

# Tennesse - Sierran

The Bi-Monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

Volume 50, Number 1 - January/February 2017

## Larkspur Conservation: Tennessee's conservation option for natural burials

By John Stone

Larkspur Conservation, Inc. is a Tennessee nonprofit corporation with a mission of conserving land throughout Middle Tennessee through a revival of traditional burial practices. Larkspur anticipates establishing its first conservation burial ground on 155 acres of land located along the Highland Rim in Sumner County, Tennessee, adjacent to The Nature Conservancy's Taylor Hollow State Natural Area. This property is one of a kind, with a mixed mesophytic forest which is home to numerous plant species, some endangered. The living memorial Larkspur Conservation is creating on this land will preserve this unique ecosystem and honor life.

In addition to the preservation and restoration of the habitats acquired by conservation burial sites they also reduce burial activities that damage our natural home. Natural burial, which has been practiced throughout human history, is the practice of burying deceased remains directly into the soil without the use of contaminating materials such as metal caskets, concrete vaults and embalming chemicals. Contrary to popular belief, no law requires bodies to be embalmed nor the use of caskets or vaults. These common misconceptions are the result of rules and regulations which the funeral industry has adopted to control its profit margin. In Tennessee most conventional burials consist of an embalmed body placed in a metal casket that is buried in a concrete vault. Conversely, remains, when buried naturally, are buried in biodegradable caskets and shrouds.

Currently, the average funeral costs about

### A GREENER WAY TO GO

From preparing bodies to burying them in natural settings, the green burial movement is attempting to make death more environmentally friendly and, in some ways, closer to the way it was in the past. A comparison:

#### STANDARD BURIAL

Burials use formaldehyde embalming and long-lasting caskets. They can easily cost \$10,000.

A standard grave site, often landscaped and well-maintained, features a large headstone made of granite or flat bronze. Fertilizer and pesticides are used on the grass.

Below ground, a casket made of steel, finished wood and copper rests inside a concrete vault capped by a thick concrete lid.

#### NATURAL BURIAL

The natural, or green, burial method starts with the body preparation, which uses no embalming fluid or a nonformaldehyde-based formula. Green burials can cost less than \$2,000.

If there's a headstone, it's a rock or a piece of rough-cut limestone that's flat on one side to identify the deceased. Some methods use GPS coordinates to spot a grave's location.

Caskets are made of wood, plywood, bamboo, cardboard, cornstarch or wicker. Sometimes a shroud or quilt may be used to wrap the body.

Source: Nathan Butler

STEPHEN J. BEARD / The Star

\$13,000, with many exceeding \$15,000. In the United States today, more than 800,000 gallons of embalming fluid containing toxic chemicals are buried in the earth every year, along with 100,000 tons of steel and copper and 1.6 million tons of reinforced concrete vaults. The use of embalming fluids and concrete vaults that hold coffins, in addition to the fossil fuels consumed in the manufacture and transportation of these items, are

creating permanent damage to Tennessee's environment. Natural burial is the palatable alternative—and even gives those families considering cremating the remains a viable and inexpensive burial solution.

Many spiritual and religious leaders believe that current funeral practices can complicate and confuse the grieving process. The once simple practice of home funeral care and natural burial quickly changed after the

## Looking Ahead: Tennessee Chapter Winter Retreat January 27-29 Cedars of Lebanon State Park

Join the TN Chapter as we meet for our Winter Retreat. Come and enjoy the company and interaction with environmental leaders from across the state. Be a part of the fellowship, hikes, fireplace chats, meetings, and star gazing. Be sure not to miss the Saturday evening program, live music and bon fire. Meet others that share your love and respect for Mother Nature.

Cedars of Lebanon is a 900 acre state park located south of Lebanon, TN and is part of the Cedars of Lebanon State Forest. We will meet at the Group Lodge. Facilities include two heated bunkhouse wings with restroom and shower accommodations

Weekend activities will feature:

- Winter nature hikes on both Saturday and Sunday led by Randy Hedgepath, TN State Naturalist.
- Saturday evening program by Susan Thrasher, owner and operator of Southern Brookies Fly Fishing in Lancaster, TN about her home water, the Caney Fork, and other tail waters in the Tennessee area
- Saturday evening live music by Antoinette Olesen, award winning singer and songwriter.

Details regarding these activities and their presenters can be found on page 8.



Register by Saturday, January 14th to receive early bird pricing of \$50 for the entire weekend, which includes dorm style lodging, two breakfasts, and Saturday dinner. Note that you will need to bring your own lunches. Registrations after January 14th are \$60. First time attendees are half price. Partial attendance pricing: Saturday meals - \$30, Sunday breakfast - \$10, attendance only registration fee - \$5

To register, email Charlie High at [ca-high1722@aol.com](mailto:ca-high1722@aol.com) or telephone at 615-500-5499. Voicemail is available; reservations will be confirmed in same form made. Be sure to specify Vegetarian or Omnivore.

