

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING


Newsletter No. 5, April 7, 1967

No meeting is scheduled for this month, but a number of very important activities have taken place, or are about to take place. You will note, in the reports to follow, that there are several ways in which you can make your voice heard. We shall draw attention to these by a marginal star and hope that you can find time for this (perhaps the time you otherwise would have spent going to the meeting?).

I. SURFACE-MINING LEGISLATION

With so many of our efforts either discouraging or apt to be drawn out for years, it is doubly gratifying to be able to report one that was crowned by quick success. The bill to regulate surface mining in Tennessee passed the House on April 5 by a vote of 86 to 8, having previously passed in the Senate 32 to 0. The only amendment in the House was to exempt the mining of limestone, marble, and dimension stone. In spite of this amendment, Tennessee now has one of the most comprehensive land reclamation laws in the entire country.

We list for you here the quite extensive efforts of TCWP in this connection. (1) A large public "information meeting" on surface mining was held on February 9 to discuss the technical aspects of mining and reclamation, state and federal stripmine legislation, and the history of and prospects for legislation in Tennessee. All three of our local representatives in the current legislature were present, and the audience numbered over 200. Press coverage was extensive. (2) A TCWP stripmine committee was formed, Bob Lefler, chairman, Bob McNees, Evan Means, Bob Peelle, Lee Russell, Ken Warren, members. This committee distributed to 135 newspapers throughout the state (a) a letter acquainting the editor with our organization and its efforts toward stripmine legislation; (b) a long news story and a short summary of our Feb. 9 meeting; and (c) a letter to be published in the letters-to-the-editor column urging public support for stripmine legislation. The following TCWP members helped with this mailing: J. Bangham, A. Best, J. Carver, E. Kelly, H. Warren, and R. Young. (3) We wrote to 100 organizations throughout the state that were thought to be friendly toward stripmine control measures, asking that they urge members to express their feelings in letters, petitions, etc. From several replies we have had and from various other indications, we know that the response was good. (4) We were instrumental in the resolution passed by Oak Ridge City Council in support of stripmine legislation. (5) The committee arranged a one-hour cable-TV program on March 31 in which discussion of stripmine legislation played a prominent part. (Other subjects were also discussed, see below.) Participating in the TV show were Bob Lefler, Dick Lorenz, Evan Means, and Bill Russell.

 We suggest that you may wish to write to Repr. William Pope, House of Representatives, Tennessee State Capitol Building, Nashville, and congratulate him on his success in getting the measure passed after 25 years of attempts in this direction. You may, at the same time, want to express your hope that he will now become a champion of other conservation measures as well.

II. SMOKY MOUNTAINS

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An alternate road proposal, initiated by the Carolina Mountain Club and endorsed by the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, would satisfy the 1943 agreement made between the National Park Service, the State of North Carolina, and Swain County, N.C., and would thus remove the main reason given for the Park Service's proposal to build a transmountain highway. Ernie Dickerman has been hard at work on the alternate road proposal, and has provided the enclosed brochure to which you should refer for details. In it, please note the suggestion that you write to Secretary Udall, your Congressman and Senators.

III. PUBLIC LAND LAW REVIEW COMMISSION HEARINGS

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The Public Land Law Review Commission was established by Congress to study public land laws and the procedures of Federal agencies administering such laws. A commission meeting intended to air citizen views on public land problems of this particular region will be held in Asheville, N.C., on May 29 and 30. At a recent TCWP Directors' meeting, it was decided to supply testimony on two broad subjects: (1) preservation-of-wilderness aspects of public lands, and (2) land use policies of Federal agencies active in this region. We feel that this is an excellent public forum and urge that as many of you as possible submit individual testimonies. We are hoping to coordinate these to make sure all pertinent points are covered. Therefore, if you plan to make or submit a statement, please get in touch with Ernie Dickerman (7105 Rockingham Drive, Knoxville, 588-2678), Dick Lorenz (203 Villanova Road, Oak Ridge, 483-4742), or Lee Russell (130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, 482-2153) as soon as possible.

