

Tennes-Sierran

The bi-monthly state newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club

Volume 53, Number 4 - July / August 2020

A Sierra Club Statement about the Murder of George Floyd

see page 3

Deadlines to Register to Vote: Tuesday, July 7 & Monday, October 5

more about voting on page 3



Photograph of a house finch by Senator and Mrs. Richard Briggs

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nashville, TN
Permit No. 3225

Tennes-Sierran
3712 Ringgold Rd., #156
Chattanooga, TN 37412-1638

Bi-Monthly Newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club
Vol. 53, No. 4 - July / August 2020

From Mac Post, State Chair

I had originally drafted an article for this newsletter about how perfunctory Earth Day has become and that we needed to regain the political consensus that led to the enormous environmental progress 50 years ago with the bipartisan passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. However, in recent weeks, the chronic issue of police killings against Black people across the country has, again, escalated to a boiling point and resulted in protests. I have decided to use this article to reflect on what this means for our organization.

What is so enraging is that the reasons for these protests are not new. Abusive police practices coupled with state-sanctioned violence has resulted in systematic brutality since our nation's founding, not only on Black people, but also Native Americans, Brown people, and other people of color. Sure, progress has been made—slavery, and overt segregation are now illegal, and affirmative action laws have made some progress in ending some specific forms of discrimination. However, recent history shows that this long cycle of lawlessness against Black people continues and leads to protests time and again from the Watts riot in Los Angeles in 1965 and nationwide riots in 1967 to protests in Ferguson in 2014.

It is abundantly clear that we need Congress to pass meaningful police reform legislation now. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is advancing several specific proposals to Congress (<https://bit.ly/CivilRightsLeadershipConference>) and the Movement for Black Lives is promoting actions for local communities (m4bl.org/week-of-action). The Sierra Club publicly supports these proposals. But this is only the beginning. We must go beyond outrage and work for justice by confronting the racism that enables police violence across our country.

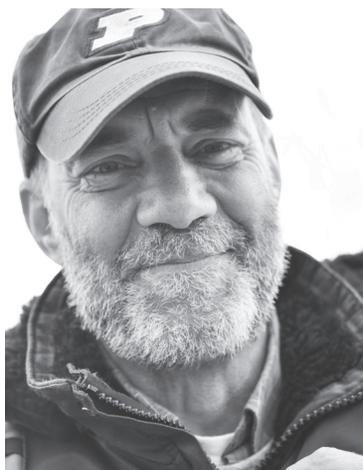
Why is this important to Sierra Club members? Environmental issues cannot be separated from racial and social justice—we can't fulfill our mission to enlist humanity to protect the planet while racism continues to divide us. As Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune recently pointed out, "The companies that have profited from fossil fuels and accelerated the climate crisis are the same ones who have benefited from environmental injustice, colonialism, and racism."

I am a privileged white man who is beginning to understand the many ways Black people have such a different experience of life in the United States than mine. I am learning how to identify and confront my own racist ideas. I have much to learn in my personal journey towards antiracism and championing antiracist ideas and policies. I invite you to join me. Together we must confront inequality embedded in our society and continue to fight for the dignity of all people. This year let's support and vote for representatives that will unite us, not divide us. Only together can we tackle ecological crises and ensure environmental justice in this country.

Please read the Sierra Club's statement on the opposite page. Here are some resources I have found useful:

- Search "Showing Up for Racial Justice" on Facebook
- <https://bit.ly/antiracismresources>
- <https://mashable.com/article/how-to-be-antiracist/>

Contact Mac at mpost3116@gmail.com



Tennes-Sierran

The bi-monthly newsletter of the
Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club
Online at: <https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee>
Volume 53, Number 4 - July / August 2020

Change of Address

Email: address.changes@sierraclub.org
Snail Mail: Mail new address AND the mailing label on page 1 to:
Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

Request no paper copy here: http://bit.ly/Stop_My_Paper_Copy

Submissions

August Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by July 22
September/October Issue of The Tennes-Sierran by July 31
Request Submission Guidelines at tnsierran.editor@gmail.com

News Team

Tennes-Sierran Editor: Emily Ellis, tnsierran.editor@gmail.com
E-Newsletter Editor: Allie Stafford, enews.sierratn@gmail.com
News Wrangler: Rita Bullinger, wranglerSCTN@gmail.com

TENNESSEE CHAPTER

OFFICERS

Chair:	Mac Post 865-938-3116 mpost3116@gmail.com
Vice Chair:	Cris Corley 615-477-9090 driscorley@gmail.com
Secretary:	Kate Anthony 513-365-7989 rainbowgardener2@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Andre Porter 931-252-2708 andre.porter@gmail.com
Conservation Chair:	Bill Moll 404-401-7899 whmoll@aol.com
Outings Chair:	Ron Shrieves 865-924-8973 ronshrieves@gmail.com

Conservation Program Coordinator

Scott Banbury 901-619-8567 smbanbury@gmail.com

GROUPS AND REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEES

Cherokee Group — Chattanooga

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/cherokee>
Chair: kate anthony 513-365-7989
rainbowgardener2@gmail.com

Harvey Broome Group — Knoxville

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome>
Chair: Joanne Logan 865-310-1171
loganj1023@gmail.com

Chickasaw Group — Memphis

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/chickasaw>
Co-Chairs: Ramie Bell 901-383-3680
ramie.bell@gmail.com
Anthony Cernosek 901-461-1889
tonycernosek@gmail.com

