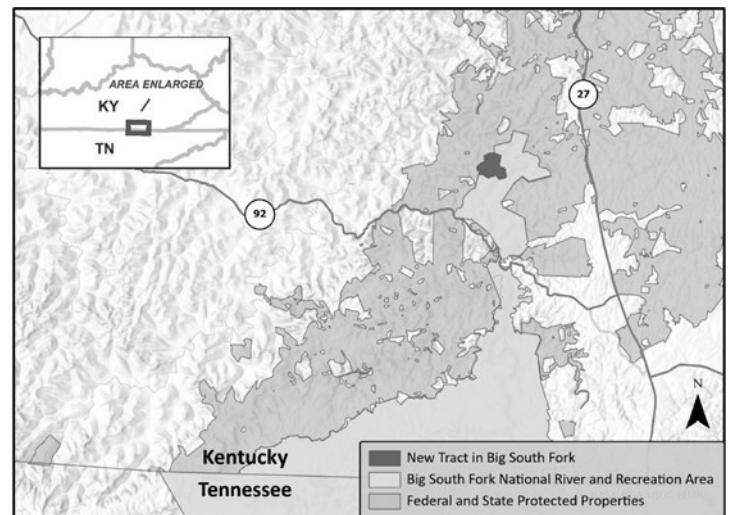
AFORR Board service provides opportunities to collaborate, analyze and/or communicate with other savvy thinkers on such projects as the late unlamented racetrack project or currently proposed hazardous waste landfill on the reservation. For more information visit aforr.info.

2. TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. 500 Acres Added to the Big South Fork

The National Park Service had long wanted to add a 500-acre inholding within the legislative boundary of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in Kentucky. However, funds were lacking for purchase of this property. So The Nature Conservancy stepped in to acquire the property and hold it until funds became available. That finally happened as a result of the passage last year of the Great American Outdoors Act, which included permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

With funds from the LWCF, the NPS purchased the inholding for addition to the BSFNRA. The 500 acres are at the northwestern end of the park's legislative boundary, to the north of KY State Route 92 after crossing to the west side of the Big South Fork on Yamacraw Bridge.



Map provided by TNC's Hayley Lynch

By providing no-cost financing to TNC, The Wyss Foundation made purchase of the property possible until it could be transferred to the NPS. TNC's Kentucky chapter led the effort to preserve this land. "This is a new partnership and our first transaction with the National Park Service," says Dian Osbourne, director of protection for the Kentucky chapter. "This inholding was a large hole in the park's land, and NPS ownership will make management more efficient and effective and provide better opportunities for hiking, paddling, camping, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors."

See the TNC news release: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/kentucky-big-south-fork-addition/> - *Russ Manning*

2B. Interim State Legislative Report

The 2021 session of the Tennessee General Assembly adjourned earlier this month. Advocates for conservation and sustainability actually enjoyed some key successes! TCWP, along with others:

- helped stop erosions of the open meetings law for local governments and utilities agencies
- helped pass the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resilience Act which is a significant step forward for clean energy in Tennessee
- helped stop the reduction of stormwater fees paid by property owners which would have hurt local governments ability to properly manage stormwater

We are less happy about:

- The backward-looking actions designed to promote more coal-mining in a state where coal is no longer an appropriate or possible way to meet energy needs and which will cost taxpayers a huge amount over time (see below)
- The failure to make progress on the CLEAN Act, which would have incentivized litter prevention in a tangible way and removed litter now polluting waters and habitats.

Be on the lookout for a more comprehensive report about the status of bills we cared about this year after the legislative staff have prepared their report on what happened and have put newly passed bills into the appropriate Public Chapter format. - *Stewart Clifton*

2C. Tennessee to Subsidize Coal Companies at Taxpayers' Expense

The 2021 Tennessee Legislature moved to subsidize coal companies when Governor Lee signed HB90/SB742 amending the Primacy Act passed on party line votes. (Interesting House debate on the vote can be seen at http://tnga.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=610&clip_id=24835&meta_id=605573).

Passage of this bill obligates Tennessee taxpayers to pay about one million dollars each year to subsidize the collapsing coal industry, an industry that produced no coal in Tennessee during the last three quarters of 2020.

