

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 14, May 24, 1968

CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE THE BIG SOUTH FORK OF THE CUMBERLAND

(1) TCWP Outing, June 15-16, Big South Fork

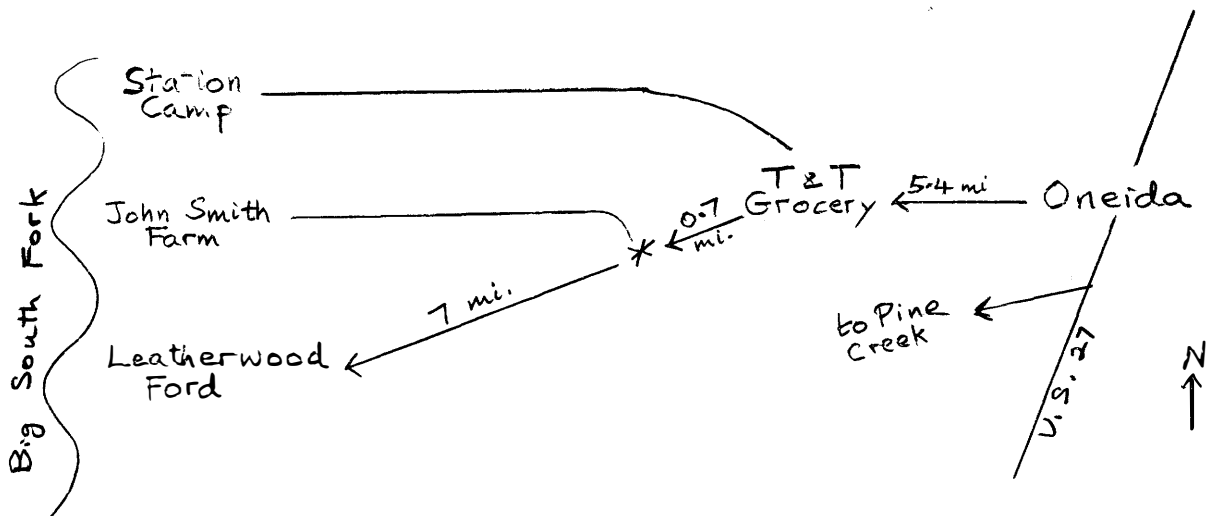
Since we are in the midst of a vigorous campaign to preserve the Big South Fork of the Cumberland as a national scenic river and to protect it from impoundment by the proposed Devils Jumps Dam, this is an appropriate time to acquaint ourselves with this river.

Ken Warren has arranged an outing with varied activities to suit both land and water people. For fullest enjoyment, plan to spend two days, camping Saturday night at Leatherwood Ford, at the new, attractive Wild River Campsites (send \$1 to W.R.C., P. O. Box 18, Oneida, Tennessee 37841). Our organized activities start Sunday at 9:30 a.m., and those unable to camp Saturday night may want to join us then at Leatherwood.

Sunday, Stan Kirsilis will lead a rubber raft trip through a most scenic part of the gorge, (Pine Creek-to-Leatherwood section). Bring your own raft if you can, but a few will be available on loan. There will also be one or two organized canoe trips, Rod Davis, leader: Leatherwood to John Smith Farm (portage around Angel Falls mandatory); and/or John Smith Farm to Station Camp (an easy stretch). Wild River Campsites will rent out canoes for \$1.00 per hour or \$7.50 per day. Several walks or hikes are possible, the simplest being down the river on an old woods road. Anyone wishing to hike individually or in a group, either Saturday or Sunday, should consult Ken Warren, or the management of Wild River Campsites. Swimming is fine from a big sand beach at Leatherwood or in any of the pools in the river (good to combine with hiking). Fishing, of course, if you enjoy it.

Wild River Campsites will provide wood for cooking at a charge of 50 cents. There is a commissary that sells ice, fishing licenses, and food supplies.

Driving directions -



Drive to Oneida, Tennessee via U.S. 27. The highway makes a sharp turn left (coming from the south) at the edge of town. 0.3 mile beyond this, turn left onto Third Street (funeral home on the corner). Stay on the extension of Third Street (it makes a left-right jog after 0.4 miles) for 5.4 miles until you reach an intersection marked by the Terry and Terry Grocery. Turn left. 0.7 mile further you pass the turn-off (right) to the "John Smith farm" (marked with *, above). Seven miles further on (mostly gravel) is Leatherwood Ford, where a bridge now crosses the river (about 20 miles from here to Jamestown).

