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TCWP Newsletter

1. LOCAL

1A. Bull Run Pollution Discharge Permit

Tennessee Valley Authority has asked the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to renew the permit that allows discharge of toxic pollutants from Bull Run Fossil Plant into the Clinch River. Bull Run coal plant in Anderson County is slated to retire by December of 2023.

Meantime, TVA is asking the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to allow it to release more toxic pollutants into the nearby Clinch River. It would be better for the permit to hold TVA to the current water discharge standard rather than the more lax 2020 standard.

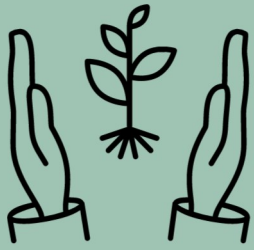
TDEC is accepting public comments on TVA’s proposal until January 26. Please email TDEC to ask that they not allow TVA to further pollute the Clinch River and to maintain the current water discharge standard. The email address is vojin.janjic@tn.gov.

1B. Bull Run Fossil Plant Deconstruction EA Released

Tennessee Valley Authority has issued a Draft Environmental Assessment on the Deconstruction and Decontamination of the Bull Run Fossil Plant. The EA offers three options which includes the usual No Action Alternative.

Alternative 1 calls for full demolition of all structures to three feet below the final grade. This alternative is the best one with one change: railroad tracks should be left in place to transport coal ash. Rail transport is economical and appears to be the optimal way to remove coal ash.

Comments are due by February 2 and should be emailed to Brittany Kunkle, NEPA Specialist, brkunkle@tva.gov.



*Support
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*by donating,
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renewing*

your membership

at tcwp.org

TCWP Board Meetings

The Officers and Directors of Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning meet the third Thursday of each month. Members are welcome to call, email, or attend a Board meeting to raise issues that TCWP needs to address. We welcome your input. See inside front page for contact information.



Keep TCWP in Mind for Charitable Payroll Deductions through Community Shares.

2. CUMBERLAND PLATEAU

2A. Regional Water Authority Established

The water supply for Cumberland County (county seat: Crossville) has been a concern for county leaders as well as Obed River advocates for many years. The threat of a dam was motivation for the creation of TCWP. According to the Census reports, the county's population has increased by more than 5000 people or 9% from 2010 to 2020. The area's population is projected to increase significantly over the rest of the century, along with the demand for water.

Damming the Obed or a tributary to create a reservoir has been suggested as a solution to increase water supplies. Damming our state's only National Scenic River (or its tributaries) is a loathsome project because it permanently alters biota, geography, recreation, everything! The city of Crossville has undertaken increasing the height of key water source Meadow Park Lake Dam. The multi-year project has not yet been permitted by the state.

The State Legislature passed a private act earlier this year that created the Cumberland Plateau Water Authority; the membership may include City of Crossville and Catoosa Water Department, South Cumberland Utility District, Crab Orchard Utility District, and West Cumberland Utility District. Each district chooses whether to join the authority. The authority is charged with working with utility districts on regional water supply or sewer projects, with the idea that working together will lower costs.

3. STATE

3A. Report from Tennessee Conservation Voters

Our elected state Senators and Representatives have begun to meet in Nashville and a few bills and resolutions have already been filed. Thanks to the Tennessee Conservation Voters (TCV), of which TCWP is a member, there are lobbyists monitoring legislative activities and developments.

TCV member groups meet most Thursdays at 6 pm ET to discuss bills of interest to us. TCWP members can attend electronically to learn more about what's going on with the state legislature. Call or write Sandra at 865-583-3967 or sandra@sandrakgoss.com to get the call-in information.

House Speaker Cameron Sexton and Lt. Governor Randy McNally announced that the 2023 billing filing deadline is January 31 and that they anticipate adjournment sometime in April.

Wondering about best plants for pollinators?

Tennessee Department of Transportation has developed a database of native Tennessee Pollinator flora and fauna. Said to be in-depth, the program is free. The url is www.tnpollinators.org. Look for Polli, The Bee from Tennessee.