Middle Tennessee Group — Nashville

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/middle-tennessee>
Chair: Antoinette Olesen 615-498-2778
time4nashville@gmail.com

Watauga Conservation Committee (Johnson/Carter Counties)

Chair: Gloria Griffith 423-727-4797
gla4797@embarqmail.com

Clarksville-Montgomery County Conservation Committee

Chair: JoAnn McIntosh 931-338-2530
mcjoann@gmail.com

Tipton County Conservation Committee

Chair: Roger Graham 901-481-1978
rgraham179@hotmail.com

CareNET Conservation Committee

Chair: Bill Kornrich 423-300-8764
bkornrich@gmail.com

Call for Nominations:

Chapter At-Large Executive Committee

This year three of the seven members of the Chapter's At-Large Executive Committee (ExCom) reach the end of their term. The Sierra Club uses democracy to hold itself accountable to its membership, so the Chapter needs good candidates to best represent members' interests. The Chapter's Nomination Committee is seeking candidates to run, so we're looking to you to self-nominate or suggest nominees. Any Chapter member in good standing is eligible for nomination.

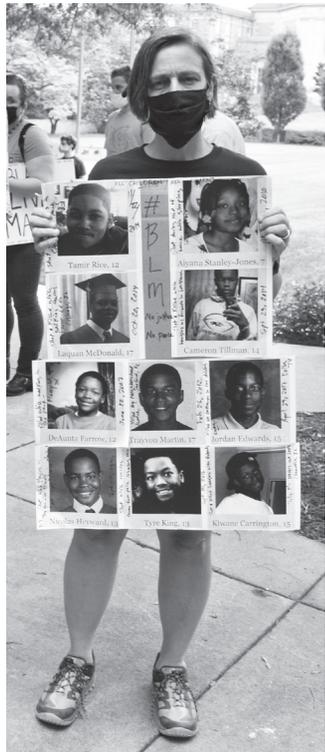
The ExCom sets the Chapter budget and strategic direction, reaches consensus on conservation positions, raises money, appoints officers and committee chairs, and approves litigation and electoral endorsements.

To accomplish all of this, the Chapter ExCom meets six times a year (four electronic meetings, two in-person meetings) every other month, and communicates by e-mail correspondence between meetings. The ExCom also plans important events throughout the year.

After receiving your nominations by July 31, 2020, the Chapter Nominations Committee will consider and recommend candidates for the ballot, which is published in the November/December edition of the *Tennes-Sierran* newspaper, or sent electronically if preferred. Candidates may also get on the ballot by petition. Candidates are allowed space on the ballot to advocate for their election. Candidates receiving the top votes will start their two-year term January 2021.

Any Sierra Club member wishing to be considered as a Nomination Committee candidate should indicate their intent to do so by emailing Charlie High at cahigh1722@aol.com or by regular mail to: Charlie High, 1722 Sweetbriar Avenue, Nashville, TN 37212 by July 31.

Sierra Club Statement on the Murder of George Floyd



The faces of Black people killed by police are displayed at a vigil for George Floyd on June 8 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune and Kamau Wilkins, the Executive Committee Chair of the Sierra Club's Minnesota Chapter, issued the following statement on the murder of George Floyd. The Sierra Club has also issued statements condemning police brutality and the violent, racist killings of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. In July of 2019, the Sierra Club joined forces with a coalition of environmental justice and national environmental groups to release a just and equitable national climate platform that centers racial, climate and environmental justice to improve the public health and well-being of all communities.

"We all deserve to thrive in safe communities, yet the inhumane, daily assaults on Black and Brown people directly threaten our ability to maintain a healthy planet. The cruel, public lynching of George Floyd is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We cannot expect to come together to protect the planet if racism continues to tear us apart.

"The Sierra Club is committed to confronting the inequality embedded into our society that has allowed these tragedies to persist. If we want to create communities that are truly safe, just and equitable, we must continue fighting for the humanity and the dignity of all people."

Environmentalists Tend to Have Bad Voting Records — And Lie About It

by Bill Moll, TN Chapter Political Co-Chair

Tennesseans have historically placed a high value on our natural environment. The Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter contact list, about 70,000 environmental supporters' names, might sound like a lot of voters.

Nathaniel Stinnett founded the Environmental Voter Project (EVP), a 501(c)4 in Boston with a mission to "increase voter demand for environmental leadership." EVP's research shows that in the 2016 presidential election, about 68 percent of registered voters turned out to vote nationally—but only 50 percent of environmentalists turned out to vote. In the 2014 midterms, only 21 percent of environmentalists voted. Yikes!

The Tennessee Chapter now has access to SmartVAN, a privately-owned voter database that enables the Chapter to review environmental voter turnout in

Tennessee. Potential environmental voters who did not vote in past years can be targeted in get-out-the-vote campaigns for a greater turnout in 2020.

A lot of the work will happen later in the year. In the meantime, make sure YOU are still registered to vote AND make sure others who believe in protecting the environment are registered. Be aware that officials can accidentally delete the registration of someone who has a similar name to a voter who has died or moved. See the box below for important links.