IV. RIVERS

There has been and is going to be considerable activity by TCWP and TSRA (Tenn. Scenic Rivers Assn.) both at the state and national levels. On March 15, Bill Russell, Col. Claude Black, and Ernie Dickerman visited the Washington offices of Congressmen Anderson (D., Tenn.), Evins (D., Tenn.), Brock (R., Tenn.), and Saylor (R., Pa.), in connection with various scenic rivers bills now pending in Congress. On March 20, Bill Russell went to Nashville to talk to Commissioner of Conservation, Boyd Garrett, and to Deputy Commissioner, Col. Wm. M. Slayden II. Two weeks later, Col. Slayden met for three hours with a group consisting of Tom Berg, Dick Lorenz, Dick Reed, and Bill Russell. On each occasion, we showed illustrative material (slides, photographs) on particular rivers that must be preserved, and presented our views on what we consider essential features of river preservation in general. Our efforts in behalf of preserving rivers were also discussed on the March 31 cable-TV program mentioned above.

There are now a number of scenic rivers bills pending in both the Senate and the House, and the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs will shortly conduct hearings on the Senate bills. TCWP and TSRA have decided on a joint testimony which will be presented on April 13 by Bob Miller, president of TSRA and a member of TCWP. Both organizations are financing his trip. Col. Black will sit at the witness table. Our testimony is in two portions. (1) We strongly advocate that legislation include (a) a moratorium on dam building, channelization, etc., for rivers under study, including state scenic rivers; (b) a classification of rivers, with restrictions on timbering, mining, road-building, etc., proper to each class; and (c) the inclusion of adequate amounts

of shore to protect the entire scenic vista. All of these aspects that are so essential to preservation are contained in Repr. Saylor's bill, H.R. 90 and in Repr. Digell's, H.R. 493, which is a duplicate. They are lacking from the Senate bills (S. 191 and S. 1092). (2) We advocate for immediate designation as scenic rivers three Tennessee rivers, namely, the Buffalo, the Big South Fork of the Cumberland with its main tributary, and the Obed, with its tributaries. We also advocate the inclusion, in the category to be studied, of eight other rivers in Tennessee.

X We hope that you will express your views on scenic-rivers legislation to your Representative and Senators (see p. 4 of enclosure for list).

V. WILDERNESS HEARINGS

X Although no further hearings under the Wilderness Act are scheduled for the State of Tennessee, TCWP members may be interested in such hearings in nearby areas. The next one is on the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (administered by the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife), to be held on April 21 at Waycross, Georgia (Ware County Courthouse, beginning at 9 a.m.). In a preliminary proposal, distributed by the Wilderness Society, citizen-conservation groups recommend that, except for four small developed areas, the entire rest of the Refuge be placed under the National Wilderness System. The four exclusion areas are in the immediate vicinity of Okefenokee Swamp Park, Camp Cornelia, the park on Jones Island with the road leading to it, and the dam west of Jones Island. If you cannot testify in person, write to Hearings Officer, c/o Regional Director, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 809 Peachtree-Seventh Building, Atlanta, Georgia 30323. Testimony will be accepted for the record up to 30 days after the April 21 hearing.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

X A large and widespread membership lends considerable political weight to an organization (to say nothing of being beneficial for finances). We feel that there are many people in Tennessee who are really looking for an organization like TCWP but do not know it exists. Personal appeal works wonders: one of us was recently able to recruit 20 new members within 4 days, simply by talking to friends and acquaintances. If each of us could do as well, we should have over 2800 members. Let us try to get partway there!

(NOTE: Copies of our Purposes and Objectives statement and of past Newsletters, which are useful in recruiting members, can be obtained from Lee Russell, 130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, 482-2153. Names of persons wishing to join should be given to Jean Bangham, 432 Villanova Road, Oak Ridge, 483-9862.)

LEE RUSSELL, Editor