4. NATIONAL

4A. Biden's TVA Board Nominees Confirmed

All six of President Biden's nominations to the TVA Board were finally approved by the Senate on December 21, 2022:

- **Beth Geer** from Tennessee serves as the chief of staff to former Vice President Al Gore and previously served in various roles in the Clinton-Gore White House, U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Senate.
- **Bobby Klein** also from Tennessee is a former vice president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and served for decades as a lineman and foreman for the Electric Power Board of Chattanooga.
- **Michelle Moore** from Virginia is author of *Rural Renaissance: Revitalizing America's Hometowns through Clean Power* and CEO of Groundswell, a nonprofit helping communities to reduce energy use and expand economic opportunity.
- **Bill Renick** from Mississippi is chair of the Commission on the Future of Northeast Mississippi and previously was the Workforce Division Director at Three Rivers Planning and Development District.
- **Joe Ritch** from Alabama practices law with Dentons Sirote, PC, in Huntsville and previously served as Chair of the TVA Board 2014-2017.
- **Wade White** from Kentucky was Lyon County Judge Executive and is now with Farmers Bank and Trust Co. of Princeton and Eddyville working in business development and public relations.

These six new members join three current members installed by the previous Administration, bringing the TVA Board to the full complement of nine members. The hope is that this new TVA Board will reign in the agency's ill-conceived plans to replace its aging coal-fired plants with natural gas plants and pipelines. Instead, replacing those plants with solar production and storage would support President Biden's stated goal for production of electricity to be carbon-free by 2035.

For more detail: <https://www.chattanooga.com/2023/1/4/461846/6-New-Members-Join-TVA-Board-Of-Directors.aspx>
-Russ Manning

4B. Tissue Paper 2022

The Natural Resources Defense Council has issued its Tissue Paper Sustainability Scorecard for 2022. As reported previously (NL 352, 4C; NL 354, 3D), NRDC's TP campaign encourages the use of sustainable paper products in an effort to limit the cutting of Canada's old-growth boreal forest. This homeland of Canada's indigenous people harbors abundant wildlife and holds untold tons of carbon. Currently more than a million acres are cut each year primarily for throwaway paper products in a "tree-to-toilet pipeline."

For the 2022 scorecard, NRDC included grading for bamboo paper products in addition to recycled paper products. While bamboo and recycled products rate higher than virgin forest products, surprisingly several bamboo products only achieved a B score because of the bleaching processes used and the plastic bulk packaging in which the rolls are delivered. As with the previous scorecard, the big brands continue to earn an F.

For the full report, see www.nrdc.org/tissue
- Russ Manning



4c. Waters of the US better protected as of December 30

The Biden rule defining “waters of the United States” was announced last month. The rule formally rejects the previous administration’s rollbacks and restores the pre-2015 definition of waters of the United States.

The Biden rule reinstates longstanding clean water protections that were in place prior to 2015 for traditional navigable waters (e.g., waterways that can be used for commercial waterborne recreation such as boat rentals or guided fishing trips), the territorial seas, and interstate waters (i.e., waters that flow across state lines), as well as upstream wetlands, streams, lakes, and ponds that significantly affect those waters. The Rule protects many critical waterways that have been protected by the administrations of both parties for decades. The rule also sets forth exclusions for certain waters and features that have generally been considered outside the scope of waters of the United States.

Under the Biden rule, many waters that lost protection under the unlawful Trump rule—ephemeral streams, many wetlands, and other intrastate waters—will be protected if they, either alone or in combination with similar waters in the region, significantly affect traditional navigable waters, the territorial seas, or interstate waters. The agencies have also clarified that the “waste treatment system” and other exclusions do not apply to traditional navigable waters. This means, for example, that large public recreational lakes like Lake Keowee—the drinking water supply for almost 400,000 people in South Carolina—will remain protected even though the lake also provides cooling water for an industrial facility.

The rule will soon be published in the Federal Register and will take effect 60 days after publication. - *Sandra Goss*

5. TCWP NEWS

5A. 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 ask that unvaccinated participants practice social distancing, maintain at least 6 feet of separation between themselves and other unvaccinated participants.
- We ask that unvaccinated participants continue to wear a mask especially when social distancing is not possible.
- We will organize activities into group of 20 or fewer.
- 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 for unvaccinated participants, rather than carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancellation 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.]