Contact Bill at whmoll@aol.com

Hindsight is 20/20, so Vote 2020

by Alex Searce, Co-President, Students Promoting Environmental Action in Knoxville

As Tennesseans are flooded with struggles brought on by COVID-19, August primaries and November general elections beg the question of how Tennesseans will keep the vote afloat. U.S. Census data from 2018 ranks Tennessee 41st among states in percent of total voters registered with only 63.5% of those eligible registered to vote in the 2018 midterm elections. As far as actual voter turnout goes Tennessee ranked 40th with only 44.7% of the voter-eligible population exercising their right to vote in the 2018 general election.

Data from January and February of 2020 showed voters on track to surpass voter registration turnouts from four years ago leading up to the 2016 elections, but with the pandemic eliminating door-to-door canvassing and limiting gatherings, numbers registering this year have dwindled, as reported by Pam Fessler, a correspondent on National Public Radio. However, as Tennesseans seek to flatten the curve of COVID-19, it's not too late to steepen the curve of the number of citizens registering to vote in 2020 elections. Encourage everyone to register (deadlines to the right on this page).

Contact Alex at yt139@vols.utk.edu

Absentee Ballots and COVID-19

Good news came in early June when Davidson County Chancellor Ellen Hobbs Lyle ruled that all registered voters in Tennessee must have the option to cast a ballot by mail due to concern about the pandemic, making widespread mail-in voting possible. As of press time, however, the State Attorney General's office has appealed Lyle's decision to both a lower appellate court and the Tennessee State Supreme Court.

Get the latest on reasons to vote absentee and how to request an absentee ballot, check the State's website here:

<https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/absentee-voting>

BE READY TO ROCK THE VOTE!

DEADLINES TO REGISTER TO VOTE:

Tuesday JULY 7

for the August 6 State/Federal Primaries and State/County General Election

Monday OCT 5

for the November 3 State/Federal General Election

Register to Vote **Online**
<https://ovr.govote.tn.gov/> **OR**

Register to Vote **By Mail**
Call your county election commission to request a voter registration form OR download the form at
https://bit.ly/TN_voter_reg

Confirm **YOU** are **STILL** registered here:
<https://www.govotetn.com/voting.html>

~
"One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors." — Plato

Joanne Logan Is New Chair for Harvey Broome Group



As a soon-to-be retired professor at the University of Tennessee where she directs and teaches in the Environmental and Soil Sciences program, Joanne Logan has been integrally involved with environmental issues both near and far. Joanne grew up in Massachusetts where she first discovered her love of the outdoors, hiking, canoeing, and camping as a Girl Scout. She was also very lucky to have a very outdoorsy high school science teacher who took his students on many field trips and organized summer projects such as surveys of river otters, birds, and beavers. This led her to an undergraduate degree in soil and water science from the University of Connecticut.

Her passion for environmental protection was expanded when she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador in the late 1970s. She worked

closely with farmers to reduce their chemical inputs, and with the National Forestry Service to better manage their resources. For more than a year, she was lucky to have a beautiful view from her office of Cotopaxi, a 19,000-foot, snow-covered volcano. Being that close to the wonders of nature was sure to have a life-long impact.

Joanne completed her graduate work in applied climatology at the University of Nebraska, where she camped, hiked, and canoed in the famous Sandhills. Seeing

(and hearing) the sandhill cranes for the first time was enthralling. She also went on several hiking trips to the Rocky Mountains.

Joanne has been a Sierra Club member since 1988. She was active in the local group while a graduate student in Nebraska, but drifted away when her hectic family and work life took over. However, since 2015, Joanne has resurfaced with a greater passion than ever to play an important role within the organization. She was elected to the Harvey Broome Group (HBG) ExCom and served as vice chair for two years, as well as delegate to the Chapter, and one year as chapter secretary. She often helps with outreach booths and activities and attends most chapter retreats. She is honored to serve as the 2020 Chair of the HBG, although she says taking over from Ron Shrieves will be a hard act to follow.

In addition to the Sierra Club, Joanne has been involved with other environmentally related organizations such as Green Drinks, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Knoxville Climate Council, Climate Voices, Climate Reality Project, River Rescue, Tennessee Climate Network, and the Water Quality Forum. She also volunteers with Young-Williams Animal Shelter and Beardsley Community Farm. She has given talks about climate change throughout the state.

Joanne is as an avid organic gardener, working on her own sustainability and developing skills for self-sufficiency. Her love of gardening led her to teach a First Year Studies class for the past 10 years to share with incoming freshman students the joys of working with soil and plants, and the important food security issues in communities both here and abroad.

Joanne can be contacted at loganj@utk.edu

COVID-19 and Beyond: Power and Water for the People

By JoAnn McIntosh, Chair, Clarksville-Montgomery County Conservation Committee

In early April, The Tennessee Chapter, in partnership with Appalachian Voices, completed a survey of the state's local power companies (LPCs). The survey result showed that only 57 of the 82 had suspended shutoffs for non-payment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, some LPCs have resumed shutoffs of nonpaying customers' utilities. As new unemployment claims surpass 550,000 statewide, some families are forced to choose between putting food on the table and paying their utilities bill.

As reported in the May/June issue of this newsletter, one possible solution, "round-it-up" programs, rounds up customers' monthly bill to the nearest dollar.

The average cost to a customer is only \$6 per year, but the resulting funds raised could go a long way to help those who cannot pay. Programs that allow customers to opt-in have lower participation (typically 1.5-5.0 percent) compared to those that give customers an opt-out option (50-85 percent participation). When Memphis Light, Gas, and Water changed from opt-in to opt-out in 2018, the revenue generated annually jumped from \$40,000-50,000 to about \$1 million.

