

Tennes-Sierran

The monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

Volume 47, Number 2 - March/April, 2015

2014: A Year in Review on Climate and Trade

Iana Solomon, Director, Responsible Trade Program, Sierra Club

In the past year, we saw governments and multinational corporations using trade rules to challenge climate progress, but we also saw Sierra Club activists and fair trade allies across the country fight against harmful trade pacts and we saw the largest climate march in history when 400,000 people come together in New York City to demand climate action.?? Many people see trade rules as distant, something to leave to the economists, unrelated to the greatest environmental challenge of our time: climate disruption. Some of the major happenings on trade in 2014 indicate that trade rules and climate disruption are integrally linked.

1. The United States challenged India's national solar program at the World Trade Organization. The government of India is dealing with the climate crisis head-on by adding more clean energy in place of dirty fossil fuels. India's national solar program aims to bring 100 gigawatts of solar power to India by 2022--much of it home-grown. "Buy-local" rules in the program -- financial support to investors that source solar cells and modules manufactured in India -- will help India build a strong domestic solar industry. This program is a huge step forward for India, the fourth-largest energy consumer in the world. The energy market in India and the financing available to it is currently dedicated to fossil fuels--especially the struggling coal sector. The development of India's solar sector can help shift the energy market away from coal toward clean energy while generating other local benefits like new green jobs.

The United States, however, claims that the buy-local rules in India's solar program violate World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations. In April, despite objections from major environmental organizations including the Sierra Club, the U.S. formally requested that the WTO establish a panel to hear the case. The first WTO panel hearing is scheduled for February 2015, continuing the trend whereby trade rules are used to challenge government efforts to build domestic clean energy sectors. In the year ahead, the Sierra Club will continue to work with our environmental allies to urge the WTO to stay out of climate policy and urge the U.S. to drop this case.

2. The United States and Canada used trade rules to weaken a landmark EU climate policy. In another effort to combat climate disruption, the European Union set a target to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels six percent by 2020 with its 2009 Fuel Quality Directive (FQD). To meet the target, in 2011 the European Commission proposed a system to encourage fuel suppliers to switch from high-carbon fuels, such as those derived from tar sands, to lower-carbon fuels.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper lobbied against the FQD, concerned that it would reduce demand for tar sands, and threatened the EU with a WTO challenge. The U.S. oil industry, which refines Canadian tar sands for export to Europe, also lobbied against the proposal and urged the U.S. to use the trade negotiations

between the U.S. and the EU to weaken the policy.

That's when the U.S. government stepped in and took the oil industry's side. In July 2013, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman told members of the U.S. House of Representatives that he raised issues about the FQD with senior European Commission officials "on several occasions, including in the context of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)." Even more distressing, an email uncovered by Friends of the Earth Europe in an access-to-information request revealed that the U.S., like the oil industry, pushed the EU to remove the incentives for fuel suppliers to move away from high-emitting fuels like tar sands.

In October 2014, the European Commission published revised implementing measures for the FQD that mirrored the position of the U.S., Canada, and the oil industry. The incentive to keep tar sands out of EU transport fuels vanished. Trade negotiations provided just the leverage that the oil industry needed to weaken the FQD, but environmental groups will continue to shed light on this dirty deal.

3. A leaked trade document revealed the EU's attempt to strike American climate and energy policies. While the U.S. was busy using trade rules to weaken EU climate policy, the EU was working to use trade rules to strike down U.S. climate and energy policies. In 2014, a leaked trade document revealed that the European Commission seeks a rule in the US-EU trade pact (TTIP) that could dramatically expand fossil fuel exports from the U.S. to the EU, and therefore oil and gas fracking across the U.S.

The proposal would require the United States to approve crude oil export licenses without even considering the national interest, and would remove the requirement that the U.S. Department of Energy review whether liquified natural gas exports are in the public interest. Instead, the proposal would require the U.S. to "automatically and expeditiously" approve all oil and gas export licenses to the EU. This means if the trade deal is signed, we'd likely see more oil and gas production, more dangerous fracking, more pipelines and export terminals, more climate pollution, and more reliance on fossil fuels. Luckily, there's activism mounting on both sides of the Atlantic to reveal the dangers of this trade deal, and negotiators are far from reaching a deal.