## Tennessee Chapter Spring Retreat Pickett State Park April 28th thru 30th

4605 Pickett Park Highway  
Jamestown, Tennessee 38556  
<http://tnstateparks.com/parks/about/pickett>

Mark your spring calendar to attend the TN Chapter Retreat!

Pickett State Park has miles of trails with geologic features on the scenic Cumberland Plateau. Come join the fellowship, hikes, campfire, star gazing and silent auction. Early wildflowers will be popping.

Meet up at Pickett State Park Group Lodge which includes bunkhouses with separate bathhouse accommodations. Early bird reservation fee is \$50.00 which includes Sat & Sun breakfast plus dinner on Sat night. Specify vegetarian or omnivore when you confirm.

Everybody pitches in to help with clean-up before 11am Sunday checkout. Special 1/2 price for first time attendees, children 15 and under are free and several scholarships are available with advance approval.

Watauga Group is hosting this Spring Chapter Retreat. For further information contact Gloria Griffith at 423-727-4797 or [GLa4797@Embarqmail.com](mailto:GLa4797@Embarqmail.com)

# Tennes-Sierran

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

SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:

\*Email: [address.changes@sierraclub.org](mailto:address.changes@sierraclub.org)

\*Snail Mail: clip the Moving? coupon below and mail

\*Address changes are processed much faster if you include your Sierra Club membership number. To find your membership number, look on the address label of this newsletter.

SEND ARTICLES TO:

E-mail: [c.demetreon@mchsi.com](mailto:c.demetreon@mchsi.com) and [sean.m.rinehart@gmail.com](mailto:sean.m.rinehart@gmail.com)

ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Submission Target Date is January 31st for the March/April 2017 issue.

1. E-mail and e-mail attached files are preferred. Send to [c.demetreon@mchsi.com](mailto:c.demetreon@mchsi.com) and [sean.m.rinehart@gmail.com](mailto:sean.m.rinehart@gmail.com) either with embedded text messages, or attached files. Attached files are preferred. Word is preferred but Apple users may send articles in Pages.

2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or a .tif file format then either attached to e-mail or mailed via U.S. Postal Service on a 3 1/2" diskette or CD RM. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your diskette or photo prints returned.

3. Hard-copy handwritten or typewritten articles may be accepted: however, pre-approval from the Editor is required.

4. Any materials submitted via USPS mail will not be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.

5. Concerns or complaints should be addressed to: Tennessee Chapter Ombudsman, Joel Gearhardt at [jgearhardt@yahoo.com](mailto:jgearhardt@yahoo.com). The opinions expressed in the Tennes-Sierran are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Tennessee Chapter, or the Sierra Club.

**Target Date for the March/April Issue is January 31, 2016.**

**All meetings and outings notices, articles, and photographs should be in by then.**

**Send material to Chris Demetreon at [c.demetreon@mchsi.com](mailto:c.demetreon@mchsi.com) and Sean Rinehart at [sean.m.rinehart@gmail.com](mailto:sean.m.rinehart@gmail.com)**



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## All Creatures Great and Small



"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense"

- John Muir

Join Sierra Club and help protect all creatures, great and small.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.  
Please charge my:  Visa  Mastercard  AMEX  
Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32141-6417 or visit our website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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### Chickasaw Group - Memphis

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Treasurer: Ed Jones 901-374-0582  
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Conservation: vacant  
Outings: vacant

### Harvey Broome Group - Knoxville/Oak Ridge

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### Middle Tennessee Group - Nashville

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### Chapter Staff:

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Conservation Program Coordinator  
901-619-8567

**Please notify the Editor when changes are needed**

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Chapter Meeting	Location	Dates
Winter	Cedars of Lebanon State Park	January 27 - 29
Spring	Picket State Park	April 28 - 30
Summer	NB Forrest State Park	July 21-23
Fall	Picket State Park	October 27-29

# Veteran finds hope and peace in the outdoors

by **Lornett Vestal**

*Lornett Vestal serves as the Southeast Leader for Sierra Club Military Outdoors program.*

It was a warm June day in the Talamanca Mountains of Costa Rica. My new friend Christine Cruise had spent the last several days at our host family's home trying to convince me to go white water rafting. I'd never done anything like that before. Yet there I stood with several other volunteers from Habitat for Humanity on the Pacuare River. It was a hot, muggy, and humid day, these bright yellow rafts that would take me on an adventure of a lifetime.

Before I joined the Navy in June 2001, my experience in the outdoors was no more than my boyhood adventures playing in woods, digging up worms out of the dirt, and catching grasshoppers during the hot Midwest summers. By the time I joined the Navy, I was a straight city kid from Chicago, IL. During my time in the service, I learned to work with people from various racial, social, and religious backgrounds. We were men and women working together to achieve a common goal.