A new state law taking effect at the end of 2020 will prevent LPCs from changing to an opt-out program which will result in a profound reduction in funds raised to help those who cannot cover their utility bill. Take Action below!

Contact JoAnn at mcjoann@gmail.com

Take Action! Power and Water for the People!

Join the Voice of Solidarity for round-it-up programs and suspended shutoffs:

- Follow this link to find your LPC's status concerning its COVID-19 response and current "round it up" programs: https://bit.ly/TN_LPCs
- Call your LPC with thanks if they have suspended shutoffs.
- If your LPC doesn't have one, urge them to develop an opt-out "round-it-up" program before a new state law described above takes effect. LPCs have received letters from the Chapter on these points, but member action is absolutely essential to the success of our request.

- Let Governor Bill Lee know you support suspension of utility shut-offs: Call 615-823-8795 and listen to information about the issue. Then you will be connected to Governor Lee's office.
- Sign an Action Alert Petition to Governor Lee here: <https://bit.ly/no-shutoffs-TN>
- Sign an Action Alert Petition to members of Congress here: bit.ly/no-shutoffs-US
- For more information, contact the Tennessee Chapter at https://bit.ly/Round_It_Up



Inspiring Outdoor Connections Opens the Door to Nature

The Sierra Club's Inspiring Outdoor Connections (ICO) program helps create the next generation of environmental justice and social justice leaders through building community and increasing exposure to outdoor recreation, advocacy, and leadership training. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, ICO activity is temporarily on hold, but hopes to be back in action this fall. If you would like to help youth from Nashville communities with limited access to connect to the outdoors, for the benefit of both, please contact Charlie High cahigh1722@aol.com. For more information see <https://bit.ly/MTG-inspiring-connections-outdoors>

Lower left: catching critters on a creek walk at Beaman Park Nature Reserve. Lower right: children from Preston Taylor Ministries in Nashville enjoy a hike on a chilly November day on the Henry Hollow Trail.



Let's Hold This Space of Dissonance

by Marquita Bradshaw, Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club Environmental Justice Chair



I was invited to write this by Mac Post, the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club Chair. I'm so used to people trying to limit my voice that I will not limit my words. I will take all the space needed to walk you through the grief and disappointment I feel right now around national events.

My childhood South Memphis community is within walking distance of a National Priority List Superfund Site. The pollution contaminates the air, soil, surface water, groundwater, and aquifers still today. The chemicals are mutagenic in the decommissioned military landfill. The chemicals in the landfill are very effective in inducing sickness and killing of plants and people. In the landfill somewhere on the 640 acres are weaponized viruses, chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear weapons, and munitions. I'm speaking from having personal experiences of systemic racism and working through holding grief for my life that black people experience law enforcement, the criminal justice system, the medical system, the economy, the educational system, employment, and the political system differently. I have organized around police accountability and seeking justice in environmental laws at the same time. As a black woman, I can't afford to be sick and don't have time to be tired because lives are at stake.

Understanding that calling for unity without addressing racism will be a band-aid on a wound that needs 400 years of stitches in the American fabric. No more band-aid fixes. I'm asking you to hold this space of dissonance of publicly demonstrating so we can get justice for all. Understanding that making policies in our republic to address racism is an investment in moving to have justice in police accountability, the criminal justice system, the health care system, the environment, the green new infrastructure, and the economic system.

It was racism that was the underlying culprit that caused the death of Mr. George Floyd, and it was racism that caused my community to experience higher than national average sickness and death rates. There are many names in every community across our nation that didn't get the national attention as Mr. Floyd when it comes to extrajudicial killings by law enforcement. His death is driving the conversation on how we will emerge from the pandemic of COVID-19 and the pandemic of racism. We are in this space of dissonance together. This is the crossroad on whether we pivot to do the work to eradicate racism or allow it to continue to feed the hypocrisy of reprobate leadership that hides behind inaction. Can you imagine listing all of the names of people who are sick and dying from the polluted environment that the public will never know? What if we list all people experiencing economic injustice of poverty in a wealthy nation? Would we have space to list all of the people who have died because of no healthcare from medical racism? Try to imagine if we list all of the black names that are sick or have died prematurely from injustice over the last 400 years.

Understanding that calling for unity without addressing racism will be a band-aid on a wound that needs 400 years of stitches in the American fabric. No more band-aid fixes. I'm asking you to hold this space of dissonance of publicly demonstrating so we can get justice for all. Understanding that making policies in our republic to address racism is an investment in moving to have justice in police accountability, the criminal justice system, the health care system, the environment, the green new infrastructure, and the economic system.

Making policies can happen overnight, which will start to correct the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior over time to rid ourselves of racism. Hold all of our elected leaders accountable no matter the party. Demonstrate until they do their job of leading. It will take work to make our republic a true democracy by enforcing the policies to rid out systematic racism. The only way to climate justice is to rid ourselves of racism in the fabric of America. We will know when all lives matter when black lives matter too.

Contact Marquita at envirodivamarquita@gmail.com

Marquita Bradshaw is a lifelong Memphian. Her passion centers on training underserved and disenfranchised people to become agents of change. She has been a champion for environmental justice as the co-founder of Youth Terminating Pollution and one of the founding board members of the International Coalition to Ban Depleted Uranium Weapons. She is the recipient of the Human Rights Award from the Mid-South Peace & Justice Center, the PRSSA VOX Campaign Award, and Dick Machow Environmental Justice Award from Sierra Club.

