

# Tennes-Sierran

The monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

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## Nobel Prize Winner Al Gore Delivers Acceptance Speech

DECEMBER 10, 2007 OSLO, NORWAY ~

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Honorable members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen.

I have a purpose here today. It is a purpose I have tried to serve for many years. I have prayed that God would show me a way to accomplish it.

Sometimes, without warning, the future knocks on our door with a precious and painful vision of what might be. One hundred and nineteen years ago, a wealthy inventor read his own obituary, mistakenly published years before his death. Wrongly believing the inventor had just died, a newspaper printed a harsh judgment of his life's work, unfairly labeling him "The Merchant of Death" because of his invention – dynamite. Shaken by this condemnation, the inventor made a fateful choice to serve the cause of peace.

Seven years later, Alfred Nobel created this prize and the others that bear his name.

Seven years ago tomorrow, I read my own political obituary in a judgment that seemed to me harsh and mistaken – if not premature. But that unwelcome verdict also brought a precious if painful gift: an opportunity to search for fresh new ways to serve my purpose.

Unexpectedly, that quest has brought me here. Even though I fear my words cannot match this moment, I pray what I am feeling in my heart will be communicated clearly enough that those who hear me will say, "We must act."

The distinguished scientists with whom it is the greatest honor of my life to share this award have laid before us a choice between two different futures – a choice that to my ears echoes the words of an ancient prophet: "Life or death, blessings or curses. Therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

We, the human species, are confronting a planetary emergency – a threat to the survival of our civilization that is gathering ominous and destructive potential even as we gather here. But there is hopeful news as well: we have the ability to solve this crisis and avoid the worst – though not all – of its consequences, if we act boldly, decisively and quickly.

However, despite a growing number of honorable exceptions, too many of the world's leaders are still best described in the words Winston Churchill applied to those who ignored Adolf Hitler's threat: "They go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all powerful to be impotent."

So today, we dumped another 70 million tons of global-warming pollution into the thin shell of atmosphere surrounding our planet, as if it were an open sewer. And tomorrow, we will dump a slightly larger amount, with the cumulative concentrations now trapping more and more heat from the sun.

As a result, the earth has a fever. And the fever is rising. The experts have told us it is not a passing affliction that will heal by itself. We asked for a second opinion. And a third. And a fourth. And the consistent conclusion, restated with increasing alarm, is that something basic is wrong.

We are what is wrong, and we must make it right.

Last September 21, as the Northern Hemisphere tilted away from the sun, scientists reported with unprecedented distress that the North Polar ice cap is "falling off a cliff." One study estimated that it could be completely gone during summer in less than 22 years. Another new study, to be presented by U.S. Navy researchers later this week, warns it could happen in as little as 7 years.

Seven years from now.

In the last few months, it has been harder and harder to misinterpret the signs that our world is spinning out of kilter. Major cities in North and South America, Asia and Australia are nearly out of water due to massive droughts and melting glaciers. Desperate farmers are losing their livelihoods. Peoples in the frozen Arctic and on low-lying Pacific islands are planning evacuations of places they have long called home. Unprecedented wildfires have forced a half million people from their homes in one country and caused a national emergency that almost brought down the government in another. Climate refugees have migrated into areas already inhabited by people with different cultures, religions, and traditions, increasing the potential for conflict. Stronger storms in the Pacific and Atlantic have threatened whole cities. Millions have been displaced by massive flooding in South Asia, Mexico, and 18 countries in Africa. As temperature extremes have increased, tens of thousands have lost their lives. We are recklessly burning and clearing our forests and driving more and more species into extinction. The very web of life on which we depend is being ripped and frayed.

We never intended to cause all this destruction, just as Alfred Nobel never intended that dynamite be used for waging war. He had hoped his invention would promote human progress. We shared that same worthy goal when we began burning massive quantities of coal, then oil and methane.

Even in Nobel's time, there were a few warnings of the likely consequences. One of the very first winners of the Prize in chemistry worried that, "We are evaporating our coal mines into the air." After performing 10,000 equations by hand, Svante Arrhenius calculated that the earth's average temperature would increase by many degrees if we doubled the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

Seventy years later, my teacher, Roger Revelle, and his colleague, Dave Keeling, began to precisely document the increasing CO<sub>2</sub> levels day by day.

But unlike most other forms of pollution, CO<sub>2</sub> is invisible, tasteless, and odorless -- which has helped keep the truth about what it is doing to our climate out of sight and out of mind. Moreover, the catastrophe now threatening us is unprecedented – and we often confuse the unprecedented with the improbable. We also find it hard to imagine making the massive changes that are now necessary to solve the crisis. And when large truths are genuinely inconvenient, whole societies can, at least for a time, ignore them. Yet as George Orwell reminds us: "Sooner or later a false belief bumps up against solid reality, usually on a battlefield."

In the years since this prize was first awarded, the entire relationship between humankind and the earth has been radically transformed. And still, we have remained largely oblivious to the impact of our cumulative actions.

Indeed, without realizing it, we have begun to wage war on the earth itself. Now, we and the earth's climate are locked in a relationship familiar to war planners: "Mutually assured destruction."

More than two decades ago, scientists calculated that nuclear war could throw so much debris and smoke into the air that it would block life-giving sunlight from our atmosphere, causing a "nuclear winter." Their eloquent warnings here in Oslo helped galvanize the world's resolve to halt the nuclear arms race.

Now science is warning us that if we do not quickly reduce the global warming pollution that is trapping so much of the heat our planet normally radiates back out of the atmosphere, we are in danger of creating a permanent "carbon summer."

As the American poet Robert Frost wrote, "Some say the world will end in fire; some say in ice." Either, he notes, "would suffice."

But neither need be our fate. It is time to make peace with the planet.

We must quickly mobilize our civilization with the urgency and resolve that has previously been seen only when nations mobilized for war. These prior struggles for survival were won when leaders found words at the 11th hour that released a mighty surge of courage, hope and readiness to sacrifice for a protracted and mortal challenge.

These were not comforting and misleading assurances that the threat was not real or imminent; that it would affect others but not ourselves; that ordinary life might be lived even in the presence of extraordinary threat; that Providence could be trusted to do for us what we would not do for ourselves.

No, these were calls to come to the defense of the common future. They were calls upon the courage, generosity and strength of entire peoples, citizens of every class and condition who were ready to stand against the threat once asked to do so. Our enemies in those times calculated that free people would not rise to the challenge; they were, of course, catastrophically wrong.

Now comes the threat of climate crisis – a threat that is real, rising, imminent, and universal. Once again, it is the 11th hour. The penalties for ignoring this challenge are immense and growing, and at some near point would be unsustainable and unrecoverable. For now we still have the power to choose our fate, and the remaining question is only this: Have we the will to act vigorously and in time, or will we remain imprisoned by a dangerous illusion?

Mahatma Gandhi awakened the largest democracy on earth and forged a shared resolve with what he called "Satyagraha" – or "truth force."

In every land, the truth – once known – has the power to set us free.

Truth also has the power to unite us and bridge the distance between "me" and "we," creating the basis for common effort and shared responsibility.

There is an African proverb that says, "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." We need to go far, quickly.