I had never seen the ocean growing up, and despite its beauty, Lake Michigan could never compare to majestic power of the world's oceans. I've been lucky to sail the waters of the Pacific, the Southern, Indian oceans, the Mediterranean Sea, and Persian Gulf. On stressful days at sea aboard the USS Cleveland LPD-7, I would come out to the flight deck when operations were down. I would stand at the bow of the ship and watch the dolphins swim alongside the forecastle. I witnessed the beauty of bioluminescent through

thousands of jellyfish lighting up the night sea in the Persian Gulf, it was only matched the beauty of the night's sky. Or being out to sea and witnessing a lunar eclipse in the Indian Ocean on my first deployment to Kuwait during Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was the first time in many years, I stood in awe of nature's beauty even in the midst of modern warfare.

I developed a taste for travel, and wanted to see more of the world. Six months before getting out the service. I volunteered to spend a summer in beautiful Costa Rica building homes for those less fortunate. Fast forward a month after receiving my honorable discharge from the United States Navy. I stood on that riverbed in Costa Rica preparing to have my first white water adventure. We hit a class five rapid on the last section of the river, and our raft capsized. We were all dumped into the river, and I hit my head on a rock. The helmet saved my life that day, and I still wear a scar on my left ear from that eventful day on the Pacuare River proudly.

Fast forward 11 years later and now I have a new mission to accomplish, which is building the Sierra Club Military Outdoors program in the Southeast. My time in nature didn't end after my trip in Costa Rica, back home in the Midwest I found personal redemption through sweat lodges in the woods of Northern Illinois and backyards of Chicago. I dealt with many years of insomnia, and depression that first manifested itself during my first deployment. Upon entering graduate school for social work I learned that many men and women who served in Armed Forces suffered from the invisible wounds in the form of depression, insomnia, and PTSD.

These mental health problems probably were born on the seven seas or the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan. I owe my life to a vet who helped me in a time of need and a good friend who brought me to the sacred space that was the sweat-lodge. I now hope that my fellow veteran and military brethren can find redemption in the beauty of nature.

The goal of Sierra Club Military Outdoors is to ensure that our service members, veterans, and their families have the skills, exposure, knowledge, and confidence to access the great outdoors. They can enjoy the lands they once swore to protect. A University of California Berkley long-term study, in partnership with Sierra Club Outdoors, has found that time spent outdoors in nature can positively impact the ill effects of PTSD. Many veterans experience difficulty adjusting to civilian life after leaving the service. Or have trouble with invisible wounds through PTSD. By providing service members, veterans, and their families with quality outdoor experiences we hope foster the development of a new generation of Sierra Club leaders. I hope my brothers and sisters in arms can find peace through nature just like I did.

Please stop by and introduce yourself to Lornett and feel free to contact him at [Lornett.vestal@sierraclub.org](mailto:Lornett.vestal@sierraclub.org) or at his office phone at (404) 607-1262 ext. 222, especially if you are interested in leading outings within this program.

Landmark Study Shows Nature Kills PTSD in Combat Veterans by Claire Bernish

Read more at <http://thefreethought-project.com/landmark-study-shows-nature-kills-ptsd-combat-veterans/#z7FZ3p-b4HvV5BKTf.99>

## A sacred calling to care for the earth

by **Joy Mayfield**

Many of us in the environmental movement strive to recruit like-minded people to our cause, however, often feel our efforts thwarted when we are erroneously mislabeled as "environmental whackos." This is especially true when we confess our membership in the dreaded, left wing, liberal Sierra Club.

Take heart. Here is another door from which to launch an environmental membership: church!

On Saturday, October 1 Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light (Nashville chapter), Cumberland Harpeth Audubon Society and Franklin First United Methodist Church held an all day conference entitled A SACRED CALLING TO CARE FOR THE EARTH. The intent of the conference was to educate caretakers of the earth.

The keynote speaker (via Skype) was Matthew Anderson, Audubon Society's national Vice President on Climate change and board member of the national faith-based organization, Interfaith Power and Light.

Several workshops were offered over the course of the day including Plants for Birds, Best Earth Care Practices for Houses of Worship, Climate Change; Threat and Solutions, Earth Friendly Agriculture and Food Choices, Shared Urban Habitat, Earth Care as a Justice Issue and lastly a panel of religious scholars representing Judaism, Islam and Christianity educating the audience on their own religion's perspective on Care for the Earth.