4. Countries tried to call incinerators and wood pellets "environmental goods." In early 2014, a group of WTO members including the United States, the European Union, Australia, and Canada, launched a new set of negotiations to eliminate tariffs on a set of supposedly environmentally beneficial products. Sounds like a good thing, right? Well, while the goal of increasing use of and trade in environmentally beneficial products is certainly noble, the approach is seriously flawed.

Here's the problem. The WTO members will create a list of products that will receive tariff elimination. Unfortunately, a number of products under consideration for tariff elimination could actually do more harm than good. Incinerators, for example, are used to burn waste

material and release toxic chemicals and byproducts into the water we drink and the air we breathe. Centrifuges, which are used to filter and purify water for a variety of reasons, can also be used in the production of oil and tar sands -- dirty fuels that should stay in the ground as more clean energy comes online in America. And wood pellets, when cut and burned, are loaded with carbon and associated with deforestation and habitat loss.

WTO members are moving full-steam ahead without even defining an "environmental good." The result is another flawed trade negotiation that has little to do with building a healthy environment, highlighting again the need to expose the contradiction between free trade and climate policy.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership, a massive trade deal that could harm our climate in numerous ways, comes closer to completion. The U.S. and 11 other nations have been negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership for more than 5 years, and now they appear to be close to a deal. This trade pact threatens our climate -- from the expansion of fossil fuel exports to the imminent increase in fracking, and more. One of the worst parts are broad new rights that the TPP would fork over to multinational corporations, including major polluters.

In order to combat the climate crisis, we must move beyond fossil fuels and fully embrace clean energy. However, investment rules in the TPP will make that harder. The rules empower corporations to sue governments, in the secrecy of private trade tribunals, over laws and policies that corporations allege reduce their profits, including protections from dirty fossil fuels. Such rules have allowed corporations including Chevron and ExxonMobil to launch nearly 600 challenges against almost 100 governments. Increasingly, corporations are using these perverse rules in trade deals to challenge energy and climate policies, including a moratorium on fracking in Quebec and a nuclear energy phase-out in Germany. The TPP would expand the use of "investor-state dispute settlement" to many more multinational corporations, threatening our safeguards we fight hard to achieve. Thankfully, leaders from senior U.S. Senators to union presidents to policy wonks to Sierra Club's executive director Mike Brune have spoken up and made that warning clear.

There's no doubt about it: Trade rules threaten to severely undermine climate progress. But we don't have to accept the status quo.

2014 was also a year of incredible mobilization against harmful trade pacts. In November, more than 700,000 Americans petitioned Congress to oppose putting harmful trade agreements on the fast track. There were actions all over the country, from Connecticut to Texas, from Maryland to Washington state, against harmful trade rules. In far away places like New Zealand, thousands took to the streets in protest of the TPP.

Let's make 2015 the year to stop harmful trade pacts. Join the Sierra Club's Responsible Trade Program and we can work together to build a new model of trade.

Tennes-Sierran

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

SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:

*Email: address.changes@sierraclub.org

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

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

SEND ARTICLES TO:

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USPS: Gene Van Horn, Editor
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ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Submission Target Date is March 25 for the May-June issue.

1. E-mail and e-mail attached files are preferred. Send to gvanhorn26@gmail.com either with embedded text messages, or attached files. Attached files are preferred. Word is preferred but Apple users may send articles in Pages.

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

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

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

5. Concerns or complaints should be addressed to: Barbara Kelly, Communications Committee, bk1rivers@comcast.net.

The opinions expressed in the Tennes-Sierran are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Tennessee Chapter, or the Sierra Club.

**Target Date for
May-June Issue is
March 25, 2015.**

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

**Send material to
Gene Van Horn at
gvanhorn26@gmail.com**

Hearings Needed Representation

This was a letter in the Chattanooga Times Free Press on January 4, 2015.

