

Tennes-Sierran

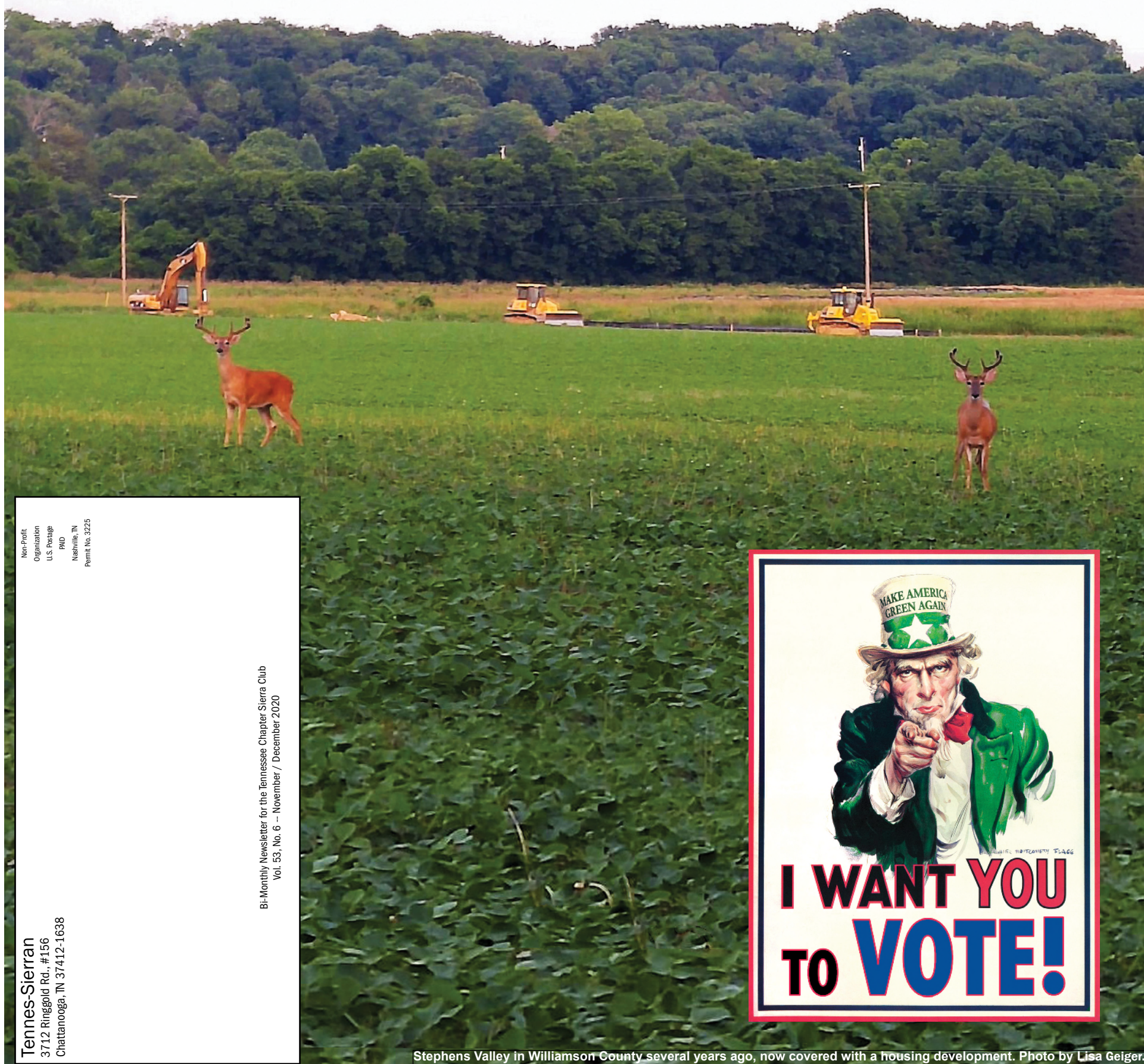
The bi-monthly state newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club

Volume 53, Number 6 - November/ December 2020

Chapter and Group Ballots Inside

Protecting the Old Natchez Trace in Williamson County

Story on Page 7



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Bi-Monthly Newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club
Vol. 53, No. 6 -- November / December 2020



Stephens Valley in Williamson County several years ago, now covered with a housing development. Photo by Lisa Geiger.

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect

From Mac Post, State Chair



John Muir is perhaps the most famous and influential naturalist and conservationist. Muir and a number of his supporters founded the Sierra Club in 1892 to protect the newly formed Yosemite National Park from the assaults that would diminish its boundaries. Muir served as the Club's president until his death in 1914.

Through his extensive writing (over 300 articles and 10 major books) he explained the importance of experiencing and protecting the earth's natural heritage. His writings have a spiritual quality that heightens the perception of nature. His untiring involvement in the great conservation questions of the day is still an inspiration for environmental activists everywhere.

John Muir was also a reflection of his society's ideologies. As pointed out in Michael Brune's forceful post on the Sierra Club website (bit.ly/SC-JohnMuirHistory) and featured in the Washington Post article, "Liberal, progressive, and racist?" Muir accepted

the racism widely shared by many in the early conservation movement. Several of his friends and founders in the Sierra Club were advocates of white supremacy and eugenics. His writings contain many derogatory comments about Black people and Indigenous peoples based on extreme racist stereotypes.

Some members are wondering why the Sierra Club has been critical of John Muir and his views on race. It is important not to cast Muir in a binary light, either good or evil. Muir, while a contributor, is not the problem today. Rather, the early white supremacist legacy lives on in the Sierra Club.

In the early years the Sierra Club was a mountaineering club for white gentlemen who worked to preserve the wilderness areas they visited. This led to the persistent idea that exploring, enjoying, and protecting the outdoors can be separated from the complications of society, power, and race. Overcoming this misguided idea is the real work that needs to be done to confront our own structural racism. It begins with an unflinching view of the Club's history, including its charismatic founder.

To challenge the harms that the Sierra Club has and continues to cause to Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color requires more than introspection and good intentions. Michael Brune outlines in his post the structural changes being considered:

- redesigning of "our leadership structure so that Black, Indigenous, and other leaders of color at the Sierra Club make up the majority of the team making top-level organizational decisions;"
- shifting "\$5 million from our budget over the next year — and more in the years to come — to make long-overdue investments in our staff of color and our environmental and racial justice work;"
- creating "a dialogue with, and resources for our members, about the intersection between racism and environmental justice issues;"
- investing in "our HR and training capacities to ensure that staff, volunteers, and members are held accountable for any harm they inflict upon members of our Sierra Club community who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color."

I will continue to read books and essays by John Muir. I will also work hard to make all outdoor spaces, from small urban parks to big national and state parks, accessible, welcoming, and secure for people of color. I will learn how I can help the Sierra Club live up to its commitment of becoming an actively anti-racist organization.

Contact Mac at chapter.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org

Sue Williams Recipient of 2020 National Robert Bullard Environmental Justice Award

by Rita Harris, Sierra Club National Board of Directors and Retired EJ Organizer



Sue Williams, recipient of the 2020 Robert Bullard Environmental Justice Award. Photo by Virginia McLean.

Sierra Club member and activist Sue Williams has received the 2020 Robert Bullard Environmental Justice award. Sue joined the Sierra Club in 1991 and has been dedicated to supporting and advocating for a wide variety of environmental causes and campaigns. She has been an outspoken advocate for Environmental Justice (EJ) in Memphis communities since the mid-1990s.

The Sierra Club's Robert Bullard Award is given annually to an individual or group that has done outstanding work in the area of environmental justice. Bullard is considered the Father of Environmental Justice and is a former recipient of the Sierra Club's John Muir Award.

In 1999, when the National Sierra Club received funding for five EJ Program offices around the country, Sue and her fellow Sierran, Dick Mochow (now deceased), successfully wrote the internal grant proposal to establish an EJ Program office for Memphis. She also served on the hiring committee for this new position. The establishment of this program office sparked local and regional support for people-of-color and poor communities dealing with a myriad of issues such as fighting dangerous air pollution from nearby industries, protecting neighbors from Superfund sites, closing down illegal barrel storage operations, and stopping a low-level nuclear waste incinerator, among numerous

other community battles. Sue served as volunteer co-lead for the Memphis EJ Program site for the first three years, working intimately with the staff organizer, Rita Harris, and neighborhood leaders. In 2000, Sue was awarded the first Memphis EJ Award, which turned into an annual EJ award for the next 16 years. The name of the award was later changed to the *Dick Mochow EJ Award* after Mochow's passing.