**Joy introduces attendees of the Sacred Calling conference to the Sierra Club.**

Many local environmental organizations tabled this event including Cumberland Harpeth Audubon Society, MTG Sierra Club, St. Mary's Bookstore, Earth Matters, Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light, Creation Care Ministry, The Temple Green Team, Blessed Earth Tennessee, Nashville Climate Action Team, Tennessee Conservation Voters, Concerned Citizens for a Safe Environment, Keep Southeast Nashville Healthy, The Nash-

ville Food Project and EcoEcclesia Media.

If you are a member of any church, mosque or synagogue, why not ask your religious leaders what they're doing to be good stewards of the earth? Persuade them to join the local Creation Care Ministry and to begin preaching the message to their congregation to care for the earth as is clearly mandated in the doctrine of at least these three Abrahamic faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

# Meetings

The public is very welcome at ALL Sierra Club Meetings and Activities! All members traveling across the state should feel free to drop in and attend another Group's meetings. You will find yourself among friends and learning something interesting.

## CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

**January 8, 2017 - Welcome 2017 Covered Dish Supper/Mixer:** Audubon Acres, 5-8 pm YOU are invited! Bring friends and a covered dish. We'll supply drinks, utensils, plates, etc. Come start the new year off on an optimistic note as you join people who share the same interests, energy and dreams for our environment as you. All welcome, don't worry if you haven't got a dish, there's always plenty of food and wine as well. We'll share a quick walk to the bridge over South Chick Creek before dinner. Also the Visitors Center is a mini-museum with interesting archeological artifacts to explore. Location: Audubon Acres Visitor Center, 900 Sanctuary Rd, Chatta., 37424 -- in East Brainerd, off Gunbarrell Road, just follow the signs. The Visitors Center is on the right, just inside the gate.

**January 24, 2017 - 7:00 P.M. - January Program:** At Nutrition World's Speaker Room, 6237 Vance Rd., Chatta. 37421 (downstairs from Nutrition World on Lee Highway) Starting the new year right: Tips and discussion of greening our households along with a hands on demonstration of homemade green cleaning supplies. This will be fun and interactive and we can all support each other in continuing to move in the direction of reducing our environmental impacts. You'll leave with recipes and possibly your own bottle of something great! Learn about local Sierra Club outings and advocacy activities. The public is very welcome. ALL ARE WELCOME. Invite your friends. FREE as always.

**February 6, 2017 - 6:30 P.M. - Strategy/Business Meeting:** Held at Second Presbyterian Church, @corner of E. 7th Street and Pine, 700 Pine Street [parking is free in their Pine Street lot, across the street from the church] Come add your ideas, share your concerns as we plan our actions. We've got committees on outings, clean energy, forest watch/protection, mining/fracking issues, and room to support YOUR concern. Come share! The building looks like an old school - knock on the door, and if somebody doesn't answer, call 423-718-5009 for access! All are welcome!

**February 28th, 2017 - 7:00 P.M. - February Program:** At Nutrition World's Speaker Room, 6237 Vance Rd., Chatta. 37421 (downstairs from Nutrition World on Lee Highway) Strategies in the Trump Era: Lets do some brainstorming and planning for how do we keep putting pressure on local, state, and federal governments to continue moving towards climate and environmental protection. We need to be working against fracking, pipelines, coal mining and for clean renewable energy, work for zero fossil fuels. Sierra Club says we need to resist, recruit, train, sustain. "Donald Trump may be president for the next several years, but the Sierra Club has been doing this work for nearly 125 years.

We'll still be here when he is gone, and our

movement will be bigger, stronger, and more innovative than ever for having opposed him. For many of us, these will be the biggest environmental fights of our lives, but they'll also be the most meaningful. We're ready to give it everything we've got." So let's get together to figure out how to turn these words into actions! The public is very welcome. ALL ARE WELCOME. Invite your friends. FREE as always.

## CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Check <http://www.facebook.com/Chickasaw.Group/> for meeting information.

## HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

See our web page ([sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/programs](http://sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/programs)) for details.

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

**January 3, 2017 - 6:15 P.M. - ICO MEETING:** Come join our Nashville Inspiring Connections Outdoors Group as we meet in Nashville. We will discuss our outings for disadvantaged kids, and training. Contact Craig Jervis at [cmjervis@comcast.net](mailto:cmjervis@comcast.net) for our new location. Put "ICO" in the subject line.

**January 17, 2017 - at 6:30 P.M. LOCAL ISSUES MEETING:** Everyone is welcome at this local issues and business meeting. We are in the midst of changing our meeting location, so please contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or [cahigh1722@aol.com](mailto:cahigh1722@aol.com) to find out where we will be meeting and to let him know that you plan to attend. Put "MTG Sierra" in the subject line. We look forward to seeing you.

