

# TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 39, March 23, 1971

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## 1. TRANSMOUNTAIN ROAD OUT; "CIRCUMFERENTIAL PARKWAYS" IN!

The Park Service study promised by then Secretary Hickel on the occasion of our 6/23/69 delegation-visit to Washington, is now published, and we can indeed be pleased with the result. The report is described and discussed in detail in the enclosure, prepared by the SMHC, with TCWP's full concurrence. Be sure to take action on the third item under "What Can We Do?" (but note the minor exceptions to our approval -- Cataloochee Divide and Slickrock Creek -- discussed on the preceding page). The deadline is May 1. We applaud Congressmen Quillen and Duncan for stating that they will support the circumferential parkway system.

## 2. BIG STRIPMINE MEETING APRIL 4

Unless we Tennesseans act now to improve our 1967 Strip Mine Law, we can expect rapidly increasing quantities of our scenic, agricultural, recreational, and water resources to fall victim to the short-term exploitation of a single nonrenewable resource -- coal. Find out more about the problems and what we hope to do about them (in this session of the Legislature -- see item 3A).

Time: Sunday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.

Place: Oak Ridge Unitarian Church, 1500 Oak Ridge Turnpike

Program:

- a. Members of the TCWP Committee on Surface Mining will outline (with the help of slides) the weaknesses of the 1967 law and will summarize what the bills that are now pending would do (or fail to do) to correct these weaknesses.
  - b. A stripmine operator will discuss the industry's point-of-view.
  - c. Al Curry, TVA Division of Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife Development, will speak on TVA's new reclamation requirements.
  - d. Legislators will comment on progress of and prospects for pending bills.
- Many of your friends are sure to be interested in stripmine evils. BRING THEM ALONG!

over

### 3. STATE LEGISLATURE: CONSERVATION CAPSULES

#### A. Amendments of the 1967 Strip Mine Law.

The TCWP Committee on Surface Mining (Don Todd, Bob Peelle, co-chairmen), after consultation with many experts in the field, and literally hundreds of man-hours of hard work, has come up with a very fine bill that is being sponsored by Senators Baird and Ayres (SB 193) and Representatives Bissell and Murphy (HB 334). A very much weaker bill was prepared by the Tenn. Dept. of Conservation and is sponsored by Repr. Bowman (HB 271). The latter bill only increases revenue and bond, but fails to prescribe improved rehabilitation, makes no provision for permit denial for unduly damaging operations, and ignores the problems of orphan mines and prospecting. Committee hearings will probably be scheduled soon. Urge your legislator to support strong legislation.

#### B. Natural Areas bill, HB 372 (Ashe and others), SB 366 (Bruce, Ayres, Baird). This excellent bill, which TCWP helped draft, was introduced March 15. It sets up two classes of natural areas protected by state or local governments, as well as a registry of areas whose private owners have agreed to maintain them in a natural state. You should tell your legislator about this good bill.

#### C. A bill to create a Tennessee trails system, HB 44 (drafted by TTA, TCWP, and Dept. of Conservation) passed the House 59-to-14, March 17, with minor amendments. Bob Bible was the prime sponsor. Tell your Senator to support this bill when it comes up in the Senate (under the sponsorship of Douglas Henry).

#### D. Senate Joint Resolution No. 30 (Crouch) which passed last week, directs the Dept. of Conservation to study ways to preserve Savage Gulf and to take immediate action if this is required.

### 4. COAL OPERATIONS ON BIG S. FORK AND OBED: MOSTLY (BUT NOT ALL) GOOD NEWS

#### A. In response to a request from TCWP, Dr. Thomas Ripley, Director of TVA's Div. of Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife Development, states in a letter of March 16 that "pending outcome of the present study," "TVA does not intend to purchase coal" in the Big S. Fork area that is being considered for national park or national recreation area status. Dr. Ripley deserves our warmest thanks.

#### B. A memo to all strip mine operators was sent on February 5 by Chase Delony, Director of the Tenn. Division of Strip Mining, informing them that the current Wild River Study of the Obed "will influence issuance of any strip mine permit" on the Obed, Daddys Creek, Clear Creek, or any of their tributaries. Mr. Delony deserves our sincere thanks.

#### C. A coal-washing operation on the Obed near Crossville has been proposed. It is essential that we express our strongest opposition to this source of pollution by writing to S. Leary Jones, Chmn., Tenn. Stream Pollution Control Board, Room 621, Cordell Hull Bldg., Nashville, TN 37219.