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(2) Report of Whitley City hearings, May 9

The Army Corps of Engineers hearings, announced in our Newsletter #13, were attended by 12 TCWP members, 9 of whom gave oral testimony. The McCreary County school auditorium, in the heart of pro-dam country, was packed with local people (we estimate 300), undoubtedly as a result of the Corps-connected activities in the area during the previous weeks. In spite of this, a tally of oral testimonies showed 21 against the dam as against 23 for (plus 3 "neutral"). Furthermore, Col. Fishback announced that of mail received by May 9, the anti vs. pro dam ratio was 54 to 43, several of the latter, however, being petitions.

We know of 14 organizations who have read and/or sent statements for the hearings record: the Wilderness Society of America, the Ecological Society of America, Tennessee Conservation League (over 100 affiliated clubs, ca. 15,000 members), TCWP, TSRA, Middle Tennessee Conservancy Council, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, Kentucky Section of Sierra Club, Ohio Section of Sierra Club, Bluff City Canoe Club, East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Cherokee Sportsman's Conservation Association, and Highland Sportsman Club. There may be others. We managed to get good press coverage, containing long quotes from the TCWP statement.

The recurrent theme in pro-dam testimonies was that the dam would bring an economic miracle to the area (note: existing Lake Cumberland, only a few miles from Whitley City, seems to have done nothing to lift it from its state of poverty). As usual, conservationists were labelled as "outsiders", or as a "small band of hardy outdoor enthusiasts," and they were ridiculed by such titles as "amalgamated society of bird lovers and sleeping-bag watchers." "We too love beauty," the dam proponents protested, "but we want to share it, not just reserve it for a few!" Only two local people spoke for the scenic river concept. We know of many more individuals and local organizations (the Scott County Conservation Board, Oneida Kiwanis, etc.) who advocate scenic river status for the South Fork, but they evidently thought there was not much point in appearing at this hearing. Several later allowed themselves to be quoted in the press, and one business man from Oneida summed it up succinctly: "As far as I'm concerned, this thing boils down to the Corps keeping their empire alive and a few local people wanting to get rich quick."

We do not think it necessary here to give the conservationists' arguments (see Newsletter #13 for a few). Copies of TCWP's full statement are available on request.

One very striking feature of the hearing was the bias with which it was conducted. The presiding colonel, who significantly introduced himself by saying he was born in a house that was later washed away in a flood, stated that all views should receive equal treatment; but his own talk (which ended after 9:00 p.m.) stressed only the benefits of the dam plan. He allowed the audience to boo conservationist testimonies; and he answered such testimonies from the chair "in the interest of the whole truth"--yet never corrected the most blatant factual errors in pro-dam statements (e.g. the assumption that the 483-foot-high dam would allow navigation). The registration cards were shuffled in such a way that conservationists -- by no means the last to register--were called up last. Thus of 21 anti-dam testimonies, 16 came in the second half of the talks: after midnight, when the crowd had left. The probability that such a distribution would occur by chance is only about one in a hundred. At one point in the proceedings, the colonel said: "Next week, at Fontana, I shall talk back to these conservationists, but tonight I've got to sit here and take all this guff."

The hearings record remains open until June 1.

(3) Fontana Conservation Roundup, May 15-17.

We gather that in its eight previous years, the Roundup did not cover very many controversial issues. This year it bristled with controversy, making it an interesting meeting indeed. Aside from Redwoods National Park, the Devils Jumps dam proposal was the hottest item discussed: Col. Fishback versus Bob Miller, TSRA, and W. L. Russell, TCWP. This made several papers, including the New York Times of May 19.

(4) What we can do now.

If you have not already written to your Representative, Senators, and Secretary Udall, we would urge you to do so. Send a letter to the editor of your paper. If you know of any organization that you think might be sympathetic to scenic river status for the South Fork, talk to them (factual material and slides available from L.B. Russell on request). Help to circulate the petitions we have started (the June 1 closing of the hearings record will not be a cut-off for petitions, although we'd like as many as possible before then). If you have any technical knowledge, study the power production aspects of Devils Jumps dam and note (in letters to Congressmen or press) how poorly they compare with nuclear or coal power. If you know any pro-scenic-rivers people in the Big South Fork area, give them encouragement.

POLITICAL NEWS

(1) J. William Pope, Jr., successful sponsor of the Tennessee Stripmine Control Law of 1967, and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, has announced that he will oppose Republican W.E. Brock III for the 3rd district seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He will thus not be a candidate for the State legislature. If you decide to express your support to Mr. Pope, you may wish to mention that you admire his conservation record.