**January 27 - 29, 2017 - CEDARS of LEBANON:** Come join us for our Retreat & Chapter Meeting, stay in the group lodge, and enjoy breakfasts and a Saturday evening meal cooked by MTG's talented chefs (Joel & Cyndi). Bring your own lunches. Early bird fee is \$50; regular price is \$60; bring your own bedding or sleeping bag for the bed. First time attendees are half price. For more information, contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or [cahigh1722@aol.com](mailto:cahigh1722@aol.com)

**February 6, 2017 - 6:15 P.M. - ICO MEETING:** Come join our Nashville Inspiring Connections Outdoors Group as we meet in Nashville. We will discuss our outings for disadvantaged kids, and training. Contact Craig Jervis at [cmjervis@comcast.net](mailto:cmjervis@comcast.net) for our new location. Put "ICO" in the subject line.

**February 21, 2017 - at 6:30 P.M. LOCAL ISSUES MEETING:** Everyone is welcome at this local issues and business meeting. We are in the midst of changing our meeting location, so please contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or [cahigh1722@aol.com](mailto:cahigh1722@aol.com) to find out where we will be meeting and to let him know that you plan to attend. Put "MTG Sierra" in the subject line. We look forward to seeing you.

**March 6, 2017 - 6:15 P.M. - ICO MEETING:** Come join our Nashville Inspiring Connections Outdoors Group as we meet in Nashville. We will discuss our outings for disadvantaged kids, and training. Contact Craig Jervis at cm-

## 10 Essentials for Hiking



Sierra Club outings offer a variety of wilderness and near-wilderness experiences. It is important to realize that while all trips are guided by a leader, it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to operate in a safe manner. To this end, the following is a list of essential items which should be modified according to the particular type of outing. These are:

1. Adequate map
2. First aid kit
3. Compass
4. Rain gear
5. Extra clothing (it is a good idea to always have a wool hat)
6. Matches
7. Knife
8. Flashlight
9. Extra food, water
10. The tenth essential: You decide what is the most important thing to bring!

[jervis@comcast.net](mailto:jervis@comcast.net) for our new location. Put "ICO" in the subject line.

**March 21, 2017 - at 6:30 P.M. LOCAL ISSUES MEETING:** Everyone is welcome at this local issues and business meeting. We are in the midst of changing our meeting location, so please contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or [cahigh1722@aol.com](mailto:cahigh1722@aol.com) to find out where we will be meeting and to let him know that you plan to attend. Put "MTG Sierra" in the subject line. We look forward to seeing you.

## WATAUGA GROUP (Northeastern TN)

**PROGRAM MEETINGS: Every second Tuesday at 6 P.M.** Please contact Gloria Griffith at [GLa4797@embarqmail.com](mailto:GLa4797@embarqmail.com) or 423-727-4797 for more information.

## Tennes-Sierran E-News

Check out our Chapter Website: [www.sierraclub.org/tennessee](http://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee)

Check out Tennes-sierran online: [www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/tennes-sierran](http://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/tennes-sierran)

Please Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Tennessee-Chapter/574009059275758](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Tennessee-Chapter/574009059275758)

on Twitter: [twitter.com/sierraclubtn](https://twitter.com/sierraclubtn)

Keep those e-mail addresses coming so you will get our E-News: send your e-mail address to Alice at [demetreon1981@gmail.com](mailto:demetreon1981@gmail.com) so you get the News about our Programs and Outings!

We have e-mails for only about 1/3 of our members -- so you are missing out on all our activities! We will not give your address away.

# Outings

The Tennessee Chapter's Outings and activities are always open to the public and members of the Club from across the state! Sponsored by our local Groups, pre-registration with the trip leader is a must for all outings.

**January 12, 2017 – 7:00 P.M. – Nashville PROGRAM: “Walk Bike Nashville & Sustainable Transportation”:** Our program speaker is Daniel McDonnell, from Walk/Bike Nashville who will discuss local efforts and progress in obtaining sustainable transportation in Nashville. This presentation will provide an overview of the benefits of sustainable transportation and the possibilities the city has for a multimodal future. Come at 6:30 to socialize, and the program will begin at 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center. You must enter Radnor Lake from Granny White Pike, which may involve ignoring your GPS. The program is free and open to the public. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 14, 2016 – Sandhill Crane outing:** Join us for a trip to The Tennessee Sandhill Crane Festival at the Hiwassee Refuge and Birchwood Community Center. – To sign up, contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or cahigh1722@aol.com. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 21-22, 2017 - Winter Backpack - Hidden Passage Trail, Pickett State Park and Big South Fork NRR:** Arches, waterfalls, and rockhouses add to the visual interest of this relatively easy backpack into Pickett State Park. Though not very long as the crow flies, the constantly twisting and turning trail makes this a 10 mile loop. We'll camp near a small waterfall and probably have time to take a short side trip through an old railroad tunnel. Total distance, 10 miles. Rated moderate due to potential for cold/snow/ice weather conditions. Driving distance/time about 115 miles/2 hours, 15 minutes each way. Preregister with Ron Shrieves: phone 922-3518; email ronshrieves@gmail.com (Harvey Broome Group)

