

# Tennessee Sierran



The bimonthly state newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club

Volume 55, Number 6 - November/December 2022

## Students Rescue Food Waste at Westmeade Elementary in Nashville

Story on Page 7

**Chapter and Group Ballots Inside!**



**Sierra Club Endorses Candidates — page 3**

Cover Photo: In a project to reduce cafeteria food waste, Westmeade Elementary School students in Nashville organized surplus food that was then offered to hungry students; what remained was transported to the Nashville Rescue Mission.

# Message from the State Vice Chair

## Nancy Bell weighs in on the Apocalypse

Feelin' kinda apocalyptic lately? Raging fires, droughts and drowning rains, and hurricanes. Climate change migration and species driven to extinction — you might wonder if humans are next. Fear leads to anger, hatred, and war, including dire nuclear threats. The climate change evidence from every direction may be weighing you down.

Nature is threatened, but remains a solace. Fall's extravagant beauty draws our attention as well as sparkling water, golden-rod, purple asters, and cool fresh air. Now when we look at autumn in full dress, there is an urge to ask trees not to lose their leaves, to plead with them to last 'til spring, to ask the ailing walnut trees and blighted redbud to hang on another year.

If you feel sad, you're not alone. But remember, you don't have to mourn every day. Instead, make a list of what makes you feel good, what makes life worth living. No doubt extravagant natural beauty tops your list. Your relationship to Nature is something to cherish and nurture. What about your other relationships — to your own body, to your home, to your community?

So, fall is a time to check your maintenance schedule — your heat pump, your outdoor pipes. And those roof gutters! Have you tended to your garden's fall upkeep, protected fall greens from frost? And you, have you settled into an exercise routine, which will help to reduce stress?

Now, check the maintenance of your human relationships. You are not alone, not the only one fretting, mourning, or angry. Independent activities such as fixing or building something, reading and writing all relieve anger and frustration and bring satisfaction and make life worth living. But topping them all is the joy of fellowship with family and friends. You can't live without those ties.

In fact, humans cannot live without each other. "We are the World" has never been more true. We now realize that without the help of the whole world, we will not escape the apocalyptic threat of the destruction of nature.

Sorrow, guilt, and bitter regret take too much energy. Thank goodness, you have already put that energy into action instead. You reuse and recycle, cut waste where possible, perhaps drive less, drive electric if you can. You read about environmental issues, sometimes write to your legislators, and contribute to the Sierra Club. Thank you!

Back to that maintenance schedule. The final step in realizing your responsibilities, as well as your need for joy and community, is to show your appreciation for our democratic society by working to make it so. Improve your relationships, open your mind, gather hope and even joy, by joining others to support political candidates. Find the candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club. Angry non-participation will only produce a one-party state, with no one to challenge ideas that are short-sighted and harmful. Voting is a privilege that shows you value community, and demonstrates the hope that we are keeping alive for ourselves and the next generation. If you are in a minority party, help them to show a strong presence in the state by voting and getting others to vote.

It is a cooperative effort to raise a family, to tend our town's trees and flowers, to feed the hungry, and to elect legislators who will truly help us, who will remember that climate change affects every living thing. Let's elect legislators who will enact the changes we need and judges who will hold firm to the principles of care for each other and the community. Let's work together in the joy of fellowship. Remember, it takes a village to raise our spirits.

Contact Nancy at [nancywithbell@gmail.com](mailto:nancywithbell@gmail.com)



## Trees Saved in Downtown Knoxville

by Kent Minault, Harvey Broome Group Political Committee Chair

This month, Harvey Broome Group members pulled off a significant victory by saving the tree canopy in downtown Knoxville's Cradle of Country Music Park. In June 2021, a small group led by Maggie Longmire started contacting city officials asking that they find a way to protect five mature trees in the park that were threatened by the installation of a large sculpture. We were repeatedly told, as we continued our efforts, that the sculpture was already approved and the destruction of the trees was inevitable. The leader of the public arts committee, Liza Zenni; the City's Chief Operations Officer, David Brace; and the Urban Forester, Kasey Krouse; all agreed: "There's been a public process, it's had several stages, and we have to go ahead."

Then, on August 19th, 2022, local activists held a rally at the Park. People spoke about how important the trees were in their lives, signed petitions, and word got out about the issue. Some who had been angered by the destruction of trees at another Knoxville park, Lakeshore Park, started putting messages on social media, and others began an online petition. Some of us were interviewed by local media, and our request to make calls (continued on page 8)



Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon shakes hands with Sierra Club activist Kent Minault after a new plan to save downtown trees was made. Mayor Kincannon is a former Sierra Club endorsee. That's State Representative Gloria Johnson standing beside Kent.

## Tennes-Sierran

The bimonthly newsletter of the  
Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club  
Volume 55, Number 6 November/December 2022  
Digital Edition

### Change of Address

Email: [Address.Changes@SierraClub.org](mailto:Address.Changes@SierraClub.org)

Online: [MyAccount.SierraClub.org](http://MyAccount.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](http://bit.ly/Stop_My_Paper_Copy)

### Submissions

December Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by November 24

January Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by December 22

January / February Issue of The Tennes-Sierran by November 30

### Chapter News Team

Communications Coordinator: Gary Bowers [sierra@totheforest.net](mailto:sierra@totheforest.net)

Tennes-Sierran Editor: Emily Ellis [tnsierran.editor@gmail.com](mailto:tnsierran.editor@gmail.com)

E-Newsletter Editor: Allie Stafford [enews.sierratn@gmail.com](mailto:enews.sierratn@gmail.com)

Assistant Editor: Todd Waterman [jtoddw@gmail.com](mailto:jtoddw@gmail.com)

Poetry Editor: Alan May <https://alan-may.com/>

### TENNESSEE CHAPTER

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee>

### Officers

Chair:	Cris Corley 615-477-9090 <a href="mailto:chapter.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org">chapter.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org</a>
Vice Chair:	Nancy Bell 423-272-6342 <a href="mailto:nancywithbell@gmail.com">nancywithbell@gmail.com</a>
Secretary:	open
Treasurer:	Craig Brandt 865-924-0597 <a href="mailto:brandtcctn@gmail.com">brandtcctn@gmail.com</a>
Conservation Chair:	Bill Moll 404-401-7899 <a href="mailto:whmoll@aol.com">whmoll@aol.com</a>
Outings Chair:	Ron Shrieves 865-924-8973 <a href="mailto:ronshrieves@gmail.com">ronshrieves@gmail.com</a>
Political Chair:	Bill Moll 404-401-7899 <a href="mailto:whmoll@aol.com">whmoll@aol.com</a>

### Conservation Program Coordinator

Scott Banbury 901-619-8567 [scott.banbury@sierraclub.org](mailto:scott.banbury@sierraclub.org)

### Beyond Coal Campaign Staff

Bonnie Swinford, Senior Organizing Representative

[bonnie.swinford@sierraclub.org](mailto:bonnie.swinford@sierraclub.org)

Amy Kelly, Campaign Representative

[amy.kelly@sierraclub.org](mailto:amy.kelly@sierraclub.org)

### GROUPS

#### Cherokee Group—Chattanooga

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/cherokee>

Chair: David Hoot 423-503-9482

[hoot.david@gmail.com](mailto:hoot.david@gmail.com)

#### Harvey Broome Group—Knoxville

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome>

Chair: Jerry Thornton 865-719-9742

[gatwildcat@aol.com](mailto:gatwildcat@aol.com)

#### Chickasaw Group—Memphis

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/chickasaw>

Chair: Carl Richards 218-409-5150

[crich555@gmail.com](mailto:crich555@gmail.com)

#### Middle Tennessee Group—Nashville

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/middle-tennessee>

Chair: Antoinette Olesen 615-498-2778

[middle.tn.group.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org](mailto:middle.tn.group.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org)

### REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEES

#### Clarksville-Montgomery County Regional Conservation Committee

Chair: JoAnn McIntosh 931-338-2530 [mcijoann@gmail.com](mailto:mcijoann@gmail.com)

#### Care NET Regional Conservation Committee (Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, and Hawkins Counties)

Chair: Bill Kornrich 423-300-8764 [bkornrich@gmail.com](mailto:bkornrich@gmail.com)

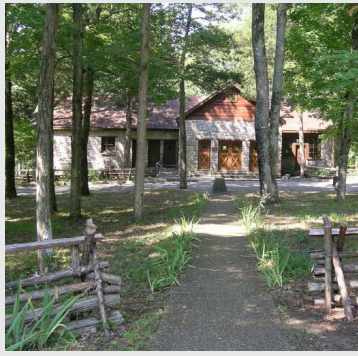
#### Holston Valley Regional Conservation Committee

Chair: Dan Firth 423-390-0882 [dan.firth.sierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:dan.firth.sierraclub@gmail.com)

#### Watauga Regional Conservation Committee (Johnson and Carter Counties)

Chair: Gloria Griffith 423-727-4798 [gla4797@embarqmail.com](mailto:gla4797@embarqmail.com)

## Retreat is Back! Jan 20-22



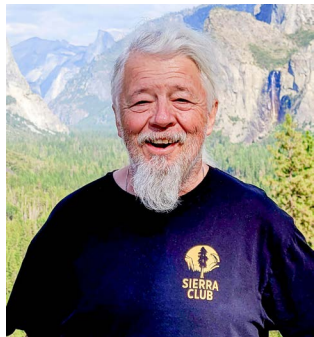
Join fellow Sierra Clubbers at Cedars of Lebanon State Park January 20-22, 2023 for Hikes, Talks and Planning Sessions. Lodging options include Lodge, Cabins and Camping. Check the website, digital newsletter and next *Tennes-Sierran* for more details.

## Sierra Club Endorses Candidates

To see candidates endorsed by your Sierra Club Chapter and Group, go to your Chapter or Group website, click the “Political” dropdown menu and find a link there. Want to endorse future candidates where you live? Tell Jerry Thornton at [gatwildcat@aol.com](mailto:gatwildcat@aol.com).

## Council of Club Leaders Meeting Impressive

by Charlie High, Alternate CCL Delegate



In September, Chapter Delegate Cris Corley and I attended the Annual Meeting of the Council of Club Leaders (CCL) in Oakland, California. The CCL adopted ten resolutions and met in joint session with the Board of Directors and senior staff members. As a first-time attendee to the CCL Annual Meeting, I was impressed by the intelligence and dedication of the volunteer leaders, staff and Board of Directors of Sierra Club. The size and scope of the organization is larger than I had imagined, with many Club

issues covered.

Mel MacInnis, National Director of Outings Engagement, discussed whether outings were dead, or maybe dying to change, as a result of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. Vicky Hoover, Wilderness 60 Coordinator, reminded delegates that the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act was coming in 2024. All chapters were urged to plan events to promote wilderness protection and to tout chapter successes in protecting wild places. Tara Bedeau, Chief of People, Culture and Equity, gave a dazzling presentation which encouraged creation of a sustainable, long-term political committee in each chapter with a strong group of political donors. It set the tone for a cooperative, accepting meeting. (Continued on page 8)

## A Call from Sierra Club Member, A Solid Waste Disaster Avoided

by Scott Banbury, TN Chapter Conservation Programs Coordinator

In early September I received a call from Gale Moore, a member in Maury County with whom we’ve worked for many years on several landfill issues along the Duck River. Gale was extremely concerned by the construction of a tire shredding and recycling facility on the Monsanto Superfund Site. She is very vigilant about such things and was alarmed that there had been no public notice or local discussion about this project.

I looked up the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) files on the project and was horrified to learn that an outfit called Trinity Business Group (TBG) had received the tire shredding permit via a process called Permit-By-Rule, whereby TDEC can issue a solid waste permit without public notice and participation as long as it conforms to certain rules. What’s more, I learned that TBG had also applied for permits by rule to operate a Construction & Demolition Material Recovery Processing Facility, a Municipal Solid Waste Material Recovery Processing Facility, and an Energy Recovery Processing Facility (waste-to-energy incinerator), all presumably for the same Maury County site.

It became apparent that what TBG intended to do was import construction waste and municipal garbage from surrounding communities, separate out any recyclable material, and then burn the rest. Based on their scale in the applications, the facilities were being designed to replace the Middle Point Landfill in Rutherford County, which currently serves 34 counties in Middle TN, in addition to serving the construction demolition needs of several surrounding counties, including Davidson County.

Needless to say, Maury County residents were not happy with this idea, and were rightly infuriated that TBG was trying to sneak it through without public notice and participation. We immediately contacted TDEC and several local officials to find out what was going on and who knew what about it. We were shocked to learn that no elected officials knew anything about it, and that TDEC didn’t think that public notice was necessary, even though the City of Columbia had adopted the Jackson Law during a previous fight over a proposed Regional Municipal Landfill at the same site. The Jackson Law allows any municipality or county that adopts it to decide whether or not TDEC should go forward with solid waste permitting. We also learned that TDEC shared some of our concerns and that they had issued Notice Of Deficiency letters on all three permits that were still pending.

To their credit, newly elected Maury County Mayor Sheila Butt, State Representative Scott Cepicky and State Senator Joey Hensley all contacted TDEC. TDEC responded by reviewing an updated City of Columbia map and, lo and behold, discovered that the proposed facilities were, in fact, within a mile of Columbia and therefore subject to the Jackson Law. Now TBG has to submit their plans to the City of Columbia and most likely Maury County, as they had passed adoption of the Jackson Law on first reading Oct 4th.

The takeaway here is that all it took was one member letting Sierra Club know that something foul was afoot to turn the table on a sneaky company trying to build one of the most polluting facilities Tennessee has ever known. The fight’s not over yet, but we stand a chance of stopping it now.

Contact Scott Banbury [scott.banbury@sierraclub.org](mailto:scott.banbury@sierraclub.org) or 901-619-8567, or join the “Don’t Trash Maury” group on Facebook.

## How to Vote for Your Sierra Club State Chapter and Group Leaders

This issue contains ballots for the election of Sierra Club Tennessee’s state and group leaders. Please note that **ONLY a paper mail-in ballot is available for this year’s ballot** — no electronic ballot is available. Each winner will have a two-year term beginning January 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2024. Successful candidates will join other Executive Committee (ExCom) state or group members in managing fiscal, legislative, and environmental matters, the outings program, and governance responsibilities of the Chapter or their group.

- Vote for Tennessee State Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) candidates on page 4 of this newspaper.
- Also vote for your group’s ExCom candidates based on which county you live in (See the list below).
- Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2022. Please allow for holiday mail delays.
- Only current members as of November 1, 2022, may vote.
- Joint members must use the same ballot.
- Ballots list candidates in randomized order.

**Complete a ballot for your group on page 5, 8, 9, or 10. Which group you are in depends on which county you live in:**

- **Chickasaw Group Ballot on Page 5:** Choose this ballot if you live in one of these counties: Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Madison; McNairy, Obion, Shelby, Tipton, Weakley.
- **Middle Tennessee Group Ballot on Page 8:** Choose this ballot if you live in one of these counties: Bedford, Cannon, Cheatham, Clay, Davidson, DeKalb, Dickson, Giles, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Moore, Perry, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Wayne, Williamson and Wilson.
- **Harvey Broome Group Ballot on Page 9:** Choose this ballot if you live in one of these counties: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Cumberland, Fentress, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Pickett, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, Washington.
- **Cherokee Group Ballot on Page 10:** Choose this ballot if you live in one of these counties: Bledsoe, Bradley, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Jackson, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Overton, Polk, Putnam, Rhea, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren, White.