Embrace Humanity: The Solution to Global Issues

by Jan Berry, Tennessee State Coordinator, Citizens' Climate Lobby

The coronavirus pandemic is preparing us for our next global battle: climate change. As we stay at home, we have time to take walks, enjoy the spring, listen more deeply, and rethink what makes our lives worth living. Many are embracing our humanity and our natural environment.

The recognition that our choices matter hits us hard—do I go out?—do I wear a mask?—do I wash my hands? These choices affect ourselves and our families, and also the most vulnerable of our society. Embracing our humanity is how we flatten the curve on the infection rate to survive this pandemic. It is also how we flatten the curve on carbon emissions.

Dr. Katherine Hayhoe, an atmospheric scientist and professor of political science and director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University, spoke

to over 3,000 climate advocates during an Earth Day CCL Zoom meeting. "We were designed to live on this perfect, amazing, home that we have. It is the single most important bond we share no matter who we are that live on this planet." Her inspirational statement expresses one of the core values of Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL). When asked, "Why do you care about climate change?"—climate advocates respond, "I am human!" "I care about humanity!"

Non-profits, community groups, churches, even corporations share strong core values that drive action on climate change. The Sierra Club (SC) and CCL are two such groups influencing individuals, corporations and government to act. Our embrace of humanity renews our shared commitment to act on climate change. Your local CCL and SC groups will welcome you and help you act on climate change.

Contact Jan at jan.berry@cclvolunteer.org

Bull Run Gets a Newsletter

by Todd Waterman, Harvey Broome Group

For now, the grassroots Bull Run organizing team can't organize in-person grassroots Bull Run Community meetings on coal ash or even meet in person themselves. But that hasn't stopped them from "Zooming" ahead and publishing their revealing first Bull Run Community Group Newsletter, mailed to about 600 of Bull Run Coal Plant's closest neighbors—thanks to donations from the Harvey Broome Group, Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM), Beyond Coal, and Appalachian Voices. Volunteers are also emailing newsletters and hanging them on mailboxes in stakeholder neighborhoods not on the chosen postal route.

The newsletter reports coal ash contamination of drinking water. Anderson County Commissioner Catherine Denenberg hopes commissioners will unanimously support independent testing for contamination anywhere on the Bull Run site.

To subscribe to the Newsletter, email BullRunNeighbors@gmail.com or call Adam Hughes at (865) 249-7488. View the newsletter here: <https://bit.ly/BRCG-Spring2020>

Contact Todd at jtoddw@gmail.com

BULL RUN COMMUNITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

-Keeping Our Communities Safe From Coal Ash-
Spring 2020, Issue 1

We are a grassroots coalition of community members, organizations, and county officials dedicated to protecting our communities from the effects of toxic coal ash and engaging the public in decisions around the closure of the Bull Run Fossil Plant.



Coal Ash Landfill Permit Now on Hold

Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards for 2020 Announced

"Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Commissioner David Salyers announced the winners of the 2020 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards in early June. Tennesseans continue to show their commitment to the environment in innovative ways, and we want to recognize their outstanding efforts," Lee said. "These awards show that responsible environmental stewardship is happening across our state."

The Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards program recognizes exceptional voluntary actions that improve or protect our environment and natural resources with projects or initiatives not required by law or regulation.

Winners include The Doe Mountain Recreation Authority (Johnson County) in the Natural Resource category; the City of Knoxville (Knox County) in the Energy and Renewable Resources category; Milcrofton Utility District (Williamson County) in the Water Quality category; Paint Oak, LLC. (Hamblen County) in the Materials Management category; green|spaces (Hamilton County) in the Environmental Education and Outreach category; Shelby County Health Department in the Clean Air category; and Stanley Black & Decker (Madison County) in the Sustainable Performance category.

Watch for more about these outstanding winners in future issues.

The Sierra Club Mourns the Passing of Three Activists

We honor the Earth-changing work they did.

Mack S. Prichard, State Naturalist Emeritus

by Randy Hedgepath, Tennessee State Naturalist



Former Governor Phil Bredesen called Mack Prichard the “conscience of Tennessee Conservation” and Senate Joint Resolution #1007 named him the State Naturalist Emeritus. He worked under eight governors in his more than 50-year career until his retirement in 2008. Mack began his career with Tennessee State Parks at 16 as a seasonal naturalist at Meeman Shelby Forest State Park near Memphis. He also worked at the Chucalissa Indian Mounds in T.O. Fuller State Park in Memphis. As a teenager he was named Vice President of the Memphis Archeology Club. Mack gave a talk in favor of preserving Parkin Mound in Arkansas when he was just 15 years old, which convinced the owner to donate the site for preservation. This initial success led him to become a guide for the

parks. His talents soon landed him a statewide position with the Division of State Parks Educational Services. In 1971, Mack helped establish the Tennessee Archeology Division and was the first State Archeologist.

Mack had a hand in starting and preserving nearly half of the areas now designated as state parks. Governor Frank Clement championed a multi-million-dollar parks acquisition fund in the 1960s and Mack was one of the people charged with identifying areas to acquire. He also worked on securing numerous areas for the State Natural Areas system. Notable examples are Savage Gulf, May Prairie, Colditz Cove, and Radnor Lake. The Natural Areas Act of 1971 enabled our system of nature preserves and the first administrator was Mack Prichard

Most conservation and environmental organizations in Tennessee can count Mack Prichard as a founding father or long-term member. The ‘Middle Tennessee Conservancy’ which became the Nature Conservancy of Tennessee, the Tennessee Trails Association, Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, and many others had Mack present at their first meetings. If the cause was protecting nature, a healthy environment, and cultural history of our state, Mack was on board. He was on the Board of Directors of the South Cumberland Regional Land Trust, the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation and others.

