

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING
Newsletter #12, April 8, 1968

TENNESSEE NOW HAS A STATE SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM!

Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning can be very proud: ~~as soon as the Governor signs the bill,~~ Tennessee ~~will~~^{is} be the first State in the Union with a scenic rivers system, and we ~~shall~~ have played a big part in achieving this. An equal share of credit should go to Bob Miller, President of the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association. And the whole venture would, of course, not have been possible without the hard-working, able, and devoted sponsor of the bill, Representative J. William Pope, Jr., of Pikeville.

The final passage of the bill on April 3, within what were literally the last few hours of this year's legislative session, climaxed two months of determined effort and of almost unbelievable legislative vicissitudes. We shall here attempt to give you a brief summary of this extremely dramatic story.

Part of the history of the "Tennessee Scenic Rivers Act of 1968" was already told in our last Newsletter: the TCWP open meeting of February 1, at which Repr. Pope offered to introduce a scenic rivers bill into this session of the Legislature, the writing of the bill, and its introduction into the House by Mr. Pope on February 21 and into the Senate the following day by Don Moore of Chattanooga.

News coverage on the bill was good in papers throughout the State, and we got excellent editorial backing from the Chattanooga Times, the Nashville Tennessean and probably other major papers. We also managed to get the support of a large number of organizations throughout the State.

It was known from the beginning that we would have opposition to including certain rivers in the system. Morgan County Representative Freels, apparently in response to a small group in Harriman and Wartburg, who are highly oriented toward a dam on the Obed, demanded open House-Senate joint Conservation Committee hearings. At these hearings, on March 6, overwhelming positive testimony was presented by TCWP, TSRA, the Tennessee Conservation League (with about 100 affiliated clubs), the Middle Tennessee Conservancy Council, the 11-county Full-York Lakeland RC&D Association, and the Bluff City Canoe Club of Memphis. Apart from some discussion about the Duck River, the only opposition to the bill came from the pro-Obed-dam group that had demanded the hearings. In a question period, the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission went on record as supporting the bill.

It is interesting that it was not until six days after the hearings that TVA openly announced what had been known to many for some time: that the proposed Nemo dam on the Obed was not economically justifiable, benefit-cost ratio being only 0.6. (Note: this was the third feasibility study on this system in 29 years.)

On the House floor on March 18, the Upper Duck was lost, and Freels and Bowman, in a single amendment, removed the Obed, Clear Creek, Daddys Creek, South Fork of the Cumberland, and Clear Fork. The Upper Clinch, Hiwassee, and Nolichucky were also removed by amendments. The success of these may be attributed largely to courtesy extended to local representatives talking about "their" rivers. After the bill had been amended, it passed by an overwhelming majority, about 70:11. Of the 17 original rivers, eight were left, and, in the confusion, one had been added: Tuckahoe Creek.

During the remaining 10 working days of the legislative session, TCWP made a great effort to get at least the Obed and South Fork systems reinstated by Senatorial amendment. The response was tremendous: one Knox Senator told us that he had had more mail on this issue than on any other legislation in his career, and that all of it was favorable. A petition to include the Obed collected about

1000 signatures in only five days (this, in addition to the earlier student petition of 256). Following a News-Sentinel feature story on the Obed (Lowell Branham), over 130 additional persons from 23 localities sent in their names and comments by mail. Senator Ayres of Knoxville offered to introduce an amendment to re-instate the Obed and South Fork systems.

Our real piece of bad luck came when the bill got stalled for 10 days in the Senate Calendar Committee. It finally came to vote on the day of adjournment. Sponsors of the bill had, by that time, reluctantly decided to sacrifice even favorable amendments, for fear of not having enough time to get concurrence in the House and thereby losing the whole bill. They had also tried to avert an amendment to remove the Hatchie which, in the last few days, was being considered by Senator Ewell, reportedly in response to pressure from Congressman Everett in Washington. However, on adjournment day, with the chance of a quorum rapidly dwindling, two amendments were passed by the Senate: (a) to remove the Hatchie; and (b) to re-instate the Hiwassee. After this, the bill carried 22:5. In spite of the amendments, Rep. Pope, who walked the bill over to the House, managed, by some miracle, to get concurrence.

Even though some of our best rivers are not on the bill, eight of the original 17 still are (Hiwassee, French Broad, Collins, Buffalo, Harpeth, Roaring, Spring Creek, Blackburn Fork)--and, what is most important, the body of the bill is an excellent one and a strong one. We now have the "base" to which rivers can be added, and a fine start--in political, popular, and press support--toward doing so next year.

We may eventually be able to list for you the whole voting lineup on every part of this bit of history. Right now, we can give you only a few highlights: Rep. Bridges (D., Roane, Anderson) and Kidwell (D., Anderson) were a tremendous help to sponsor Pope and co-sponsor Steinhauer at every step of the way, and they deserve our sincerest thanks. Sen. Brown Ayres (R., Knox) was ready to re-instate the Obed and South Fork systems; and, when this turned out not to be feasible in the time available, he made a fine speech in behalf of these rivers and offered to add them next year. On the other hand, Rep. Bowman (R., Roane) who had originally signed the bill, turned around and, along with Freels, fought to remove the Obed and South Fork systems. After that had succeeded, he and Freels still went on to try to defeat the whole bill.

NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

Hearings were held on March 7-8 and 18-19 by the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Several bills to establish a national scenic rivers system are before the Committee, including one by the Chairman, Rep. Aspinall. It is hoped that a bill will come to the floor of the House in this session. The Senate passed a rather weak scenic rivers bill last year.