# Election Ballot for At-Large Delegates to the Tennessee Chapter Executive Committee

**2023-2024 Term**

**VOTE HERE FOR CHAPTER AT-LARGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:**

<u>At-Large Chapter Candidates</u>	<u>Single Member or First Joint Member</u> - Max 3 votes -	<u>Second Joint Member</u> - Max 3 votes -
Virginia Dale	_____	_____
Kent Minault	_____	_____
Cris Corley	_____	_____
David Riall	_____	_____

**HOW TO SUBMIT BALLOTS:**

Paper ballots must be properly submitted to be counted.

1. Place both your Group and At-Large ballot in the same envelope.
2. Seal and write "Ballot" plus your county on that envelope.
3. Place that "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing.
4. Write your name, address, and Sierra Club membership number in the upper left hand corner of the mailing envelope. Your membership number is located to the left of your name on the mailing label of this Tennes-Sierran, and is also available at [myaccount.sierraclub.org](http://myaccount.sierraclub.org). Envelopes *must* include name, address, and membership number to be counted.
5. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2022. To avoid holiday delays, please mail ballot promptly to:

**Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter**  
P.O. Box 113,  
Powell TN 37849    Attn: Elections

**Dr. Virginia Dale**

Dr. Virginia Dale's roots in Tennessee go back seven generations. She grew up in Nashville and attended Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee (UT). When taking a class in ecology, she realized that becoming an environmental scientist was the best opportunity for her to make a difference. While pursuing a doctorate at the University of Washington, she joined the Sierra Club as a life member and worked with the organization to establish the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, where she still conducts research. In 1984, she returned to Tennessee to work at Oak Ridge National Lab and now is an adjunct professor at UT. Her research focuses on how to assess and manage ecosystems in view of disturbances and climate change. She has served on scientific advisory boards for five US agencies, five committees of the National Academies of Science, and several nongovernmental organizations. She helped develop the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment that in 2007 shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore. She has fought for long-term protection of land and resources by engaging with the Sierra Club and numerous other environmental organizations. Virginia has enjoyed serving on the TN Sierra Club Executive Committee since 2021 and being chair of the Land Management Committee, and feels that she still has more to contribute to the Chapter and to conservation of Tennessee's unique resources.

**Kent Minault**

Kent Minault has served two terms as chair of the Political Committee of the Harvey Broome Group. During that time, HBG has significantly expanded its endorsement and candidate support activities. Our candidates scored an important victory last year when all five of our City Council endorsees won reelection in the face of a well-financed attack by the far right. Kent had been leading a life of environmental activism on the west coast and has continued it energetically since moving here in 2018. In 2010, he joined the Beyond Coal campaign for the city of Los Angeles (LA). After helping to get LA off coal, he joined the LA County Electric Bus Coalition and got LA Metro to commit to transitioning to electric buses by 2030. He organized three EV events in the LA community of Watts and helped found the Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee, installing rooftop solar and helping residents enter union apprenticeship programs. After moving here, he organized an EV event in east Knoxville with SEED. He works regularly with the Beyond Coal Team and the Chapter Energy Team as well as with Bull Run Neighbors. He currently chairs the State Transportation Committee and co-chairs Drive Electric Tennessee's Infrastructure working group. He's eager to work with the Chapter ExCom on refining statewide endorsement activity to help Club members in rural areas endorse pro-environment candidates and conduct successful support activities.

**Dr. Cris Corley**

Chair TN Chapter Sierra Club, Delegate (CCL), and National Sierra Candidate Forum Committee. In 2019, with the endorsement of the Executive Committee, I was able to persuade Governor Lee to transfer several thousands of acres of environmentally sensitive state forest lands to Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Currently I am involved in the planning and development of a 30-mile trail system that will connect Long Hunter State Park to Cedars of Lebanon. Due to the Covid 19 virus, the Sierra Club faces numerous challenges at all levels. Current financial issues related to Covid have resulted in budgetary reductions and a hiring freeze at the National level. The Tennessee Executive Committee has been diligent in meeting its fiduciary responsibility to our members and our financial reserves are strong. Hopefully the chapter will soon be able to return to safely gathering at our favorite retreat locations and begin hiking together with our favorite outings leaders. I hope to continue as your delegate-at-large and Chair. I would appreciate your kind vote. Let's all continue on the good path that provides our membership and the public the opportunity to explore and protect the natural wonders of this great state.

**David Riall**

In my 40-year career in graphic arts, I have always been concerned about the environmental direction in which our world and country are headed. I was very active in the 70s during college and my early career. Family then became my main focus, but now I am back getting involved. In the past few years, I have become active in Sierra Club, Interfaith Power and Light, and Audubon, and as Conservation Chair/Webmaster for the very active and socially-conscious Tennessee Valley Canoe Club. Through the paddle club my wife and I have captained river cleanups along with Adopt-A-River at Audubon Acres. I also work with the Nature Center on invasive plant removal along with path and river cleanups. With Sierra Club, I serve on the Chapter Transportation Committee and am currently working through the Cherokee Group to get East Ridge to start thinking in terms of renewables and EVs. I am working with Drive Electric Scenic City to encourage driving with EVs. I think that everything begins on a local level, so on top of these involvements, I have been politically active in getting exposure for environmentally friendly candidates. I see that there is a path to a better and cleaner world, but we need to get on that path as soon as we can. I would love to be a part of that change for the better.

# Election Ballot for Cherokee Group Executive Committee

2023 - 2024 Term

## VOTE HERE FOR CHEROKEE GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:

<u>Cherokee Group Candidates</u>	<u>Single Member or First Joint Member</u> - Max 5 votes -	<u>Second Joint Member</u> - Max 5 votes -
David Riall	_____	_____
David Hoot	_____	_____
Sandy Kurtz	_____	_____
kate anthony	_____	_____
Barbara Kelly	_____	_____
Neil Kjos	_____	_____

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**Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter**  
P.O. Box 113,  
Powell TN 37849    Attn: Elections

### David Riall

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### David Hoot

David Hoot was born and spent his formative years in upstate Michigan. His family's outdoor lifestyle and exposure to small farms instilled a deep love and respect for nature. Media exposure of acid rain, oil spills, and several garbage crises of the 1970s and 80s were first signs of trouble to him. Most of his professional life has been in the construction industry. He has worked to educate and employ green practices in his accomplishments. He has also witnessed how market pressures, ignorance, and greed in this sector buck up against achieving a sustainable environment. Cognizant of the growing environmental threats, and inspired by the words and actions of Al Gore and Bill McKibben, David committed earnestly to activism. Locally in the Chattanooga area, he has been active with green | spaces and serves as the current chair of Sierra Club Tennessee's Cherokee Group. He is also a representative for Climate Chattanooga, which is working toward securing climate change goals for the city. Besides the Climate Crisis, some of the related issues most concerning to David are the current mass extinction event, population rise, and deforestation. However, he believes wholeheartedly that the proper and healthy response in the face of these threats is vigorous, inspiring action.

### Sandy Kurtz

Sandy has long been active in the environmental education field while dealing with environmental issues at local, state, and federal levels. She was one of the founders of the Tennessee Environmental Education Association in 1974, and went on to establish the first educational programs at the Chattanooga Nature Center and at the TVA Energy Center Museum. She also went to Paris with the Sierra Club for Climate Accord work. As of late, Sandy has been working primarily on nuclear, climate change, local water quality, energy justice, and sustainability issues. She is incredibly active with the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign.

### kate anthony

kate anthony is a retired psychologist. She grew up in Southern California, and spent her young adult years backpacking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. An environmentalist of long standing, she's done four different National Sierra Club service outings, and participated in the People's Climate March in NYC in 2015. She completed the Climate Reality Leadership training. Besides the Sierra Club, she serves for Quaker Earthcare Witness and is active in Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light. Her main focus is climate change. She is former Chair of the Cherokee Group.