### 5. STATUS OF SLICKROCK CREEK, JOYCE KILMER

Two U.S. Forest Service teams will be working on studies affecting this area:

- (a) a team under the leadership of Keith Argow, to draw up an environmental impact statement on the Robbinsville-Tellico Plains highway (including various alternative locations for the unbuilt portion);
- (b) a team to study the Slickrock Creek drainage

in terms of its wilderness potential. However, a March 18 letter to TCWP from Acting USFS Chief R. F. Droege makes one wonder whether the Forest Service has already made up its mind. About the Slickrock drainage, he says, "Contrary to the Wilderness Act's provisions, its 'community of life' is not 'untrammelled by man.'" About the road, he says, "location between Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and Slick Rock drainage meets the intent of Congress to provide people with an opportunity for an outstanding travel experience," and then continues for two paragraphs to defend the ridgetop location. We hope the USFS can be made less resistant to the protection of de facto wilderness (see also item 6).

#### 6. CAN YOU HELP WITH IMPORTANT TESTIMONIES?

- X A. Highly significant hearings on National Forest Management will be held April 5, 6 by Sen. Frank Church's Subcommittee on Public Lands. If you have any specific examples (including photos, if available) of any USFS actions that have been environmentally or scenically harmful, please transmit them to us immediately.
- X B. Hearings on stream channelization will soon be conducted by Congr. Henry Reuss' Select Subcommittee on Government Operations. We need information on environmental damage done by channelization projects, or lists of people who would make good witnesses.

#### 7. MUCH FINANCIAL HELP NEEDED FOR FURTHER OVERTON PARK EFFORT

The case of the proposed I-40 crossing of Overton Park in Memphis has gone to the U.S. Supreme Court, and there is now hope that the Park crossing may eventually be blocked. The Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision of March 2, found that lower courts had erred in deciding the case on the basis of "litigation affidavits" and without access to the full administrative record. The case was remanded to Federal District Court in Memphis (Judge Bailey Brown), and Citizens to Preserve Overton Park feel that this type of full hearing will vindicate their position.

X However, they need a big "war chest" for the heavy expenses now required. This is a precedent-setting case of national significance. Won't you help? Donations are tax deductible. (Mail checks to Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc., 192 Williford St., Memphis, TN 38112).