Sue has served in a number of roles to further support the issues related to environmental justice, including as a member of the Tennessee Chapter's Environmental Justice Committee, as a Chickasaw Group delegate to the Chapter for several years, and as a delegate to the former Gulf Coast Regional (continued on page 6)

Tennes-Sierran

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Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club
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Digital Edition

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Email: Address.Changes@SierraClub.org

Online: MyAccount.SierraClub.org

Snail Mail: Mail new address AND the mailing label on page 1 to:
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Request no paper copy here: http://bit.ly/Stop_My_Paper_Copy

Submissions

Dec Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by Nov 20

Jan Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by Dec 31

Jan / Feb Issue of The Tennes-Sierran by Nov 30

Request Submission Guidelines at sierratnnews@gmail.com

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

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mcijoann@gmail.com

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rgraham179@hotmail.com

CareNET Conservation Committee

Chair: Bill Kornrich 423-300-8764

bkornrich@gmail.com

ELECTION OF CHAPTER AND GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Now You Can Vote Either Electronically OR with the Traditional Paper Ballot.

This issue of *The Tennes-Sierran* contains ballots for the Chapter At-Large Executive Committee (ExCom) and the four Tennessee group committees. Members have the option to vote on paper or electronically. Here's what you need to know.

How does the electronic voting process work?

In early November an email will be sent with an invitation to vote electronically. This email will contain a link to the Sierra Club ballot website keyed to your Sierra Club membership number. All ballots will be the same, including Chapter and Group information all on the same form. Members will be able to select their Group from a drop-down list and only their Group's ballot will be presented.

How do I vote with a paper ballot?

To use the paper ballot, complete the ballot on page 4 of this newsletter and complete one page on page 5, 8, 9 or 10, depending on which group you are a part of. You will find further instructions on the ballots.

Can I vote both on paper and electronically?

Vote either electronically OR on the paper ballots. Not both. Voting both ways will complicate the vote counting process. The Election Committee has to verify that for each paper ballot received an electronic vote has not also been submitted. Please vote using one method only.

Will both members in a joint membership be able to vote?

Yes. Both members in a joint membership (2 people with the same membership number) will be able to vote.

How can I learn about the candidates?

Candidate biographies are included on the ballots in this issue of *The Tennes-Sierran* (pages 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10). The email about electronic voting will have a link to the biographies on the Chapter website.

How can I be sure I will receive the email about voting electronically?

To receive this email invitation that enables you to vote electronically, you must: (1) have a valid email address on file with the Sierra Club linked to your membership number; and (2) NOT have opted out of receiving emails from the Sierra Club. To check, visit or contact Member Care: (415) 557-1100 or membercare@sierraclub.org. (When contacting Member Care it is faster if you provide your Sierra Club member number. If you don't know your member number, look to the left of your name on bit.ly/SC-account the mailing label of this newsletter.)

If you use gmail, be sure to check your "Promotions" tab for the ballot. Emails from Sierra Club usually land in the Promotions tab unless you have set up a filter. If you do not receive the email in early November, please use the paper ballots in this newsletter to vote. You can also print the ballot from the online edition of this newsletter. Go to www.sierraclub.org/tennessee, scroll down and find in the right column a link to the *Tennes-Sierran*.

John Behn Provides Invaluable Technical Support to Chapter and National

By Sarah Ellis, Volunteer Writer

Two years ago, John Behn heard from a friend that Sierra Club's Tennessee Chapter needed website assistance. Already practiced in web development, he figured he could lend them a hand. Within a matter of months, Behn found himself helping with all facets of the Chapter's digital strategy, from social media to marketing approaches. He instructed the team on how to merge platforms together, how to better reach members across the state and how to make use of the data already at their disposal.

Behn has been especially helpful with tasks like organizing Sierra members by county, which allows our team to better provide you with information relevant to your local community (like events in your area). He helped post a newsletter library on the chapter website, a tip that was picked up by the National office and shared with other chapters across the country. "He sees things as a puzzle to solve in life," says Gary Bowers, Communications Coordinator for the Tennessee Sierra Club and the friend who originally recruited Behn. "He's a teamwork kind of guy."

Even though Behn and his wife moved to California recently to be close to his wife's mother, he continues to help the Chapter as needed with digital strategy and development. "John will continue to support the technology he has put in place over the last two years," said Bowers. "He has brought us from the stone age to where we are now. He has been beneficial to both the Chapter and the national support team."

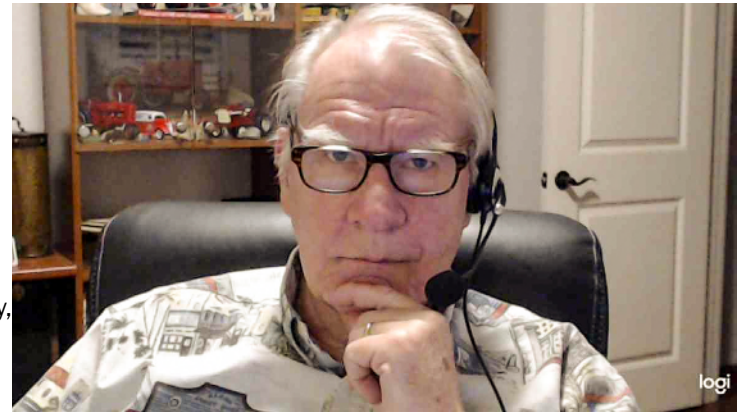
"John is an absolute professional in the best sense of the word: his knowledge, communication skills, and ability to adapt and grow in an ever-changing field are without peer," says JoAnn McIntosh, Chair of the Sierra Club Clarksville-Montgomery County (SC CMC), one of the Chapter's regional conservation committees.

McIntosh has come to recognize that she can ask Behn just about any of her technical questions. "John knows his stuff," She says. "But more importantly, he knows how to use it to make real improvements in the digital

strategies of the Chapter, and so facilitate the mission of the Sierra Club and its grassroots activists." When she was starting the SC CMC, McIntosh needed help spreading the word. "John patiently and efficiently guided me through the steps I needed to take, not overloading me with technical info, but not talking down to me, either. He is an excellent listener, and can quickly assess a technical issue while he also is getting to know the person seeking his help."

Behn's contributions are unparalleled and we are a better organization because of what he has given us. Thank you, John!

Contact Sarah at SarahAbbottEllis@gmail.com



Chapter Webmaster and tech guru, John Behn. Selfie by John.

Council of Club Leaders Passes Coal Ash Resolution

by Rick Sanders

The Sierra Club's Council of Club Leaders has unanimously approved a resolution calling for adoption of a national policy to address the coal ash problem in the United States. The resolution, which was submitted by the Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia Chapters of the Sierra Club, will now go to the Board of Directors for consideration. The hope is that a national voice will motivate polluting coal burners to be more responsible with this toxic waste product — more specifically, that coal ash will be put into dry, lined landfills to keep it out of the environment.

Coal ash, also known as coal combustion residuals (CCRs) is produced primarily from the burning of coal in coal-fired plants. Although coal ash produces a number of harmful by-products, including cadmium, arsenic, and mercury, the CCRs themselves come in different forms. The most harmful of these is fly ash, which is a fine, powdery material composed mostly of silica. Because the particles are so small, they can be distributed in the air and breathed in by people and wildlife. Flue gas desulfurization material, another form of combustion residual, is a leftover sludge-like material created from the process of reducing sulfur dioxide emissions from a coal-fired plant.

Coal ash is one of the largest types of industrial waste generated in the United States. According to the EPA, about 130 million tons of coal ash were created in 2014.

There are serious problems with the disposal of CCRs. Some power plants dispose of coal ash in ponds or landfills. It may also be discharged in nearby waterways. The problem with that, of course, is that the toxicity of the coal ash is still intact, so it may leech into the soil or discharge toxic metals directly into the water. This can disrupt sensitive water environments and end up in drinking water.

Sometimes coal ash can be reused, creating environmental and economic benefits. The reuse of CCRs can positively affect the environment by reducing the need to dispose of it in landfills, and even creating a reduction in the use of other materials. If coal ash is reused, there is less cost for its disposal, increased revenue from selling it, and savings by using it in place of more costly materials. Coal ash can also improve the strength, durability, and workability of the materials it is added to. For instance, if a slurry of limestone is sprayed into a stack producing coal ash, it will react chemically with the exhaust gases and create calcium sulfate. This is basically gypsum, which can be made into wallboard.