### Barbara Kelly

Barbara joined the Sierra Club in the 1970s and has been the Tennes-Sierran Editor, Chair of the Cherokee Group, and active in many other Chapter activities. She is involved in climate action issues, working with the Sierra Club, Climate Chattanooga and Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) to advance the belief that a 100% CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE is possible in Chattanooga and Tennessee. She's willing to work behind the scenes on things that keep the group going. She likes to learn new and interesting things at our programs, meet our members and welcome them to Sierra Club's activism and fun.

### Neil Kjos

Neil Kjos grew up in southeast Michigan, where he developed his interest in the outdoors, nature and conservation. This began with the Boy Scouts (achieved Eagle), joining several conservation organizations, and becoming an avid birdwatcher. Later he moved to Atlanta for his Doctorate of Chiropractic and then to Chattanooga to start his practice in 1997. Soon after he was elected the President of the Lookout Valley Neighborhood Association for four years. There he was instrumental in defeating a large-scale housing and marina development off the Tennessee River. He also became involved in the Red Wolf program at Reflection Riding and hosted a fundraiser in his office, donating profits to provide food and assistance to the wolves. He has spent most of his adult life involved in kayaking, rock climbing, and hiking and has been an active member of the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club for 20 years. Neil is fluent in Spanish and travels throughout Latin and South America contributing his time to both healthcare and environmental projects. Currently, Neil is pursuing volunteer opportunities in the conservation of both the snow leopard and the Andean condor.

# Congressman Stephen Cohen

## Honoring an Environmental Champion from Tennessee

By Rita Harris, Sierra Club Board Director

Congressman Stephen Cohen, who represents Tennessee's 9th Congressional District, has been awarded the Edgar Wayburn Environmental Champion Award. This award is one of the highest conferred by the Sierra Club and honors outstanding service to the environment by a person in government.

Congressman Cohen is an attorney and politician who has served as Tennessee's 9th Congressional District representative since 2007; his district encompasses Memphis and all of Shelby County, but he has championed environmental causes across the country. According to the League of Conservation Voters Scorecard, he has an impeccable record and has ranked 100% in five of the last seven years. Actually, he has a 97% lifetime score for all his years in Congress.

When I staffed the Sierra Club Environmental Justice Program office based in Memphis from 1999 to 2017, we worked with his office on various issues regularly, and he was always responsive and supportive. He advocated for issues the community raised as critical, and would write letters or speak out on matters when needed. Congressman Cohen has always supported the efforts of local environmentalists and had an open door to hear their concerns on various issues. It must be noted that he was regularly seen at the Sierra Club Environmental Justice Conferences and events held in Memphis. He continues to show that support in word and deed, most recently, by supporting the vigorous fight by a Southwest Memphis community led by Justin Pearson (Memphis Community Against the Pipeline), to keep a crude oil pipeline out of their community and protect Memphis' artesian water source. As reported in this paper, this community struggle gained national attention and drew national figures such as Vice President Al Gore to join the local team of collaborators, including Protect Our Aquifer, the NAACP, and the Southern Environmental Law Center. Congressman Cohen has proved to be a reliable collaborator and ally.

Congressman Cohen is a respected and outspoken member of the 117th Congress and sits on five committees, including the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the House Committee on Natural Resources. He has served on numerous other committees and either introduced or supported key environmental legislation as well. For example, he has supported increased funding for renewable energy; restoration of Arctic protections and an end to drilling in the Arctic region; the Build Back Better bill; protection of the Grand Canyon from uranium mining; acquisition of federal funding for highways & transit in Tennessee; and so much more. The best way to browse the entirety of his record is to visit his website where his accomplishments and activities are outlined in depth: [cohen.house.gov](http://cohen.house.gov)

The award was truly a team effort. Tennessee Chapter Chair and Council of Club Leaders (CCL) delegate Dr. Cris Corley, along with his brother and fellow Sierra Club member Mike Corley, traveled to Washington DC for the presentation of Congressman Cohen's prestigious Sierra Club award. Congressman Cohen was on the House Floor, but returned to his office for the award presentation. Representative Cohen was elated by the honor, saying



Cris Corley, Tennessee Sierra Club Chair (right), presents the prestigious 2022 Edgar Wayburn Environmental Champion Award to Congressman Stephen Cohen. Congressman Cohen represents the 9th Congressional District in Tennessee.

simply, "I really love the Sierra Club," before returning to a heated debate at the Capitol.

One interesting fact about Congressman Cohen that may not be evident from his website is that he is a Jewish American who has successfully and effectively represented a majority (64%) African American district for 17 years. A lifetime member of the NAACP, he represents the largest percentage of Black constituents of any non-Black member of Congress. He is attentive to constituents of his district and demonstrates it with his votes and his consistent advocacy. He is a longtime member of the Progressive Caucus and has a history of dependably supporting democratic causes during his elected positions at the local and state levels. A true community servant, he has offered general support for many issues we all care about.

Congratulations, Congressman Stephen Cohen, on receiving the Edgar Wayburn Environmental Champion Award, and thank you for all the work you have done for the environment, climate, justice, and our democracy!

Contact Rita at [rita2600@gmail.com](mailto:rita2600@gmail.com)

## Care NET Receives Tennessee River Basin Network Award

by Bill Kornrich, Care Net Regional Conservation Committee

The Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter's Care NET Regional Conservation Committee was the recipient of the Tennessee River Basin Network's (TRBN) Communication/Outreach award, presented at the TRBN's recent conference in Knoxville. This honor also included a \$5,000 cash award provided by TVA. Care NET is located in northeast Tennessee with members from Grainger, Greene, Hancock, and Hawkins counties. The TRBN is a partnership of states, cities, counties, tribal and federal agencies, academic groups, private industry, and non-governmental organizations. TRBN formed in 2014 to protect the Tennessee River watershed, one of the most diverse areas for aquatic species in North America. The Holston, Clinch, and Powell Rivers (areas where Care NET members live) are among the many rivers that feed into the Tennessee River, which is about 650 miles long and flows through four states.

Gillian Bee, TRBN Coordinator, noted that Care NET had "demonstrated its ability to work effectively with individuals and organizations in Hawkins County to promote awareness of the Holston as a community resource and to support activities that improve aquatic diversity in the watershed."

Water quality — in particular that of the Holston River —



Gillian Bee, Tennessee River Basin Network Coordinator, presents Bill Kornrich, Care NET Chair, the annual Communication/Outreach award at its annual conference in Knoxville. The backdrop for the award ceremony at Ijams Nature Center is Care NET's exhibit on the Holston River.

has been a major concern of Care NET since it began meeting in 2016. The Holston runs the entire length of Hawkins County, eventually becoming Cherokee Lake. The river has had a major influence on this region from Native American times to the present. Boating, fishing, duck hunting, and other recreational activity take place on and along the Holston.

Care NET encourages the community to focus on the river with semi-annual river and lake cleanups; a twenty-page booklet on the river for school use; a traveling exhibit called "Tennessee Waters" displayed in Hawkins County public libraries and the Printing Museum; actions to support residents of the Jim Town Road area in opposing the opening of a quarry that sits on the Holston River; work with county commissioners to pass the Jackson Law; coordination of cleanups with county solid waste department; and kayak trips on the Holston. Finally, "The Holston: It's Your River, Hawkins County" exhibit is housed at the Surgoinsville Area Museum and is available for community use.

