

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 15, July 2, 1968

TENNESSEE WILDERNESS ACTION COUNCIL

At the Tennessee Wilderness Workshop, held June 1-2 at Big Ridge State Park, it was decided to form a Tennessee Wilderness Action Council. This would be a liaison group that could function efficiently, and, when necessary, with great speed, to inform various conservation-minded organizations and key-individuals throughout the State when action is needed on Tennessee and national wilderness issues. The basic concern, underlying all projects of the Council, will be the conservation of natural areas.

TCWP, which has had experience with this type of liaison activity (in connection with stripmine-control legislation, national and State scenic rivers bill, and certain national conservation issues), offered to sponsor the Council, at least initially, and this offer was accepted by members of the Workshop. Any organization cooperating with the Council will, of course, remain perfectly independent, i.e., it will not be bound in any way to act in accordance with the information or suggestions received. This appears to us to be the perfect way to achieve coordination without impairing the autonomy -- and thus the enthusiasm -- of the individual conservation-oriented organizations.


The Council consists of one member from each Congressional District and a chairman. The following appointments have been made, to date. Chairman, Kenneth S. Warren, 105 Evans Lane, Oak Ridge; 1st Distr., Richard Phelps, Kingsport; 3rd Distr., Walter Williams, Chattanooga; 5th Distr., Dorothy Adams, Goodlettsville; 9th Distr., Henry Hall, Memphis; 2nd Distr., William T. Chaffin.

If you can assist the Council in any capacity, please get in touch with the Chairman.

NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERS BILL

The news is potentially excellent: five days ago, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs reported out the Scenic Rivers Bill, and this bill contains, in the category of rivers to be studied for inclusion in the system, all three of the Tennessee rivers systems we asked for: the Buffalo; Obed, with Clear Creek and Daddys Creek; and Big South Fork, with Clear Fork. We believe that the following were major factors in this achievement: our oral testimony at Washington; our repeated contacts with Congressmen; the efforts of Representatives Anderson and Fulton; the cost estimates on these rivers prepared by Bob Miller; endorsement of our testimony by many other Tennessee organizations.

The Scenic Rivers bill must now pass two hurdles. First, it will go to the House floor for vote. After that, it will probably face a Conference Committee, since the Senate bill, passed last year, is so meager compared to the present House version. As far as we are aware, the latter is a good bill, except for the fact that the moratorium on construction for rivers in the study category is only five years. We should like to have it at least 10 years long (it was originally 15).

 We are very close to having our best rivers protected on a national bill. To help make it come true, write to Senators Baker and Gore, and to your Representative, endorsing the House bill, and especially the inclusion of the Obed and South Fork (both with tributaries), and Buffalo; but asking that the moratorium be extended to at least 10 years. Hurry! Action will come soon.

DEVIL'S JUMPS DAM

The Senate Public Works Committee has again included authorization for the Devil's Jumps Dam in the public works bill. The House bill again does not include this project. Our hope is that the Conference Committee will remove Devil's Jumps from the final bill.

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We do not yet know the constitution of the Conference Committee, but it will help to write to your Senators and Representative. Authorization of this dam could jeopardize inclusion of the South Fork in the National Scenic Rivers system.

A WORD OF THANKS

We wish to express our sincerest appreciation to the many (well over 100) who worked so hard in collecting and mailing signatures for the South Fork petition, which opposed Devil's Jumps Dam and advocated National Scenic River status. You may be interested to know that, thanks to this hard work, the petition bore 2648 signatures. Of these, about 2100 were from Tennessee (all over), about 160 from Kentucky, about 100 from Ohio, and the remaining approximately 300 came from 25 other states. The petition has been sent to the Corps of Engineers, Senators Gore and Baker, and a number of others.

NATIONAL TRAILS BILL

It looks fairly certain that a bill designating the Appalachian Trail for immediate inclusion in a National Trail System will be passed in this session. In the House bill, a number of other trails are to be studied for future addition. The bill is going to Conference Committee.

STATE PARKS

TCWP plans to advocate the establishment of an extensive system of natural areas, i.e. areas to be preserved free of development, within the Tennessee State Parks. To examine this problem and see whether we can work for it in the 1969 Legislature, we hope to hold a program on State Parks late in September. You may wish to read "A History of State Parks in Tennessee" by Beverly R. Coleman, 1963, reproduced 1968, Tennessee Department of Conservation. Available at Oak Ridge Library (976.8).