On Dec 16, the Tennessee Joint Government Operations Committee held an informational hearing on two proposed EPA regulations -- the Clean Air Act, Section 111(d), or the Clean Power Plan, and the Clean Waters Act ("Waters of the United States"). I heard of it after it was over. According to the chairman of the committee, Senator Mike Bell, the hearing was to hear from all major stakeholders. I feel I have a major stake in clean air and water. There are

two questions that need to be answered:

1. Why wasn't the environmental community given prior notice of this hearing?

2. Why were only TDEC and industry lobbyists invited to give presentations? If this is a foretaste of dealing with the legislature in 2015, things look gloomy indeed for the future of Tennessee's environment. Citizens have a right to know what meetings are being held to decide the fate of our communities and the fate of our children, who will have to live with their decisions.

Alice Demetreon, Whitwell, Tenn.



It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Let your voice be heard.

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

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club,
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**Please notify the
Editor when changes
are needed**

TVA's New Community Solar Programs

Tennes-Sierrans will soon have an opportunity to invest in solar energy – even if they do not have a suitable roof for panels. TVA recently made available two new opportunities for local electric distributors or Local Power Companies (LPCs) to develop community solar projects within their respective territories: the EPA Solar PV Project and a 4 megawatt carve-out within the 2015 Solar Solutions Initiative.

Solar energy is the energy of the future and it is available now. Global solar power costs have fallen dramatically over the last five years. There has been an 80% reduction in cost of solar panels in last 5 years. Rooftop solar power stands potentially to revolutionize the US power sector. Some say that solar power will be the cheapest energy source worldwide by 2020 and the predominant source of energy worldwide by 2030.

Community Solar allows many energy customers to share the costs and benefits of a central site solar array and have an experience that is as close to possible to that of customers who invest in onsite generation. Community solar power can offer unique benefits in the expansion of solar power, from greater participation and ownership of solar to a greater dispersion of the economic benefits of harnessing the sun's energy.

Under TVA's EPA solar project, the LPC is free to devise a program that will benefit both the LPC and their customer, including return on investment for customers making the investment. The solar array can be owned either by the LPC or by a third party and may - or may not - include tax benefits for the customer.

So far we know that the large municipal local power companies (NES, KUB, MLGW and the



EPB) have applied for part of the \$2 million TVA is making available for LPC's to develop Community Solar programs. Middle Tennessee Electric Co-Op and Appalachian Electric Membership Co-op have also applied for TVA funds to develop these programs. The deadline for LPC's to apply for this program has already passed, but the awards have not been made yet.

Under the second of TVA's Community Solar programs, the LPC is free to devise a program that will benefit both the LPC and the customer, but as a part of the TVA Solar Solutions Initiative program, LPC customers will be entitled to receive 4 cents per kwh above market price for the energy generated by their share in a solar array set up by their LPC.

A good place for Sierra members to start to learn about what might be possible for a Community Solar project under TVA's SSI program is to look at the websites for TVA's solar programs and also for the Duck River Electric Co-op. DREMC initiated a community solar

farm several years ago, providing an opportunity to interested members to invest and receive premium pricing offered by TVA's Generation Partners (Now Green Power Providers) program. For an investment of \$600 per unit of limited partnership interest, customers benefit from premium equivalent to the production of a half panel of the 108 panels installed at the LPC.

The Chapter's Rebuild and Repower America Committee urges all Tennessee Sierra members to contact their local power companies to inquire about these programs. If your LPC has already submitted an application under the first option, ask to be kept informed about the program as it develops and consider investing in the community solar project and encouraging others to do so.

If your LPC did not apply under the first option - or does not receive an award under that option, encourage the LPC to develop a program under the second option (SSI program) and offer to help them develop the program. The deadline for LPCs to submit proposals for this program is April 1 so it's important to start discussions with your LPC now.

For pointers on how to develop a program, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and the Southern Environmental Law Center have developed a primer for good practices for Community Solar in the Tennessee Valley and we have developed a power point that could be shown at Group meetings. Members of the R & R committee will help with a program if you contact me.

Mary Mastin, Chair TN Chapter Sierra Club, Rebuild & Repower America Committee, 931-268-2938.

Make Your Voice Heard On Tennessee's Energy Future

The process of drafting the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) latest Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), kicked off with public scoping meetings in October 2013. Since then a group eighteen people, representing state agencies, local power companies, industrial users, economic development agencies, and environmental interests have been coming together monthly as The IRP Working Group to guide the staff of TVA in creating and analyzing a range of future scenarios to arrive at a vision to guide TVA's power generation decisions for the next 20-30 years.