Since 1984, regulation of coal mining in Tennessee has been performed by the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) at no direct cost to the State of Tennessee. Among the misguided comments that legislators have made about Tennessee assuming enforcement and permitting responsibilities are:

Passage of this act will result in a resurgence of the coal industry.

TVA will buy our coal if this bill is passed.

Coal mining can provide rare-earth elements (REEs) needed by computers and phones.

It is widely accepted that coal will not be a primary energy source again. TVA has announced plans to phase out coal power by 2035. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, coal accounted for 19% of utility scale electricity generation in 2020. There is research underway in Kentucky to determine the prevalence of REE's in coal and coal mining by-products. The economics of extracting REE's need to be studied.

More alarming is the fact that assuming this regulatory authority will burden Tennessee taxpayers with reclaiming the lands associated with forfeited coal mining permits. This has become a common occurrence throughout the nation as coal company bankruptcies continue. Adding insult to injury, the bill also requires taxpayers to pay many of the coal companies' engineering costs required for new permit applications. One can easily imagine Tennessee citizens shouldering the costs of the mining industry's past work.

Free Books from the Library of Jerry Olson

Several books on a wide variety of topics (ecology, climate change, Appalachia, general travel) in the late Jerry Olson's library need a new home. If you or someone you know is interested in some of these books get in touch with daughter Martha (865-577-1234) or assistant Emily Shane (ekshane1@gmail.com) to pick up the books at the downtown Knoxville condo's storage unit. There are many folks receiving word of this opportunity and it would be good to take advantage of it quickly.




Did you know that you can support TCWP while shopping at amazon.com?

Simply start at smile.amazon.com and choose Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning as your charity to support.

AmazonSmile will donate .05% of your eligible purchases.

2D. Safe Passage Thru Pigeon River Gorge

It's risky just to drive I-40 through Pigeon River Gorge. But it's deadly for animals attempting to cross this interstate that bisects public land—Cherokee National Forest on the northern stretch in Tennessee and Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina, with Great Smoky Mountains National Park just to the west. This undeveloped public land provides a critical link in the Wildlands Network's "Eastern Wildway" that extends up the Appalachian Mountains all the way into Canada. But migrating animals can use this wildway only if they can safely across the many roads fragmenting the landscape, especially in our region the I-40 corridor.

In 2017, Jeff Hunter with National Parks Conservation Association convened a group of people concerned about the increasing numbers of animals killed by vehicles along the section of I-40 through Pigeon River Gorge. Others soon joined and coalesced into a group representing nearly 20 federal, state, tribal, and non-governmental organizations, which is now called "Safe Passage: The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project."

The project focuses on black bear, elk that have been reintroduced to GSMNP, and white-tailed deer, with a goal of identifying key areas where these animals cross along a 28-mile section of I-40 and developing strategies for helping them to cross safely. These megafauna were selected for study because mortality is easier to document and the economic impact from vehicle collisions can be quantified. And as sometimes discovered in such efforts, if the megafauna of an ecosystem are protected, many of the lesser creatures that follow in their wake are protected as well.

The data being gathered from such techniques as mortality counts, accident records, and monitoring cameras will be used to provide recommendations to Departments of Transportation for safe crossings. For example, planned replacement of bridges in the Harmon Den area (the I-40 exit you take if you're headed to Max Patch) provides a prime opportunity to introduce safe passages in the planning. While DOTs are receptive to the idea of incorporating wildlife crossings (over and/or under the interstate), the additional funds required are often not available. To help achieve the necessary resources, a Safe Passage Fund has been established to accept donations, with the Wildlands Network serving as the fiscal sponsor.

The hope is that safe passages across I-40 in Pigeon River Gorge not only reduce the danger to wildlife and motorists alike, but also strengthen connectivity so wildlife populations may be free to migrate in search of food and home, especially with impending climate change.