Care NET meets monthly in Rogersville on the fourth Thursday at 6:00 pm at St. Henry's Catholic Church. For more information, go to Care NET's Facebook page or email: [Carenetsc@gmail.com](mailto:Carenetsc@gmail.com)

*This is the first in a series of articles that show the challenges and opportunities of creating and maintaining the kind of true cultural shift necessary to embrace sustainability. It began with two unassuming vegetable beds, a hopeful physical education teacher and a librarian (the writer, Karen McIntyre) seeking to collaborate with and help children. It brought together district, local and state governments, foundations, and individuals eager to contribute. These articles trace 10 years of evolution showing how each colorful piece of the sustainability patchwork was sewn into place to create a community ready to take the next steps toward a Net-Zero future.*

# What Can We Learn from a 4<sup>th</sup> Grader?

## **A Student's School Assignment Leads to Food Waste Reduction Practice at West Meade Elementary School in Nashville**

by Karen McIntyre, Retired Metro Nashville School Librarian

A fourth-grade student called me over to his computer. As part of a project, he was encouraged to think critically, to research and find answers to real world problems. Assigned hunger, he was less than excited, until I explained that he might actually have one of the few projects where he could make an impact! "Look!," he pointed excitedly to the figures on the screen. One showed that 40 percent of all food produced in the United States went to waste. He then pointed to the number of food-insecure people in the country. "We just need to get this food to those people! Problem solved!" His sweeping over-simplification resulted in a student-proposed solution to food waste at my school Westmeade Elementary in Nashville.

In 2017, The World Wildlife Fund encouraged schools to explore their food waste and we did a food waste audit. It made clear that we had too much waste to compost on campus, and had a big impact on student awareness of how much waste they created.

After a week there was a mountain of untouched, unopened food on the cafeteria stage. Oranges, apples, pre-wrapped PBJ sandwiches, cookies, and chips, all sat in full view of the kids. The fourth grader who had solved world hunger, brought some of his friends over and asked, "Why can't we just give all that to the homeless?" I promised I would find an answer and sent an email to Spencer Taylor, head of Food Service at Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS).

Taylor responded with guidelines for "share tables" where our own students got first chance at the food, and what was left could go to pantries. Once again, this young man had the problem solved (or so he thought)!

We learned how difficult it is to change long-standing patterns — the cafeteria staff was horrified by the prospect of taking the food and giving it to a pantry rather than throwing it away as they always had! They warned the principal about a possible legal suit if anyone got sick from the food, but I had documentation from the head of food services to the contrary and we continued rescuing food.

Student 'Waste Warriors' brought the food to the library at the end of lunch where it was stored in the new stainless refrigerator donated by Home Depot. If students were hungry, teachers sent them to the library to pick up some food. When the refrigerator was full, I weighed the food and loaded it into my car for the trip to the Nashville Rescue Mission. After just 2 ½ years, the school redirected 10,000 pounds of untouched food to the mission. Keep in mind this was a small school of only 380 students!

There are 73 elementary schools in MNPS. Assuming that all of them would produce similar amounts of waste (4,000 pounds of untouched food a year), we could deliver 146 tons of food from MNPS to the hungry and reduce our carbon footprint at the same time by 91,396 lbs. simply by not landfilling perfectly good food. Re-directing food was a relatively easy and no-cost solution to a real problem, but it was only half of the food waste solution. We still had all that plate waste going to the landfill!

Just two years later, the World Wildlife Fund, in conjunction with Kroger Foundation and its "Zero Hunger, Zero Waste" initiative, funded a food waste audit in eight major U.S. cities. Urban Green Lab organized this and invited three metro schools (Warner, Westmeade and Hill Middle) to participate. (See the full report here <https://wwf.to/3dxUlkL>). The hope was that, armed with knowledge, schools would not wait for a national initiative, but would embark on solutions individually.

Participating in this audit not only scientifically measured our food waste (Westmeade produced over 600 lbs of food for the landfill a week), but it introduced me to a whole new network of people within the sustainability movement. In addition to our friends at Urban Green Lab, we met with Nashville's Vice Mayor, Jim Shulman; representatives from MNPS facilities and food services; the Kroger Foundation; Society of St. Andrew (a gleaning organization); Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation; Linda Breggin, co-chair of the Mayor's Sustainability Advisory Committee and long-term proponent of dealing with food waste as a senior attorney with the Environmental Law Institute in Washington, D.C. and a professor at Vanderbilt University. These relationships were invaluable and all people at this table seemed to want to end waste and encourage sustainable practice.

At the audit's conclusion we learned that there was money left in the grant. Knowing that food took up precious space in our landfill and it produced a lot of methane (a gas 25 times more potent for climate change than CO<sub>2</sub>),



Teachers and students at West Meade Elementary School in Nashville organize surplus cafeteria food.

it just seemed like the time was right to move the needle and try composting. Vice Mayor Shulman and one of the pillars of the community, former councilmember and Bell Garden founder, Charlie Tygard, approached the foundation, securing permission to use the funds for that purpose — and we thought we were home free!

*Find the next installment of this inspiring story of kids fighting climate change and working for a healthy future in the next issue of this paper.*

Contact Karen at [kjmcinty@comcast.net](mailto:kjmcinty@comcast.net)

Karen McIntyre, retired Metro Nashville Public Schools librarian, was the sustainability lead at Westmeade Elementary for 12 years. Karen earned her BA at Chapman University, Her M.Ed at Eastern New Mexico University, and her M.L.S. at the University of North Texas. She served in academic libraries, public libraries, and most recently in public school libraries during her career. Karen is now the leader of the volunteer movement to establish sustainable practices in the Metropolitan Nashville Public School System. She is Vice Chair of the Middle Tennessee Group of the Sierra Club.



# Election Ballot for Chickasaw Group Executive Committee

## 2022 - 2023 Term

### VOTE HERE FOR CHICKASAW GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:

<u>Chickasaw Group Candidates</u>	<u>Single Member or First Joint Member</u> -Max 3 votes -	<u>Second Joint Member</u> - Max 3 votes -
Mondell Williams	_____	_____
Marquita Bradshaw	_____	_____
Joe Ozegovich	_____	_____

### HOW TO SUBMIT BALLOTS:

Paper ballots must be properly submitted to be counted.

1. Place both your Group and At-Large ballot in the same envelope.
2. Seal and write "Ballot" plus your county on that envelope.
3. Place that "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing.
4. Write your name, address, and Sierra Club membership number in the upper left hand corner of the mailing envelope. Your membership number is located to the left of your name on the mailing label of this Tennes-Sierran, and is also available at [myaccount.sierraclub.org](http://myaccount.sierraclub.org). Envelopes *must* include name, address, and membership number to be counted.
5. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2022. To avoid holiday delays, please mail ballot promptly to:

**Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter**  
P.O. Box 113,  
Powell TN 37849 Attn: Elections

**Mondell Williams** has been involved in local environmental justice issues for over 25 years, including fighting against a hazardous waste blending & recycling plant in South Memphis and addressing groundwater contamination issues in the Mallory area. He served as Co-Chair of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for the Memphis Defense Depot, monitoring environmental cleanup and reuse activities. He has also been involved in civic affairs for years, running for City Council, and later for Shelby County Clerk in 2018. Mondell was involved in the fight to "Save MLK Park" when the former Mapco oil refinery wanted to lease parts of the park and privatize it. Mondell has worked with the Sierra Club Chickasaw Group since the 1990's, and the Sierra Club EJ Program office from 1999 to 2017, which included serving on the EJ Leadership Team. He served on the Chickasaw ExCom in 2007 and 2021, and served on the Political Committee. Mondell attended two Good Jobs, Green Jobs conferences in Washington, DC, and has never missed the annual Memphis EJ Conference. He was awarded the "Long Haul EJ Award" at the 2010 EJ Conference.