**January 28, 2017 – 9:00 A.M. – Hike at Cedars of Lebanon:** Led by Randy Hedgepath, Tennessee State Naturalist. Bring a sack lunch or snack if you like. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/events/calendar/>. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 28, 2017 – 2:00 P.M. – Hike at Cedars of Lebanon:** Led by Randy Hedgepath, Tennessee State Naturalist. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/events/calendar/>. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 28, 2017 – 6:00 P.M. Dinner & 7:30 P.M. Program - “Fly Fishing across the State”:** Join us for dinner and a program presented by Susan Thrasher on Fly Fishing throughout Tennessee. Susan is an entertaining & informative speaker with lots of great pictures. You'll enjoy this program even if you're not a fisher-person (in fact, she throws her catches back in). There is a cost for dinner that has not been determined yet (approximately \$15 I think). For more information, contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or cahigh1722@aol.com. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 29, 2017 – 9:00 A.M. – Hike at Cedars of Lebanon:** Led by Randy Hedgepath, Tennessee State Naturalist. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/events/calendar/>. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 29, 2017 – 9:00 A.M. – Hike at Cedars of Lebanon:** Led by Randy Hedgepath, Tennessee State Naturalist. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/events/calendar/>. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**January 27 – 29, 2017 (weekend) – CEDARS of LEBANON:** Come join us for our Retreat & statewide Chapter Meeting, stay in the group lodge, and enjoy breakfasts and a Saturday evening meal cooked by MTG's talented chefs (Joel & Cyndi). Bring your own lunches. Early bird fee is \$50; regular price is \$60; bring your own bedding or sleeping bag for the bed. First time attendees are half price. For more information, contact Charlie at (615) 500-5499 or cahigh1722@aol.com. (Middle Tennessee Group hosting statewide chapter)

**February 3, 2017 - 9:00 A.M. - Morning Walk, South Chickamauga Creek Greenway:** We'll be walking along the Brainerd Levee over to Camp Jordan to explore that section and cross the bridge over the Creek. Lots of nature to watch for. Did you know that Sierra was deeply involved in the planning of the Levee as a walking path? Bring water and a snack. For details and to pre-register, contact Barbara Kelly at [bk1drivers@gmail.com](mailto:bk1drivers@gmail.com) or 423-718-5009. (Cherokee Group)

**February 4, 2017 - Dayhike - Virgin Falls State Natural Area, Crossville area:** This lollipop hike offers three impressive waterfalls and the usual karst landscape common to the Cumberland Plateau. One of the most unusual features of Virgin Falls itself is that the water drops over a hundred feet, only to disappear into a sinkhole. The hike, about 9 miles, is almost all downhill to the falls - meaning, of course, the hike out is considerably tougher! There is an option for a side trip to a nice overlook, adding about a mile. This could be a wet, or even possibly an icy, hike, so plan accordingly. Hiking poles are recommended. Rated moderate to difficult depending on weather conditions. The driving distance from West Knoxville is about 85-90 miles. Pre-register with Brad Reese: [bradktn@gmail.com](mailto:bradktn@gmail.com); 865-599-1708 (email preferred). (Harvey Broome Group)

**February 9 (Thursday) – 7:00 p.m. – Nashville PROGRAM: I'm not your steppin' stone:** Recent winter finds and current distribution of the Streamside Salamander in Tennessee. – A presentation by David I. Withers, Sunny A. Fleming, and Stephanie A. Williams, Division of Natural Areas and Tennessee State Parks, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Nashville, Tennessee. (Middle Tennessee Group)

David Ian Withers and colleagues will discuss the Streamside Salamander (*Ambystoma barbouri*), an increasingly rare and threatened winter-breeding species restricted to the Central Basin. Listed by the TWRA as in “Need of Management,” it is believed extant from 32 locations but extirpated from at least one historic site, Hillsboro High School. Its cryptic nature suggests that many other populations may have been lost

before adequate surveys could be conducted.