We must abandon the conceit that individual, isolated, private actions are the answer. They can and do help. But they will not take us far enough without collective action. At the same time, we must ensure that in mobilizing globally, we do not invite the establishment of ideological conformity and a new lock-step "ism."

That means adopting principles, values, laws, and treaties that release creativity and initiative at every level of society in multifold responses originating concurrently and spontaneously.

This new consciousness requires expanding the possibilities inherent in all humanity. The innovators who will devise a new way to harness the sun's energy for pennies or invent an engine that's carbon negative may live in Lagos or Mumbai or Montevideo. We must ensure that entrepreneurs and inventors everywhere on the globe have the chance to change the world.

When we unite for a moral purpose that is manifestly good and true, the spiritual energy unleashed can transform us. The generation that defeated fascism throughout the world in the 1940s found, in rising to meet their awesome challenge, that they had gained the moral authority and long-term vision to launch the Marshall Plan, the United Nations, and a new level of global cooperation and foresight that unified Europe and facilitated the emergence of democracy and prosperity in Germany, Japan, Italy and much of the world. One of their visionary leaders said, "It is time we steered by the stars and not by the lights of every passing ship."

In the last year of that war, you gave the Peace Prize to a man from my hometown of 2000 people, Carthage, Tennessee. Cordell Hull was described by Franklin Roosevelt as the "Father of the United Nations." He was an inspiration and hero to my own father, who followed Hull in the Congress and the U.S. Senate and in his commitment to world peace and global cooperation.



Continued on page 3

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## Tennes-Sierran

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2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or .tif file format, whenever possible, then either attached to email or mailed via US Postal Service (USPS) on a 3 1/2 diskette or CD Rom. 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 cannot be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.

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- John Muir

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## Nobel Prize Winner Al Gore Delivers Acceptance Speech

Continued from page 1

My parents spoke often of Hull, always in tones of reverence and admiration. Eight weeks ago, when you announced this prize, the deepest emotion I felt was when I saw the headline in my hometown paper that simply noted I had won the same prize that Cordell Hull had won. In that moment, I knew what my father and mother would have felt were they alive.

Just as Hull's generation found moral authority in rising to solve the world crisis caused by fascism, so too can we find our greatest opportunity in rising to solve the climate crisis. In the Kanji characters used in both Chinese and Japanese, "crisis" is written with two symbols, the first meaning "danger," the second "opportunity." By facing and removing the danger of the climate crisis, we have the opportunity to gain the moral authority and vision to vastly increase our own capacity to solve other crises that have been too long ignored.

We must understand the connections between the climate crisis and the afflictions of poverty, hunger, HIV-Aids and other pandemics. As these problems are linked, so too must be their solutions. We must begin by making the common rescue of the global environment the central organizing principle of the world community.

Fifteen years ago, I made that case at the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro. Ten years ago, I presented it in Kyoto. This week, I will urge the delegates in Bali to adopt a bold mandate for a treaty that establishes a universal global cap on emissions and uses the market in emissions trading to efficiently allocate resources to the most effective opportunities for speedy reductions.

This treaty should be ratified and brought into effect everywhere in the world by the beginning of 2010 – two years sooner than presently contemplated. The pace of our response must be accelerated to match the accelerating pace of the crisis itself.

Heads of state should meet early next year to review what was accomplished in Bali and take personal responsibility for addressing this crisis. It is not unreasonable to ask, given the gravity of our circumstances, that these heads of state meet every three months until the treaty is completed.

We also need a moratorium on the construction of any new generating facility that burns coal without the capacity to safely trap and store carbon dioxide.

And most important of all, we need to put a price on carbon -- with a CO2 tax that is then rebated back to the people, progressively, according to the laws of each nation, in ways that shift the burden of taxation from employment to pollution. This is by far the most effective and simplest way to accelerate solutions to this crisis.

### Dear Editor,

I was deeply disturbed by the Editorial "Does Al Gore deserve the Peace Prize?" on two counts: first, the factionalism that has so divided our country that we cannot be proud of a U.S. citizen who has been honored by the highest international recognition of his efforts to improve our world, and second, that it represents a continued failure, even in the highest echelons of media, to be truthful, and to do one of the basic tenets of journalism, fact-checking. This is not an attack on the editor of the student newspaper, but on this tendency in the media in general.

Mainstream media is so afraid to be thought biased, that they invariably, as in this editorial, bend over backwards to seem "objective," even if it means repeated calumny and invective.

Did the student editor mean to imply by saying that "many people see the award as more of a political publicity stunt" that the Nobel Prize academy has an interest in seeing Al Gore (re) elected president even though he is not even running for political office?

In addition, to repeat the slander that Al Gore "asks people to conserve energy, but his house uses 12 to 20 times more energy than the average house according to the Tennessee Center for policy research" without doing fact checking encourages a disturbing tendency in our age: the planting of "information" on the web, which becomes "proof" for biased conclusions. I ask 1) what is "average" consumption and who defines it? 2) whether those statistics from the "Tennessee Center for policy research" take into account that the Gores buy into the more expensive alternative energy option which TVA allows? 3) Doesn't a good reporter ask, "What is the Tennessee Center for Policy Research?" I hope that today's journalism students are being taught

The world needs an alliance – especially of those nations that weigh heaviest in the scales where earth is in the balance. I salute Europe and Japan for the steps they've taken in recent years to meet the challenge, and the new government in Australia, which has made solving the climate crisis its first priority.

But the outcome will be decisively influenced by two nations that are now failing to do enough: the United States and China. While India is also growing fast in importance, it should be absolutely clear that it is the two largest CO2 emitters — most of all, my own country — that will need to make the boldest moves, or stand accountable before history for their failure to act.

Both countries should stop using the other's behavior as an excuse for stalemate and instead develop an agenda for mutual survival in a shared global environment.

These are the last few years of decision, but they can be the first years of a bright and hopeful future if we do what we must. No one should believe a solution will be found without effort, without cost, without change. Let us acknowledge that if we wish to redeem squandered time and speak again with moral authority, then these are the hard truths:

The way ahead is difficult. The outer boundary of what we currently believe is feasible is still far short of what we actually must do. Moreover, between here and there, across the unknown, falls the shadow.

That is just another way of saying that we have to expand the boundaries of what is possible. In the words of the Spanish poet, Antonio Machado, "Pathwalker, there is no path. You must make the path as you walk."

We are standing at the most fateful fork in that path. So I want to end as I began, with a vision of two futures – each a palpable possibility – and with a prayer that we will see with vivid clarity the necessity of choosing between those two futures, and the urgency of making the right choice now.

The great Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen, wrote, "One of these days, the younger generation will come knocking at my door."

The future is knocking at our door right now. Make no mistake, the next generation will ask us one of two questions. Either they will ask: "What were you thinking; why didn't you act?"

Or they will ask instead: "How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?"

We have everything we need to get started, save perhaps political will, but political will is a renewable resource.