**Marquita Bradshaw** is a lifelong Memphian who has extensive experience in the environmental justice movement and who advocates for human rights causes. She is an alumna of the University of Memphis and is committed to lifelong learning. Her environmental activism began as a teenager working alongside her mother and father in the community group they started in South Memphis. She began writing press releases and planning direct actions with Defense Depot Memphis, Tennessee - Concerned Citizens Committee (DDMT-CCC) to educate and fight for her childhood community, seeking justice for contamination from a Superfund site, the Memphis Defense Depot chemical and biological warfare military landfill. Marquita continues to serve as a volunteer project director for DDMT-CCC. In 1999 she was one of eleven founding members of the group, Youth Terminating Pollution. She has further served her community by working with several other community organizations and support teams in her role as an EJ advocate and activist. Most recently, she was a candidate for the US Senate race for Tennessee. She has worked with union organizations and other groups focused on health disparities and stopping toxic pollution.

**Joe Ozegovich** has served on the Executive Committee for the Chickasaw group for two terms and as Energy Chair since 2016. Joe enjoys the opportunity to share his clean solar energy generation, energy efficiency, and Electric Vehicle (EV) experiences to the community of West Tennessee, Chickasaw group programs, and to the Tennessee Chapter. Joe has been an active participant in the Memphis 3.0 plan targeting EV charging stations, building codes to include 240 volt outlets in garages for easier adoption of electric vehicles, and LED streetlight adoption in the Memphis area. Joe is also involved with the Drive Electric Tennessee group made up of government, industry and Sierra Club members looking to promote EVs with a target of 200,000 Tennessee EVs by 2028. Joe would like to see changes to the TVA renewable energy programs which would substantially increase the amount of clean energy in the TN Valley. Joe would like to continue his work in these areas as an Executive Committee member and would appreciate your vote.

### Knoxville Trees Saved (continued from page 2)

and send emails to the Mayor and City Council was answered by hundreds of people. Knoxville started to pay attention.

Mayor Indya Kincannon called on September 6, right before the next City Council meeting, to tell us they'd reached a compromise whereby four of the five trees could be saved. I thanked her for working out this solution but pressed her about that last tree and why it had to die. My concern was the continuity of the tree canopy. She said it would still be "pretty continuous" and 22 more trees would be planted as well.

The Mayor said I should take this as a victory, and she was right; it is a victory. An aroused public defeated government intransigence, and the Kincannon administration came up with an acceptable solution. We now have a core of roughly 1500 people who can organize to win more. Especially important is massive voter turnout for November. Evelyn Gill made the point at our first rally: vote in all elections and bring friends with you. We need way more champions in public office. Drop me a note if you'd like to find a way to get more involved: [kminault@gmail.com](mailto:kminault@gmail.com)

### CCL Meeting Impressive (Continued from Page 3)

Among resolutions adopted without opposition were those that proposed to: focus chapter administrative support on specific needs; provide digital support to conduct chapter and group elections securely through electronic voting; eliminate requirements for local outings that discourage participation, specifically, a burdensome medical disclosure form.

Among resolutions adopted after debate was one to establish a methane cap and fee on farm animals. Cris Corley spoke in opposition as a person who raised a herd of goats, as did other delegates from farming states. Notwithstanding, the resolution passed with a roll-call vote.

President Cruz reported the Club's long-running, people-centered movement helped Congress pass the Inflation Reduction Act, a major environmental law. On a more personal note, Cruz noted that he was a Puerto Rican graduate of an Ivy League school and that human rights are environmental rights. In the past, Sierra Club had sought to stay out of human rights initiatives, to "stay in their lane." Our lane has broadened somewhat, he suggested.

Contact Charlie at [cahigh1722@aol.com](mailto:cahigh1722@aol.com)



# Election Ballot for Harvey Broome Group Executive Committee

## 2023 - 2024 Term

**VOTE HERE FOR HARVEY BROOME GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:**

<u>Harvey Broome Group Candidates</u>	<u>Single Member or First Joint Member</u> - Max 6 votes -	<u>Second Joint Member</u> - Max 6 votes -
John Nolt	_____	_____
John Todd Waterman	_____	_____
Kent Minault	_____	_____
Gerald Thornton	_____	_____
Haley Ratliff	_____	_____
Angelia Harris	_____	_____

**HOW TO SUBMIT BALLOTS:**

Paper ballots must be properly submitted to be counted.

1. Place both your Group and At-Large ballot in the same envelope.
2. Seal and write "Ballot" plus your county on that envelope.
3. Place that "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing.
4. Write your name, address, and Sierra Club membership number in the upper left hand corner of the mailing envelope. Your membership number is located to the left of your name on the mailing label of this Tennes-Sierran, and is also available at [myaccount.sierraclub.org](http://myaccount.sierraclub.org). Envelopes *must* include name, address, and membership number to be counted.
5. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2022. To avoid holiday delays, please mail ballot promptly to:

**Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter**  
P.O. Box 113,  
Powell TN 37849     Attn: Elections

**John Nolt** is a lifetime member of the Sierra Club, having joined in the 1980s. He retired this year from his professorship in Philosophy at the University of Tennessee, where he had taught since 1978. His specialties included logic, environmental ethics, climate ethics, and intergenerational ethics. He has published eight books, including four on environmental topics. Two deal specifically with the Southern Appalachian environment (for a detailed list of his publications, see <http://web.utk.edu/~nolt/CV-Nolt.pdf>.) While teaching and writing, he moonlighted as an environmental activist. For a decade in the 1980s and 90s he helped lead Project Witherspoon, a community-based effort to force cleanup of toxic and radioactive waste sites in the impoverished Vestal community of South Knoxville. He also served on the founding board of Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, where afterward generations of his students worked and learned. From 2003 to 2016 he co-chaired, then chaired, UT's Committee on the Campus Environment, advising the Chancellor on environmental matters. Simultaneously, he assisted with the ultimately successful effort to halt the extension of the James White Parkway across South Knoxville, researching and filing a citizen petition to have the Berry Cave Salamander, which lives there, declared a federally endangered species.

**John Todd Waterman.** Climate change fundamentally, irrevocably threatens us, our ecosystems, and our environmental, social, and economic progress. It's the greatest readily-addressable challenge we humans have ever faced, and our greatest opportunity to do profound, lasting good. And thanks to all of you who helped build public support, profound change is coming, even to Tennessee. The 73%-publicly-approved Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), however imperfect, should reduce U.S. carbon emissions by 40% compared to 2005 levels within just 7½ years. Can we not now persuade TVA that the IRA's direct payments on clean energy investments, and its fast-falling clean energy prices, make TVA's unconscionably-planned new gas plants foolish investments? I loved being an artist. Though my Covid risk factors often ground me, I love even more working with you and with our partner organizations to preserve our exquisitely-evolved environment. I love helping our outstanding volunteer editors make the Tennes-Sierran, HBG Newsletter, and Chapter Newsletter beautiful, polished and informative, love finding stories, writing, and photographing, love publicizing initiatives and events in the media, love supporting and spotlighting our gifted leaders. Together we can win on TVA sustainability, conservation, coal ash, forests, politics, justice, and much more. The winds of change are at our back.

**Kent Minault** has served two terms as chair of the Political Committee of the Harvey Broome Group. During that time, HBG has significantly expanded its endorsement and candidate support activities. Our candidates scored an important victory last year when all five of our City Council endorsees won reelection in the face of a well-financed attack by the far right. Kent led a life of environmental activism on the West Coast and has continued it energetically since moving here in 2018. In 2010, he joined LA's Beyond Coal campaign. After helping to get LA off coal, he joined the LA County Electric Bus Coalition and got LA Metro to transition to electric buses by 2030. He organized three EV events in Watts and helped found the Watts Clean Air Committee, installing rooftop solar and helping residents enter union apprenticeship programs. After moving here, he organized an EV event in East Knoxville with SEED. He works regularly with the Beyond Coal Team and the Chapter Energy Team as well as with Bull Run Neighbors. He currently chairs the State Transportation Team and co-chairs Drive Electric Tennessee's Infrastructure Working Group. He's eager to work with the Chapter ExComm on refining statewide endorsement activity to help Club members in rural areas endorse pro-environment candidates and conduct successful support activities.