(2) Representatives Bill Anderson (D., 5th Dist.) and Richard Fulton (D., 6th Dist.) have both sent statements to a subcommittee of the House Interior Committee asking that the Obed and Big South Fork, as well as the Buffalo, be included in a national scenic rivers bill. You may wish to commend Representatives Anderson and Fulton. Senator Gore made a similar endorsement to the Senate Committee last year.

(3) Rep. John J. Duncan (R., 2nd Dist.) was the only member of the Tennessee delegation who voted in accordance with our recommendation on the San Rafael Wilderness (see Newsletter #10). You may wish to thank Mr. Duncan.

(4) An important bill, H.R. 8578, to augment the Land and Water Conservation Fund was passed in the House yesterday by overwhelming majority. We do not yet know the lineup of the Tennessee delegation, but in answer to earlier letters from us, Representatives Bill Anderson and John Duncan had indicated that they would vote in favor of H.R. 8578, Rep. Evins was non-committal.

(5) The Anderson County Young Democrats, following talks by W.L. and L.B. Russell, passed three resolutions: (a) urging addition of the Obed and Big South Fork, with their tributaries, to the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Act of 1968; (b) opposing the trans-mountain road through the Smoky Mountains National Park and urging study of alternate roads; (c) urging creation of a National Scenic Rivers system, containing Buffalo, Obed, and South Fork.

(6) We sent the TCWP testimony on the Devils Jump project with covering letters to all Tennessee's Senators and Representatives. Senator Gore states, "There is now perhaps a greater appreciation for the value of our freely running streams and it would appear that this project may not now be approved." Rep. Anderson says he is "negatively inclined toward it [the dam]" and Rep. Fulton's letter has the same implication. Sen. Baker and Representatives Quillen, Duncan, Evins, and Everett are non-committal.

WILDERNESS WORKSHOP

The East Tennessee Wilderness Workshop will be held at Big Ridge State Park, June 1-2. All interested persons are invited. You can sleep in the group camp (bring sleeping bag) or reserve a cottage. Cooking facilities are available, and there is also a restaurant.

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Saturday morning's topics include: "The new Tennessee Scenic Rivers Act", L.B. Russell, TCWP; "The Wilderness Act: its provisions and its application by Congress and the federal agencies," M. Rupert Cutler, Wilderness Society; "The New Great Smokies Wilderness Campaign," Ernest Dickerman, Smoky Mts. Hiking Club; "The facts about the 1943 agreement," Dan Hale, Huntsville; "A report on Tennessee's new Strip Mining Control Act in practice," Francis Watkins, director, Tennessee Division of Strip Mining Control. In the afternoon, the meeting will break into discussion groups. Saturday evening, Rep. J. W. Pope will speak on "Politics and Conservation," and there will also be a showing of slides and movies. On Sunday, Stan Murray, chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference will discuss the National Trails bill. Following this, plans for hiking and hike-bike trails will be outlined.

For further information, call Ernest Dickerman, Knoxville, 588-2678, or Charles Du Bois, Kingston, 376-9813.

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK HEARINGS

For these hearings, held May 25, TCWP presented testimony endorsing the wilderness proposal of the National Parks Association. The hearings record will remain open for some time, and if you wish to send a statement in support of this badly threatened wilderness, consult David Irving, 113 N. Seneca Rd., Oak Ridge, for details. Mail statements to: Master Plan Study Team, c/o Superintendent, Mammoth Cave National Park, Mammoth Cave, Ky. 42259.

FUTURE OUTINGS AND EVENTS

- June 15 (unfortunately conflicting, at least in part, with our South Fork outing).
The Tullahoma League of Women Voters is sponsoring a float trip on the Upper Duck, threatened by the proposed Normandy dam. For details, call Mrs. Collier, Tullahoma, 455-4186.
- June 22-23 - TSRA float of Big South Fork.
- July 6 - Third annual Angel Falls - Devils Jump Canoe Race and U.S. Canoe Assoc. National Championship. Our Congressmen will undoubtedly be present and accessible on this occasion.
- July 20-21 - TCWP and Smoky Mts. Hiking Club float trip on Little T. Perhaps the last?
- July 20-21 - TSRA and BCCC float on Buffalo.
- August 10-11 - TSRA and Tennessee Valley Canoe Club float of Hiwassee.

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