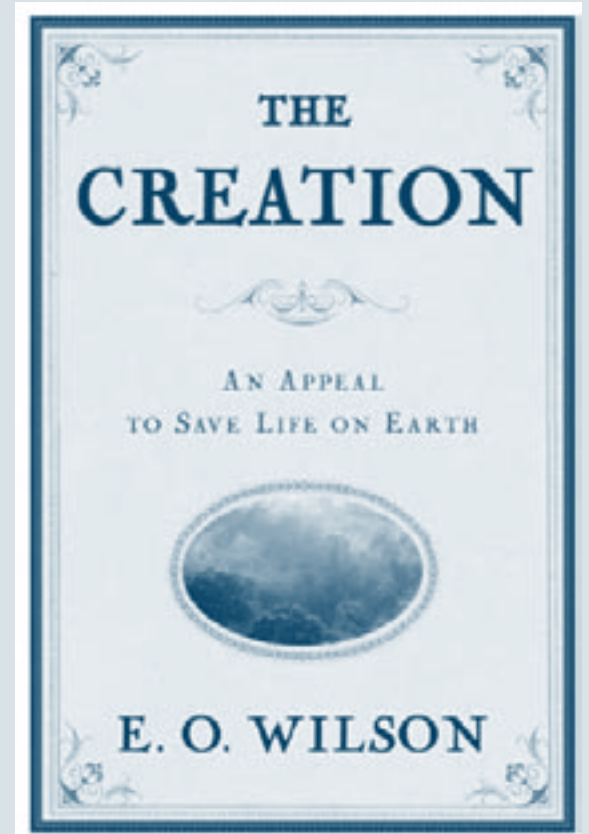
So let us renew it, and say together: "We have a purpose. We are many. For this purpose we will rise, and we will act."

the power and the pitfalls of "The New Media" and that "fact checking" is being translated into a new idiom for the electronic age.

"Source Watch" at [http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Tennessee\\_Center\\_for\\_Policy\\_Research](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Tennessee_Center_for_Policy_Research) <[https://rim.tntech.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Tennessee\\_Center\\_for\\_Policy\\_Research](https://rim.tntech.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Tennessee_Center_for_Policy_Research)> reports that this site has web links to right wing organizations, which it defines as organizations about which one writer, "the great social psychologist Robert Altemeyer, whose books such as (1996) *The Authoritarian Specter*, and (1988) *Enemies of Freedom*, reported the most extensive studies ever done of political orientation, found that traditionalists in both capitalist and communist countries share a great deal in common: They hold to the alleged inerrancy of some Scripture, which in capitalist nations might be the Torah, the Bible, or the Qur'an, but in communist nations is Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. Altemeyer found that this fundamentalistic approach toward some Scripture as being the ultimate source of Truth is at the root of all forms of traditionalism or conservatism, both 'right-wing' and 'left-wing.'" In other words, this think tank might be far from unbiased. It might have more in common with Al Queda and invective ideology than with "objective" thought. Truly open minded readers may want to check Keith Olbermann's commentary from CNBC on the topic of Al Gore: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvvMBHOrpLA> <<https://rim.tntech.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvvMBHOrpLA>>

I say simply, congratulations to Al Gore on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Way to go!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Josephine McQuail  
Professor, English Department



## Book Review The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth

by James H. Baker

I recently acquired a copy of Edward O. Wilson's *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* and like every other book of his that I have read; I thoroughly enjoyed it. Wilson shoots straight and speaks the truth about the root cause of humankind's environmental dilemma, too many people consuming too much of everything.

First, let me digress ten years. In late 1997, I became a member of the largest Southern Baptist church in Memphis. At the time, I heard a message that appealed to me. However, I quickly discovered that in matters of the environmental kind, this church was way behind the curve, and some of the members expressed the idea that being an environmentalist...a steward of the Creation...was of low priority. I even gave a Sunday school lesson on stewardship of the environment with a number of Bible verses to back me, but I still could not get the message framed right to find common ground with my classmates. Believe it or not, I also received thinly disguised hostility from a very small minority of church members when I advocated for the environment. Needless to say, after four years, I moved away from that church, but I still think the message is needed, at all houses of worship, and that one in particular.

Enter E.O. Wilson's latest book. I think it provides a framework to achieve that needed common ground to speak that message, and with hope, it will be heeded. The book is written in the style of a single letter to a Southern Baptist Pastor, but it is broken into chapters, somewhat akin to the letters of the Biblical New Testament. It is written in a conversational style and can be easily read in a week or less. While his letter does not dodge the pitfalls that create the gulf between some Christians and environmentalists, he takes pains to point them out. In doing so, he allows the reader a better chance to get the environmental message across.

Dr. Wilson says it best, "I am heartened by the movement growing within Christian denominations to support global conservation. The stream of thought has risen from many sources, from evangelical to Unitarian. Today it is but a rivulet. Tomorrow it will be a flood."

# Meetings

## HARVEY ROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

**JANUARY PROGRAM MEETING:** Tuesday, January 8, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike. Sam Venable--noted columnist, author, and raconteur--will speak on "Buddy, This Ain't No Lie," a collection of some of the funnier stories from his earlier career as outdoor writer for the Knoxville News-Sentinel. Sam's books will be available for sale and signing. Everyone is welcome. For information call John Finger at 865-573-5908.

**FEBRUARY PROGRAM MEETING:** Tuesday, February 12, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church 2931 Kingston Pike. Melissa Ziegler, of Wilbur Smith Associates, will discuss various aspects of the proposed "Corridor K" highway linking Asheville, North Carolina, and Chattanooga. Wilbur Smith Associates, a consulting firm, is preparing a study of the economic feasibility of such a road. This is a controversial issue that entails, among other things, a highway replacing or paralleling present-day U.S. 64 along the Ocoee River. Everyone is welcome. For information call John Finger at 865-573-5908.

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

**JANUARY PROGRAM:** On the second Thursday of the month, January 10 at 7:00 p.m. - Do you think you really KNOW Tennessee and what every corner looks like? What terrain and ecological differences exist? How we acquired our waterfalls, mountains and hills, special species and rare flowers? You will be stunned at the photography of this film that traces our state's unique parks and resorts from the Smokies to Memphis. "Beautiful Tennessee" is a delightful and amazing documentary produced by our own Nashville Public Television and is the forerunner to the Tennessee Waterways program we saw last summer. Don't miss this one! Bundle up for the January chill and let's give a warm reception to the folks at NPT who are doing this for us so graciously. We want to encourage them to continue treating us to their great programs! Visitors are always welcome. Please call Martha Wilson at 376-2535 for info and directions.

**JANUARY STRATEGY MEETING:** Tuesday, January 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the old St. Bernard's Academy Building, 2021 21st Avenue South, 4th floor. Conservation issues are first on the agenda. All members are invited to attend this conservation and administrative meeting to get the news on what's happening in our Middle Tennessee Group. We welcome you to be with us to learn about the group's conservation initiatives and community activities. For conservation issues or additions to the conservation agenda, contact Diane Perschbacher at 615-895-1236 or email Diane@Propson.com. For additions to the administrative agenda or for more information regarding the meetings, send a message to Rachel Floyd at rfloyd557@bellsouth.net or call 792-2590.

## CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

**MONTHLY FIRST THURSDAY MEMBERS GATHERING:** January 3 and February 7, 5:30-7:00pm - Otherlands, 641 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee: Join us for Chickasaw Group's "First Thursday" monthly gathering where Sierra Club members, activists and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. Anyone interested in learning about the Sierra Club is invited. For more information, contact Juliet Jones, Vice Chair, at (901) 374-0582 or juliet101@comcast.net.