According to Axel Ringe, Water Quality Chair for the Chapter, "the EPA established national regulations for the disposal of coal ash and strengthened existing controls on water discharges in 2015. However, the Trump Administration weakened those regulations in 2020." And of course there is the danger of spills into nearby waterways such as the 2008 spill in Kingston, Tennessee. In this case a dike on a coal ash pond ruptured, pouring over a billion gallons of toxic coal ash into the nearby Emory River. Even though the cleanup was largely successful, 50 of the workers have died from brain cancer, lung cancer, leukemia, and other diseases through their work on the river. Many of them had blistered skin from the arsenic, and almost all of them required inhalers.

Whatever national policy the Sierra Club adopts, it must address the issues of storage, reuse, and the potential problems with both. We need energy, but the by-products of energy production must be dealt with in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

Contact Rick at artduderick76@gmail.com

Election Ballot for At-Large Delegates Tennessee Chapter Executive Committee

2021-2022 Term

Please vote for the election of three (3) At-Large Delegates of the Tennessee Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom), each having a two-year term beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022. Successful candidates will join our other ExCom members in managing our fiscal, legislative, environmental, outings program and governance responsibilities of the Tennessee Chapter. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020, to be valid. Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote. Joint members must use the same ballot. Single Members or each Joint Member should vote for no more than three (3) candidates. The order of candidates on the ballot was determined by drawing names at random. **Also complete a ballot for your group on page 5, 8, 9, or 10.**

VOTE HERE FOR CHAPTER AT-LARGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:

At-Large Chapter Candidates	Single Member or First Joint Member - Max 3 votes -	Second Joint Member - Max 3 votes -
Dr. Cris Corley	_____	_____
Andre Porter	_____	_____
Dr. Virginia Dale	_____	_____
Nancy Bell	_____	_____
Kent Minault	_____	_____
Don Barger	_____	_____

How to Submit Your Paper Ballot:

Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote! Place both Group and At-Large ballots in the same envelope. Seal and write "Ballot" on that same envelope. Place your "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing. 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 your *Tennes-Sierran*.

- Envelopes without name, address, and membership number cannot be counted.

- Mail promptly! Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020 to be valid.

Mail ballot promptly to:

Charlie High
1722 Sweetbriar Avenue
Nashville TN 37212-5527

Candidate Bios

Dr. Cris Corley *Delegate at Large, *Vice-Chair Sierra Club, *Vice-Chair Conservation, *Alternate 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 has resulted in budgetary reductions and a hiring freeze at the National level. The Tennessee Executive Committee has been diligent in meeting it's 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 vice-chair. I would appreciate your kind vote. Let's all continue on the good path that provides our membership and public the opportunity to explore and protect the natural wonders of this great state.

Andre Porter was born in Los Angeles and spent his childhood there; at Clovis Air Force Base, New Mexico; Millington Naval Air Station, Tennessee; and Naval Air Station Meridian, Mississippi. Both his father (U.S. Air Force) and step-father (U.S. Navy) are Vietnam veterans. Andre earned his bachelor's degree at California State University, Hayward, and his Master of Healthcare Administration with a Healthcare Informatics Certificate from Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville. Andre is currently the graduate and professional studies recruiter at the University of Tennessee Space Center in Tullahoma, Tennessee. Mentoring and uplifting youth and social and environmental justice are his passions. He serves on the board of Stronger Than My Father, Inc. in Antioch, Tennessee, supporting youth and families through quality pre- and after-school care, including a Christian principles-based leadership academy. Since January 2020, Andre has served as treasurer and budget committee chair for the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club.

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. Serving on the Chapter ExCom will allow her to give back to Tennessee.

Nancy Bell. A native of New Hampshire and a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Iran, she arrived in Tennessee as a public health nutritionist. Joining the Sierra Club in 1988, she worked on clean air issues in Kingsport. In 1990, she joined the Friends of the Clinch and Powell Rivers, serving as president for three years. The Friends presented a 4th grade ecology program for 10 years which she designed. She coordinated many cleanups and a recycling fair for 600 students. The Friends defeated an ash landfill in Hancock County and an azide plant in Hawkins County and started a recycling program. In the 1990s she served as a board member of the Hawkins County Solid Waste Board and Coalition for Jobs & the Environment (Northeast TN/ Southwest VA). In 2002 she returned to grad school earning a biology teaching certificate and taught 2004-2014. In 2016, a group of friends formed CareNET Conservation Committee which she chaired for three years, working on solid waste issues, getting the Jackson Law passed and doing cleanups; promoting solar and electric vehicles, broadband, and herbicide reduction. She will work to support Sierra Club goals—in rural and urban areas—one club working together.

Kent Minault started in the '60's acting and touring with the San Francisco Mime Troupe. He joined the Diggers, organizing street rallies and serving daily free food in the park. They organized the first Haight Ashbury Free Medical Clinic. In the 70's, he worked as an Actor/Organizer for the SF Art Commission. He expanded into television and film, but also taught English. He successfully organized to preserve adult education and worked to defeat anti-union ballot measures. In 2010, he volunteered with the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign. After getting LA off coal, he joined the LA County Electric Bus Coalition and got LA Metro to transition to electric buses by 2030. He organized EV events in Watts and helped found the Watts Clean Air Committee, installing rooftop solar and helping residents enter union apprenticeship programs. He organized an EV event in East Knoxville in collaboration with SEED. He's on the Harvey Broome Group's ExCom and is the Group's Political Chair. He's developed a strategy for endorsing local candidates and works with the State Political Team on 2020 endorsements. He works regularly with the state Beyond Coal Team and the Chapter Energy Team as well as with the Bull Run Neighbors. Mentoring and uplifting youth and social and environmental justice are his passions.

Don Barger recently retired from a 37-year career as a grassroots organizer, conservationist and environmental advocate. A graduate of the University of Tennessee School of Architecture, Don worked as a coalfield community organizer in the Cumberland Mountains (1983–1990), as a Policy Analyst with the Environmental Policy Institute/Friends of the Earth in Washington, DC (1990–1992), and founded the Southeast Regional Office of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) serving as Regional Director (1992–2019) and as Senior Advisor to NPCA (2019–2020). Don has worked extensively with the Sierra Club, both nationally and locally, on numerous regional issues such as the 10-year TVA lawsuit that cleaned up or retired most of TVA's coal-fired boilers; the contentious North Shore Road settlement at Great Smoky Mountains NP; Buffalo River dam fight; the North Cumberland WMA Lands Unsuitable designation, and on many others. In 2016, Don was recognized as one of 17 "Conservation Pioneers" in the Southeast by *Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine* and was named one of the "100 Most Influential People in the History of Great Smoky Mountains National Park" by the Great Smoky Mountains Association. Don is seeking this position to remain engaged in meaningful, impactful and societally progressive conservation efforts.

Election Ballot for Cherokee Group Executive Committee

2021 - 2022 Term

You are in the Cherokee Group 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 or White. Please vote for the election of five (5) members of the Cherokee Group Executive Committee (ExCom), each having a two-year term beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022.

Successful candidates will join our other ExCom Members in guiding our Group's actions. Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote. Joint members must use the same ballot. Single Members or each Joint Member should vote for no more than five (5) candidates. The order of candidates on the ballot was determined by drawing names at random.

VOTE HERE FOR CHEROKEE GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:

Cherokee Group Candidates	Single Member or	Second Joint Member
	First Joint Member	
	- Max 5 votes -	- Max 5 votes -
David Hoot	_____	_____
Tami Freedman	_____	_____
Sandy Kurtz	_____	_____
Barbara Kelly	_____	_____
David Riall	_____	_____
Elizabeth Tallman	_____	_____

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- Envelopes without name, address, and membership number cannot be counted.

- Mail promptly! Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020 to be valid.

Mail ballot promptly to:

Charlie High
1722 Sweetbriar Avenue
Nashville TN 37212-5527

Candidate Bios

David Hoot. Born in Michigan, a long way from the Sunny South, David grew up hiking, camping and swimming in the Great Lakes, while also enjoying snow and all the winter sports. Environmental consciousness and a large organic garden were a big part of his family's values. When they moved South, he lived next to Cloudland Canyon, spending much time hiking over and through the park. Active in the St. Elmo Neighborhood Association, he works as a contractor doing building and remodeling. With green|spaces, David is involved in construction focused on improving building performance and environmental sustainability by using less energy. He serves on the board of the Chattanooga affiliate of Rebuilding Together, a national nonprofit organization assisting low-income homeowners with repairs through grants and neighbors helping neighbors. Several recently completed projects brought new roofs and a remodeled bathroom to the community through their Safe & Healthy Homes Project. When he's not out building or advocating for better housing, you'll find David on the phone, calling Democratic voters to remind them to vote. David's main concern is the climate crisis, and he hates to see humans spoiling the Earth for all its creatures.