Withers and colleagues will discuss the current state of winter 2016-17 surveys, exciting ongoing research at area universities, and ways in which Sierra club members can help identify potential survey sites in the Green Hills area. The program starts at 7:00, come at 6:30 to socialize, at Radnor Lake Visitor Center. You must enter Radnor Lake from Granny White Pike, which may involve ignoring your GPS. This program is free and open to the public. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**February 25-26, 2017 - Backpack - Chadwell Gap and the Hensley Settlement, Cumberland Gap National Historic Park:** The Martin's Fork campsite in the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park provides a nearly perfect location for a winter backpack. Easily accessible via good roads, (Albeit a bit of drive from Knoxville), road conditions shouldn't prevent us from reaching the trailhead. The hike up from Chadwell Gap trail is short, only about 3 miles to the campsite, though it is fairly steep, especially the top third or so. Martin's Fork is a wonderful campsite; a large open field near a stream, with an old cabin we'll rent for the night. Though eating is not allowed in the cabin, it does have a nice stone fireplace to build a warm fire out of the weather. After we set up camp we'll hike the two miles or so to Hensley Settlement, a lovingly preserved mountain farming community. In the morning we'll return the way we came. Total hiking distance is about 5 miles Saturday and 3 on Sunday. The hike is rated moderate. Drive is about 120 miles round trip from Knoxville. Leader: Brad Reese, [bradktn@gmail.com](mailto:bradktn@gmail.com) Please preregister at least a week in advance so I can get the permit and rent the cabin. Keep in mind this is a winter backpack and participants must be prepared to deal with winter weather. Pre-register with Brad Reese: [bradktn@gmail.com](mailto:bradktn@gmail.com); 865-599-1708 (email preferred). (Harvey Broome Group)

**March 9, 2017 – Nashville PROGRAM - How Natural Burial Can Conserve Land in Tennessee:** John Christian Phifer of Larkspur Conservation will present this program on the stewardship of our natural environment through earth friendly funeral and burial practices, including Larkspur Conservation's mission, goals and current projects. We will also discuss the impact of current funeral practices on our environment. Come at 6:30 to socialize, and the program will begin at 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center. You must enter Radnor Lake from Granny White Pike, which may involve ignoring your GPS. For more info contact Betsy at 615 668-1977 or [garberb@hotmail.com](mailto:garberb@hotmail.com). The program is free and open to the public. (Middle Tennessee Group)

**NOTE: Outings Leader Training** is in the planning, though a date has not yet been set. Look for it to be on a 2nd Saturday in January or February in Chattanooga. If you're interested, contact Barbara Kelly at [bk1drivers@gmail.com](mailto:bk1drivers@gmail.com) or 423-718-5009. (Cherokee Group)

## CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Time and dates of outings are to be determined. For information check: <http://www.facebook.com/Chickasaw.Group/>

## HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

See our web page ([sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/outings](http://sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/outings)) for details.

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

The Nashville area Middle Tennessee Group has an active outings schedule and want you to come along! Many times our outings are planned too late to be included in this newsletter. To check out our outings, please click on the outing of choice at <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/events/calendar/>

# Tennessee Sierra Club 2017 Summer meeting snap shots



Group picture from the Max Patch Summer meeting. (Photos by Charles High and Dennis Shekinah)



## Traditional burials (continued from page 1)..

**Continued on page 7.** Civil War with the introduction of embalming. The tradition of a natural preparation of a body by family and friends gave way to a new industry. Modern funeral homes have since grown to capitalize on the grief of Americans. Often they recommend unnecessary products and services that do not fit the true needs of grieving people or the environment. Larkspur will allow for the practice of rituals that honor the mystery and power we encounter in death, provide green space for the public to enjoy and serve as a platform to protect and conserve endangered land in Middle Tennessee. Although Larkspur will

be the first in Tennessee, conservation burial grounds have proven successful in several other states, where native ecosystems have been sustained and improved.

Without natural burial cemeteries, our natural traditions are harder to uphold in Tennessee and are contingent upon access to private burial grounds, economic resources, and individual research. Larkspur is creating this new burial option in the state of Tennessee, benefiting the environmental community and the region in which we live.

Larkspur is currently conducting a capital campaign for the funds needed to acquire the Taylor Hollow land. Once that land is ac-

quired, revenues from the sale of burial plots will fund the preservation and maintenance of that property and, eventually, provide funds for the acquisition of additional lands to be preserved and used for the same purposes. The hope and goal is that Larkspur Conservation at Taylor Hollow will be the first of many nature preserves for burial in Tennessee.

For more information please visit [www.LarkspurConservation.org](http://www.LarkspurConservation.org)

View the film "A Living Memorial" at <https://vimeo.com/177111981> for more information on natural burials.

## Thank you to our defender contributors!

What is a Defender? Over the past 21 years, participants in this program have provided enormous assistance to the Tennessee Sierra Club in funding our legislative program, enabling our contract consultant/lobbyist, our Conservation Program Coordinator, and our many volunteers to work with the legislature toward our conservation goals.

What priorities does the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club have for the coming year?

