

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 6, May 5, 1967

NEXT MEETING

Friday, May 26, 8:00 p.m., Oak Ridge Unitarian Church, 1500 Turnpike. Mr. Robert A. Miller, President of the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association (TSRA) will speak on "Tennessee's Scenic Rivers and Legislation to Preserve Them." The talk will be illustrated with slides. For background material on some of Mr. Miller's subject matter, see below.

I. RIVERS

A lot has happened lately with regard to national scenic rivers legislation and Tennessee's role in it. The Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs conducted hearings on two Senate bills, both of which lack what we consider to be essential features of scenic river legislation. TCWP, jointly with TSRA, submitted testimony, the substance of which was outlined in Newsletter No. 5.

Some members of the Committee seemed receptive to what we had to say --partly because we were one of only a few State-citizens' groups represented, partly because there was some feeling that Eastern rivers are being neglected in the present bills.

A news-release on our testimony was submitted by us to 20 papers in Tennessee. We know of at least eight that published it, some prominently (The Chattanooga Times, Knoxville News-Sentinel, Oak Ridger, Tullahoma News and Guardian, Murfreesboro Daily News Journal, Morgan County News, Scott County News, Roane County News). Martin Ochs, editor of the Chattanooga Times, wrote in a personal letter, "Best of luck on it. It's important."

Following the testimony, Miller and Black had several conferences in offices of Tennessee Congressmen, none of whom had been at the hearings. Since then, we have had a letter from Senator Gore in which he states that he has written to Senator Church (Acting Chairman of the committee) "to endorse the inclusion of the Buffalo, Obed, and South Fork Rivers in a scenic rivers system."

We have sent accounts of the success of our testimony, of the endorsement by Senator Gore, and of the sympathy of the press to Governor Ellington, Commissioner of Conservation Garrett, and Deputy Commissioner Slayden. In each case, we have expressed the hope that the State of Tennessee will give us more official support when we testify at House hearings (see below). We have also written to Representative Duncan and suggested that, since two of the three rivers recommended by us for immediate inclusion are in his district, he might want to introduce a bill of his own, listing these two. His reply was non-committal, although he does state that we would support "something other than a dam" for the Big South Fork.

It is expected that the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs will shortly be holding hearings, especially since Representative Aspinall, the chairman, has now introduced his own bill. TCWP and TSRA have listed themselves as desiring to testify. About half a dozen House bills have been

submitted. The "Administration bill" is now said to be Aspinall's H.R. 8416, rather than Anderson's H.R. 6588. The latter includes the Buffalo, but lacks various of the general provisions we advocate. The former, though good in some of the general provisions, lists very few rivers altogether, and none in Tennessee. Its worst feature is that the moratorium would apply only to licensing by the Federal Power Commission, and would thus not affect TVA projects. We have written to Secretary Udall, drawing his attention to this and hoping that the proper change can be made.

For our coming testimony at the House committee hearings, we have had assurance from Representative William Anderson's office (Tennessee, Sixth District) that he will introduce our witness and endorse our statement. We are also keeping in touch with Representative Saylor's office and some of the National conservation societies.

The times are very critical for scenic-rivers legislation. We would strongly urge you to WRITE to our State officials and U.S. Representatives, so that we can express our strong sentiment for preservation of some of Tennessee's truly magnificent free-flowing rivers.

II. SMOKIES

Recent statements by Mr. Hartzog, National Park Service Director, indicate that the N.P.S. is still considering the trans-mountain road proposal for the Smokies. We suggest that you write to Senator Lister Hill, Senate Finance Committee, urging consideration of the alternate proposal made by the Smoky Mountain Hiking Club and the Carolina Mountain Club (mailed to you with last month's Newsletter), and opposing the \$1,200,000 requested by the Department of Interior for extension of the Bryson City-Monteith Branch Road. It can be pointed out that there has been no construction on the road for nearly a year, and that appropriation is premature since it has not yet been decided in which direction any extension would go: north, west, or south.

Holiday Magazine has announced an award jointly to the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, Knoxville, and the Carolina Mountain Club of Asheville, N. C., as part of its "Awards for a Beautiful America". The award is made for the efforts of the two organizations to preserve the natural beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains by advancing constructive alternatives to a proposed trans-mountain highway across the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which trans-mountain road would be bull-dozed through the forest, permanently marring the wild beauty of the Great Smokies.

Formal presentation of the award will take place later at Knoxville.

III. WILDERNESS HEARINGS

Help is needed for the preservation of wilderness in the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, a precious piece of wild area in a torn-up region. Wilderness hearings on this park will be held at Middlesboro, Kentucky, on June 8.

The National Park Service wilderness proposal is grossly inadequate and the N.P.S. master plan is highly destructive of natural values of the park. Specifically, the wilderness proposal covers only 9,000 acres, whereas 15,250 acres in a single unit qualify. The N.P.S. master plan provides for construction of the Allegheny Parkway to run the length of this narrow Park

from one end to the other. It also provides for a new road bull-dozed up Shillalah Creek as a temporary route solely for the convenience of the employees working on the Hensley Settlement restoration; the Park Service is already using another road to get to the Settlement.

Write to the Superintendent, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Middlesboro, Kentucky, and request a copy of the Park Service Wilderness Proposal packet so you can testify pertinently in person or by mail at the forthcoming hearing on June 8 at Middlesboro.

IV. PUBLIC LAND LAW REVIEW COMMISSION HEARINGS

This is a reminder to consult your last Newsletter about these hearings. We consider them an excellent opportunity to air various important subjects, and therefore urge you strongly to plan to testify--in person, if you can, but at least in writing. For further information call E. Dickerman, 588-2678; W. L. Russell, 482-2153; or R. A. Lorenz, 483-4742.

V. A PAT ON THE BACK

In a recent article in the Knoxville News-Sentinel (April 23), Carson Brewer wrote as follows, "Why a strong (strip-mine control) law was passed with such ease this time, whereas one not as strong could not be passed in previous Legislatures is a subject for speculation. The only new element I know of this time is a new statewide conservation group, called Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning. It's statewide, technically, but it's based in Oak Ridge, and much of the heavy work done by the group on the strip-mine bill was done by Oak Ridgers."

We should like to add at this time that we had the valuable help of several "key-men" and "key-women" in other cities as well. We should also like to remind you that we must continue to be alert to see that the law is properly enforced. Kentucky is having some problems on this score.

LENE RUSSELL, Editor