Tami Freedman. Growing up with a dad in the Air Force, Tami has lived around the world before finally settling in Collegedale. A former realtor, Tami has a B.A. in Communications/Public Relations and has served as our Group's Publicity Chair. She has also done PR for our Clean Energy Festivals and Drive Electric weeks. She is a holistic healthcare advocate, a proponent of Algae4Oil, and opposes corporate corruption in all arenas.

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.

Barbara Kelly. Barbara has been active 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, though she looks forward to the end of her tenure as the Tennessee Chapter Fundraising Chair, with Mac Post taking command in 2021. She likes to learn new and interesting things at our programs, meet our members and welcome them to Sierra Club's activism and fun.

David Riall. David has always been concerned about the environmental direction in which the world and country are headed. After being very active in the 70s during college and his early career, family became his main focus. But now, after 40 years of working as a Graphic Artist, he is back. In the past few years David has become an active member of the Sierra Club, Interfaith Power & Light, Audubon and now serves as the Conservation/Webmaster for Tennessee Valley Canoe Club (TVCC), a very active and socially conscious paddling club. David thinks everything begins on a local level, so on top of these involvements, he and his wife Dixie have been politically active getting exposure for environmentally friendly candidates. David believes there is a path to a better world, but we need to get on that path as soon as we can.


Elizabeth Tallman. Elizabeth is an experienced grant writer and community organizer. She has her Masters in Public Administration - Nonprofit Management and during the last 15 years, she has served as Development Director, Director of Education and Policy Council Chair at three prominent and well-respected local nonprofit organizations. Elizabeth has served on multiple nonprofit boards during the last twenty years, including as chair of the Cherokee Sierra Club and Tennessee Chapter Executive Committee at the beginning of the new millennium. passions include gardening, conservation, dance, youth empowerment, travel, natural medicine, social justice and studying the brain. Elizabeth currently works as a trainer for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)-Building Strong Brains Tennessee.



**The Tennessee
Environmental Conference**
Rescheduled for March 21-24, 2021.

We have a great agenda planned.
Please see the website for further updates.
Thanks for your support and patience!

Learn More and Get Updates:
bit.ly/TNEnvironmentalConference



**We CHAMPION solutions
to the climate crisis.**

We WORK for clean air, safe water, land
protection, & a vibrant natural world.

We FIGHT for environmental and social justice.

We BELIEVE in getting people outside to enjoy the
outdoors.

Every election is determined by the people who show up.

Exploring Our Relationship to Racism

By: Gary Bowers, Chapter Communications Coordinator
and Rita Harris, Sierra Club National Board of Directors and Retired EJ Organizer

Sometimes people seem to jump on the bandwagon and embrace new ideas when there is momentum and things are popular. Perhaps, it is human nature to respond in that way. For some, awareness of injustice was recently raised by the George Floyd murder, and the numerous images of police brutality that we have seen dominating news reports. There has been an increase in racial sensitivity training, anti-racism training, and requests for speakers about race, racism, white privilege, etc. Many will agree that it is time to learn as much as possible about things that cause so much pain and discontent in the world. After all, much of this was not covered in school.

Participants who attended the Tennessee Chapter's Dismantling Racism (DR) Training back in 2015 should be applauded for proactively making the decision to experience it. If you want to know why we decided to host this learning experience at that time, you will have to ask each participant and you will probably get different answers from everyone that set aside a weekend to attend this training that some described as a life-changing experience.

The workshop was co-facilitated by Rita Harris, former Sierra Club Environmental Justice Organizer based in Memphis, now a newly elected member of the Sierra Club National Board of Directors, and Bill Price, a former Beyond Coal Campaign organizer, who began his career with Sierra Club as an EJ organizer from the coal fields of West Virginia. Since that time Bill has been promoted to the position of Eastern Region Organizing Manager. Bill and Rita had facilitated trainings across the country for many years, but this was the first time Tennessee made a request for this kind of training. Funding was secured from the Sierra Club's Equity, Inclusion and Justice department to cover participants' lodging, food and gas mileage.

The weekend workshop was held at St. Mary's Retreat Center in Sewanee, Tennessee, and consisted of various activities and exercises designed to evoke thoughts & emotions to awaken one's personally held beliefs. The different activities and discussions helped us examine our own understanding of racism and stereotypes and how we can overcome the impact that racism has had on

us and move to become anti-racist allies working for a better society. The goal was to create an awareness of both individual and societal impacts on those of different ethnic groups and



Current literature about anti-racism recommended by Rita Harris.

Bull Run Neighbors Group Presses TVA for True Community Engagement

By Todd Waterman, Harvey Broome Group

In July, the grassroots Bull Run Neighbors community group boycotted the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) "Open House" because it would allow no live interaction. Rather, the event consisted of a one-way virtual placard and a video tour. The topic was repurposing the coal-ash-contaminated Bull Run Fossil Plant's site after it closes in 2023. Some of us had publicly dubbed TVA's rosy vision "Disneyland on a pile of poison." A TVA aerial illustration showed park-like features, and the solar array we'd proposed – but spreading over an abandoned yet already-leaking dry fly ash stack.

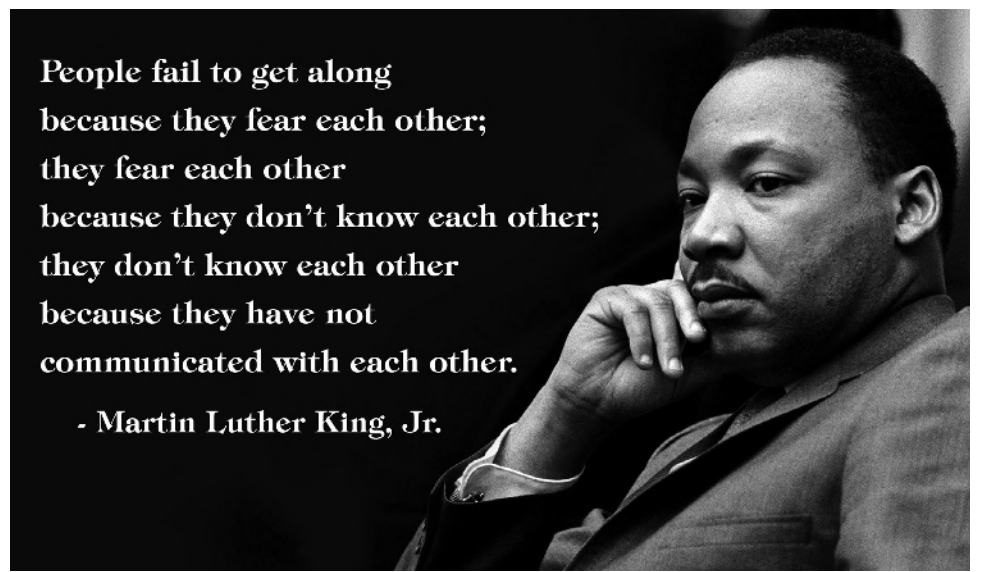
On August 13, Bull Run Neighbors hosted its own richly-interactive community Zoom meeting to discuss TVA's vision. TVA skipped it, but over 55 people joined in. Many, despite occasional glitches, commented or raised questions. A Greek chorus of Bull Run residents, Oak Ridge experts, environmentalists, officials, and Kingston cleanup survivors mostly called on TVA to remove millions of tons of Bull Run coal ash that TVA plans to cap and abandon in place, both in its dry ash stack and in an also-leaking wet ash pond jutting into the reservoir from which Anderson Countians and many Knoxvilleans drink.

The meeting was wrenching for activist Julie Bledsoe. Her husband Ron and his two brothers, all denied respiratory protection as Kingston cleanup workers, had long been sick. One, Doug, had died the night before. Julie angrily dismissed the assurances of Chuck Head, who was representing the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), that the department would protect Tennessee citizens from coal ash: TDEC had "looked the other way" when Kingston workers were poisoned by coal ash.