The Sierra Club has been engaged throughout the process, represented by Mary Mastin, the Chair of our Rebuild and Repower America Committee, volunteer Louise Gorenflo, and Sierra Club attorney Zachary Fabish, supported by many more volunteers and experts behind the scenes. We have advocated for replacing the need for dirty fossil fuel generation with reduced demand through energy efficiency programs and clean renewable technologies like dis-

tributed solar and utility scale solar and wind projects.

TVA will release the resulting Draft Integrated Resource Plan and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in March, followed by a series of public meetings to solicit input on the drafts throughout April. We strongly encourage everyone with concerns about our energy future and it's implications on our climate to attend one or more of these hearings and make your voice heard. While final times and locations have not been determined as of this writing, we know that the dates are March 30 in Chattanooga, April 6 in Knoxville, April 9 in Huntsville AL, April 14 in Tupelo MS, April 15 in Memphis, April 21 in Nashville and April 22 in Bowling Green KY.

Learn more about the IRP at: tva.com/environment/reports/irp/

For more information about coordinating with other Club members to attend one of the meetings, contact Scott Banbury at 901-619-8567 or scott.banbury@sierraclub.org.

RECRUIT A FRIEND OR GIVE THE GIFT OF A MEMBERSHIP...

Members are the strength of the Sierra Club and while nearly 40,000 Tennesseans support the Sierra Club by taking action in our campaigns or participating in our activities, only 6,834 are dues paying members. The benefits of membership include receiving the national Sierra Club's bimonthly magazine and the Tennessee Chapter's bimonthly newsletter. Being a member also puts you on the rolls of your local Group so we can let you know about important events, outings and other opportunities in your neck of the woods. Your membership benefits the Chapter because we're only allowed to reach out to dues paying members on issues related to electoral politics, ballot initiatives and lobbying. **Through the end of March 100% of all new membership dues will come back to the Tennessee Chapter.**

GIVE GENEROUSLY DURING OUR MARCH APPEAL...

Because we're sensitive to the number of fund raising requests that the typical Sierra Club member receives from many different organizations, we limit ourselves to just a couple of chapter-wide requests in March and August each year. The money we raise during these two fund raising windows supports lobbying in the Tennessee General Assembly, administrative advocacy at all levels of government, and our work to protect our air, water, land and wildlife through vigilant attention to environmental permitting, promulgation of regulations and enforcement of rules.

Meetings

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

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

Strategy/Business Meetings: Mar. 12 and Apr. 13 (2nd Monday) 6:30 P.M. Held at Second Presbyterian Church, at the corner of E. 7th Street and Pine, 700 Pine Street [parking is free in their Pine Street lot, across the street from the church, next to the old Blue Cross (orange) building.] Come add your ideas and share your concerns. We'll be planning our actions on several fronts: clean energy, TVA IRP hearings, forest watch/protection, mining/fracking issues, and energizing our Outings program. All are welcome!

NOTE: We have moved! 2015 Program meetings are at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main St., Chattanooga. 37408. Parking available along the street and around the corner of the building. Mark your calendars now!!!

March Program: 4th Monday, March 23, 7:00 P.M. at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main St., Chattanooga. 37408. Brownfield Remediation Program: Troy Keith, Manager of the Chattanooga Tenn. Dept. of Environment & Conservation (TDEC) Department of Remediation, will discuss the brownfield remediation program. This will include what a brownfield is, how it differs from a superfund site and the process of returning the sites to beneficial uses. He will discuss the remediation process and how it contains potential pollutants. He will also reference successful projects in the Chattanooga area.

The public is very welcome and healthy snacks are served. Invite your friends!! Look for our banner.

April Program: 4th Monday, April 27, 7:00 P.M. at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main St., Chattanooga. 37408. Sustainable Food Production in Your Own Home. **Small-Scale Egg Production:** Shawn Schuster is a small-scale farmer who uses traditionally sustainable and chemical-free methods to produce vegetables, meat, and dairy products for the tri-state Chattanooga area markets. He will discuss how to get into raising chickens - what they need to survive, what kind to get, how many eggs you will get and is a rooster required. He will also discuss the laws concerning backyard chickens and why are they restricted when other animals aren't.