Mack was a long-term member of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club. In fact, he was instrumental in establishing it when it was known as the Tennessee Group of the Cumberland Chapter. He told me once he was very glad that I worked with the Sierra Club, leading field trips and doing programs, because, “those folks do really good work.” Long-time Sierran Charlie High shares that he first met Mack in the late 1960s when he went to work for the Department of Conservation as a park planner. On his first day tour of Central Office, he met Mack sorting slides for an upcoming program. Charlie’s first field trip with Mack was into the Rocky River Gorge to help him mark off an area to protect a huge Tulip Poplar from logging. It seems the timber company that had bought the area had requested Mack do so, because it was believed to be the largest Tulip Tree in the state. Charlie says Mack would show up for Sierra Club outings, sometimes unannounced and later in the trip would wander off on his own, exploring the woods, only to show up at camp in the evening—that was Mack’s way.

Mack’s greatest legacy may be the numerous people he inspired to work for conservation through his programs and advocacy. Many new employees with the Department of Conservation named Mack as a reason they pursued their career. When I was in college at UT Martin in the 1970s, I first witnessed Mack give a slide talk to the School of Agriculture. He made some folks squirm with his facts about pesticides, made them laugh at his outdoor adventures, and made a few jump out of their seats when he imitated the barred owl at the end and urged them to “give a hoot” for conservation in Tennessee. I came away with a newfound ambition to pursue a career in parks, perhaps as a naturalist with state parks.

Everyone who loves the natural beauty, biological diversity, and fascinating history of Tennessee owes a debt of gratitude to Mack Prichard. Especially those, like myself, who were inspired and trained by him. I may owe him the most because he not only helped save some of my favorite places but also helped make my dream of walking in his footsteps, as State Naturalist, a reality.

Contact Randy at Randy.Hedgepath@tn.gov

Nancy McFadden, Urban Environmentalist

By Rita Bullinger



The Sierra Club Tennessee mourns the loss of Nancy Gunderson McFadden who passed away March 28, 2020, in Nashville, Tennessee. Nancy was an active member of the Sierra Club’s Middle Tennessee Group Executive Committee.

Nancy was a person of deep spiritual convictions, kind and straightforward; a special education teacher and ardent advocate for environmental and social justice who worked to make the world a better place. Known for her passion and knowledge, Nancy weighed in on issues pertaining to health care, pesticide misuse, and coal ash. She was also a skillful coalition builder, remembered for her enthusiasm and inclusiveness.

As an environmental activist, in the 1980s, Nancy did all the development and filing work required for the environmental organization Bring Urban Recycling to Nashville Today (BURNT) to qualify as a 501(c)3 non-profit. BURNT was the lead organization advocating for Nashville to shut down its downtown incinerator and institute recycling programs.

Later, Nancy initiated and led a successful campaign to convince Metro Nashville Public Schools to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) practices in order to minimize the use of toxic pesticides in schools and classrooms while also reducing pest infestations. The effort involved bringing in nationally recognized experts to train Metro staff in the practice of IPM. After its success in the schools, Metro Nashville adopted this practice for all their public buildings.

Working with SC and the Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC), she also successfully advocated at the Tennessee State Legislature for the rights of localities to retain local control over pesticides. For all these efforts TEC awarded Nancy the Environmental Health Advocate Award in 1994.

Those of us who knew Nancy remember her as an avid reader and researcher of issues that impacted the environment and people’s health. She regularly shared these resources with the members of the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club via their internal communications tools. “Members looked forward to receiving and reading her informative posts,” recalls Gary Bowers, Chapter Communications Coordinator. “Her acuity and acumen for this communication was highly valued and will be greatly missed.”

Scott Banbury, the Tennessee Chapter’s Conservation Program Coordinator, first met Nancy when she was working with Bring Urban Recycling to Nashville Today (BURNT). He recalls, “She really understood what it took to be a change-making public citizen. Nancy attended public meetings and engaged in the organizational work that promotes the public good. I thought of Nancy as my conscience. Hardly a week went by in the 20 years I knew Nancy that she didn’t reach out to me personally to make sure I was aware of important national, state, and local environmental and social justice issues impacting Tennessee,” Scott says. “Often, she inspired me to take on issues I may have otherwise overlooked. I miss her already.”

Nancy volunteered for the League of Women Voters and Catholic Charities in support of their refugee work. She also worked with the president of Physicians for Social Responsibility to arrange for Grand Rounds environmental health speaking engagements, one with Dr. Bill Reid, at both Meharry and Vanderbilt Hospitals.

The Middle Tennessee Group welcomed her recent addition to the Tennessee Executive Committee and appreciated her activity in areas and issues that were her passion.

In the words of Rita Harris, Sierra Club National Board Member, “I remember Nancy vividly. She was dedicated and very knowledgeable about integrated pest management and I recall her pushing the concept in the Memphis City School system. I’m so sorry to hear about her passing.”

Nancy is survived by her husband of 46 years, Jack McFadden, their daughter, son, and two grandchildren.