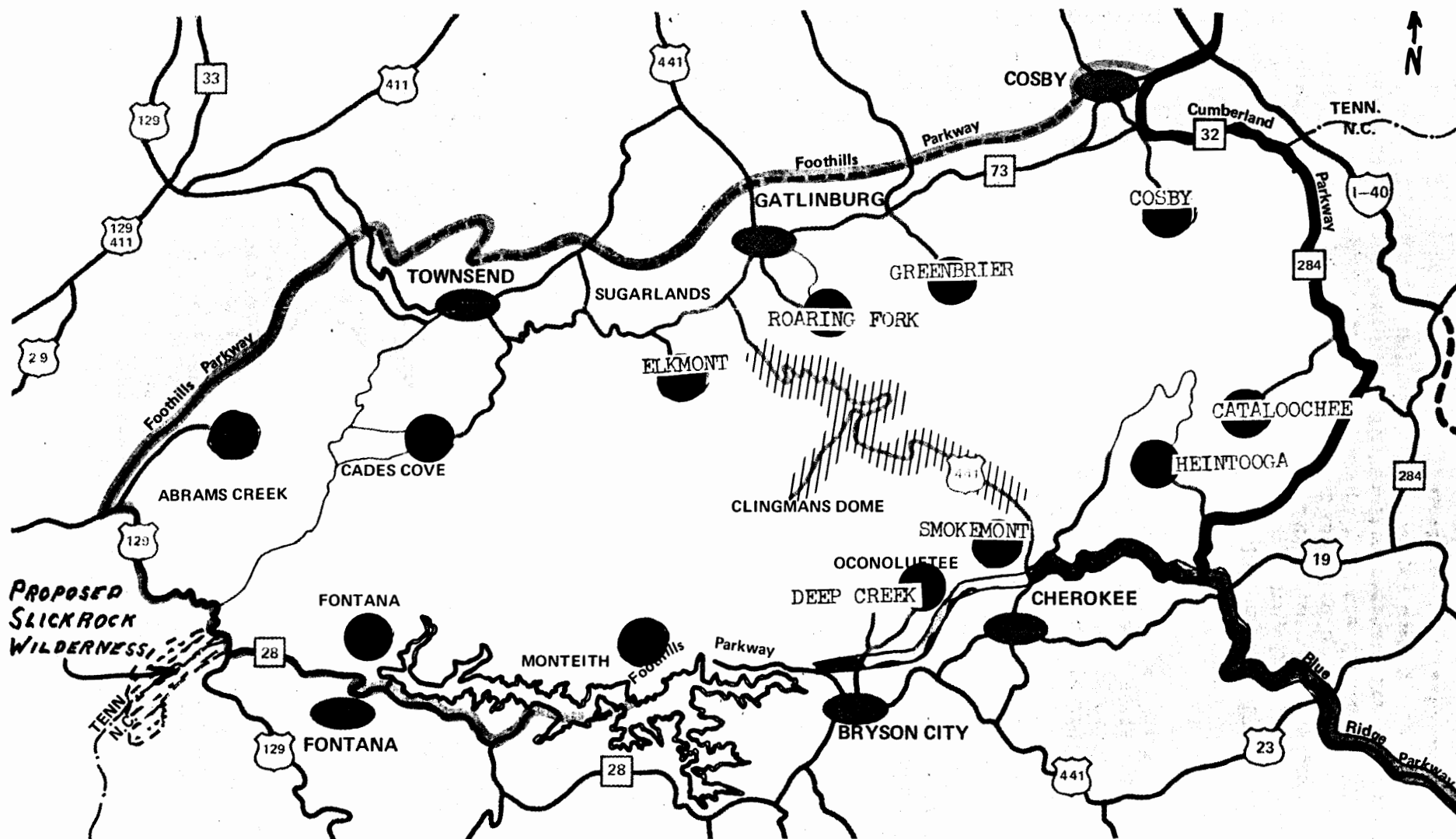
#### 8. OAK RIDGE GREENBELT TRAILS

X The entire Northern Greenbelt Trail, from Illinois Avenue to Endicott Lane, has now been marked and a major portion cleared. Volunteers are requested for a trail-clearing party Sunday, March 28. Meet 2 p.m., at cable TV tower off Orchard Circle; bring rakes and/or pruners.

#### 9. SST

X The House rejected the SST appropriation 215-to-204 on March 17. Tennessee's Congressmen Anderson, Duncan, Evins, Fulton, and Jones deserve our thanks for voting on the side of conservationists. The Senate is voting as this goes to press. A coalition of 13 Tennessee organizations, led by TCWP, has urged our Senators to reject the SST. Watch your paper! If the Senate should approve the SST, conferees must report the bill back "in disagreement" for a second floor vote in both Houses. Thus you may still have to get busy. 2

*Newsletter text continued on the small page*



**N.P.S. PROPOSAL B**  
**Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

SCALE IN MILES



March 27, 1977

10. WE HELPED GET THE CEQ FUNDS

You may remember that we pointed out in NL #34 that we were in a particularly important position to help restore funds for the Council on Environmental Quality, since Tennessee's Congr. Evins had the No. 1 power over this appropriation. A recent letter from Chairman Russell E. Train states "As you know, the supplemental appropriation for the Council was approved. I wish you and the members of TCWP to know how much I appreciate your effective, persistent work in our behalf."

11. CHANGE IN TCWP BOARD; DUES REMINDER; APPOINTMENTS

TCWP will have a new Secretary: Nancy Jaszczak, who has done a truly fine job, is moving to Chicago early in April; Ruth Slusher has kindly agreed to take on the position.

\* All of you who have yet to mail in your 1971 dues, please address them to Fred Sweeton, 334 Louisiana Avenue, Oak Ridge, TN 37830 (rather than to Nancy, as stated on the bill). Prompt payment will greatly simplify our bookkeeping.