For Further Information:

A Senior Program Manager with NPCA, Hunter serves as facilitator for Safe Passage and, in that capacity, presented a virtual program on The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project earlier this year that was sponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society; you can access on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3xjcrZ4KaE>

Hunter also has an excellent podcast with National Parks Traveler: <https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/podcast/2021-03-14-national-parks-traveler-episode-109-great-smokys-wildlife-corridors>

Safe Passage website: <https://smokiessafepassage.org>

To donate to the project: <https://wildlandsnetwork.org/safepassage-donate/> - RM

2E. George Lindemann Gives Nearly 2,000 Acres of Land to TennGreen for Conservation Research

George Lindemann recently donated ~2,000 acres of mosaic habitat, including forested streams, grassland and open space, and upland wooded areas suitable for forest management to TennGreen Land Conservancy ("TennGreen"). This property, known as the Soak Creek Farm, is located in Rhea and Bledsoe Counties and abuts the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park (the "Cumberland Trail").

The Soak Creek Farm has more than 16 miles of streams—including Dunlap Creek, Evans Branch, and Shingle Mill Branch—that flow to the Piney Creek watershed. This watershed includes significant recreational areas, such as Soak Creek, which was designated a State Scenic River in 2017, the first such designation since 2001. Piney Creek River is the most recent river to earn Tennessee's State Scenic River designation. George Lindemann was instrumental in both the Piney and Soak Creek designations.

Mr. Lindemann and TennGreen's long-term goal is to establish the Soak Creek Farm as a research station, evaluating habitat management techniques and medicinal plants. TennGreen will identify partners in higher education for research projects and potential management of the land. Before transferring the Soak Creek Farm to new ownership, TennGreen will place a conservation easement on the property to ensure it remains undeveloped, other than a research station.

This generous, nearly 2,000-acre donation expands TennGreen's successful history of conservation in the region. Since 2001, TennGreen and its partners have conserved more than 13,000 acres within ten miles of the Soak Creek Farm. In 2017, Mr. Lindemann donated a 1,034-parcel to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to establish the Soak Creek section of the Cumberland Trail.

The region continues to be an area of focus for TennGreen due to its significant conservation resources, such as its large forested tracts, rich biodiversity, and the ample recreational opportunities that the Cumberland Trail provides. - *Honey Rand*

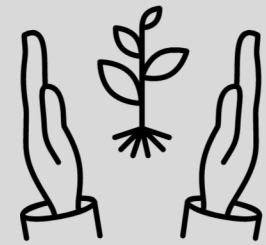
2F. A License to Fund Conservation

Did you know that TWRA receives a majority of its funding through the sale of hunting & fishing licenses? Each license sold is met with federal dollars and those funds support the conservation of all species of plants and animals in the state of Tennessee.

Not a hunter or fisherman? No problem. TWRA offers a Friends of Wildlife license for \$22. That \$22 will return more than \$30 of federal funds to TWRA for its conservation efforts.

To purchase a license and support TWRA's conservation effort, go to <https://gooutdoorstennessee.com>.

To learn more about TWRA and its programs, check out <https://www.tn.gov/twra>. - *KM*



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Newsletter Changes

As you can see, we are trying something new with the newsletter. We hope these changes make the newsletter more readable and aesthetically pleasing. Tell us what you think about the new format and bear with us while we fine tune the new format.

Ken Mayes

3. NATIONAL NEWS

3A. Rep. Cohen Introduces Bill to Ensure Safe Disposal of Coal Ash

Tennessee Representative Steve Cohen (TN-09) has introduced Ensuring the Safe Disposal of Coal Ash Act (HR 2396). This bill to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act, which was weakened during the previous administration, will strengthen the requirements for safely storing and disposing of ash from the combustion of coal.

Congressman Cohen states, "I have been acutely aware of the dangers of coal ash contamination because of the disastrous 2008 coal ash spill in Kingston, Tennessee, and the unacceptably slow clean up of the contaminated groundwater beneath coal ash pits at TVA's Allen Fossil Plant in my own district. This plant is now identified as one of the most-contaminated sites in the country. The measure I am introducing strengthens protections outlined in the (EPA) 2015 Coal Ash Rule and protects communities by mandating safer and faster disposal of this dangerous waste product of electricity production."