February 4 – Pellissippi Blueway Hickory/Melton Hill Bend hike, cleanup and owl prowl

For this outing along the Pellissippi Blueway, we’ll plan to meet at 3:30 p.m. at the TVA Hickory Bend trail access and clean up some of the trash in the parking area. We’ll then set out on a pleasant two-mile hike to the TVA undeveloped recreation area camping/picnic spot on Melton Hill Lake across from the actual Melton Hill. Here we plan to clean up any additional trash, and trim some of the vegetation in the cleared area. As the sun starts to sink behind Melton Hill, we’ll light a campfire, enjoy sack dinners, and possibly roast marshmallows. At dusk the nearly full moon will already be rising, and any owls in the area might begin calling. We will slowly make our way back to the parking area and listen for owls calling along the way. February is a good time to listen for owls staking out their territory for spring.

The TVA Melton Hill Bend undeveloped recreation area is one of many jewels TVA has designated along the Clinch and other Tennessee rivers that are suitable for hiking, day use and a camping stopover along the Pellissippi/Three Bends Blueway that TCWP and Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR) are working on developing.

Gloves, trash bags, grabbers, and marshmallows will be provided. Participants should be prepared to dress warmly, bring their own sack dinner, and bring a headlamp or flashlights. (Please test them beforehand.) We plan to hike about four miles overall; there are some slight hills along the way. If the weather is terrible, we will reschedule.

The TVA Hickory Creek Bend trail Parking area is at the end of Everett Rd. past Hickory Creek Park in SW Knox County at the Loudon County line. Everett can be reached from Hickory Creek Rd. at the west end of Hardin Valley, or from I-40 exit 369, Watt Rd., past the Flying J. - *Tim Bigelow*

Alley Ford Workday – Saturday, February 11

A day of trail work and hiking will take place on the 2.5-mile section of the Cumberland Trail at the Obed Wild and Scenic River between Nemo Picnic Area and Alley Ford adopted by TCWP in 1998. Participants should dress appropriately for winter weather, wear sturdy shoes or boots, and bring work gloves, loppers, small bow saws or folding saws, shovels and grubbing tools, as well as a lunch and plenty of water. Cumberland Trail State Park personnel will provide some tools that will be available at the event.

Participants can meet for carpooling in Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's) in time to leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m. Eastern, or can join the crew at Nemo Picnic Area or Rock Creek Campground at 10 a.m. We expect to return to the trailhead by around 3 p.m. (NOTE: If the weather is uncooperative—excessive rain or snow and ice—we will reschedule for the following Saturday.)

Participants will need to sign a National Park Service volunteer form (parent's or guardian's signature required for minors). Forms can be requested in advance from TCWP, or NPS representatives will have forms available at the event.

For additional information, contact Jimmy Groton at 865-805-9908 or at groton87@comcast.net.

Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® - Saturday, March 4

The Oak Ridge Cedar Barren will again be the site of exotic invasive plant removal as we conduct our first cleanup of 2023. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, the Barren is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. The area is one of just a few cedar barrens in East Tennessee, and is subject to invasion by bushy lespedeza, leatherleaf viburnum, privet, autumn olive, mimosa, Nepal grass, multiflora rose, and woody plants that threaten the system's prairie grasses. Our efforts help to eliminate invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sunlight.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School Parking lot at 9 a.m., with sturdy shoes, loppers, gloves, and water. For more information, contact Tim Bigelow at 865-607-6781 or Bigelowt2@mindspring.com.

Update on tick borne diseases in East Tennessee - Thursday, March 30

Dr. Richard Gerhold, who in 2021 presented a program on tick-borne diseases cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society, will follow that up on March 30 with a 7 p.m. Zoom program on Thursday, March 30. Dr. Gerhold will discuss updates on tick abundance and prevalence, as well as the spread of the Asian longhorned tick. He'll also cover the various pathogens that can be transmitted, their geographical and temporal variations, diagnostics tests, and prevention.

Dr. Gerhold, who holds a BS degree in wildlife science and a DVM degree, both from Purdue University, is an associate professor of parasitology in the Department of Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, at the University of Tennessee, where he researches Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. In addition to the latter, his

research interests include wildlife and public health associated parasite epidemiology and transmission, protozoa transmission and ecology, and avian diseases.

The program will be free, but participants will need register to receive a Zoom link, to be provided at www.utarboretumsociety.org. Contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu regarding any questions or registration issues.

5B. Recent Events

TCWP Holiday Party/Annual Meeting – Thursday, December 8

TCWP's December 8 Holiday Bonfire at the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church provided wading opportunities for 30-odd brave attendees. In spite of the rain and fog, there were tasty foods and beverages, along with a recap of our year from President Mark Bevelhimer and Treasurer Tim Bigelow, and a compelling slide compilation of TCWP's 2022 activities created by Anne Child.