Contact Rita at wranglersctn@gmail.com

Frank Fly: Attorney, Environmentalist and Friend

by Joe W. McCaleb, Attorney at Law

I first met Frank in the late 1970s just as he was engaging the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in a legal battle to stop the proposed Columbia Dam and defend the Duck River and surrounding lands, part of which was Frank's boyhood home. Frank loved the Duck River, and as a boy he canoed it, swam in it and explored many of its tributaries as well as the woods in its watershed.

Frank demonstrated his love for nature both as a long-time member of the Sierra Club and in his practice of the law. Details are fuzzy because it has been so many years, but I joined Frank's legal team sometime after January 1977, after I left the employ of Tennessee as its first environmental lawyer. The other



lawyer on Frank's team was Jim Tripp, attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund. In the ensuing months, we experienced defeat after defeat in the various administrative boards and courts, but Frank never gave up and took the fight to TVA and its political allies in both the courts and the public arena. The biggest plum in that fight was Frank's television appearance on *60 Minutes* detailing all of the reasons the land around the beautiful Duck River at Columbia, Tennessee, should not be inundated and 12,000 marginal acres placed under TVA's control. In the end, Frank and his team delayed the final construction of the dam too long for TVA's original Final Environmental Impact Study to remain ef-

fective. As a result, TVA was required to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Study which showed that the cost-to-benefit ratio from the construction of the dam was less than 1:1, violating the rules and regulations of both NEPA and TVA. TVA stopped construction of the dam and removed the portion already constructed.

Frank was the chief architect of that victory and, as a result, preserved the Duck River for all the recreation and world-class biological diversity it offers today for Americans. In 1986, Perception Inc., the world's largest kayak manufacturer, named Frank "River Conservationist of the Year" for the United States.

Afterwards, Frank returned to his law practice in Murfreesboro and became a founding partner of Bulloch, Fly, Hornsby & Evans. I began a law practice in Hendersonville, Tennessee, and from time to time, Frank and I communicated on various environmental cases. Frank became proficient in land use cases, many involving different aspects of our natural environment.

In 1996, Frank and I began to work more closely on cases primarily involving the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). We commented on Environmental Assessments filed by federal agencies and filed lawsuits in Federal District Court to enforce provisions of the CWA. We also worked together on state permits issued pursuant to the Tennessee Water Quality Act of 1970. Of course, as with all attorneys, we each also carried individual case loads. Frank was always a fierce advocate for his clients and rarely, that I recall, conceded defeat.

When not practicing law, Frank hiked, biked and kayaked on his favorite river. He was also an accomplished tennis player and won several tournaments, including the Knoxville City Championship one year. He became a mentor to young tennis students in clinics as well as young lawyers seeking his advice.

Sometime after 2009, Frank mysteriously became afflicted with ALS, also known as Lou Gerig's disease. But even as this disease progressed, he continued his law practice, sometimes from his historic home, Farmington, just outside Murfreesboro, and continued other activities as much as the disease allowed. My wife Glenda and I visited Frank and Suzanne, his wife, twice and each time he showed remarkable determination to accept our visits. On one visit, he recounted a story he told numerous visitors about the friendly ghost that lived in their historic home, and turned pages of a certain book located in their library! Even when Frank discovered the strange phenomenon and turned the page back to its original place, the next morning, the page was turned again. Frank swore it was true, and Suzanne confirmed.

But unfortunately, as the disease progressed, Frank turned away all visitors, even me. On April 29 when I received a phone call from Suzanne, it was a shock. My long-time friend passed away on April 28, 2020. His pain is now gone. I miss him but I know Frank's spirit is in a beautiful place. Due to the COVID-19 virus, a memorial service will be held to honor the life and service of Frank M. Fly at a later date.

Joe McCaleb became a member of the Sierra Club in 1977 and a lifetime member in 1990. *Contact Joe at McCalebJW@gmail.com*

A Service of Song

by Emily Dickinson

Some keep the Sabbath going to church ;
I keep it staying at home,
With a bobolink for a chorister,
And an orchard for a dome.

Some keep the Sabbath in surplice ;
I just wear my wings,
And instead of tolling the bell for church,
Our little sexton sings.

God preaches, — a noted clergyman —
And the sermon is never long ;
So instead of getting to heaven at last,
I'm going all along !

Dear Eartha :

Advice from An Eco-Guru

Dear Eartha,

I really enjoy getting around my neighborhood by walking or riding my bike. I love that I'm getting some fresh air while also not burning fossil fuels. But some parts of town lack sidewalks and lanes for safe walking and riding. How can we make transportation safer for pedestrians?

—Eager to Walk

Dear Eager,

Yes, let's walk and bike—six feet apart for now. Safety on the scale of systemic change comes in the form of citizen action. And that's where an international organization called Vision Zero, started in Sweden in 1997, takes us to the next level.

The Vision Zero Network asks citizens of the world to consider this: If one plane crash is one too many, why are thousands of pedestrian deaths caused by unsafe city traffic tolerated? On the rise around the world pedestrian deaths are caused by distracted drivers. The creation of safe streets happens by working together systematically – all of it aided by folks' awareness during the COVID pandemic as more of us, with our children and loved ones, take to the streets, parks, and open air. Vision Zero's premise has more of us demanding that our city streets become safer.