**STRATEGY MEETING:** January 14 and February 11, 6:30pm - Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, 961 Getwell, Memphis, Tennessee: This meeting of the Executive Committee is open also to all members of the Sierra Club. Contact Tom Lawrence by January 11 (January meeting) or February 8 (February meeting), to place items on the agenda: (901) 237-4819 or bus@thecave.com

**JANUARY PROGRAM MEETING:** Thursday, January 24, 7:00pm - Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, 3030 Poplar, Memphis, TN. Where does our groundwater come from? Is it really 2000 years old, as older reports suggest? Daniel Larson, Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Memphis will be the guest at the January program meeting of the Chickasaw Group. He will examine highlights from several studies conducted by the Ground Water Institute at the University of Memphis in collaboration with the United States Geological Survey. Emphasis will be placed on results from cosmogenic and anthropogenic environmental tracer studies, which provide information regarding the spectrum of groundwater ages observed in the Memphis aquifer and, along with chemical data, the source of the groundwater. Come to the meeting at 6:30pm for social time! Presentation starts at 7:00pm. The public is invited.

**TELEVISION PROGRAM:** WPYL - Channel 18, Memphis, Tennessee: "The Nature of Conservation" is the Sierra Club's Chickasaw Group TV Program on cable channel 18. For the complete "Nature of Conservation" schedule on cable channel 18, please see the website: [www.memphislibrary.org/tlc/schedule](http://www.memphislibrary.org/tlc/schedule). For more information, or if any groups or individuals in the community have a special concern and would like to see a program on it, please contact Judith Rutschman at (901) 767-5916 or rutschman@rhodes.edu

**THURSDAY & FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7-8, 2008; CLEAN WATER NETWORK CAUCUS IN MEMPHIS, TN** - This caucus will focus on strategies for fighting nitrogen & phosphorus pollution in the lower Mississippi River and will be held at the Fogelman Executive Center on the campus of the University of Memphis. The Fogelman Center is at 330 Innovation Drive. To learn more about the caucus or to register, please check the Network's website at: <http://www.cleanwaternet.org/> and click on "Meetings & Events" or send an e-mail to Natalie Roy at [Natalieroy@cleanwaternet.org](mailto:Natalieroy@cleanwaternet.org)

## WATAUA GROUP

**PROGRAM MEETINGS:** Every second Tuesday at 7 p.m.. Please contact Gloria Griffith at [gl4797@earthlink.net](mailto:gl4797@earthlink.net) or 423-727-4797 for more information.

## UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP (Cookeville)

**PROGRAM MEETINGS:** The fourth Thursday at 7:00 p.m. (four times a year at a minimum) in the lower level meeting room of the Putnam County Public Library. Please contact Peggy Evans at 931-432-6680 or [maevans@TWLakes.net](mailto:maevans@TWLakes.net) for more information.

## STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)

**JANUARY MEETING:** Wednesday, January 2. Starting 6:30 p.m. (Strategy Meeting) and at 7:30 p.m. (Program Meeting). Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Gray, TN - 136 Bob Jobe Road, off Exit 10 (Eastern Star) I 75-26. Contact Vincent Whitright at [cleanenery@excite.com](mailto:cleanenery@excite.com) or 423-747-1967 for more information.

## MTG Sierra Clubbers Hike In Nashville's Treasure, Beaman Park

Joy Mayfield led a number of Sierrans on a hike at Beaman Park. One of our newer Metro parks located 12 miles northwest of downtown Nashville, Beaman Park lies on the Highland Rim, just outside of the Nashville Basin. Its terrain features deep hollows, forested slopes, pristine streams, and elevations just under 1000 feet. Joy, who is also active with the Board of Friends of Beaman Park, led a delightful 2 mile hike on a beautiful day. She has also recruited SC members to help with trail building at the park. Though our hiking dwindles in the winter, be sure to check each month under the caption "Middle Tennessee Outings" in this newsletter for more opportunities to explore (what Joy refers to as) the "treasures" around us. We'd love to have you join us!



Front Row - Robin Johnston, Terri Stokes, Mike Robinson, Alyssa Browning, Ed Pyle. Back Row - Joy Mayfield, Lou Ann Bruce, Nancy Robinson. All in attendance where Harris Gilbert

**Tennessee  
Chapter  
Winter Meeting**

**January 25th to 27, 2008  
Cedars of Lebanon State Park**

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**Entire Weekend Fee: \$40.00**  
includes Sat/Sun breakfast, Sat dinner & Fri/Sat Bunk - bring bedding  
Other rates apply for partial attendance

Please notify Rachel Floyd at [rfloyd557@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfloyd557@bellsouth.net)  
or 615-406-9204 if you plan to attend. Please include  
# of people attending & omnivore or vegetarian designation.

Directions - Cedars of Lebanon State Park is located  
approximately 31 miles east of Nashville in  
Wilson County. It is 6 miles south of I-40 on  
U.S. Highway 231 (State Route 10). The park sign  
is on the right side of the road, entrance is on  
the other side of Hwy 231, directly across from the sign.

## 2007 Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee

By Chris Ford and John McFadden

NASHVILLE – More than two hundred citizens representing at least eighty Tennessee communities, organizations and agencies gathered at Lipscomb University in Nashville on November 15, 16, and 17, 2007 to begin a multi-phase, year-long process of crafting the state's first sustainability agenda. Assembled under the banner "Many Voices. A Common Vision", the participants spent three days in working meetings outlining key issues and goals, and discussing strategies and tactics for sharing resources and information. The meeting, titled "The Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee", was organized by the Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC) and Tennessee Conservation Voters (TCV) with help from dozens of volunteers from several local and statewide organizations.

The goal of the Summit and the ongoing visioning process is to develop a working plan for raising Tennessee's overall quality of life by making the state more sustainable. Two closely related, over-arching themes emerged from the Summit: the need to raise public awareness about the urgency of responding quickly and boldly to growing environmental threats to the state's climate, water, air, wildlife and natural landscape and the overwhelming economic benefits in store for the thousands of Tennessee households, communities and companies that are shifting to more sustainable products, policies and practices.

During the Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee, scores of scientists, engineers, ecologists, executives, farmers, educators, activists, organizers, students and other interested citizens examined issues and opportunities related to clean energy, natural infrastructure, healthy communities, quality growth and sustainable design and development. A wide range of creative approaches were proposed at the Summit focusing around the idea of "sustainability" as a source for economic opportunity and community vitality.

Among the most popular strategies and tactics:

- providing creative market incentives for private business and consumers making more sustainable choices

- developing a major statewide public information campaign directed at business, consumers and students emphasizing the many practical benefits of greener lifestyles and practices
- providing incentives and public-private partnerships to encourage investment in and development of denser, more walk-able, transit-oriented communities
- promoting healthier, more locally-sourced food systems throughout the state
- working to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy sources as the core components of the states energy plan
- purchasing and preserving up to a million acres of green space across the state, beginning with land along the state's Mississippi corridor

TEC Executive Director John McFadden spoke for both organizations when he said "TEC and TCV wish to thank and congratulate the eighty-plus organizations and agencies who participated in the first annual Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee. It was an historic gathering that set the stage for a level of statewide cooperation and collaboration that is unprecedented in Tennessee history. The Summit is all about the opportunity of change"

A top-level leadership committee made up of officers from more than twenty Tennessee organizations agreed at the Summit that TEC staff would take the lead in planning and promoting subsequent events and Regional Opportunity Forums. University of Tennessee Knoxville was named the site of the first regional event, which is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2008.