HR 2396 will direct the EPA to strengthen requirements necessary to protect human health and the environment from coal ash. It will require power plants to ensure they can pay for cleanup costs in the event of disasters or hazardous spills, prohibit the continued operation of unlined impoundments, and require full regulatory oversight of any EPA-approved state coal ash programs. In addition, it will add provisions to ensure public participation, address legacy coal ash dumps, prohibit dangerous use of unencapsulated coal ash, and require protection of low-income communities, communities of color, and other disproportionately impacted populations.

The Act was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, which passed it on to the Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change. The next step will be for a legislative analyst in the Congressional Research Service to analyze the text of the legislation. The analysis will be provided to the Subcommittee for evaluation and decision making. See Congressman Cohen's press release: <https://cohen.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressman-cohen-introduces-ensuring-safe-disposal-coal-ash-act> - RM

3B. Biden Nominates DOE Science Director and TVA Board Members

Pres. Biden has nominated Asmeret Asefaw Berhe to head the DOE Office of Science, which supports energy research initiatives and oversees 10 of the nation's 17 national laboratories, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea in northeast Africa, Dr. Berhe is currently a professor of soil biogeochemistry at University of California, Merced, a fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the Geological Society of America, and a member of the U.S. National Academies New Voices in Science, Engineering, and Medicine. She previously served as chair of the U.S. National Committee on Soil Science at the National Academies. (See her 2019 TED Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/asmeret_asefaw_berhe_a_climate_change_solution_that_s_right_under_our_feet).

In addition, Biden appointed four to the TVA Board, including two from Tennessee:

- Beth Prichard Geer is Chief of Staff to former Vice President Al Gore and serves as a member of Nashville Mayor John Cooper's Sustainability Advisory Committee. She resides in Brentwood, Tennessee.
- Robert P. Klein is a lifelong resident of Chattanooga and began his professional career at the Chattanooga Gas Company before continuing at the Electric Power Board of Chattanooga where he worked in the Overhead Line Department. He later became a Line Foreman supervising the building and maintaining of the power distribution system.
- Kimberly Caudle Lewis of Huntsville, Alabama, is the Chief Executive Officer of PROJECTSYZ, Inc., a business that provides services and products in the areas of engineering, logistics, technical services, manufacturing, and international foreign military sales. She leads a workforce that supports federal and commercial customers across several diverse subsidiaries and at locations across the US and the world.
- Michelle Moore currently serves as CEO of Groundswell, a nonprofit that builds community power through community solar, clean energy, and resilience programs that share power, savings, and economic opportunity with more than four thousand families. Her accomplishments range from building the global green building movement as a senior executive with the U.S. Green Building Council to leading the sustainability and infrastructure delivery teams for the Obama Administration. - RM

4. TCWP NEWS

4A. Upcoming Activities

TCWP's Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We will practice social distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between participants. This will limit the amount of interpretation that can be done.
- We will organize activities into groups of 10 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring a mask and wear it when around others.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning to activities instead of carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancelation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

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

"Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!" – Thursday, May 27

Birding is an activity that can bring joy and empowerment to everybody, but not everybody is able to go birding easily. Birdability is a non-profit organization focused on removing barriers to access for birders with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, intellectual or developmental disabilities (including autism), mental illness, being deaf or hard of hearing, and other health concerns; and bringing the joy of birding to people with disabilities and other health concerns who aren't yet birders.

On May 27, TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society will cosponsor a 7 p.m. program by Freya McGregor, Occupational Therapist and Birdability Coordinator. She will explain why accessibility to birding should matter to you (even if you don't have an accessibility challenge), ways to be a more welcoming and inclusive birder, the Birdability Map (and how to submit a Birdability Site Review), and resources for birders and potential future birders with accessibility challenges.

McGregor has been a birder since childhood. Her "dodgy" knee often creates an accessibility challenge for her. With a background in blindness and low-vision services, she is passionate about enabling all birders and potential future birders to enjoy birding and nature as much as she does.

Registration for this free online event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues.

Help the North Ridge Trail on National Trails Day – Saturday, June 5

North Ridge Trail Steward Ray Garrett reports that the seven-mile trail is in good shape. Occasionally a blow-down will block the trail. Thanks to Jon Hetrick and the Oak Ridge Parks and Recreation staff, those are generally cleared away.