\* TCWP member Bill Countess was one of only 12 people from throughout the U.S. chosen to participate in a recent 5-day leadership training workshop in Washington, sponsored by the Wilderness Society.--Kin Zimmerman will be TWAC co-chairman with Ken Warren.--TCWP is forming phone committees throughout the state, to add to the existing ones in Oak Ridge and Knoxville. Maxie Swindell will serve as state telephone chairman.--Charles Klabunde is continuing as outings chairman. Contact him (483-8055) if you want to help.

over, for Calendar

12. CALENDAR

March 27, 28 French Broad floats, TSRA. (Call Reid Gryder, Oak Ridge 483-1836)  
March 28 TCWP, Oak Ridge Greenbelt trail-clearing party (see item 8).  
April 3,4 Upper Duck River float, TSRA. (Call Bill Mitchum, Nashville 269-9759)  
April 4 TCWP Stripmine Meeting (see item 2).  
April 17,18 TCWP sponsors wild flower hikes, some long, some short, in Frozen  
Head State Park near Wartburg. Meet 9:30 a.m. Saturday, 1:00 p.m.  
Sunday, at caretaker's residence. (For driving directions or  
other info, call Lee Russell, Oak Ridge 482-2153; or Donald Todd,  
Wartburg 346-3113).  
April 18 TCWP sponsors Oak Ridge Greenbelt hikes (watch newspaper)  
April 19 Audubon screentour, 7:30 p.m., Tenn. Valley Unitarian Church,  
Knoxville  
April 24 Clear Fork float, TSRA (Call Bill Mitchum, Nashville 269-9759)  
April 25 White Creek float, TSRA (" " " " " " )  
April 25 TCWP sponsors Oak Ridge Greenbelt hikes (watch newspaper)  
May 1 Spring Creek float, TSRA (Call Bill Mitchum, Nashville 269-9759)  
May 15,16 Obed-Emory float, TSRA ( " " " " " " )  
May 21-22 Wildflower tour, McCreary County (details in future Newsletter)  
May 22-23 Savage Gulf backpack, Sierra Club (Call Mack Prichard 741-3251)

482-2153

Lee Russell, editor  
130 Tabor Rd, Oak Ridge, TN 37830

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ISSUES LONG-AWAITED REPORT ON SMOKIES ROAD-WILDERNESS CONCEPTS

The long-awaited report from the National Park Service on the roads versus wilderness controversy in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park contains a recommended proposal which conservation organizations throughout the Nation can endorse. The NPS proposes to do what conservationists have long advocated; namely, it would restrict automobile traffic within this park and, by so doing, would help preserve this outdoor, living museum with its unique characteristics for future generations. Use of US 441 within the Park would be ultimately phased out over a period of years after the completion of a circumferential parkway system which is expected to change park use patterns. In the interim access to the high country will be provided by public transportation vehicles. Comments on the National Park Service report are invited before May 1, 1971.

A review of the controversies about roads and wilderness in the Smokies must contain a basic element in the issue: the 1943 Agreement. Since 1943, the Department of the Interior has been committed to the construction of a road along the north shore of Fontana Lake. The commitment for that road is the result of agreement among the Department of the Interior, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the State of North Carolina, and Swain County, North Carolina. The Agreement provided that some 44,000 acres of land acquired by TVA for the development of Fontana Dam and Lake would be added to the National Park. In return for this land, the NPS would build 34 miles of road along the north shore of Fontana Lake as replacement for the existing road which was to be flooded by the rising lake. An excerpt from the Agreement says, "The Department represents and states that.... ..(its)...master plan includes an 'around the park' road, of which the park section of a projected road between Deals Gap and Bryson City, constitutes an important link."

Between 1947 and 1969, over \$4 million has been spent on 5.6 miles of this North Shore road, which would require an additional \$39 million to complete. In 1965, an amendment to the Agreement was proposed by the NPS which would have substituted for the North Shore road a 34.7 mile transmountain road from Bryson City, North Carolina, to Townsend, Tennessee. The substitute was acceptable to both Swain County and the State of North Carolina. It was and is the only substitute in which Swain County has shown any interest. The idea of another transmountain road was intolerable to the conservation groups, who only the year before had celebrated the passage of the Wilderness Act. These local and national groups had reason to expect that application of the Act to the Smokies would protect its qualifying wilderness areas from further encroachment by roads. Instead, the NPS wilderness proposals issued in 1966 contained a wide corridor through otherwise qualifying wilderness for the proposed transmountain road. At public hearings conducted by the NPS in 1966, and in many heated public and private meetings since then, conservationists have opposed the proposed road and have offered attractive alternates to satisfy the 1943 Agreement.