In mid to late December, TEC/TCV will distribute a detailed summary of the ideas and key strategies generated at the Summit, as ways for attendees to stay involved and other interested citizens to join the process of creating and carrying out a common vision for a sustainable Tennessee. TEC and TCV are currently working toward a conservation lobbying day on the hill. Given 20 days notice, we will be asking folks to take a day off of work and bring 10 friends (or as many as you can) to lobby on behalf of the environment and public health – its time we had a rally on the legislative plaza like never before! For Summit summary information and news about upcoming Opportunity Forums, visit [www.sustainabletn.org](http://www.sustainabletn.org).

## The Chair's Corner

### Greetings TN Chapter Sierra Club Members!

2007 was a busy year for me as your chapter chair. I visited all the groups in our chapter last year during the month of December for their holiday parties and during the summer shared the documentary film "The Future of Food" with the groups as well. I initiated the process of re-organizing State of Franklin Group and Cherokee Group and assisted with forming a new group in Clarksville. My travels throughout our state have shown me that our chapter has talented, passionate activists who are making huge differences at the grassroots level on many fronts of the environmental battles that are being fought. I want to personally thank everyone for the work that you do as Sierra Club members and activists.

During my visit to Watauga Group during their holiday party, a long time Sierra Club member shared with me her experiences related to having the well run dry at her home near Roan Mountain. She and her husband are transporting water in gallon jugs from their workplaces to their home and taking showers at the high school gym in town. This story struck home to me in a personal way the seriousness of the drought the Southeastern part of the country has been experiencing. I realized in hearing about this couple's plight how much I take for granted having water seemingly in abundance. I am reminded once again of the consequences of rapid climate change. We all must do all that we can to reverse global warming.

During the November, 2007 Sierra Club Board of Directors meeting, the nominating committee presented the 2008 slate of Board of Director candidates which include Lane Boldman, Joni Bosh, Jeremy Doochin, Barbara Frank, David Scott, Matt Urban, and Nathan Wyeth. Potential petition candidates include Clark Buchner, Jim Dougherty, Larry Fahn, Roberta Brashear-Kaulfers, and Jerry Sutherland. Clark Buchner is from Chickasaw Group and Jeremy Doochin is from Middle Tennessee Group in the Tennessee Chapter.

As a reminder, the Winter Tennessee Chapter Meeting will be held at Cedars of Lebanon State Park January 25-27, 2008. Middle Tennessee Group is hosting the weekend events. I look forward to seeing you there!

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet,  
Katherine Pendleton, Chair



MTG will be return to the old tradition of escaping winter drudgery by venturing into the woods for a productive weekend of learning, planning, outdoor adventure, and fellowship at Cumberland Mountain State Park's Millhouse!

Our facilitator we will be Dave Muhy, Regional Representative for the Sierra Club's Appalachian Region, and Sierra Club staff member for the Club's Southern Appalachian National Forest Protection Campaign. Dave will lead our group through setting goals and objectives for the upcoming year; then assist us in planning events, strategy and seeking volunteer participation using a planned agenda designed to create a system of organization.

What could you expect from this weekend? Wonderful rustic accommodations in a cozy cabin lodge setting (bring your bedding/sleeping bags and bath towel); a schedule of meetings that leaves time in the afternoon to venture an organized hike. Potluck gourmet meals provided by all our master chefs of MTG. A warm, friendly fireplace surrounded by plenty of like minded folks to entertain your enthusiasm. Games, dancing?, discussion, and, a sense of accomplishment in spending a weekend soooooo very well! Contact Rachel Floyd at 615-406-9204 or email [rfloyd557@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfloyd557@bellsouth.net) for more information, or to register.

## First Annual Dick Mochow Environmental Justice Award!!!

By: Rita Harris

Four community people were recipients of our annual environmental justice award. After the death of Dick Mochow in June, we decided to name our annual award the "Dick Mochow Environmental Justice Award" to honor his dedication and work in support making sure Memphis was the site of the first staffed environmental justice program site. Gary Bullwinkel of Fayette County, Willie Tappan, Femesha Randle, and Rev. Gregory Stewart of the Fredonia community in Haywood County were all recipients of the 2007 Dick Mochow EJ Award!

The award celebrates the victories they all won in stopping the siting of a megasite auto assembly plant whose overall footprint would have straddled both Fayette and Haywood County. This proposed auto assembly plant was so large that it would have needed its own water treatment facility and would have destroyed the Hatchie River and wetlands area. In addition to the environmental damage the megasite would have destroyed the historic community of Fredonia near Stanton, Tennessee. Fredonia is a very solid, and strong rural community that has been there in the same place since freed slaves founded their community; Fredonia Baptist Church and Fredonia Cemetery date back to the late 1800's. This was a community victory for a couple of great reasons!

Pictured (Left to Right); Don Richardson, Gary Bullwinkel, Willie Tapplin, & Femesha Randle  
~ Photo by Sue Williams



# Outings

All participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver before you participate, please refer to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/SignInWaiver.PDF>, or call 415-977-5630, for a printed version. Transportation to the outing, including carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar, is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

## HARVEU BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

January 19-20. Winter Backpack, Frozen Head State Park back country site at Tubbs Springs. Cold-weather gear required -- check with the leader if you are unsure about your equipment. Distance 3 to 6 miles each way, depending on route. Rated moderate to difficult, depending on weather. Driving distance about 45 miles each way. Preregister with Ron Shrieves: phone 922-3518; email [ronaldshrieves@comcast.net](mailto:ronaldshrieves@comcast.net).

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

January 12, 2008, Shelby Bottoms Day Hike - In the words of Andrew Wyeth, "I prefer winter and fall when you feel the bone structure of the landscape, the loneliness of it." So, in the spirit of Andrew Wyeth, won't you join me for a 3-5 mile walk on the primitive trail (not the paved one) at Shelby Bottoms? Bring binoculars. Birding is always excellent there. Saturday, January 12, 2008 at 9 AM. Meet in the parking lot. For additional information contact Joy Mayfield at 851-1192 or [joy.mayfield@comcast.net](mailto:joy.mayfield@comcast.net). (Education)

January 13, 2008, Stones River Greenway Day Hike - One of the newest greenways in Nashville is a 3 mile paved walkway parallel to the Stones River. Blue heron are often seen on the river bank. We will walk 3-6 miles depending on the group's desires. Rated moderate due to several hills. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring some water. Meet at 2 PM at the parking lot by Percy Priest Dam. Please call to register because the outing may be cancelled due to weather conditions. Contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email [Katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:Katibug1959@aol.com). (Education)

January 18-20, Frozen Head State Park Car Camp/Backpack - Frozen Head State Park has one of the highest peaks west of the Great Smoky Mountains. We will leave Nashville Friday afternoon and car camp at Frozen Head State Park campground Friday night. On Saturday morning, we will meet up with Harvey Broome Group for an overnight backpack to Tubbs Springs. Total elevation gain on the backpacking trip is 3000 ft. Distance is 3-6 miles each way. Rated moderate in mild weather and difficult in bad weather. Cold weather gear is required. Space is limited on this

## Ten 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!

trip. Trip participants who register by January 12 and go on the trip will receive a commemorative Sierra Club stainless steel cup. For additional information and to pre-register, contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or [Katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:Katibug1959@aol.com).