Mushrooms: Angel Miller raises a wide variety of gourmet mushrooms sustainably on her small family farm in Harrison, TN, without pesticides or chemicals. She will discuss how you can grow your own mushrooms at home. The options vary according to the season - spring and fall mean Shiitake, Wine Caps, and various oyster mushrooms, the summer is tropical mushrooms, and the winter Blue Oyster, Elm, and Lions Mane.

The public is very welcome, healthy snacks are served. Invite your friends!! Look for our banner.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Monthly Strategy Meetings are held on the **second Tuesday** of each month at 6:30pm. Call 901-619-8567 or email scott.banbury@sierraclub.org for location.

March 25th, Wednesday, Benjamin Hooks Library, 3030 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN ... Program Focus: Coal Ash Disposal in

Tennessee and at Memphis' Allen Fossil Plant in Particular. We will show Coal Ash Stories, four short films that illustrate the public health concerns, policy issues, and ways communities are responding. The movie will be followed by a discussion of currently evolving state and federal policies and what they mean to us. Our Programs begin with a **social/refreshment time of 5:30** with the **Program to begin by 6:15 pm.** Please watch our Facebook, Sierra Club -Chickasaw and Website located at sierraclub.org/tennessee for this evolving educational community resource. Hope to see you there! Program Contact: susan.routon@gmail.com

April 16th, Thursday, Benjamin Hooks Library, 3030 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN ... Focus: TN-Memphis Area Landfills, Speaker

DON SAFER. Don educates community leaders, environmental advocates, public officials, and concerned citizens about nuclear waste, and the need to stop generating nuclear wastes in Tennessee and to manage the wastes we already have responsibly. Programs begin with a networking-refreshment time at 5:30 with the Program to begin by 6:15 pm. Please watch our Facebook, Sierra Club -Chickasaw and Website located at sierraclub.org/tennessee for this evolving educational community resource. Hope to see you there! Program Contact: susan.routon@gmail.com

HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

March 10, 7:00 P.M. Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. Preview of Harvey Broome Group 2015 Outings Program. Ron Shrieves, Harvey Broome Group, Sierra Club, Outings Coordinator

The annual outings program provides a preview of the HBG's outings program for 2015 and a slideshow from past outings. Included in this year's program are 12 backpack trips, 22 day hikes, 4 canoe/kayak day trips, and 1 snorkeling adventure. This year we will again offer the HBG "Take-a-Hike" program, a series of day hikes that will increase the skills and confidence of first time hikers. A special feature of these beginner day hikes is that they will provide a guided tour of all the major ecosystem types in the biologically diverse Great Smoky Mountains. Invite anyone that is interested in exploring the outdoors to come and find out more about HBG outings.

April 14, 7:00 P.M. Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. Wildlife Viewing in Tennessee: Programs, Funding and Opportunities

Bill Reeves, Chief of Biodiversity. TWRA Bill Reeves will present the TWRA Biodiversity Division's finance and budgeting for wildlife diversity in TWRA, what programs the Biodiversity Division does, who are the wildlife watchers in Tennessee and what they spend and contribute, and what we can do together to improve biodiversity in Tennessee.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

"Owls" -- March 12th, 2015, Thursday, 7:00 P.M., Location change! Due to construction at Radnor Lake, please check our meetup page at <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/>, or call Betsy at 615/668-1977 for the location.

Robert English (photographer, naturalist, and very entertaining speaker) has sighted all nineteen species of North American owls and nineteen species of owls from other countries around the world. A birder for 31 years, Robert's photographs have been published in the National Audubon Society books, The Bird Garden and The Audubon Backyard Birdwatcher. Robert is the founder of LEAPS, an environmental consulting service which conducts research to provide natural area interpretation and management techniques to parks and natural areas. He is also a member and instructor for the Tennessee Naturalist Program. Free and open to the public.

"Trees" - April 9, 7:00 P.M. Location change! Due to construction at Radnor Lake, please check our meetup page at <http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures/>, or call Betsy at 615/668-1977 for the location.

We invite you to join us in welcoming **Nashville's horticulturist within the Beautification and Environment Commission, Jennifer Smith.** She is at the helm of the Metro Landscape Coordination Program, established in 2012. Her work involves coordination with Metro departments, non-profits and the business community. A program focus is the urban forest. Previously Jennifer served for twelve years as the executive director of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council.