Being opposed to a road plan is not enough. Conservationists had proposed circumferential roads instead of roads penetrating the interior of the Park as early as 1941. As we have seen, such a road was even an element in the 1943 Agreement. The rise over the years in the number of visitors to the Park and the traffic jams on US 441 in the Park at peak travel times made it evident that accesses other than US 441 to the Park should be used to divert traffic and to absorb visitor impacts. In a leaflet sponsored by 20 North Carolina, Tennessee, and national conservation organizations in 1968, a Circle-the-Smokies scenic drive was proposed using mainly existing roads around the Park and existing spur roads into the Park. One link in this scenic drive would have been a South Shore (of Fontana Lake) road between Fontana and the already completed portion of the North Shore road near Bryson City. Swain County was unimpressed by this substitute for either the North Shore road or the proposed transmountain road.

The opponents of the transmountain road had an ally in Secretary Udall, who twice rejected the transmountain road as a substitute for the North Shore road. But 1969 brought

Secretary Hickel into the controversy. In a Washington, D. C. meeting on June 23, 1969, with local, regional and national conservation groups, Mr. Hickel directed that the NPS prepare a study and issue a report by late 1970 on the Smokies controversy. The study, entitled "Transportation Concepts / Great Smoky Mountains National Park", was begun in July, 1970, and on February 19, 1971, was released to the public. In it, Director Hartzog proposes that a beltway of parkways around the Park would, if acceptable to the parties at interest, be a substitute for the 1943 obligation. Director Hartzog solicits and urges that comments on the proposal be sent to him before May 1, 1971.

Only a very limited number of the 60-page reports are available. Its contents are summarized below. The information in the report is provided by both text and maps.

Construction history (of roads)  
Existing visitor activities  
Visitation and traffic  
Forests  
Wilderness studies  
Possible solutions:

- A. North Shore road -- \$39 million
- B. Transmountain road -- \$37.1 million
- C. Blue Ridge Parkway extension -- \$18 million
- D. Foothills Parkway extension in Park -- \$69 million
- E. Foothills Parkway extension outside Park -- \$62.5 million
- F. Improvement of US 441 -- not feasible
- G. Relinquish title to 44,000 acres -- not feasible
- H. Reconstruction of NC 28 -- rejected
- I. Monteith developed area -- no interest
- J. Bryson City intercept center -- no interest
- K. Beltway using existing roads -- about \$62.5 million

NPS Proposals:

- A. Transmountain bus and rail loop -- \$40 million
- B. Circumferential Parkway system -- \$120 million

Environmental impact statement  
Economic advantages

The 1943 Agreement, full text  
Comprehensive background summary  
Tennessee House Joint Resolution No. 92, May 6, 1969

Under NPS Proposal B there would be a 190-mile parkway system encircling the Park and linking a series of 12 access roads and visitor facilities or clusters spaced around the Park's perimeter. This is illustrated by the map on page 5. Proposal B would include the gradual phasing out of US 441 for the private automobile--busses would transport visitors across the Smokies until the beltway system had been completed. This is estimated to be, and an NPS official concurs, a matter of 20 years or more. Before this plan could become effective, legislation by the Congress would be required, plus the support of the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, the States of North Carolina and Tennessee and Swain County.

Proposal B calls for extending the network of existing and proposed national parkways, complemented with roads penetrating the park boundary into areas of interest, thus providing the visitors with increased recreational opportunities and enjoyment. Where state highways or rights-of-way are affected by this plan, means will be provided for access to private property. Under this proposal the Cumberland Parkway would connect directly with the Foothills Parkway near Cosby, Tennessee, and continue around the eastern end of the



Park to connect with the Blue Ridge Parkway. Tennessee 32 and NC 284 would be upgraded to parkway standards. A new section of parkway would be constructed from the point where NC 284 leaves the Park (Cove Creek Gap), along the Cataloochee Divide\* connecting the Cumberland Parkway with the Blue Ridge Parkway in the vicinity of Heintooga. The Blue Ridge Parkway would be utilized to its present terminus at Cherokee. It would then be extended westward within the Park, roughly along Thomas Divide, to connect to the existing parkway near Deep Creek. An extension of the present Foothills Parkway around the southwest perimeter of the Park would utilize a Fontana Lake crossing in the vicinity of Monteith and a portion of NC 28. Acquisition of NC 28 from that point westerly to US 129, and the US 129 right-of-way from that point to its present connection with the Foothills Parkway at Chilhowee, Tennessee, would be necessary. These sections would need to be rebuilt to parkway standards. US 129 and NC 28 would be relocated on a new alignment south of the Little Tennessee River through National Forest Service lands.