January 22, 2008, Fort Negley Tour - A new visitor center opened last month at Fort Negley, where Union troops fired some of the first shots of the Battle of Nashville on December 15-16, 1864. The fort was closed to the public for about 60 years before reopening in 2004 with a \$1 million interpretive trail and boardwalk, which leads to the top of a hill. The visitor center at the base of the hill, with touch screen displays and war photos, will give visitors more opportunities to learn about the war. There's also a computer that provides access to the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, a federal database that lets users learn where their ancestors served during the war. Meet at Fort Negley Visitor Center at 11:00 a.m. at 1100 Fort Negley Blvd. in Nashville. Admission is free. We can get lunch afterwards if the group so desires. Contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or [Katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:Katibug1959@aol.com) for information and to sign up for the trip.

January 26, 2008, Cedars of Lebanon Bike Ride - The Tennessee Chapter quarterly meeting will be held at Cedars of Lebanon State Park January 25-27, 2008. A bike ride will take place on Saturday, January 26 beginning at 10 AM from the parking lot at the Group Lodge. We will bike approximately 10 miles touring a portion of the bike route of the 2007 Bike Ride Across Tennessee (BRAT). Bring your own bike and helmet. The outing will be cancelled due to snow or heavy rain. For additional information contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email [Katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:Katibug1959@aol.com). (Education)

January 26, 2008, Outings Leader 101 Training - Outings Leader 101 training is a requirement for outings leaders to lead Sierra Club outings. Judith Hammond, TN Chapter Outings Chair, will conduct an Outings Leader 101 class during the TN Chapter Meeting at Cedars of Lebanon State Park on January 26, 2008. Please contact Judith for time and location. 901-276-2819 or [hammondjudithm@yahoo.com](mailto:hammondjudithm@yahoo.com). (Education)

February 23, 2008, Inner City Outings Training - An Inner City Outings Program (ICO) is starting in the Middle Tennessee area co-chaired by Alyssa Browning and Tami Hilbert. Part of the requirements for ICO leaders is a training workshop led by a regional Sierra Club ICO representative. This training will be held February 23. Please contact Alyssa Browning for additional information and time and place of the training. 314-369-5705 or [Alyssa.browning@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Alyssa.browning@vanderbilt.edu). (Education)

March 1-8, 2008, Clair Tappaan Lodge Ski Trip - Make your reservation now to go with Middle Tennessee Group to Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge for a week that you will never forget! Several TN Chapter members traveled to Clair Tappaan in February, 2007 for a ski trip with the Kentucky Chapter and had a memorable experience. Clair Tappaan Lodge is located 7000 feet in California's Sierra Nevada 45 minutes West of Reno, Nevada. Activities planned for our week at Clair Tappaan include cross country skiing and a guided overnight snowshoeing trip to Peter Grub Ski Hut. Skiing classes are available at the lodge. Accommodations are in bunk beds equipped with mattresses. Bring your own bedding and towel. Restroom and shower facilities are shared with two men's and two women's bathrooms. Meals are served family style. Price for the trip is \$499 per person and includes lodging, all meals from supper on March 1 thru breakfast on March 8, overnight snowshoeing trek to Peter Grub Ski Hut, and transportation from airport to lodge and back to airport. Trip price does not include airfare, ski rental, ski lessons, ski fees, incidentals, breakfast and lunch on March 1 and lunch and supper on March 8. Reservations are limited to 9 participants. Non-refundable deposit of \$100 is due by January 15, 2008 made to TN Chapter Sierra Club Outings, P.O. Box 290306, Nashville, TN 37229. Complete information regarding equipment rental rates, cross country skiing activities planned, accommodations, and any other inquiries may be directed to Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or [Katherine.pendleton@sierraclub.org](mailto:Katherine.pendleton@sierraclub.org). (Educational, Conservation)

## CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Saturday, January 12, 10:00-12:00 p.m., Sierra Club/Park Friends Second Saturday Hike (also second Saturday in February) - The Old Forest Trail - Overton Park, Memphis, Tennessee. The Old Forest Hike. Hike the trail through the only urban forest of its type in the region. Located in Overton Park, this moderate hike includes portions of the Old Forest Arboretum. Identify wildflowers, native trees, and learn Memphis History from its original landscape. The hike is co-sponsored by the Park Friends. Meet on the bridge at the end of the Old Forest Lane. For additional information, contact Don Richardson at (901) 276-1387 or [donrich@juno.com](mailto:donrich@juno.com).

## Memphis Environmental Justice Conference a Brilliant Success!

By: Rita Harris

Annually the Chickasaw Group joins with the Memphis Environmental Justice Program to host a citywide grassroots environmental conference to offer learning opportunities to members, community partners, and friends. All day long, on Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> twelve workshops were offered on topics that affect our health, safety, and general environment, such as protecting our drinking water supply from the threat of radioactive waste in our landfills, reducing air pollution levels, actions we can take to curb global warming, preserving parks and green spaces, and understanding where to go to get help from our local and state government agencies.

The greatest measure of our success were the 106 enthusiastic participants who were community leaders, environmental activists, college students, and community advocates of all kinds, coming together from all many different neighborhoods of Memphis. The fact that people did not allow the location of LeMoyné-Owen College to keep them from attending (for some people there is a fear of traveling in inner city south Memphis) was a testament to their dedication of issues they are passionate about.

Steve Sondheim had listed our conference as an official Step it Up event and requested that Congressman Steve Cohen attend and speak to us about the current energy legislation that (at that time) was due to come up for a vote. Congressman Cohen, who has been very supportive overall of environmental issues spoke eloquently about the task before him as a fairly new Congressman and what is ahead for us as we seek better environmental measures that will pave the way for a more sustainable energy future for this country. He was very open to the audience's questions as always. In addition State

Representative Barbara Cooper and State Representative Mike Kernell were also in attendance and pledged their support of our environmental efforts. Rep. Cooper has been very involved in various environmental justice fights in her district over the past months and even years. It was great having our legislators be available to hear firsthand the concerns from the grassroots community.

Sierra Club Appalachian Senior representative, Dave Muhly led a workshop on how to beef up your campaign with the art of storytelling. The keynote address was given at lunch by Leslie Fields, the new National Environmental Justice Program director, based in Washington, DC. Leslie wowed the audience with her wide breadth of knowledge of environmental regulations, the Washington, DC. legislative scene, and her general knowledge of the tools available to communities to assist as they demand stronger environmental protection.

