

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 17, September 15, 1968

NEXT MEETING

The meeting originally announced for September 26 had to be changed to October 3. Please mark your calendar!

Topic: The Tennessee State Parks System: Needs for the Future. A panel discussion and slide show.

Time: Thursday, October 3, 7:30 p.m.

Place: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge Turnpike, corner of Lafayette Avenue.

Speakers: Mr. Boswell, Director, Division of State Parks, Tennessee Department of Conservation.

Mr. Robert J. Bible, Kingsport; member of the Tennessee Legislature.

Dr. Rodney J. Davis, Oak Ridge, one of the founders of TCWP, particularly interested in park planning.

Moderator: Ernest M. Dickerman, Vice President, TCWP; consultant, Wilderness Society; conservation chairman, SMCS; winner of 1967 General Motors conservation award.

Slide show: "Scenic areas that are or could be in the Tennessee State Park System."

Mack S. Prichard, Naturalist, Tenn. Division of State Parks.

We hope that there will be plenty of discussion from the floor, so come prepared with questions and ideas. We particularly want to explore the possibility of a "natural areas act" for Tennessee, i.e., a law by which portions of the state parks would be preserved free of "developments" -- analogous to the Wilderness Act for national parks. Past TCWP meetings have led to activities that contributed in major ways to subsequent State legislation, such as the Stripmine Act of 1967 and the Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. We hope that our next meeting will help us to explore and define the legislative needs for our park system. Please bring all interested friends.

NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERS BILL

In accordance with the expectation reported in our last Newsletter, this bill, defeated under suspension of the rules on July 15, was returned to the House floor. On September 12 it passed 265:7, but not until three rivers were removed by amendment. One of these was our own Big South Fork of the Cumberland, one of the most scenic rivers in the eastern U.S. The amendment was offered by Tim Lee Carter (R., Ky. 5th Dist.), one of the major proponents of Devil's Jumps dam; and it was concurred in by Tennessee's Representatives Duncan and Evins. The amendment was accepted without question by Repr. Wayne Aspinall, manager of the bill. The Buffalo and the Obed with tributaries (Clear Creek and Daddys Creek) remained in the study category of the House version, which now goes to Conference Committee.

All of us who have worked hard for preservation of Tennessee's scenic rivers can take pride that the Obed and Buffalo are still on the bill. Furthermore, our efforts on behalf of the Big South Fork are by no means wasted, in spite of the loss of this river from the scenic rivers bill. As reported in our last Newsletter, a study under the rivers-and-harbors bill may lead to protection of the South Fork. TCWP will continue to work toward the river's fullest preservation during the coming year.

BALANCING WILDERNESS AND ROADS IN THE GREAT SMOKIES

The enclosed* folder "Wilderness and Roads in the Great Smoky Mountains" (dated August 30, 1968) marks the latest step in the Great Smokies wilderness campaign. We have done pretty well in reaching other conservationists and securing their aid. It is time to broaden the base of support and to win over people and groups who up to now have either been neutral or who have opposed wilderness designation under the Wilderness Act within the Great Smokies Park on the grounds that they want more driving opportunities within the Park. Take this folder with you, call on a few of these folks among your acquaintances, and win them over!

Too many people hold the mistaken notion that the Newfound Gap highway and the road into Cades Cove are the only places to drive within the Park. The text and map of the folder show impressively that there are, in fact, more than a dozen different roads, including those to Heintooga Overlook at elevation 5300 ft. and to Cove Creek Gap at elevation 4062 ft. (on Tenn 284). In addition to the Circle-the-Smokies scenic drive, two shorter loop drives are pointed out: one of 105 miles and the other of 155 miles, in and around the eastern and the western halves, respectively, of the Park. Note how Townsend is already the hub of a network of roads -- and how it has its own loop drive into Cades Cove, out to US 129, thence on US 129 to the Foothills Parkway, along the Foothills Parkway to Tenn 73, and return to Townsend via Tenn 73.

TCWP and the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club are each sending copies of this folder, with a covering letter, to every Tennessee Congressman and Senator. This folder will provide a factual answer to those constituents who ask for more driving opportunities without knowing about the numerous public roads already available within the Park. You can strengthen the influence of this folder by writing to your own Representative and to the two Senators: mention the folder and the message which it brings, and urge each to endorse the citizens' wilderness plan as shown on the map and as recommended by conservationists from all over the nation at the official June, 1966 wilderness hearings on the Great Smokies Park.

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* Because of the limited number of copies available, TCWP members who are also members of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club will receive their folders thru a mailing by SMHC. If additional copies are required they will be supplied on request.