Meeting publicity prompted from TVA newly clarified evidence, now publicly acknowledged by Bull Run Neighbors, that local drinking water intake tests had thus far only appeared to show unsafe coal ash contamination. But across the nation, as at Bull Run, 91% of coal ash sites are already contaminating groundwater. At TVA's retired Allen Plant, groundwater arsenic levels an ominous 350 times safe levels threaten the Memphis area's drinking water aquifer. There, and by court order at Gallatin and throughout North Carolina, coal ash is being safely excavated.

On September 24, TVA would host its second virtual Bull Run Open House - this time adding an interactive, if amusingly bungled, Q&A. Perhaps they're learning that communication means more than one-way PR. And that only good deeds, not PR, can build public trust.

Contact Todd at jtoddw@gmail.com



People fail to get along
because they fear each other;
they fear each other
because they don't know each other;
they don't know each other
because they have not
communicated with each other.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

other cultures. "Sharing circles" and other activities supported this goal. The desired result was to have each of us leave with a new and expanded understanding and outlook. The ultimate goal was to have a change of heart and mind that would result in a change of our attitudes and behaviors toward individuals with a different skin color and a recognition that people of color live under different circumstances than white people. We also learned that these changes of heart and mind do not happen magically or instantaneously, but over time. Becoming anti-racist is a lifelong journey.

Part of the first night together included watching the award-winning movie *Crash*. If you have not seen it, we highly recommend that you watch it. If you have seen it, watch it again. Better yet, hold a house party with some friends and watch it together when safely able to do so. Suggest prior to screening that it might be interesting for each person to keep track of the biases, white privilege, racial stereotypes and language that they notice in the movie and afterwards compare notes and have a discussion. There are many lessons about how we stereotype people when we really know little about them. Gary tried hosting a house party a couple of years ago with a few friends. The unwillingness by some of those invited to participate was both telling and disappointing.

In these times of racial unrest and nationwide discussions about the Black Lives Matter Movement, having a facilitated discussion about race and differences can be a very positive and useful thing to bring more understanding to all of us. And, as Executive Director Michael Brune says, the climate crisis makes this an all-hands-on-deck moment where we need to build a more powerful movement leaving no one out. Knowing how to befriend others, inspire action, and draw them into the movement makes us a more powerful organization overall. There is much work to do and we could all benefit from new members sharing their talents for Mother Earth.

Contact Gary at sierra@totheforest.net and Rita at rita2600@gmail.com

Sue Williams Wins Award

(continued from page 2)



Sue Williams is the recipient of the 2020 national Robert Bullard Environmental Justice Award. Photo by Virginia McLean.

Conservation Committee. Locally she served as an EJ team/committee member for 18 years. Sue's background as an attorney always helped her give good guidance from a legal perspective.

In the early 2000s she supported the fight for clean air by assisting with planning a Bucket Brigade air sampling training for the Douglass neighborhood in north Memphis that was surrounded by eight polluting industries. The training was successful and prepared the community to do their own air sampling & testing. She supported training Sierra Club members and community members alike. When the communities around hazardous facilities were encouraged to be prepared by taking the Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Course, Sue was right there, learning alongside neighborhood members. She attended a 1998

Organizing Training held in Memphis, and a 2012 Dismantling Racism weekend training in Marin County, California, and. Sue served on the planning committee of Memphis' longest-running grassroots environmental conference series for 16 years, with the most recent conference in November 2019.

Sue's long list of advocacy and experiences include seeking a change to the Memphis' billboard ordinance, which was successfully revised in 1998; serving as the SC Group & Chapter water quality chair; serving as environmental chair with the local League of Women Voters; and writing numerous letters to the editor about Superfund sites, development in flood zones, support for a walking trail along the Mississippi River, and many other issues. In August 2013, she was awarded a Guest Editorial in the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper, where she focused on the closing of the TVA coal plant. In addition, Sue is a trained outings leader who specializes in local wildflower hikes.

Overall, Sue Williams has been a dedicated and consistent voice for conservation issues as well as environmental justice for 29 years. Congratulations, Sue, on your 2020 Robert Bullard Environmental Justice award!

Contact Rita at rita2600@gmail.com

Protecting the Old Natchez Trace

By Aaron Butler, Volunteer Writer

If you ever find yourself in Williamson County driving west on Sneed Rd between Temple Road and Hillsboro Road, you can't help but be struck by the beauty of the landscape. The road goes up, down then up and down again as you careen through walls of lush trees and occasionally spot deer and turkey meandering close by.

If you're not paying attention, you may overlook the signs aligning each side of the road, alerting people to the fact that this pristine rural landscape is in danger. Heading in one direction, eleven individual signs atop a white fence read "Rochford Profits, At Any Cost, Taxpayers Pay, Historic Land Lost, citizens@oldnatcheztrace.org, Stephens Valley, Don't Be Fooled, You're Not Zoned To, Grassland Schools, But Fairview Schools, Are Really Cool!!" Admittedly I drove by these signs numerous times before I took time to research their purpose. An all too familiar threat is looming right in our backyard: the threat of encroaching development. It wasn't even twenty-four hours after using the "Contact Us" option on the site that Laura Turner, a Williamson County resident and activist, responded to my message. I also reached out to Donna Clements who runs the Save Stephens Valley Facebook page and has been a Williamson County resident since 2002.

Laura shared with me the history of Old Natchez Trace, a four-mile stretch



Old Natchez Trace is a historic forest trail which extends roughly 440 miles from Nashville to Natchez, Mississippi, linking the Cumberland, Tennessee, and Mississippi rivers

of road winding through Williamson County not very far from where I first saw these signs. Constructed in 1801 by order of President Thomas Jefferson, the road has historical, cultural, and environmental significance that can't be overstated. The two-hundred-year-old stone walls built by human hands are now crumbling in many places, but surprisingly intact in others. Homes are few and far between, and everything made by humans seems to just fold into the landscape, present but easily ignored in this wild backdrop. And although this landscape is currently minimally unscathed, at least in comparison to the typical suburban developments many of us live in, it is facing growing pressure for residential and commercial development.

But why care about a two-hundred-year-old road like Old Natchez Trace and a small strip of land like Stephens Valley anyway? While much of these preservation efforts are based on economic and lifestyle preferences, it turns out that the environmental benefits are numerous as well. As homes are built throughout the county, vibrations from regular traffic and large construction vehicles cause the road and the stone walls of Old Natchez Trace to crumble. Trees and forest growth in Stephens Valley would be cleared and ancient Native American burial sites under the Old Natchez Trace road would be endangered. Additionally, much of the area lies in a flood plain; further development will cause more flooding and pollution resulting from stormwater, a significant concern considering the 54 inches of average annual rainfall in Williamson County. And new communities need utilities and infrastructure like running water, electricity and roads, all of which are not currently abundant in this area. Development leads to more development, further endangering the landscape.

When asked about the signs atop the white fence I'd seen, both Laura and Donna shared that these signs are multi-purpose, fostering public awareness and education as well as discouraging further development. Although not every effort to slow development in Williamson County has been successful, they've scored some major wins through persistent social media, letter writing and community awareness efforts.



A bridge abutment built by US soldiers in 1801 by order of President Thomas Jefferson for the wooden bridge that crossed over Brown's Creek by the Harpeth River at Old Town. Photo by Marsha Comstock.

And how did they make it happen? By making the case that the economic engine of Williamson County isn't fueled by subdivisions and strip malls, but by the town-and-country lifestyle so many Williamson County residents were drawn to in the first place.

In 2016 the Tennessee Preservation Trust added Old Natchez Trace to their list of Tennessee's top 10 endangered historic places. Additionally, Laura and Donna have been outspoken supporters of the Williamson County Town and Country Comprehensive Land Use Plan which was adopted by the Williamson County Regional Planning Commission on March 12, 2020. This plan stipulates that homes must be built on a minimum parcel size of five acres, thereby protecting the land in the unincorporated portion of the County from overwhelming population density.

So what battles lie ahead for these local activists? Although Williamson County adopted the Town and Country Comprehensive Land Use Plan, there is one more step to ensuring the plan is fully implemented. Williamson County now needs to adopt zoning that matches the Land Use Plan, and this zoning legislation will be considered by the County Commission for a full vote on November 9, 2020.

Not much seems certain right now in this crazy, mixed-up world, but there are a few things we can count on. Development pressure will continue to bear down upon undeveloped areas while concerned citizens like Laura and Donna continue to make a difference in the fight to preserve historic and natural landscapes. No level of activism is too small. We win when we get involved and, as the story of protecting Old Natchez Trace and Stephens Valley teaches us, we win when we work together.

Do you have a similar story to tell about other areas in Tennessee? If so, we'd love to hear from you!