**Gerald Thornton.** Jerry seeks a third term on the HBG Executive Committee. Jerry has been a member of the club since the 1960s and was the Chairman of the Bluegrass Group in Kentucky in the mid-1970s. He resigned from SC leadership roles when he went to work as a staff attorney for the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1978. His career included a large amount of environmental law as counsel for the Office of Surface Mining, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. Since his retirement in 2014, Jerry has again become active in the Sierra Club. In particular, he volunteers in the Club's ICO program, is an outings leader, and is the current Chair of the group. Jerry has a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Kentucky, an MS in aquatic ecology from Cornell University, and a J.D. degree from Kentucky. He is active with Scouts BSA Troops 246 and 946 in Knoxville. If re-elected to the HBG board, Jerry will work to continue an active outings program, seek more volunteers for the Political Team and an expanded ICO program, and will be politically active to fight climate change, plastics and chemical pollution, and will support the club's efforts to protect public lands.

**Haley Ratliff.** While my journey as an environmentalist has been lifelong, my career as an environmentalist began in 2019 when I started my first term with AmeriCorps as an Environmental Steward in sunny Northwest Florida. In the years following, I have served in multiple positions such as the Biodiversity Education Coordinator for Discover Life in America, and as an Education Specialist for the Utica Zoo in Upstate New York. It was during my time in these positions that I discovered my passion for environmental education. As an educator, I have created, delivered, and facilitated lesson plans for groups of all ages on a variety of topics ranging from biodiversity and animal conservation to water quality and watershed ecology. Through education, I strive to teach all generations the significance of conservation for animals and the environment alike. As a member of the Harvey Broome Group ExCom, I would be able to continue my mission to show the members of my community the beauty of our East Tennessee region through raising awareness and understanding of the conservation issues we face today.

**Angelia Harris** attended Austin Peay State University where she obtained her bachelor with honors in Biology and a minor in environmental studies. It was there that she worked in entomology at the Center of Excellence for Field Biology. Her favorite project she helped aid was conducted to show the negative effects of mountaintop removal on the local environment. This was when she learned about the Sierra Club, became a member, and loved learning about all its accomplishments. Other organizations she was involved with were Students Organized to Advance Renewable Energy and the Wildlife Society. Great joy comes from being a part of groups that genuinely try to help the environment, nature, and Earth as a whole. Being able to share knowledge with others and teach what she's learned are her strengths. Her specific environmental interests are invasive species, plastic pollution, and ocean cleanup. Social justice issues she's invested in are land-back initiatives for indigenous people, abortion rights, and environmental racism's effects on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. She hopes to help further the collective efforts to make our world a genuinely better place by being on the Harvey Broome Group Executive Committee.

# Election Ballot for Middle Tennessee Group Executive Committee

2023-2024 Term

VOTE HERE FOR MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES.

<u>Middle Tennessee Group Candidates</u>	<u>Single Member or First Joint Member</u> - Max 5 votes -	<u>Second Joint Member</u> - Max 5 votes -
Tim Weeks	_____	_____
Robert C. Wingfield, Jr., Ph.D.	_____	_____
Karen Wiekert	_____	_____
Antoinette Olesen	_____	_____
Gary Bowers	_____	_____

## Candidates

**Tim Weeks**, a long-time Nashville resident, has invested the last 13 years in community organizing and volunteering. Ten of those years, he served as President of the Donelson Hermitage Neighborhood Alliance, a regional organization that sponsored educational forums and represented the area to Metro government on neighborhood issues. Through DHNA, Weeks also became involved with the Coalition of Nashville Neighborhoods, a countywide group that opposed short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods. More recently, Tim served as vice president of the steering committee of Friends of Cook Recreation Area, a grassroots organization formed to oppose the Corps of Engineers' plans to commercially develop 200 acres of pristine land on Percy Priest Lake. Weeks consulted with the Tennessee Sierra Club Chapter and Middle Tennessee Group during the campaign, which ultimately was successful when the Corps withdrew their plans in February 2022. A member of the Sierra Club, Tim is familiar with local and state government. As a television and video producer, Weeks covered the Tennessee General Assembly for 5 years for statewide public television from 2014-19. A resident of Hermitage, Tim and his wife Teresa, enjoy gardening, walking, and camping in Tennessee parks.

**Robert C. Wingfield Jr. Ph. D.** is currently serving as an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Fisk University. He is the Director of the Fisk Community Environmental Toxics Awareness and Sustainability Program, which is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences through the Midwest Consortium. He has had industrial experience in chemical process and product development. He served as External Process Leader and Co-Chair of a Steering Committee to develop an Environmental Justice Strategic Plan for TDEC (1998-2000). In 2003, he was appointed by the Mayor of Nashville to the Healthy Nashville 2010 Leadership Council. In 2009 he was appointed by the Governor of Tennessee to the Compliance Advisory Panel to provide support to the TDEC Small Business Environmental Assistance Program. He has served as a member of the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Wastewater Hearing Authority since 1999. During 2021 he served as Chair of the Nashville Section, the American Chemical Society, and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Middle TN Group of the TN Chapter of the Sierra Club. He is currently serving as co-Chair of the Family and Youth Sustainability Education Workgroup of the Mayor of Nashville's Sustainability Advisory Committee for the development of a Nashville Climate Action Plan.

**Karen E. Wiekert** is dedicated to preserving more than the human world. As a young person in Wisconsin, she spent weeks in the northern forests at Girl Scout camp, hunted with her father, and provided her baby teeth for her mother's involvement in a project measuring strontium-90 from radiation fallout. She moved to Tennessee with her family 20 years ago. Her career and family obligations took her away from active participation in environmental causes, but as her daughter's Girl Scout leader, she helped the troop enjoy the beauty of Middle Tennessee and taught them how to advocate for its preservation and enhancement. Since retiring, Karen has revived her active involvement in local causes. Her specific focus is to work toward a local circular economy, realizing that waste, recycling and landfill issues throughout Tennessee are a major concern. Karen has a BS in Mathematics from Oregon State University and a PhD in Information and Computer Science from UC-Irvine. She taught at numerous universities, including MIT, UCI, Stanford, and Belmont. During the [dot.com](http://dot.com) era, she worked on redesigning large e-commerce sites. She conducted postdoctoral research in Medical Informatics, and worked on corporate medical information and education projects.

**Antoinette Olesen.** I have been a long-time member of the Sierra Club and have served as the Sierra Club Middle Tennessee Group Executive Chairperson for the past two terms. We have achieved some wins recently in spite of the Covid-19 restrictions. I'm glad things are opening up a bit and we are able to meet in person. My focus, of course, is on the environment. Some of the things I want to keep on track include: protection of and access to our National and State parks - tree preservation and ordinances - open space - protection of wildlife habitats - education regarding natural organic landscapes and gardening using native species, and finally, building membership with an added focus on attracting active youth members. I also want us to co-sponsor some events with some of the other local environmentally-focused organizations. Strength in numbers will help promote who we are and what we do to attract members and create environmental and social justice wins for all of us.

**Gary Bowers** is committed to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to experience nature and the natural wonders of the world. He has lived that commitment for the past 30-plus years, working diligently to protect our planet. He has been a member of the Sierra Club since 1984 and actively engaged in conservation work since the late 1980s. Gary strives to be well informed about current threats to our environment. He strongly believes that we are at a critical crossroads in the areas of energy conservation/alternative energy generation and local/organic (non-GMO) food production. Gary seeks the opportunity to support the efforts of the MTG ExCom in conservation initiatives, recruiting new members and engaging and activating them using the Ladder of Engagement. Fifteen years as the former Tennessee Chapter Conservation Chair provide an extensive knowledge of and the ability to apply those principles to these areas. Chapter level experience includes: revising Chapter conservation committees, aligning Chapter conservation committees with National Club priorities, establishing conservation committee goals and mission statements, helping bring Sierra National's Beyond Coal Campaign to Tennessee, obtaining Sierra's first End Commercial Logging on Federal Public Lands Campaign in the country for the Tennessee Chapter, and drafting forest protection legislation.