LITTLE T OUTING, JULY 20-21

As announced in earlier Newsletters, TCWP will join the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club in its float-outing, arranged by Ken Warren and Jessie Dempster. The 34 miles of lovely stream between Chilhowee Dam and Fort Loudon Lake (the last remaining free-flowing stretch of the Little Tennessee) will soon be another dead reservoir.

Put-in: 10:00 a.m., Saturday, July 20, Hoss Holt's place at the Shoals just below Chilhowee Dam (groceries and restrooms available).

Take-out: Sunday afternoon, Davis Ferry, 27 miles down-stream.

Camping: Rose Island, on a grassy strip reserved for us by the Hiwassee Land Co.

Drinking water and firewood furnished (but bring a few sticks of dry kindling).

General features of trip: There is a good current all the way, but no rough water, so this is an ideal trip for beginning paddlers. Maps showing river details of interest will be given out to canoeists Saturday morning. Life jackets are required. In addition to camping items, you may wish to bring: thermos or canteen of drinking water (hot sun), sunglasses and suntan lotion (knees), plastic bags to keep things dry.

Driving directions: Transportation arrangements will be the responsibility of the participants; however, registration with the leaders, preferably by July 15, will allow some coordination of effort (call Ken Warren, Oak Ridge, 483-3572, or Jessie Dempster, Knoxville, 577-1821). To reach take-out: From Tenn. 72, in the stretch between Loudon and Vonore, turn onto Davis Ferry Road. This corner is 4 miles south of Loudon (turn left) or 11 miles north of Vonore (turn right), and is marked by an Esso station and an IGA store. Go 0.6 miles to Davis School; bear slightly left at the "Y"; 5.4 mi. beyond school (silo directly in front of you), turn left on gravel road; proceed 0.3 mi. to Walker Humphreys farm to park cars. To reach put-in: From U.S. 411 turn SE onto Tenn. 72 and proceed about 12 miles to Hoss Holt's store below Chilhowee Dam.

CANDIDATES FOR STATE LEGISLATURE

State Primary Elections will be held on Thursday, August 1. To help our members in their choice for office of State Senator and State Representative we have sent questionnaires concerning conservation issues to most candidates in Anderson, Roane, and Knox counties, where the majority of our members will be voting. Even for these three counties alone, there were 50 candidates and we were therefore unable to do this service on a more extensive scale. However, we suggest that members in other counties question their candidates individually on the important issues that will be facing the Tennessee Legislature in its 1969 session. We apologize to candidates for the short notice which may have made it impossible for some to return the questionnaires, and to a few whom we could not contact.

Candidates were asked: "If elected, would you support legislation:

- (1) to have the Obed River and the Big South Fork of the Cumberland, each with tributaries, added to the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Act of 1968?
- (2) to obtain appropriations for the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Act of 1968?
- (3) to establish, within Tennessee State Parks, an extensive system of natural areas, i.e., areas to be preserved free of development?
- (4) to have the State acquire additional land for the State Park system?"

The table on the next page ^(over) indicates whether the answer was "yes", "no", or "undecided" (shown by ?). In addition to the short answers, several of the questionnaires included lengthier remarks. For any not summarized in "Remarks" column, call 482-2153.

We should like to remind you of the record of some of the incumbents. Forrest Bridges supported the Scenic Rivers Act at every step of the way and was instrumental in its final passage. He worked hard to keep the Obed and South Fork on the bill. Jack Bowman on the other hand, together with Freels (Morgan County), led the efforts to have the Obed and tributaries removed from the bill; even after that, they tried to defeat the bill. In the Senate, Ray Baird worked to get the bill out of calendar committee. Brown Ayres offered to introduce amendments to have Obed and South Fork restored to the bill but was thwarted by the time element (see Newsletter No. 12). Both Forrest Bridges and Ray Baird worked for stripmine-control legislation in 1967.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOU

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a questionnaire which we should appreciate your returning to us as soon as possible. It will greatly aid in many of our operations. Please return even if incomplete.

L. B. Russell
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