Chapter Chair, Katherine Pendleton, led a wonderful workshop that raised awareness of the predicament we now find ourselves in with genetically modified foods. We certainly thank Katherine for coming to share her research and knowledge with us. Chickasaw Group members were supportive from start to finish and helped make the day a success! For example, Steve Sondheim was instrumental in getting Congressman Steve Cohen to come and speak to us and took video footage of events; James Baker, Teri Sullivan, and Don Richardson, served as workshop leaders; Sue Williams took some great photographs, Judith Hammond worked the registration desk, many others spread the word about the conference as well as fully participating throughout the day. Group Chair, Tom Lawrence was on hand to welcome the



LeMoyné-Owen student Belinda Clayborn, U. S. Representative Steve Cohen, and Sierra Club Environmental Justice Coordinator Rita Harris. Photo courtesy of Steven Sondheim

crowd and stayed with us throughout the day. Ernestine Carpenter, who is a Sierra Club member as well as an EJ community member, served as an excellent Mistress of Ceremony for the opening plenary session. Professor Stanley Abell, who is a Sierra Club member as well as an EJ community member, was instrumental in securing the campus for our conference and taking care of on-site logistics. Kudos to everyone for all your hard work!!!

# Chickasaw Group News

– Contributed by various members

## Marge Davis Rides into Memphis

In the fall of 2007, Marge Davis bicycled around Tennessee to build broad support for the 2008 Container Deposit Act. Such legislation, commonly called a "Bottle Bill", has already been passed in eleven other states. These laws require that a deposit be collected on certain beverages. The consumer pays the deposit at the point of purchase and gets it back when he or she returns the empty container to a certified redemption center. For more information about the bottle bill, visit <http://www.tnbottlebill.org/>. Marge's journey brought her to Memphis on October 10. A radio station in Jackson and a Memphis newspaper covered her trip into West Tennessee. She was met in Memphis by Chickasaw Group members James Baker and Nancy Ream and taken to Boscows Squared, a local brewpub, where they were joined by Chickasaw Group chair Tom Lawrence and his wife, Janet. The outdoor deck at Boscows was a perfect place for Marge to catch her breath, sample some of Memphis's finest food, and enjoy the friendship of fellow Sierrans. Go Marge! Support for her is support for cleaner roadsides in Tennessee!

## 8th Wolf River Harbor Clean Sweep

On October 13, an absolutely beautiful early fall afternoon, five youths and 14 adults volunteered to roll up their sleeves and pick up about 300 pounds of trash and litter at what is seen as a centerpiece of the area, the Wolf River Harbor. The areas east and alongside the harbor are undergoing a major revitalization project known as Uptown Memphis. Also located nearby is St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and on the west side of the harbor are the prosperous homes of Harbor Town. More Memphians are now using the harbor for recreation such as canoeing and kayaking. Unfortunately, the trash and litter fouling the harbor and the toxic substances polluting the water sends a different message to potential new residents and employers seeking to relocate their companies in Memphis.

These volunteers joined thousands more on International Clean-Up Weekend as they sought "to have a global impact and make a real difference in how lots of people view themselves and their communities." International Clean-Up Weekend was co-sponsored by Google Maps and the United Nations Environmental Program. Worldwide, 30 collaborating organizations, including the Sierra Club –America's oldest and largest grass-roots environmental organization, supported these clean-ups.

Local sponsors of the 8th Wolf River Harbor Clean Sweep included Outdoors, Inc., the Tennessee Water Sentinels, the Chickasaw Group of the Sierra Club, and the City of Memphis Public Works Department.

## Chickasaw Group Program Meeting

Sierrans showed off three of the scenic wonders of America at the Chickasaw Group's October meeting at the Central Library in Memphis. Carolyn and Woody Pierce talked about their traverse of the Grand Canyon, from the North Rim to the South Rim. They went down the northern Kaibab trail and came up the South Rim's Bright Angel trail. They ate at "Phantom Ranch", saw plenty of wildlife, and even witnessed a rare helicopter evacuation of an injured tourist!

Ed and Juliet Jones came next, with a presentation about the Clair Tappaan lodge. Clair Tappaan is the Sierra Club's flagship lodge, built by volunteers in the 1930's. Located at the top of Donner Pass in the Sierra Nevada of California, it's an excellent base for year-round recreation. Ed and Juliet were at an elevation of 7000 feet in the winter! They literally got out the snowshoes. They even found out why someone would build an outhouse two stories tall. If you'd like to visit the lodge and hike the Pacific Crest trail in

Officials cut the ribbon, officially opening the new Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Facility in Memphis.

Photographer: James Baker



Filled with a sense of accomplishment, many of the volunteers of the 8th Wolf River Harbor Clean Sweep stand beside the trash and litter they collected. Photographer: James H. Baker

2008, contact Tennessee Chapter chair Katherine Pendleton at [katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:katibug1959@aol.com).

James Baker rounded out the evening with stories about his service trip to Hawaii in 2000. What do propellers or military sonar do to whales' ears? This is what's called "whale/boat interaction," and the results are not nice to think about. James spent some of his time behind a scientific instrument documenting these occurrences. Among the other service opportunities was the "Invasive Plant Removal Project." Because the work was varied, and it was, after all, Hawaii, the service trip was not exactly a hardship!

## A Hike in Shelby Forest

Chickasaw Group's Naomi Van Tol led 15 people and Max the dog on a 3-mile hike through scenic Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park on October 27. The park, near the Mississippi River, displayed several kinds of ferns, and perfect specimens of spicebush and snakeroot. Naomi helped the walkers identify a number of trees, including beech, persimmon, and cherrybark oak. The walk was up-and-downy, but not too difficult. Max sure got a workout, though!

## Environmental Justice Conference in Memphis

"Protecting Where We Live, Work, and Play: What Can YOU Do?" was the theme of the Environmental Justice Conference held on November 3 at LeMoyné-Owen College in Memphis. Guest speaker was Leslie Fields, National Environmental Justice Director of the Sierra Club. Over 100 people were present. U. S. District 9 Representative Steve Cohen addressed the crowd. Also in prominent attendance were Tennessee State Representatives Barbara Cooper and Mike Kernell. There were two morning workshops, lunch, and an afternoon workshop. Workshops included such topics as "Radioactive Waste Out of Control," "Removing Blight," and "Urban Growth and Inner City Neighborhoods." Workshop presenters came from both governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. Tennessee Sierra Club chair Katherine Pendleton gave a workshop entitled "What's in Your Food?" The conference was also listed as a Step It Up 2007 event. When the conference was over, the attendees knew a lot more about what the local problems are and, even better, what steps to take to address them effectively!

## A Hazardous Waste Disposal Center for Memphis

There was a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Memphis and Shelby County's new Household Hazardous Waste collection facility on November 13. It is now the fourth permanent collection site for household hazardous waste in the state of Tennessee

As a thunderstorm rolled in and raindrops began splashing off the metal roof, Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton, Jr. gave a short speech on how important this facility will be to improve the environment of Memphis and Shelby County. A number of the mayors of cities in Shelby County were present, including Mayor Keith McDonald of Bartlett and Mayor Linda Kerley of Collierville. In addition to an annual contribution from all the Shelby County municipalities, this facility was built and is being operated

with funds provided by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Memphis Light, Gas, and Water Division, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Agricenter International, and Premcor (now Valero Refinery). Don Richardson, James Baker, and Steven Sondheim represented Chickasaw Group of the Sierra Club at the ceremony.