TCWP and two other Tennessee organizations, TSRA and the East Tennessee White Water Club, sent in written statements prior to the hearings; and Lee Russell and Claude Black testified orally. The TCWP testimony recommended various general features of scenic rivers legislation (classification of rivers, strong and specific protections against damming, moratorium on study rivers, protection of State scenic rivers, etc.) and specifically asked to have the Buffalo, Obed (with tributaries) and Big South Fork of Cumberland (with Clear Fork) included in a national scenic rivers system. Following our testimony, we received a lot of questions from the Subcommittee and were asked to submit cost estimates on the three rivers proposed.

Representative Bill Anderson (D., 6th District, Tenn.), who has introduced a bill that includes the Buffalo, sent a statement to the Subcommittee, endorsing our request for the other two river systems. You may wish to express your thanks to him. We visited most of the other Tennessee Congressmen's offices and are seeking additional endorsements.

We have circulated text of our testimony to various Tennessee organizations and, to date, the following have sent endorsing statements to the Subcommittee: The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, the Bluff City Canoe Club and the Hull-York Lakeland RC&D Association.

HARVEY BROOME

On March 8, we suffered a deep loss: Harvey Broome, President of the Wilderness Society of America, and one of its founders, died suddenly at his home in Knoxville. It is a personal loss for our organization: he had shown infectious enthusiasm for the founding of TCWP, and his wisdom guided and inspired our young group from the beginning. Just hours before his death, he had helped to cheer us after what seemed like bad news on the transmountain road. Just days before, he had helped to line up support for the State scenic rivers bill; and just weeks before, he had advised on the drafting of the bill. We pledge to honor his memory by continuing, with all our might, to work for the values he eloquently supported and for the cause to which he devoted his life.

LETTERS NEEDED

(1) In view of the new pressures on Secretary Udall to reconsider his decision against the transmountain road, he should be supported in his original stand and urged to hold firm. (Secretary Stewart L. Udall, U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Interior Bldg., Washington, D. C. 20240). Send copies to Senators Albert Gore and Howard H. Baker, Jr. (Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C.)

(2) If you believe that commercial supersonic transport (SST) flights of the future could constitute a threat to the peace of wilderness area (over which they would undoubtedly be routed to keep them away from population centers), write to Secretary Udall urging that overland SST routes not be permitted.

Turn the page for news of outings.

OUTINGS AND FUTURE EVENTS

TCWP OUTING, Saturday, April 27

Our outings chairman, Ken Warren, has arranged our first outing of the year to be a hike down the Spring Creek gorge near Gainesboro. Spring Creek is one of our new State scenic rivers, and our trip will take us into the Class-I portion of this river. Those who are used to sandstone gorges will find this gorge different and interesting, and will, we hope, agree that it was well worth including in the system, even though the stream is not a typical float stream. Scenic rivers can be enjoyed through walking, too!

We hope the location of this outing will make it a fine meeting place for Middle and East Tennessee members. Furthermore, TCWP will be joined by TSRA on this occasion, and we cannot imagine two more congenial organizations.

RENDEZVOUS: Saturday, April 27, 8:30 a.m. CST (9:30 a.m. EST) at Clara's Restaurant, next to Thunderbird Motel, just off I-40 at the Sparta-Cookeville exit (for those coming from the east, this exit is after the Cookeville-Highway 70 exit). From there, Mr. W. R. Medley and Dr. Lester R. Dudney will guide us to Waterloo Falls (ample parking), the start of the hike.

Length of the hike: 5-6 miles. Degree of difficulty: moderately rough rock hopping. Note that there is no trail and that we shall have to wade across the stream several times; so prepare for laurel thickets and wet legs. Car shuttles will be arranged.

If, on the outing date, Spring Creek should be in a flood condition, thereby prohibiting the foot trip, we have planned a car caravan excursion, instead, to see the gorges of Roaring River, Spring Creek, and Blackburn Fork from various vantage points. These gorges are in Overton and Jackson Counties, a short distance from Gainesboro.

If you need further information or want to arrange carpools, write or telephone the following: in Oak Ridge, Kenneth S. Warren, 105 Evans Lane, 483-3572; in Knoxville, Bruce L. Welch, 137 Sanwood Road, 588-8327; in Chattanooga, Donald A. Bodley, 3003 Ozark Circle, 877-6256.

PREVIEW OF OTHER OUTINGS

May 4-5: Harpeth. Float trip sponsored by TSRA and BCCC (Bluff City Canoe Club, Memphis). Land trip sponsored by MTCC (Middle Tennessee Conservancy Council).
 June 1-2: Obed. Sponsored by TSRA and BCCC.
 June 15-16: TCWP outing on Big South Fork of the Cumberland.
 July 20-21. Little T float trip. TCWP will join Smoky Mountains Hiking Club.
 July 20-21. Buffalo. Float trip sponsored by TSRA and BCCC. Land trip, by MTCC.
 October or November? TCWP hike on proposed Muir Trail (possibly with MTCC).
 TCWP outings will be described in greater detail in later Newsletters. For details on TSRA outings contact Don Bodley (address above).

WILDERNESS WORKSHOP

On June 1 and 2, the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club will host an East Tennessee Wilderness Workshop at Big Ridge State Park. Further information may be obtained from Ernest Dickerman, 7105 Rockingham Drive, Knoxville 37919, 588-2678, or Charles DuBois, Rt. 3, Box 153, Kingston 37763, 376-9813.