The very steep, frequently slick slope just west of the Walker Lane connector junction needs some help. Starting at 9:00 am on Saturday, June 5, we will work to install a "rail" on the first 28 feet. The rail will be made of cable or rope, connected between trees. There will be a bit of trail rerouting.

Volunteers will meet at the Walker Lane trail entrance (off Outer Drive). Please wear appropriate clothes and shoes as well as insect repellent. Sandra Goss

East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup - Saturday, June 12

TCWP and partners Clinch Valley Trails Alliance and Oak Ridge Greenways are sponsoring the second annual trash cleanup and hike on the East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway. This wonderful new trail, developed by CVTA and Greenways Oak Ridge, was recently completed along the banks of East Fork Poplar Creek in west Oak Ridge. The trail meanders through a nice riparian woodland along the creek.

This trail is subject to occasional flooding, and help is needed to remove litter left behind by the water. There are also a lot of old tires and other debris that have washed from places upstream. TCWP and CVTA will provide plastic bags and some pick-up tools for participants. Please bring gloves and wear mud-friendly shoes.

We plan to start at the Jefferson Avenue intersection with the Turnpike at 9 a.m. We'll cover up to a mile downstream, and possibly some upstream if there is time. Park next to the Boys and Girls Club a short distance from the turnpike. We anticipate the temperature will be much more hospitable than when we did the last cleanup, in February 2020. Contact Tim Bigelow 865-607-6781 or bigelowt2@mindspring.com with questions. - *Jimmy Groton*

" Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S." – Thursday, June 24

Anyone who spends time outdoors in warm weather needs to be aware of diseases that can be transmitted by ticks. According to the CDC, tick-borne illnesses doubled in the U.S. between 2014 and 2016. Because ticks are so small, people might not even notice when they've been bitten by one.

On June 24, TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society will cosponsor a 7 p.m. Zoom program by Dr. Richard Gerhold, an assistant professor of parasitology in the Department of Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences at UT's College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Gerhold holds a B.S. in wildlife science and a DVM from Purdue University, as well as M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in veterinary pathology from the University of Georgia. He completed a two-year National Science Foundation-funded post-doctoral fellowship at UT's Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries Department, researching Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases.

Registration for this free online event is required. Register at: www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues.

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.

4B. Recent events

Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, March 6

We had 42 participants on a cool, dry, sunny morning, probably the largest number in memory. In addition to TCWP volunteers, several groups of UT students from Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity and others working on a civil engineering crosswalk and bicycle rack design project helped out. Other volunteers, from ORNL and the community, learned of the activity through the VolunteerETN website.

After a safety talk by Jimmy Groton and a description of some of the cedar barrens and some invasive species by Larry Pounds, volunteers removed small trees around the periphery of the ellipse area, removed invasive small woody plants from the open areas, cut and weed-wrenched out invasives like privet and bush honeysuckle from the surrounding wooded area, and trimmed along the trail.

The group inspected and toured the front Triangle area and around the pond. The barrens are ready for spring and summer! Volunteers found significant damage to the wood signs, possibly from woodpeckers. The replacement cedar rail fences from the City of Oak Ridge are holding up.

Thomas Fraser and photographer Anna Lawrence of the online newsletter Hellbender Press joined the workday, and wrote an excellent article about the activities and the ecology of cedar barrens. The article can be read at: <https://hellbenderpress.org/news/being-fire-volunteers-help-preserve-a-classic-east-tennessee-cedar-barren?highlight=WyJOY3dwllO=> - *Tim Bigelow*

“Gaining Ground for Clean Waterways: How a Tennessee Smart Yard Can Help” – March 11

An audience of more than 200 joined a Zoom presentation by Dr. Andrea Ludwig, Associate Professor of Ecological Engineering in the Biosystems Engineering and Soil Department at the University of Tennessee, who discussed how to create a “Tennessee Smart Yard.” The program was cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society.