A native Nashvillian, Jennifer received a degree in horticulture and landscape design and has a professional background in public horticulture, volunteer management, and board development. Interested in the community, Jennifer sits on many boards and committees and is a committed community volunteer. Her program will focus on the reasons that trees are vital to a healthy Nashville. She will discuss how, where, and when to plant trees and how you can be involved with neighborhood and community tree planting efforts. She will also answer your questions about invasive insects and plants. Free and open to the public.

STRATEGY MEETINGS: March 17, April 21, and May 19 - 3rd Tuesdays at 6:30 P.M.

Everyone is welcome at this local issues and business meeting. Meetings are usually held at the Mad Platter Restaurant, 1239 Sixth Ave. North, Nashville 37208 (near the Nashville Farmer's Market), but there may be times we meet elsewhere. If you are not a regular attendee, please contact Betsy at (615) 668-1977 or garberb@hotmail.com in case the meeting location has changed. Come a bit early because we start the meeting at 6:30. The Mad Platter is not open on Tuesday evenings, so be sure to eat before you come or bring something with you. We look forward to seeing you.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: (contact Betsy at 668-1977 or garberb@hotmail.com)

1. We need someone to assist Joel making changes each month to our web page.
2. Joy would welcome folks to assist her in presentations to elementary school students.
3. We need more hike leaders and assistants.
4. We need more ICO (disadvantaged youth) hike leaders and assistants.
5. We need folks to distribute brochures to libraries, etc.

WATAUGA GROUP (Northeastern TN)

PROGRAM MEETINGS: Every second Tuesday at 7 P.M. Please contact Gloria Griffith at gla4797@earthlink.net or 423-727-4797 for more information.

Outings

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

John Doyal is our Outings Chair, and point-person for outings information for our Group. Our activities are always open to the public and members of the Club from across the state! Outings are planned to take in the interests and skill levels of the participants. For more information, contact John at baldie052@yahoo.com. Also check our Facebook page, Cherokee Sierra, for the latest on our outings.

March 7 (Sat) Prentiss-Cooper State Forest Forestry Watch, 9:30 Meet at 9:30 A.M. in front of Outdoor Chattanooga, and we'll take off for Prentiss-Cooper. Davis Mounger will guide us to various sections of the Forest that will illustrate the need for current oversight. Come prepared to walk, carry water, pack your lunch, etc. This will not require a lot of hiking; many sites are available by car. Open to the public! To register and for further details, contact Davis at wdmounger@yahoo.com

March 22 (Sun) South Chickamauga Creek Greenway. A beautiful afternoon walk beside South Chickamauga Creek. After crossing over Chickamauga Creek we begin a delightful walk on a boardwalk 40 feet above the Creek. We pass under 2 railroad bridges. A very easy 2 1/2-3 mile trip. Children and dogs welcome. Sandy Kurtz, with the South Chickamauga Creek Greenway Alliance, will join us and offer naturalist insights during the walk. Pre-register with John Doyal, 423-506-8171 or baldie052@yahoo.com

April 10-11-12 (Fri-Sun) TN Chapter Spring Meeting at Natchez Trace State Park. The Cherokee Group hosts this event, and hope many will attend from the Cherokee Group! See the write-up else where in this issue. 1/2 off for first-timers, and children 15 and under are free! For more information contact Barbara Hurst, barbaraduckhurst@hotmail.com

April 26 (Sun) Audubon Acres Afternoon. A wonderful place to explore: swinging bridge, fields, visitor center and beautiful walking trails. There is a fee: \$4 for adults, \$2 for children; members of Chattanooga Audubon Society free. Pre-register with John Doyal, 423-506-8171 or baldie052@yahoo.com

Cherokee News

Please Like Us:

on Facebook -- our Organization Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/CherokeeSierra>

on Facebook - our Group Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/65310596576/>

Join our MeetUp --Green Events-- Group:

<http://www.meetup.com/greenhome-107/>

Keep those e-mail addresses coming so you will get our E-News: send your e-mail address to Alice at demetreon1981@gmail.com

CHICKASAW GROUP (MEMPHIS)