We gathered under the front door portico, where the food and attendees were not directly rained on. Even though rain prohibited the bonfire aspect of the evening, it had vanished toward the end of the evening, to be replaced by a brilliant nearly full moon.

Members present at the Bonfire unanimously elected the following for Board and Officer posts in 2023:

PRESIDENT: Mark Bevelhimer

VICE PRESIDENT: Michele Thornton

SECRETARY: Carol Grametbauer

TREASURER: Tim Bigelow

DIRECTORS: Michelle Campanis, Margaret Cumberland, Kirk Eddlemon, Jimmy Groton, Matt Peterson, Larry Pounds, Linda Triolo.

Nominating Committee members are Johnny Cosgrove, Christopher DeRolph, and Marion Burger. - *Sandra Goss*

5C: Fond Farewells

Jean Kann Sonder

Jean Sonder, widow of Ed Sonder, died last February in New Hampshire, three weeks before her 93rd birthday.

Jean was born in The Hague, Holland and came to the United States in 1941.

She met Edward Sonder at Queens College; they married in 1953, and lived in Oak Ridge for 50 years.

Jean is survived by her daughters, Karen Pawlo (Morristown, NJ) and Leslie Sonder (White River Junction, VT). Valley News

Detlef Matt

Detlef, who died December 7 last year, was well-known in soccer and other sports circles in the area, respected by colleagues at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and appreciated by those who worked extensively on environmental issues, particularly fracking.

At many public meetings and strategy sessions, Detleff was an informed, polite ally who carried posters with details about the topic at issue. He is survived by his wife and frequent companion at environmental meetings, Mary Headrick, sons Gunter Matt and Patrick Matt.

Detlef asked that memorial donations go to any group addressing man-made climate change.

Joanne "Bunny" Marshall

Bunny Marshall, long-time TCWP member with her husband Glenn, passed in late November in Maryland at the age of 91. Members may recall the Marshalls from various TCWP activities when they lived in East Tennessee.

Born and educated in Ohio, she and Glenn had been married 65 years. She enjoyed teaching and she taught her students, her family, her Sunday School classes, and her square dance classes. Bunny is survived by husband Glenn, son Mark, and daughter Jann.

5D. Friends and Members in the News

Lisa and Don Barger were pictured and mentioned in the September 22 issue of the Norris Bulletin, covering the activities of the Norris Lions Club.

Benefits of Child Tax Credit was the topic of Anne Child's October 9 letter to the News Sentinel editor.

The November 10 Norris Bulletin included a picture of Lisa Barger in a story about the Norris Lions Club.

Anne Child wrote a letter to the News Sentinel editor about the End TB Act; it appeared in the November 27 issue.

Chuck Nicholson penned an article about the Norris Christmas Bird Count in the December 15 issue of the Norris Bulletin.

5E. DLiA Conservation on Tap program featured TCWP Pres Bevelhimer

Discover Life in America holds a monthly program at Albright Grove Brewing Company, Conservation on Tap, that highlights an environmental or conservation group. Mark Bevelhimer spoke on behalf of TCWP last month. The gathering was well-attended by new and old friends to TCWP. Thanks, DLiA, for the opportunity to talk about our activities.

5F. Tennessee Hemlock Conservation Partnership Winter Meeting Slated for Feb. 3

There will be an informative free meeting about treating hemlock wooly adelgids on February 3. There will be a virtual option to attend the meeting.

Among the topics that will be covered are the upcoming season, national updates about the hemlock wooly adelgid, biological control agents for the adelgid, how to care for hemlocks, and much more!

For more information or to register, call or write Jackie Broeker, Strike Team Coordinator, TN Division of Forestry, 615-917-6504, jacqueline.broeker@tn.gov.

5G. Manhattan Project NHP Needs Volunteers—Can You Help?

Are you interested in talking with visitors from everywhere in an indoor setting? Volunteers can take advantage of training on various subjects such as Manhattan Project history, World War II history, customer focus, CPR/AED and First Aid training. For more information, call (865) 482-1942.

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>

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.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

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Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 4 – Pellissippi Blueway Hickory/Melton Hill Bend hike, cleanup and owl prowl
- February 11 – Alley Ford Workday
- March 4 – Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle®
- March 30 - Update on tick borne diseases in East Tennessee

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