Walk Bike Nashville recently hosted a forum on the Vision Zero plan for Middle Tennessee, modeled after Portland and Seattle. Designers and engineers, with input from citizens, are being asked to envision and create cities where pedestrian safety is a priority. Methods to slow or eliminate traffic include roundabouts, narrow street design, closed off areas (such as the Beale Street blocks in Memphis), as well as signage, sidewalks, and reflectors embedded in asphalt.

Data collection is another tool to get car drivers to slow down. In their 'Impossible Crossings Project,' Walk Bike Nashville studied the top 50 pedestrian crash locations and published the results to draw attention to the problem. A city begins to change from car-centric to walk/bike-centric by talking to citizens, law enforcement, and seeking a culture of safety through design and engineering solutions. In East Tennessee, groups such as Bike Walk Knoxville and Knox County Safe Routes to Schools Program are coming up with their regional solutions.

A member of the Nashville Vision Zero panel said, "It's okay to get mad about pedestrian deaths." Too often the parts of town with the poorest citizens, often underserved and underrepresented, have the most dangerous crossings. Many factors are involved: use of buses, more traffic lanes on highways, and funding diverted to wealthier sections of town. Go ahead, get mad. Support your local organizations who are working to make city streets safe for all citizens. Keep biking and walking because you've become aware and invested. And that's a good sign.

Takin' it to the streets, as always,

Eartha

[*Dear Eartha is written by Rita Bullinger – wraglersctn@gmail.com]*

Help Elect Conservation-Minded Candidates!

What role can you play in electing people to office who understand how critical it is to protect the environment, address climate change, and work for social justice? First, vote. Second, contact your area political chair to volunteer for 2020 Plan to Win.

- Cherokee Group – Bill Moll whmoll@aol.com
- Harvey Broome Group – Kent Minault kminault@gmail.com
- Middle Tennessee Group – Deanna Bowden deannabowden@netscape.net
- Chickasaw Group – Carl Richards crich555@gmail.com
- Watauga Conservation Committee – Gloria Griffith gla4797@embarqmail.com
- Clarksville Conservation Committee – JoAnn McIntosh mcjoann@gmail.com
- CareNET Conservation Committee – Bill Kornrich bkornrich@gmail.com

Defender Chair Needed

The Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter needs someone to take over fundraising for the Sierra Club Defenders of Tennessee, our program for lobbying the Tennessee State Legislature. We have a lobbyist who represents us, and his salary needs to be funded. The work can all be done from home. Please contact Sherry Loller:

sherryloller@hotmail.com or 615-889-2968

Tennessee Chapter Retreat Schedule

Fall 2020	Pickett State Park	October 23 - 25
Winter 2021	Cedar of Lebanon State Park	January 29 - 31
Spring 2021	Fall Creek Falls State Park	April 30 - May 2

Seeking Experienced Writers

The Tennes-Sierran is looking for passionate news and feature writers to cover important Tennessee news about conservation. We're especially interested in writers with background in environmental issues. If you are an experienced writer and would like to be a part of the Sierra Club movement to protect Tennessee's environment, please contact Emily Ellis, editor, at tnsierran.editor@gmail.com.

Everyone is talking about crime,
Tell me who are the criminals?
I said everybody's talking about crime, crime,
Tell me who, who are the criminals?
I really don't see them!
Equal rights and justice. And there'd be no crime!
Equal rights and justice. There be no criminals!
Equal rights and justice..

Excerpt from *Equal Rights* by Peter Tosh

...Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.

Martin Luther King from Letter from a Birmingham Jail

WANT TO GO PAPERLESS?

You can now opt out of getting a paper copy of this newspaper and receive it attached to an email instead. https://bit.ly/Stop_My_Paper_Copy



MEETINGS

The Sierra Club continues to pause all in-person meetings thru August 31. Most groups and conservation committees are meeting online. Check a meeting status: <https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/sierra-club-tennessee-calendar> or scan the QR code ==> If you would like to attend, please contact the group or committee chair. Contact information is on page 2.



Group Program Meetings

Group	Date	Location	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 7/27, 8/24, 9/28	TBA	TBA
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Tue 7/16, 8/20, 9/17	Benjamin Hooks Public Library, 3030 Poplar Ave, Memphis	6:30 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 7/14, 8/10, 9/8	Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Thu 7/9, 8/13, 9/10	Radnor Lake Nature Center, 1160 Otter Creek RD, Nashville	7:00 PM

Group Business Meetings

Group	Date	Location	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 7/6, 8/3, 9/7	TBA	TBA
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Wed 7/1, 8/5, 9/2	Cheffies Cafe, 483 High Point Terrace, Memphis	6:30 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 7/28, 8/25, 9/22	The Church of the Savior, 934 N. Weisgarber Rd. Knoxville	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Mon 7/20, 8/17, 9/21	House of Kabob, 216 Thompson Lane, Nashville	6:30 PM

Regional Conservation Committee Business Meetings

Committee	Date	Location	Time
Clarksville	Tue 7/21, 8/18, 9/15	Clarksville-Montgomery County Public Library, 350 Pageant Ln, Clarksville	6:00 PM
CareNET (Rogersville)	Thu 7/2, 8/6, 9/3	St. Henry Catholic Church, 114 Highway 70 North, Rogersville	6:00 PM
Watauga (Mountain City)	Tue 7/14, 8/11, 9/8	R&D Campground Pavilion 500 Mining Town Rd Mountain City	5:00 PM
Tri-Cities	Tue 7/8, 8/12, 9/9	136 Bob Jobe Rd, Gray TN 37615	7:00 PM