The facility is the result of endless hours of hard work by Lisa Williams, the Coordinator of Shelby County Environmental Programs. It is also the fruit of eight or more years of advocacy by members of the Chickasaw Group.

As the officials readied their scissors, it began to rain in earnest and reminded those in attendance that some improperly disposed liquid household hazardous wastes wash away in the rain to pollute streams and lakes. These wastes can also end up in landfills, risking pollution of Shelby County's world-famous drinking-water aquifer. It is much better to see taxpayer dollars spent building and operating a facility that provides Shelby Countians with a place for the proper collection and disposal of household hazardous wastes rather than spending many more tax dollars cleaning up pollution caused by the improper disposal of these wastes.

For those Chickasaw Group members that live in Shelby County, here are the basics of the new facility:

- \* Opening date: Tuesday, November 27, 2007.
- \* Hours and days of operation: 8:30am to 1:30pm Tuesday and Saturday. Other days of operation will be evaluated in light of operational needs and costs.
- \* Location: 6305 Haley Road, Memphis, TN 38134. Haley Road is located off of Farm Road, between Walnut Grove and Mullins Station.
- \* There is no charge for disposal.
- \* Residents may dispose of 15 gallons or 100 pounds of materials per month.
- \* Acceptable items: Aerosol spray cans, automotive fluids, batteries, cleaners, construction and home repair products, lighter fluid and fire starters, electronics, flammable liquids, drain-cleaners and openers, light bulbs, herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, paint and paint-thinners, pool chemicals, moth balls, insect repellent, mercury, and thermostats.
- \* Unacceptable items: Ammunition, commercial and institutional waste, explosives, medical waste, fire extinguishers, oxygen bottles, welding tanks, radioactive waste (including smoke detectors), refrigerants, cooking oil or grease, televisions, microwave ovens, copiers, tires, and unidentifiable materials.
- \* This facility is only for residential citizens of Memphis and Shelby County. No commercial or industrial wastes will be accepted. Users may be asked to show valid identification. In addition, vehicles with out-of-county or out-of state car tags will be turned away.

For more information, please contact Lisa Williams with Shelby County Environmental Programs at 901-379-4430.

## Chickasaw Group November Meeting

The November 28 meeting of the Chickasaw Group took up the topic of Walkways/Bikeways in Memphis. The city of Memphis is currently planning for future bicycling routes. Since the originally scheduled speaker was unable to appear at the November meeting, there was a panel discussion of this timely topic. The panel included Karen Lebovitz, a local businessperson and activist, Benny Dix of the Memphis Share the Road chapter, Nate Ferguson, a University of Memphis student, Anthony Siracusa, a student/businessperson/activist well-known to the cycling community, and Rachel Samuels, a bicycle commuter. Karen emphasized the need for bike lanes clearly marked on city streets. Benny wanted walkers/cyclists to pick to pick one realistic goal to achieve. Nate reminded the club that 48% of all trips are under 3 miles and thus suitable for walking or cycling. Anthony wanted more people to commute to work via bicycle. Rachel spoke of the need for motorists to be better educated about safely sharing the streets with bicyclists. All of the panelists agreed that walking and biking made people healthier while saving them money. At the end of the meeting, Sierra Clubbers viewed maps of proposed future bikeways in Memphis

**12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DEFENDERS OF TENNESSEE CAMPAIGN**

The Sierra Club's **Defenders of Tennessee** campaign began 12 years ago as a means of funding our legislative program. Because the Sierra Club is a volunteer organization with no paid staff in Tennessee, we would not have a strong voice in the state legislature without this program. We have a large number of faithful contributors, for whom we are very grateful. Through normal attrition, however, we have lost some of our longtime supporters. **We ask you to become a Defender so that we can continue with this critical work.**

Last legislative session our Defender donors helped achieve a number of important victories through the hard work of our Sierra lobbyist, Mike Murphy. Mike and a number of volunteers and sister environmental groups helped Governor Bredesen gain approval of the largest land conservation acquisition in Tennessee's history. We have proven the effectiveness of this program, *and we hope you will join and contribute to this Defender campaign.*

We are proud of our accomplishments during the past legislative session, including:

- Approval of Governor Bredesen's budget that included funds to purchase 124,000 acres on the Cumberland Plateau. The preservation of this land will provide outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as habitat protection for an enormous diversity of plant and animal life;
- Amendment to a bill that would have, under the guise of protecting small businesses, curtailed the efforts of state officials to implement environmentally sound regulations;
- Deferral to a study committee of a bill that would have exempted narrow run-off ditches from the state's Water Quality Control Act for regulatory purposes. (We will need to fight this bill again next year. It will be back!)

We also introduced two other bills that have been carried forward to next year, and we will continue to work toward positive progress on these bills. These are bills that would establish minimum efficiency standards for various types of electrical products and one that would enact the Tennessee Beverage Container Deposit Act.

As always, we must continue to be vigilant to identify and work against bills that damage or restrict the application of our state's environmental regulations. **We can't do this alone. We need your help!** You can give a little or give a lot, and each contribution is very important to us. The Defender campaign brings in only a part of the funds that we need to carry out our legislative/lobbying activities, and we must make up the balance out of our diminishing reserves.

Please join or renew today. Your contribution is not tax-deductible, but it is critical in enabling us to continue to have an advocate on "the hill". Remember that if we don't have a lobbyist, we don't have a voice. We urge you to 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.

Sincerely,

Bill Terry and Penny Brooks, Co-Chairs  
Sierra Club Legislative Committee

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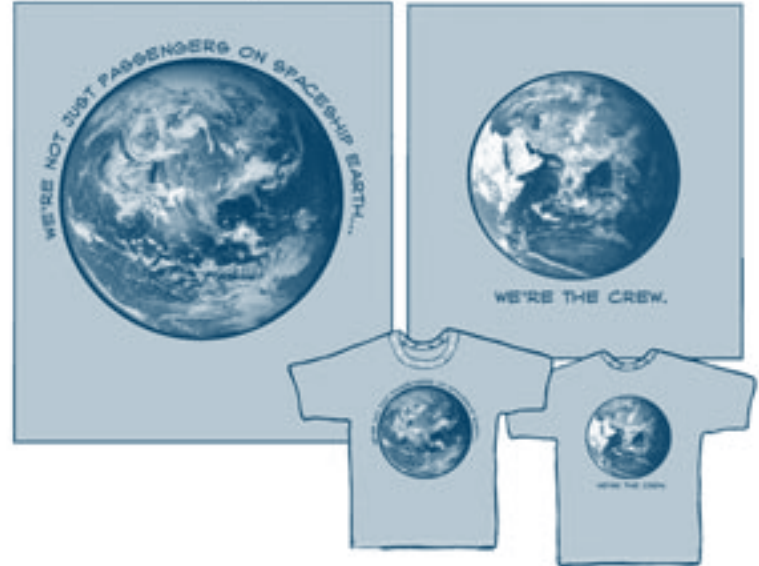
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