For more information on this story please visit:

www.oldnatcheztrace.org or bit.ly/Stephens-Valley

Contact Aaron at thegoodfightnow@gmail.com



The Natchez Trace Parkway Bridge is a concrete, double-arch bridge located in Williamson County, Tennessee, 8.7 miles from the northern terminus of the Natchez Trace Parkway. It is 1,572 feet long and carries the two-lane Natchez Trace Parkway over State Route 96 and a heavily wooded valley. Photo by Alan Sparkman.

Election Ballot for Chickasaw Group Executive Committee

2021 - 2022 Term

You are in the Chickasaw Group if you live in one of these West Tennessee counties: Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Madison; McNairy, Obion, Shelby, Tipton or Weakley. Please vote for the election of five (5) members of the Chickasaw Group Executive Committee (ExCom).

The three (3) candidates who receive the most votes will each have a two-year term; the next two (2) candidates will each have a one-year term. Terms begin January 1, 2021. The elected ExCom Members will guide our Group's actions. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020 to be valid. Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote. Joint members must use the same ballot. Single Members or each Joint Member should vote for no more than five (5) candidates. The order of candidates on the ballot was determined by drawing names at random.

VOTE HERE FOR CHICKASAW GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:

Chickasaw Group Candidates	Single Member or First Joint Member -Max 5 votes -	Second Joint Member - Max 5 votes -
Mondell Williams	_____	_____
Charlie Belenky	_____	_____
Shelica Cox	_____	_____
Marquita Bradshaw	_____	_____
Mia Madison	_____	_____
Dennis Lynch	_____	_____
Shahin Samiei	_____	_____

How to Submit Your Paper Ballot:

Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote! Place both Group and At-Large ballots in the same envelope. Seal and write "Ballot" on that same envelope. Place your "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing. 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 your Tennes-Sierran.

- Envelopes without name, address, and membership number cannot be counted.

- Mail promptly! Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020 to be valid.

Mail ballot promptly to:

Charlie High
1722 Sweetbriar Avenue
Nashville TN 37212-5527

Candidate Bios

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 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 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.

Charlie Belenky is a retired attorney. He has run for local office and attends City Council meetings and Chapter retreats. Charlie says he is against nuclear and fossil fuels and considers himself pro-solar and wind. He supports efforts for a bottle bill and a carbon tax. In addition, he wants to preserve wild lands and improve water quality. Charlie believes conserving energy is the best way. Before moving to Tennessee, he was active in the Abalone Alliance in California and was arrested at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in 1977. In 1978-1979 he was an intern in the Water Division in Region IX of the EPA. Charlie has done environmental litigation and compliance work when employed by the State of California.

Shelica Cox is a native Memphian, a business owner, mother of three beautiful children, and a parent ambassador for Shelby County Schools. She is well connected and grounded in the Shelby County area and serves as the Chair of Outreach for the Democratic Women of Shelby County, and the Co-Chair of the Legislative Democratic Women of Tennessee. She also serves as an Ambassador for the Memphis Police Department. She says her passion for the environment is great, and believes we should live in a safe, healthy environment.

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 is 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.

Mia Madison is the Executive Director of Memphis Tilth. She has served as an activist and community organizer throughout the Mid-South region and volunteers for a host of programs and projects focused on bridging the gap between people and the environment. Her passions are urban agriculture, environmental justice, youth advocacy, equitable access, and minority participation and engagement in urban affairs. Mia holds a master's degree in Anthropology and a bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of Memphis with concentrations in applied participatory action research of urban environmental affairs, and city and regional planning.

Dennis Lynch has been active in the local Sierra Club Chickasaw Group for 8 years, and the ExCom for 6. He loves hiking and bicycling. Dennis would like to keep working with the Sierra Club on many issues, including Clean Renewable Energy (Climate Crisis), Transportation, and Recycling and Solid Waste. Also, he wants to work with you to strengthen our local environmental justice, communications and membership committees. Dennis has been active in many Sierra Club efforts at the local, state and national levels. Dennis would be happy to answer your questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Shahin Samiei has worked with the Sierra Club Chickasaw Group in sustainability efforts since his time as a Master of Public Health graduate student at the University of Memphis in 2009. He has been a formal member of the Sierra Club since 2011 and works to connect environmental justice and sustainability with his various roles. Shahin also serves as the Shelby County Committee Chair for the Tennessee Equality Project (LGBTQ public policy advocacy). For their annual major fundraiser (TEP Gumbo Competition), he implemented the transition from single-use plastics toward compostable, reusable, and sustainably sourced materials. As a student and now staff at the University of Memphis, he has worked with the Physical Plant's sustainability leadership to ensure sustainability is a considered component of the area's logistics and process cycles. He volunteered with and served as the Secretary of the Memphis Bus Riders Union in the mid-2010s to advance transit justice and advocate for better transit in Memphis. As a native Memphian who values stewardship of our community, he is excited to have the opportunity to continue working with the Sierra Club as we tackle tough challenges that transcend environmental protection, materials science, human behavior, public policy, and social justice.

Election Ballot for Harvey Broome Group Executive Committee

2021 - 2022 Term

You are in the Harvey Broome Group if you live in one of these counties: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Cumberland, Fentress, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Pickett, Roane, Scott, Sevier, or Union. Please vote for the election of six (6) members of the Harvey Broome Group Executive Committee (ExCom), each having a two-year term beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022.

Successful candidates will join our other ExCom members in guiding our Group's actions. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020, to be valid. Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote. Joint members must use the same ballot. Single Members or each Joint Member should vote for no more than six (6) candidates. The order of candidates on the ballot was determined by drawing names at random.

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 -
Will Skelton	_____	_____
Joan Tomlinson	_____	_____
Todd Waterman	_____	_____
Stan Johnson	_____	_____
Kent Minault	_____	_____
Don Barger	_____	_____
Gerald Thornton	_____	_____

How to Submit Your Paper Ballot:

Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote! Place both Group and At-Large ballots in the same envelope. Seal and write "Ballot" on that same envelope. Place your "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing. 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 your *Tennes-Sierran*.

- Envelopes without name, address, and membership number cannot be counted.

- Mail promptly! Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020 to be valid.

Mail ballot promptly to:

Charlie High
1722 Sweetbriar Avenue
Nashville TN 37212-5527

Candidate Bios

Will Skelton is a retired Knoxville attorney with Bass, Berry & Sims, PLC. Prior Chair of HBG and Tennessee Chapter and longtime Harvey Broome Group outings leader. Led wilderness campaigns of 1980's that resulted in existing wilderness areas in Cherokee National Forest and editor of Cherokee National Forest Hiking Guide published by UT Press. Chair of Knoxville Greenways Commission 1992-2006 when most existing Knoxville greenways were built. Currently on Board of Legacy Parks Foundation, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards, and NPCA Regional Advisory Council. Personal interests include world travel, backpacking, walking, vegetarian cooking, reading, photography, theater and arts.

Joan Tomlinson is a retired computer analyst. She worked with information systems for 30+ years, primarily through her own consulting company. In 2014, Joan (trailname Blue Jay) thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail gaining a deep appreciation for the natural world, where she finds much wisdom and joy. To deepen and continue her love of the natural world, Joan completed a hike of the 2650 mile Pacific Crest Trail in 2018. She writes about the wisdom she has seen in wild and natural places in the *Tennes-Sierran*. Joan has been a member of the HBG's ExCom since 2017. She serves as the chair of the Outreach Committee and is on the Communications, Political-Conservation, and Membership committees. She is an outings leader, leading hikes and forest therapy walks. Joan participated in the Women's March in Washington DC in 2016 and the Climate March in DC in 2017. Joan is an active volunteer with political candidates who promote the Sierra Club values. Joan is committed to being active with organizations that promote conservation of, love of, and connections to wild and natural places on our amazing planet.

John Todd Waterman. The climate crisis and pollution irrevocably threaten our only home. You are the superheroes who will save this verdant Earth - for our children, every child to come, and every living thing. Changing our light bulbs hasn't worked. Changing our government will work. Building support for game-changing, sustainable laws and regulations will work. As an environmental and social activist and your Communications Chair, I know both we and our organizations - Sierra Club, Beyond Coal, SOCM, CCL, TIPL, Sunrise, Bull Run Neighbors - are mighty when we act as one. Together we're creating exciting volunteer opportunities to influence TVA and other power centers; to attend rallies, trainings, conferences, and marches; to comment, sign petitions, learn, lobby, and to elect green candidates. As an HBG and Chapter ExCom nominator, I've recruited effective, diverse, passionate activists. As a "babble rouser," I use social media, news outlets, email, photography, teamwork, Knox Climate Actions, and our HBG and chapter newsletters to invite folks to act. I love HBG, our Chapter's most exciting and effective group. I'll work long and hard.