Dr. Ludwig is co-director of Tennessee Smart Yards, a sustainable landscaping educational program that seeks to certify private property across the state as Tennessee Smart Yards. She has worked as the State Stormwater Management Specialist for UT Extension since 2010. In her presentation, she discussed the watershed concept and the fact that more than 4,000 miles of Tennessee streams have impaired water quality due to developed land, then focused on our role as property owners.

Dr. Ludwig described Tennessee Smart Yards as “protecting our natural resources one yard at a time.” The program (see www.tnyards.utk.edu) helps homeowners identify opportunities and actions for improvement. As an example of an action to reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants, Dr. Ludwig showed photos of the recently installed Rain Garden at the UT Arboretum, which uses native plants in a shallow bowl in the landscape to catch runoff.

The March 11 program can be viewed at https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/SC9hjFAKrimsulwVghNas6gKIHTIUS_alROqTkyvqOt-l6zVG72A1IEAkl-6Js.ucZCCsnTxS8lxFj_?startTime=1615505285000 - *Carol Grametbauer*

Hike at Head of the Sequatchie – March 20

More than 30 people took advantage of clear skies and State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath’s leadership to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Head of the Sequatchie on March 20. It had rained a lot before that day, and the various streams that become the Sequatchie River were full. The waters reached the area from Grassy Cove, which drains under the mountain range to the Sequatchie Valley.

A wide variety of wildflowers were on view, including this writer’s favorite, fields that were carpeted in wildflowers. Thanks to Randy Hedgepath for showing us the park, along with Cumberland Trail Ranger Leigh Gardner and Assistant State Naturalist Holly Taylor. - *Sandra Goss*

Clear Creek cleanup from kayaks – Saturday, March 27

On Saturday, March 27, TCWP and Obed Wild & Scenic River NPS staff sponsored a river cleanup on Clear Creek from Barnett Bridge to Lilly Bridge. East Tennessee Whitewater Club kayakers joined TCWP and OWSR staff, who provided rafts and rowers to haul trash. TCWP usually provides raft passengers to help with the cleanup, but because of COVID, TCWP participation was limited to a few brave kayakers.

After waiting out a big thunderstorm prior to launch, seven kayakers and three park staff remained to launch at Barnett Bridge at a flow of around 900 cfs. Because of the morning’s downpour, the group was treated to many normally non-existent waterfalls and rushing tributary creeks. A few bags of trash and two car tires were collected in the six-mile stretch to Jett Bridge, but the river was generally clear of trash.

By the time the group arrived at Jett Bridge, the river flow had tripled. The two rafts and four of the kayakers decided to continue to Lilly Bridge, but by then the riverside trash was covered or washed on downstream by the high water, so we all just enjoyed one of our favorite stretches of river from a somewhat new perspective. By the time we took out at Lilly Bridge, flows had climbed to 3800 cfs. Of course, post-cleanup beverages were enjoyed at the nearby Lilly Pad Hopyard Brewery. - *Mark Bevelhimer*

Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 10

For many years TCWP and Greenways Oak Ridge have sponsored a spring event on the Wildflower Greenway in Oak Ridge. This year was no exception, and 16 folks joined in to enjoy the wildflowers, yank the invasive garlic mustard (24 bags!), and dodge the occasional raindrop.

Greenway Steward Roger Macklin and well-known naturalist and TCWP Board member Jimmy Groton were there to lend their expertise on garlic mustard identification as well as the wide range of wildflowers. - SG

Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage at Frozen Head State Park – Saturday, April 17

TCWP and TNPS joined Frozen Head State Park for their wildflower pilgrimage outings. Kris Light led a group of Girl Scouts. Larry Pounds organized and shared leadership of a group of 14 with several plantfolk.

The day threatened rain, but after an early sprinkle, the weather was fine. We walked the Interpretive and Judge Branch Trails. Some highlights were large-flowered trillium, spotted mandarin lily, southern pinkster bush (a native azalea), and a group of deep purple dwarf crested irises. Meredith Clebsch called our attention to bird calls. At the end of the walk, on a whim, we went looking for Bartonias in a wet area where it is known to grow. No luck—it was probably too early for it to be up. - *Larry Pounds*

Stinging Fork Falls to Piney River – Saturday, April 24

The forecast was for 100% chance of rain, and that's what happened. I had decided that rescheduling would be too difficult, so Jimmy Groton and I headed for Spring City. Despite the soaking conditions, Bettina Ault met us there. We were a party of three on a hypothermia-inducing day.