\*The underlined sections of the paragraph above contain provisions with which we do not concur. Our objections have been given to the NPS by letter and by telephone. Specifically, they are:

Cataloochee Divide - The benefits of tourism should be brought much closer to Maggie Valley via the present NC 284 from Cove Creek to US 19, and then follow the Jonathan Creek watershed westward to a junction with the Blue Ridge Parkway at or near Soco Gap.

Forest Service lands south of the Little Tennessee River - Slickrock Creek is now being considered for wilderness status by the Forest Service, and we do not favor any road in this area. The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club has never, as the report claims, favored any road in these Forest Service lands as part of the beltway system.

In addition to creating a system of parkways, Proposal B would phase out the use of US 441 as a cross-park road. The first phase would be to close US 441 to private vehicular traffic during the daylight hours of the peak visitation season. A free transportation system of shuttle vehicles would provide visitor transportation from Smokemont to Chimney picnic area and Clingmans Dome. During the hours of darkness, the road would be open for through traffic. Bus shuttle service would be provided also to Gatlinburg from the Chimneys area and to Cherokee from Smokemont. After the encircling parkways are completed, US 441 can then be obliterated and returned to its natural condition. The encircling parkways will protect this valuable resource for future generations and enhance the visitor's experience. The Park will be accessible from entry points around the perimeter to trails entering the interior of the Park. These points would provide nature trails, living farms, camping, fishing, motor nature trails, and other facilities for concentrated visitor use. Those visitors who prefer to drive their vehicles to scenic overlooks on the high ridges of the Appalachians will enjoy the Blue Ridge Parkway extending from Virginia through North Carolina.

#### Where Do We Stand On The NPS Recommendation?

Accelerating population pressures and demands for outdoor recreation, assuming no significant changes occur in our standards of living, will continue the trend toward engulfment of all our outdoor recreation outlets, including national parks. Former Secretary of the Interior Hickel has said that the worst enemy of the national parks is the automobile. Since the national parks provide much more than conventional outdoor recreation, their special values must be given the highest and earliest degree of protection. Some other parks have transmountain roads; some have only the types of access proposed for the Smokies. Some have almost no roads, some none, but all are enjoyed to the point of being loved to death. The new NPS concept for the Smokies includes an accommodation to the present: access from the periphery and use of scenic and recreational values. It also looks to the future: ultimate restriction of the private automobile from the interior of the Park.

We conservationists in our most idealistic roles cannot but agree that the unrestricted use of the automobile within national parks is incompatible with park values, values that are increasing as they become scarcer. Can we suffer mild inconveniences, give up cherished customs, and relinquish easy access to the high country we love? As leaders in conservation can we afford not to try? We must realize that what is acceptable to us may not be as acceptable to the general public or its reflection, the Congress. If we can sell ourselves, perhaps we can sell others that the interim phases of transportation across the mountain will provide access to the high country for many years.

#### What Can We Do?

First, we suggest that one look at the NPS Proposal B objectively, as if it were being applied to a western park. The shuttle bus concept has been necessary to protect the Merced River valley in Yosemite National Park, and use of busses was highly successful there in 1970. Undoubtedly, this concept will be extended to other parks where concentrated visitor use is damaging park values.

Second, read in appropriate publications what some of the NPS problems are. We suggest recent issues of:

The Living Wilderness, quarterly

National Parks and Conservation Magazine, monthly

Sierra Club Bulletin, monthly

Audubon Magazine, monthly

Books providing a perspective on the visitor and road problems of the national parks and other public lands are available. We recommend two booklets published by the Christian Science Monitor:

The Call of the Vanishing Wildlife, 1967

Will Success Spoil the National Parks?, 1968

Third, write before May 1, 1971, to NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., Washington, D. C. 20240, giving him your support for Proposal B on the roads-wilderness controversy in the Smokies. Also, write of your support for the NPS proposal to the governor of Tennessee or of North Carolina, to all of your delegates to Congress, to your delegates to the Tennessee or North Carolina state legislatures, with copies of your letters sent to Director Hartzog. Write also to any national or local conservation organizations to which you belong asking them, if they have not yet taken a position, to support the NPS. And don't forget to write your conservation-minded friends!

SMOKY MOUNTAINS HIKING CLUB

Knoxville, Tennessee