Stan Johnson is a native of Black River, Jamaica, and emigrated to the U.S. when he was very young. His family travelled seasonally from New York to Florida to pick fruit. He attended UT and graduated from Knoxville College. After an unsuccessful bid for Knox County Commissioner, Stan served on the Metropolitan Planning Commission. While volunteering at a non-profit in 2009, Tribe One, Stan talked with three young men - Joshua Outsey, Jarius Bush, and Jerome Johnson - about the emerging green economy and how newly created jobs could help the low-income young people in Knoxville. They started a Listening Project, knocking on doors and asking questions and found that the most pressing issue was unaffordable utility bills, thus SEED (Socially Equal Energy Efficient Development) was formed. Now 11 years later, SEED is a cadre of young adults who knock on doors and host workshops on energy efficiency. They graduate 20-30 students per year with the skills to find sustainable employment. He is a graduate of the Consortium for Social Enterprise Effectiveness, a leadership program at UTK. He also just graduated from the 2020 Knoxville Leadership Class.

Kent Minault started in the '60's acting and touring with the San Francisco Mime Troupe. He joined the Diggers, organizing street rallies and serving daily free food in the park. They organized the first Haight Ashbury Free Medical Clinic. In the 70's, he worked as an Actor/Organizer for the SF Art Commission. He expanded into television and film, but also taught English. He successfully organized to preserve adult education and worked to defeat anti-union ballot measures. In 2010, he volunteered with the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign. After getting LA off coal, he joined the LA County Electric Bus Coalition and got LA Metro to transition to electric buses by 2030. He organized EV events in Watts and helped found the Watts Clean Air Committee, installing rooftop solar and helping residents enter union apprenticeship programs. He organized an EV event in East Knoxville in collaboration with SEED. He's on the Harvey Broome Group's ExCom and is the Group's Political Chair. He's developed a strategy for endorsing local candidates and works with the State Political Team on 2020 endorsements. He works regularly with the state Beyond Coal Team and the Chapter Energy Team as well as with the Bull Run Neighbors.

Don Barger founded the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) Southeast Regional Office. His work since that time has been integral in an historic cleanup of dirty TVA coal-fired plants in the area, the preservation of 10,000 acres of land adjacent to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the banning of mountaintop mining in the headwaters of Big South Fork National River, the renovation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, protection of Cumberland Gap and campaigns to protect the Buffalo National River in Arkansas, the Obed Wild and Scenic River in Tennessee and the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. Don was commended for his efforts to preserve Cumberland Island National Seashore, was named as one of 17 "Conservation Pioneers" in the Southeast, and by the Great Smoky Mountains History Association as one of "The 100 Most Influential People in the History of Great Smoky Mountains National Park". Don is seeking to get involved with meaningful, impactful, and societally progressive conservation efforts. Before joining NPCA, Don directed the Citizens' Mining Project for the Environmental Policy Institute and worked as a community organizer in the coalfields of East Tennessee.

Gerald (Jerry) Thornton seeks a second 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. Jerry has a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Kentucky, a 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 an expanded ICO program, and will work to further the Club's efforts to oppose and reverse the Trump Administration's dismantling of environmental protections and destruction of public lands.

Election Ballot for Middle Tennessee Group Executive Committee

2021-2022 Term

You are in the Middle Tennessee Group 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. Please vote for the election of five (5) members of the Middle Tennessee Group Executive Committee (ExCom), each having a two-year term beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022.

Successful candidates will join our other ExCom members in guiding our Group's actions. Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020, to be valid. Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote. Joint members must use the same ballot. Single Members or each Joint Member should vote for no more than five (5) candidates. The order of candidates on the ballot was determined by drawing names at random.

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 -
Antoinette Oleson	_____	_____
Paula Lennon	_____	_____
Daniel Joranko	_____	_____
Robert Wingfield	_____	_____
Gary Bowers	_____	_____

How to Submit Your Paper Ballot:

Only current members as of November 1, 2020, may vote! Place both Group and At-Large ballots in the same envelope. Seal and write "Ballot" on that same envelope. Place your "Ballot" envelope in a second envelope for mailing. 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 your *Tennes-Sierran*.

- Envelopes without name, address, and membership number cannot be counted.

- Mail promptly! Ballots must be received no later than December 15, 2020 to be valid.

Mail ballot promptly to:

Charlie High
1722 Sweetbriar Avenue
Nashville TN 37212-5527

Candidate Bios

Antoinette Oleson is the current Chair of the Middle TN Excom, a long-time member of the Sierra Club and an avid environmentalist. As head of the Membership Committee she has worked with an enthusiastic group and helped to organize our first *Sierra Picnic* and our first and second *Annual Holiday Party* all of which were very successful in bringing people together, building enthusiasm and attracting new members. Monthly socials, New Member Welcome and Radnor hike were curtailed by Covid. Several of her current focuses include: increasing outreach to our current members to increase participation and involvement in our programs and activities to further Sierra Club goals; launching a local environmental protection project which is already in the making; increasing communication between National and Chapters and the Excom groups; co-sponsoring events with other local environmental groups to increase awareness in and support each other's programs. Her goal is utilizing a "think big", out of the box visioning to and outreach especially attracting new, young, diverse, enthusiastic Sierra Club members. She believes all of this building, communication and inclusion will make possible all of the important environmental concerns and goals of Sierra Club. Thanks for your consideration.

Paula Lennon. Having spent most of her life in California, Paula moved to Tennessee 24 years ago and is proud to call Tennessee her home. She truly loves the outdoors and is very passionate that we leave our environment in better condition than we found it. That's quite a goal and we have a lot of work to do. Paula has worked in the background for Sierra for a long time, and currently serves on the MTG Executive Committee & Membership Committees. In the past she has served as Chapter & Group Secretary, Membership Chair, served as Chapter Election Committee Chair and was on the Chapter ExCom as delegate for the MTG Group. Tennessee is an amazing state, and Paula hopes to help more members become more active and to share her love of nature and environmental awareness to school age children. She has seen many places in this great state that she wouldn't have seen without the Sierra Club. This organization also made it possible for her to make some amazing friends all over the state. Thank for your participation in the Sierra Club and Paula would appreciate your vote!

Daniel Joranko is nominated to serve on the Executive Committee for a second term. He teaches at the Vanderbilt Divinity School (VDS) - and has taught VDS courses in local prisons over the past 15 years. He is a longtime climate activist. Dan coordinated the Tennessee Green Jobs Network for Tennessee Alliance for Progress (TAP). He was the first contract organizer for the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign in Tennessee - forming Climate Action Groups in Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, Chattanooga and Sewanee. Dan continues to facilitate the Nashville and Chattanooga groups through TAP. He is a staff coordinator for Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light and for the Creation Care Ministry of the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church. Dan was a convener of the national United Methodist Creation Justice summit in Nashville in 2019. He lives in Nashville Greenlands - an intentional community inspired by the Catholic Worker movement.

Dr. Robert C. Wingfield Jr. is currently serving as 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 NIEHS through the Midwest Consortium. He has over twelve years industrial experience in chemical process and product development. He served as External Process Leader and Co-Chair of a statewide Steering Committee to develop an Environmental Justice Strategic Plan for TDEC (1998-2000). From July 2003 to October 2004, he chaired the Nashville Health Disparities Coalition. 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. He is currently Chair-Elect of the Nashville Section, American Chemical Society and serves on the Executive Committee of the Middle TN Group of the TN Chapter of the Sierra Club. Since April 2006, he has served as co-host on the WFSK, 88.1 FM, "Health Watch: Pathway to Better Health" weekly radio show.

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 1980's. 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. 15 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.

Dear Eartha : Advice from An Eco-Guru

Dear Eartha,

I wonder if you could shed some light on how hot the planet actually is. I sometimes hear young people blame Baby Boomers for global warming. Are Boomers really the cause, and will younger generations be able to save it? —No Blame Just the Facts, Please

Dear No Blame,

Love your questions, and my short answer to both is: not by themselves. The New York Times has reported that the general global warming trend continues. July 2020 tied for second-hottest July on record for the globe, according to NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. "What's more, the Northern Hemisphere saw its hottest July ever, surpassing its previous record high set in 2019."