We toughed it out long enough to see many wildflowers, including a large-flowered yellow lady's-slipper and a population of gaywings. We then turned back to eat lunch in my vehicle. I turned the heater up to 79 and we were soon feeling better. Warmed up, we headed to another trailhead. We got out and the wind was blowing. We went a few steps, then quickly got back in the vehicle. Nope, we were not getting chilled again. - *LP*

4C. Friends and Members in the Print Media

The February 16 Oak Ridger carried a letter about the proposed Oak Ridge racetrack from Chuck and Nancy Coutant.

Anne Child wrote a letter that appeared in the February 16 Oak Ridger about child tax credit.

Frances Figart wrote a column in the March 6 Asheville Citizen Times about a children's book she authored titled *A Search for Safe Passage*, now on sale at Smoky Mountains National Park bookstores.

The March 11 Oak Ridger carried a letter from Mick Wiest about the demolition of the Brannon House.

The value of the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement was the topic of an essay written by Robert Kennedy in the March 22 Oak Ridger.

Judi Roitman's letter to the Crossville Chronicle about Medicaid expansion appeared in the March 23 edition.

The March 25 Norris Bulletin had a picture of Harry Shatz and his birdfeeders on the front page.

Public school funding was the topic of a letter to the editor of the April 4 issue of the News Sentinel that was written by Lance McCold and several others.

The April 9 Oak Ridger carried a story about the cancellation of the Motor Sports Park Center included quotes from Robert Kennedy and Don Barkman and a picture of Jimmy Groton.

Jeff Mellor wrote a letter to the editor of the News Sentinel about Republican lawmakers. It appeared in the April 9 issue.

Lance McCold is quoted in an article about the Knox County Bd of Education budget in the April 28th News Sentinel.

4D. Full Heart, Good Tidings

Note from Sandra K Goss, Executive Director

This temperate season is filled with gorgeous flowers, interesting weather, and good news. Our beautiful Tennessee abounds with wildflowers and seasonal waterfalls. The proposed Oak Ridge racetrack project has been scotched.

There have been two 50th anniversary celebrations. Cumberland Trail authorizing legislation was signed on April 30, 1971. The Tennessee Natural Areas Act was signed on May 4, 1971. TCWP had a role in the passage of both these acts, and was represented at the anniversary celebrations.

Among the people seen at the Head of the Sequatchie during the Cumberland Trail celebration were Park Manager Bob Fulcher, Natural Areas staffer Roger McCoy, retired Cumberland Trails Conference staffer Nora Beck, TCWP members Chuck Estes and Rob Harrison, and many others. This writer and Bobby Fulcher recorded an hour of conversation about the Cumberland Trail and the Cumberland Mountains.

It's a pleasure to reflect on the conservationists and advocates who precede us and to take pride in the ongoing efforts of all of us. Some of the nicest and smartest people one can meet are members of the conservationist/environmentalist community. How lucky are we?

Much of our work is slow going and takes years to come to fruition. The Cumberland Trail is an example of this. The trail is still being built, still being improved, and its full benefits will not be realized for decades. As Bobby reminded me in the wide-ranging conversation, people will enjoy the fruits of our labors 50 years from now and beyond. Roger McCoy observed that our growing population needs more natural areas. Our work continues! Thanks for your support.

5. CALENDAR; RESOURCES

5A. CALENDAR

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

- May 27, "Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!" (see ¶14A, this NL)
- June 5, Help the North Ridge Trail on National Trails Day (see ¶14A, this NL)
- June 12, East For Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup (see ¶14A, this NL)
- June 24, "Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S." (see ¶14A, this NL)

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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UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 27, "Birdability: Because Birding Is for Everybody and Every Body!"
- June 5, Help the North Ridge Trail on National Trails Day
- June 12, East For Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup
- June 24, "Eco-epidemiology of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Southeast U.S."

These events are subject to cancellation. Call ahead to verify the event will occur.