Reintroduction of the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Act that would help property owners to get a loan for energy efficiency improvements and/or renewable

energy installations;

Opposition to ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, which promotes anti-environmental legislation across the country. ALEC has been fighting the Clean Power Plan, challenging the EPA's new rules defining the Waters of the United States, rolling back solar net metering programs, and attacking incentives for electric cars;

In cooperation with Forever Green Tennessee, promotion of protected and dedicated funding for conservation;

Transportation and planning issues;

Long-term growth planning/de-annexation

issues;

Legislation to strengthen groundwater well registration and withdrawal reporting requirement to protect Tennessee's groundwater resources;

An Underground Storage Tanks and Solid Waste Disposal Control Board bill to align that board with the Board of Water Quality, Oil and Gas: re twice yearly public comments sessions during two meetings;

Other issues that arise and require our attention during the legislative session.

Please consider becoming a Defender or renewing your support. This is an all-volunteer campaign with no costs other than paper and postage, and 100% of the funds raised stays in Tennessee. Your contribution is not tax-deductible, but it is critical in enabling us to continue to have advocates, and a voice, in the legislature. Please send your donation, with a check made out to "Sierra Club Defenders" to Sierra Club Defenders, c/o Adelle Wood, 4641 Villa Green Drive, Nashville, TN 37215. Thank you.

Amount of donation  \$75  \$150  \$250  \$1,000  \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Check here to receive e-mail alerts when there is a critical vote and the Sierra Club needs contacts to your state legislators. It is not necessary to check this box if you already receive these alerts. Suggested etiquette for contacting your legislators is at <http://www.sierra-club.org/tennessee/state-lobby-team>. Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check to receive weekly e-mail updates from Tennessee Conservation Voters (dress above) during the legislative session. It is not necessary to check this box if you already receive these updates. Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No May we publish your name in the Sierra Club newsletter as a donor?

I do not need an acknowledgement letter. Please save Defender funds for program purposes.

REMEMBER: Donations to this fund are not tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes.

## We thank our contributors during the month of November:

Jim Blackstock

Sharon Boyce

Bob and Anne Brandt

Clark Buchner

Carol Burger

Caty and Laurence Butcher

Craig Canan

Daniel Case

Mary Lynn Dobson

Larry and Carolyn Dunn

Charles High and Deb Dixon

Steve and Patty Ghertner

Mary Mastin and Brian Paddock

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Ruth Neff

Diana Page

Meg Robertson

John Ross

Don Scharf and Teri Davis

Dr. Alan Solomon

Will Skelton

Helen Stewart

Gene and Ruth Van Horn

Adelle Wood and Bill Terry

Anonymous

# Tennessee Chapter Winter Retreat Sneak Peak January 27-29

## Susan Thrasher

Susan Thrasher is the owner and operator of Southern Brookies Fly Fishing in Lancaster, Tennessee. She started fishing at a young age with her dad in East Tennessee and has been passionate about the outdoors all her life. As an avid fly angler, fly tier and oarsman, her enthusiasm for the sport is contagious.

In the spring of 2015 she fulfilled a lifelong dream of spending all of her time on the river. She left her civil engineering career and now conducts business from her drift boat. She has six vintage campers at her fly fishing school to house fishing clients looking for an added adventure. Each camper is painted to represent a different trout. It adds a little flair to the banks of the Caney Fork River.

She has been on staff with the Joan Wulff School of Fly Fishing since 2005 where she teaches in the spring each year in the New York Catskills. She is also the retreat leader for Casting For Recovery, a non-profit program focused on supporting breast cancer survivors through the healing art of fly fishing.



Vintage campers at Southern Brookies Fly Fishing.

Susan will be presenting a program about her home water, the Caney Fork River, and

other tail waters in the Tennessee area.



Antoinette Olesen, Songwriter

## Antoinette Olesen

Antoinette Olesen is a member of the Sierra Club and is an award winning songwriter. She has traveled internationally and has songs recorded by numerous recording artists. Most recent recordings are with Southside Drive, Gabe Burdulis, Lauren Presley and a "Parents Choice Award" for her song "That's What I Like About The Rain". Her songs feature positive messages celebrating life, beauty, nature, relationships and living peacefully in concert with the world.

Antoinette is an avid supporter of preserving and protecting wildlife, clean air, water,

recycling and preserving natural habitats. She also works locally in Nashville with her neighborhood organization "The West Meade Conservancy" in protecting the wildlife habitats and fighting off irresponsible development. Recent neighborhood wins include the purchasing of a waterfall and adjoining 3 1/2 acres for preservation in open space and the defeat of land sale to a developer with mountaintop removal plans and sending a message to all by holding the one house per 3 acre zoning against another developer on the Hwy 70 corridor through West Meade.



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Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

## Randy Hedgepath Hikes

**Saturday, January 28th @ 9:00 A.M.**  
Cedar Forest Trail  
2 miles

**Saturday, January 28th @ 2:00 P.M.**  
Hidden Springs  
2 miles

**Sunday, January 29th @ 9:00 A.M.**  
Jackson Cave and Dixon Merrit walk  
1 mile



Randy Hedgepath, TN State Naturalist

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