Some say that Baby Boomers coulda-shoulda done more, 30 years ago, when the Silent Generation occupied Congress. When NASA official James Hansen testified in June 1988 to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources that "the greenhouse effect" was here, not much was done. George H. W. Bush was sworn in as president the following January, and even though he said he'd fight "the greenhouse effect with the White House effect," any substantive policy was shelved, according to Business Insider magazine. In 2001, his son George W. Bush pulled the United States out of the international Kyoto Protocol treaty.

When Greta Thunberg skipped her lessons to teach the world a lesson, and invited the planet's young people to join her, the older generation was meant to be shamed into finally doing something. But, of course, that's one fragment of a much wider story. One survey of 4,000 UK adults found that "people aged over 55 were ahead in almost every environmental activity they monitored, but those aged between 16 to 24 were the worst offenders."

So, No Blame, it's complicated. Bill McKibben explains that changing the status quo is hard, but "in the case of climate change, it's doubly hard, since you have to deal with the entire world." But if we've learned anything from history, we've learned young people ignite social change. In some ways that's their job. Sadly, it looks like they will be strapped with a huge bill, and playing the blame game won't really help. We're in this together and had better join forces. In fact, I think we have. Let's continue that trajectory.

Yours,
Eartha

*Dear Eartha is written by Rita Bullinger.
Submit your question for Eartha to SierraTNNews@gmail.com*

Support our State Lobbyist!

by Sherry Loller, Defenders Fund Chair

"There is something fundamentally wrong in treating the earth as if it were a business in liquidation." The economist Herman Daly made that observation over forty years ago, and how right he was! It is wrong morally, spiritually, physically, and financially. Yet in spite of the horrendous damage that our species has already done to the earth, we continue to see it assaulted on all sides like never before.

You can act to defend the environment or you can sit on the couch, watch the fight, and moan and groan when the polluters score another homer. As a Sierra Club member, I take it as a given that you are one of the former. You carry on the struggle for a cleaner environment every day in the simple, mundane choice you make about consuming energy or disposing of your trash. You carry the struggle to the halls of power when you cast a vote. You support lawmakers who work hard to get progressive legislation passed and stop those bills that treat the earth "as if it were a business in liquidation." This action at the state legislative level is the *raison d'être* of our Defenders of Tennessee.



The Defenders has a full-time Conservation Coordinator and lobbyist for our state legislature. Scott Banbury analyses and tracks bills during the legislative session and sends us the pertinent information that we need when we contact our representatives. He sends out alerts when those bills are in committee and when they come up for a vote before the full General Assembly. This enables us to communicate effectively with our legislators and encourage the stalwarts, discourage the pro-pollution faction, and hopefully persuade the undecided. This is an uphill battle because our current General Assembly has a majority that has a distinct anti-environment bias. But because something is difficult does not mean it is not worth doing, and our representatives who recognize the reality of the climate crisis and want to do something about it need to know that we are supporting them. We make an impact on the legislature when we email, call, write, or visit them personally. Because of the contacts that our lobbyist cultivates and knowledge that our members have, we often are able to give our representatives important information that they otherwise would not have. We do make a difference.

Scott Banbury is one of only two environmental lobbyists for the entire state of Tennessee. The lobbyists for the polluters are many and well funded. Koch Industries has ALEC to promote their disastrous environmental practices. Their lobbyists entertain and meet privately with some of our state lawmakers to craft bills that those same lawmakers later present to become our laws.

You know how morally indefensible that is, and you know that the earth is worth fighting for. The Defenders needs you to contact your representatives when important bills come up that impact the environment. And the Defenders needs your financial support in order to maintain our lobbying program. Please give as generously as you can afford to so that we can continue to have someone on the Hill representing the environment. It will take a strong, united effort to keep our beautiful state of Tennessee clean and green. Thank you for doing your part! Please send your donation with the form below.

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT OUR LOBBYIST! [] \$50 [] \$100 [] \$250 [] \$500 [] \$1000 \$ _____ Surprise us!

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

Please select a method of payment. Make checks payable to Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter with "Defenders" in the memo line or use your credit card:

Mastercard Visa Discover

Credit card number _____ Expiration date (mm/yy) _____

Name on card _____ Signature _____

Receive email alerts when there is a critical vote and Sierra Club needs contacts to your State legislators.

Receive weekly email updates from the 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: Sherry Loller, Sierra Club Defenders, 2313 Pennington Bend Road, Nashville TN 37214. Thank you!

SPECIAL OFFER! Upon request, a free three-night stay at VRBO #979779 will be given to donors of \$1000 or more.

To view this property, go to vrbo.com/979779. Call Sherry at 615-889-2968 for details.

The Defenders is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(4) organization and donations are not income-tax deductible.

Reluctance

by Robert Frost

Out through the fields and the woods
 And over the walls I have wended;
 I have climbed the hills of view
 And looked at the world, and descended;
 I have come by the highway home,
 And lo, it is ended.

The leaves are all dead on the ground,
 Save those that the oak is keeping
 To ravel them one by one
 And let them go scraping and creeping
 Out over the crusted snow,
 When others are sleeping.

And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,
 No longer blown hither and thither;
 The last lone aster is gone;
 The flowers of the witch hazel wither;
 The heart is still aching to seek,
 But the feet question 'Whither?'

Ah, when to the heart of man
 Was it ever less than a treason
 To go with the drift of things,
 To yield with a grace to reason,
 And bow and accept the end
 Of a love or a season?

This poem, first published in 1913, is now in the public domain.

Thanks to these Generous Donors to the Defenders Fund!

Please see the previous page to learn how you can add your name to the list.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hal May | Walter Cygan |
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| Barbara Futter | Walter Cox |
| Phyllis Morris | Walt and Linda Holmes |
| Jo Ann McIntosh | Anonymous (4) |

January Chapter Retreat Replaced with Virtual Business Meeting

The Sierra Club's Safety Management Team is requiring that we not hold in-person meetings until March 1, 2021. This means that the Winter Chapter Retreat scheduled for January 29-31, 2021 at Cedars of Lebanon State Park is canceled. The Chapter Executive Committee will still meet, but on-line, via Zoom on Saturday, January 30, at 9:00 Central, 10:00 Eastern. This is an important meeting. It is after the election of Chapter At-Large delegates who will be installed at this meeting. It is also the election of Chapter Officers who will serve for 2021. An agenda for this meeting will appear in the Chapter's January electronic newsletter. All Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter members are invited to participate. Information on how to join this meeting will be distributed to everyone who RSVPs using the Campfire Event link: [bit.ly/ TNSC030121meeting](https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/sierra-club-tennessee-calendar) and on the Chapter website calendar:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/sierra-club-tennessee-calendar>.

RETREAT SCHEDULE

	LOCATION	DATES
Winter 2021	Cancelled due to COVID-19	---
Spring 2021	Fall Creek Falls State Park	April 30-May 2
Fall 2021	Pickett State Park	October 29-31
Winter 2022	Cedars of Lebanon SP	January 14-16

MEETINGS

The Sierra Club continues to pause all in-person meetings.

Most groups and conservation committees are meeting online. Check a meeting status:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/sierra-club-tennessee-calendar> or scan the QR code ==>

If you would like to attend, please contact the group or committee chair. Contact information is on page 2.



Group Program Meetings

Group	Date	Location	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 11/23, 12/28, 1/25	Check for Virtual/On Line	TBA
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Tue 11/19, 12/17, 1/21	Check for Virtual/On Line	6:30 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 11/10, 12/8, 1/12	Check for Virtual/On Line	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Thu 11/12, 12/10, 1/14	Check for Virtual/On Line	7:00 PM

Group Business Meetings

Group	Date	Location	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 11/2, 12/7, 1/4	Check for Virtual/On Line	TBA
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Wed 11/4, 12/2, 1/6	Check for Virtual/On Line	6:30 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 12/1, 1/26	Check for Virtual/On Line	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Mon 11/16, 12/21, 1/18	Check for Virtual/On Line	6:30 PM

Regional Conservation Committee Business Meetings

Committee	Date	Location	Time
Clarksville	Tue 11/17, 12/15, 1/19	Check for Virtual/On Line	6:00 PM
CareNET (Rogersville)	Thu 11/12, 12/10, 1/14	Check for Virtual/On Line	6:00 PM
Watauga (Mountain City)	Tue 11/10, 12/8, 1/12	Check for Virtual/On Line	5:00 PM
Tri-Cities	Tue 11/10, 12/8, 1/12	Check for Virtual/On Line	7:00 PM