## HOW TO SUBMIT BALLOTS:

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P.O. Box 113,  
Powell TN 37849 Attn: Elections

# Defenders Fund – Half Way There!

by Mac Post, Tennessee Chapter Fundraising Chair

The last *Tennes-Sierran* article about the Defenders Fund and the letter that was mailed to past donors in early September are resulting in a heartening surge in donations. By the time you read this newsletter we will be approximately half-way to what we normally raise with this funding appeal each year. If you haven't already given to the Defenders Fund, please consider filling out this form and sending it in with your donation. Your contribution to the Defenders Fund makes our work in the Tennessee General Assembly possible due to the dedicated work of our lobbyist Scott Banbury.

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT OUR LOBBYIST!  \$50,  \$100,  \$250,  \$500,  \$1000,  \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Surprise us!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Please select a method of payment:  1. Use your credit card on our secure Defenders webpage: <https://sc.org/TNDefenders>

2. Mail checks payable to TN Chapter Sierra Club with "Defenders" in the memo line, or

3. Mail us your credit card information:  Mastercard  Visa  Discover (Sorry, no American Express)

Credit Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date (mm/yy) \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send me email alerts when there is a critical vote and Sierra Club needs for me to contact my State legislators.

Please send me weekly email updates from Tennessee Conservation Voters during the legislative session.

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ May we publish your name in the *Tennes-Sierran* as a donor?  Yes  No

I do not need an acknowledgment letter. Please save the Defenders' funds for program purposes.

MAIL TO: TN Chapter Sierra Club, P.O. Box 113, Powell TN 37849 Attn: Defenders Fund

## Dear Eartha : Advice from An Eco-Guru

Dear Eartha,

I have a question. What is going on with recycling, really? One day, I was running down the driveway to catch the garbage truck and of course he kindly stopped and said, bring that other bag, too. I had left the recycling bag to go into my recycling pail. It was garbage day, NOT recycling day. I said to him, oh no, that's not garbage, that's recycling. And he actually said to me, I'm going to the landfill today and it ALL goes to the landfill!

Is this true? I realize that only about 25% of stuff gets recycled anyway. He says people throw all kinds of stuff into recycling that should be trash. Is sorting it too costly and most of what people put into their recycling pail REALLY garbage? Don't different counties make deals with private companies to pick up glass or certain plastics for reuse? Couldn't some of it be cleaned and available to the public for gardening, mason jars, recycled art projects?

If we are going to make any progress we need continuous clarification and an environmental police force. Until you start fining people for that and for pollution, they will never pay it any mind. Whatever clarification you can provide, would be most helpful.

—Clare, *Trying in Tennessee*

[Editor's Note: Eartha is taking a break this month, so we are so thankful to Lisa Luck for answering this reader's important question. Lisa was on the committee that conducted the Tennessee Chapter's recent Recycling Survey. Take it away, Lisa...]

People want to recycle. We have been indoctrinated with the concept that putting materials into the landfill is "bad" and recycling is "good." That concept has created multiple problems for many counties that collect recyclable materials.

One problem is that a lot of materials that people try to recycle are not recyclable. When materials that can't be recycled are put into the recycling bin they are called contamination and must be removed – usually by hand. About one-third of materials that are "recycled" are actually trash. Shrinking recycling revenues do not always cover the costs of

recycling.

Food waste is contamination. Some people put full jars of expired pickles or tomato sauce or even place fluorescent light bulbs that shatter into glass recycling bins causing the entire load to be discarded. Styrofoam and plastic wrap put into the cardboard recycling is contamination. Plastics #3 - #7 that are put into recycling bins that collect "Plastics #1 and #2 Only" are contamination.

Another problem is that sometimes even though a county has collected, sorted and baled materials for recycling, due to erratic markets, the county cannot always recycle them. Materials can end up in the landfill. This happens primarily with plastics. Counties cannot contact residents day-by-day to let them know what they are able to recycle that day – because they just don't know. Changing the message frequently becomes too complicated and people give up recycling altogether. Studies show that consistent messaging is the proven way to get the most recyclable materials.

Rather than focusing only on recycling, we must focus on reducing, reusing and most importantly – refusing. Refuse to buy products that are made from plastic. Many plastics are not recyclable, are toxic and pollute the earth. Plastics are frequently contaminated and the current lackluster demand for plastics interferes with recycling.

Other problems are created by manufacturers. Confusing the consumer so that they will continue purchasing their products is a marketing tactic. An additional problem is that sometimes employees don't know what materials are being recycled and discourage recycling.

The best solution to our recycling problems? Learn what materials can be recycled in your county. Recycle only those materials. They must be clean and dry. Avoid purchasing products that cannot be recycled. The best you can do is to continue recycling the material correctly that your county collects. And your county will continue to recycle the collected materials the best they can.

Lisa Luck (*in Eartha's stead*)

Dear Eartha is written by Rita Bullinger.  
Submit your question for Eartha to [SierraTNNews@gmail.com](mailto:SierraTNNews@gmail.com)



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### Vision

by Robert Penn Warren

I shall build me a house where the larkspur blooms  
In a narrow glade in an alder wood,  
Where the sunset shadows make violet glooms,  
And a whip-poor-will calls in eerie mood.

I shall lie on a bed of river sedge,  
And listen to the glassy dark,  
With a guttered light on my window ledge,  
While an owl stares in at me white and stark.

I shall burn my house with the rising dawn,  
And leave but the ashes and smoke behind,  
And again give the glade to the owl and the fawn,  
When the grey wood smoke drifts away with the wind.

### Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Forum & Expo

Nov. 8 - 9 at the University of Tennessee Student Union  
The Sustainable Transportation Forum & Expo is joined by the EV Momentum Summit for three days of sustainable transportation discussions!

<https://bit.ly/TN-Sus-Transp-Forum>



**National  
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Conference**

**Nov 30 - Dec 1, 2022**

[www.zwconference.org](http://www.zwconference.org)



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### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**COVID-19 NOTICE**  
COVID-19 NOTICE: Sierra Club activities may enforce group size limits, PPE, social distancing requirements to comply with COVID-19 restrictions of the meeting venue, city, and county rules where the activity takes place. Please contact the activity organizer for any updates. Check website for Zoom or in-person meeting status or contact your chair (see page 2).

Group Program Meetings		
Group	Date	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 11/28, No Dec Meeting, 1/23	7:00 PM
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Thu 11/17, 12/15, 1/19	6:00 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 11/8, 12/13*, 1/10	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Thu 11/10, No Dec Meeting, 1/12	7:00 PM

\* HBG 50th Anniversary Celebration

Group Business Meetings		
Group	Date	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 11/7, 12/5, No Jan Meeting	7:00 PM
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Wed 11/2, 12/7, 1/4	6:30 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 11/22, 12/27, 1/24	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Mon 11/21, 12/19, 12/16	6:30 PM

Regional Conservation Committee Business Meetings		
Committee	Date	Time
CareNET (Rogersville)	Thu 11/17, 12/15, 1/26	6:00 PM
Clarksville	Tue 11/15, Dec & Jan Dates TBD	6:00 PM
Holston Valley	Tue 11/15, 12/20, 1/17	6:00 PM
Watauga (Mountain City)	Tue 11/8, 12/13, 1/10	5:00 PM

RETREAT SCHEDULE		
	LOCATION	DATES
Spring 2023	Fall Creek Falls State Park	April 28-30
Fall 2023	Pickett State Park	October 13-15
Winter 2024	Cedars of Lebanon State Park	January 19-21
Spring 2024	Fall Creek Falls State Park	May 3 -5

### Defenders Fund Contributors

Thanks to the generosity of these Defenders of the natural world!

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