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

HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

14 March (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Tellico Lake East Lakeshore Trail. We will hike the a 4.5 mile portion of the East Lakeshore Trail starting at the Tellico Canal trailhead and finishing at the trailhead on Axley Church Road. A short car shuttle will be required. This is the newest and one of the prettiest sections of the Tellico East Lakeshore Trail. This portion of the trail is flat to rolling with just a few steeper inclines. Construction of the East Lakeshore Trail is a joint venture between Watershed Association of the Tellico Reservoir (WATER) and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The entire trail now extends over 30 miles along the eastern shore of Tellico Lake. The hike is rated easy. The drive from West

Knoxville is about 20-25 miles. Preregister with BJ and Bob Perlack: perlack@aol.com; 229-5027.

21 March (Sat). Trail Maintenance, Fodderstack Trail, Citico Wilderness. We'll participate in a Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) trail maintenance project on this beautiful trail. SAWS is a conservation non-profit dedicated to providing stewardship to protected public lands in the Southern Appalachian region, which includes areas in Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. Keep in mind that this is a work project, though I'm sure we'll have a bit of time to enjoy the spring views and wildflowers while we help keep this trail in great shape. Sturdy leather boots that cover the ankle are ideal and required for use of the crosscut saw. Snacks, lunch, a backpack, long pants and something warm in case it's chilly as well as rain gear in case of inclement weather, should be brought or worn. We will provide proper safety equipment and tools. One-way drive: 60 miles. Preregister with Ron Shrieves: phone 922-3518; ronaldshrieves@comcast.net(email preferred).

22 March (Sun). Dayhike, Leatherwood Loop and Sunset Overlook Trails, Big South Fork NRR. We'll start with a 3.3 mile loop that descends to Leatherwood Ford. The trail starts near the East Rim Overlook in Big South Fork. It has several small creek crossings and is rated moderately strenuous. After we have completed the Leatherwood Loop Trail we will cross the road to the Sunset Overlook Trailhead. This is an easy 2.6 mile roundtrip trail that brings us to Sunset Overlook. Bring your lunch. Wear something orange, as hunting is allowed in Big South Fork and there is some game that is open to being hunted year round. Total distance, 5.9 miles. Wear proper shoes -- if it's been wet it will be muddy in some areas. Rated moderate. One-way drive: 70 miles. Preregister with Denise Bivens: denise-bivens@gmail.com; phone 865-384-5138.

28 March (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Chain Ring Trail, Knoxville Urban Wilderness. This will be a get-acquainted session for those interested in the Harvey Broome Group Take-a-Hike program, and includes a short, easy hike for folks who do not have any wilderness hiking experience, but would like to try it. This will be the first in a series of increasingly challenging hikes for those who have always wanted to find out what it's like. No special equipment, not even hiking boots, is required for this outing. In fact, we'll talk about what you should have in order to hike safely in the Smokies or other nearby wilderness areas. Handouts will be provided with details on information sources and equipment. So if "you always wanted to know, but were afraid to ask", this is your chance. There is no charge. Participants are expected to be in reasonable shape for a 3-mile walk on an unimproved trail, and to have aspirations for advancing to a level where they are comfortable with taking a five-mile hike in the Smoky Mountains. The Urban Wilderness Loop is in South Knoxville. Preregister with Mac Post: 865-806-0980 or mpost3116@aol.com (email preferred).

4 April (Sat). Dayhike, Bote Mountain, Finley Cane, and Turkeypen Ridge Trails, GSMNP. This will be a loop dayhike in one of the more prolific wildflower areas of the Great Smokies. A moderate hike, about 8.5 miles with about 2200 feet of gross elevation gain. One-way drive: 50 miles. Preregister with Conrad Ottenfeld: col1505@charter.net; home phone 865-288-0975; cell 256-777-1675.

11-12 Apr (Sat-Sun). Potluck Dinner Backpack along the Piney River. We will do a relatively short backpack to a site along the Piney River. This segment of the Cumberland Trail is located near Spring City. The trail was one of the ten original Bowater Company Pocket Wilderness Areas. It is a linear trail alongside Duskin Creek and the Piney River of about 9 miles. The trail includes a number of interesting features -- steel suspension bridges, an old narrow gauge railroad

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!

bed, waterfalls and cascades. The trail is noted for its wildflowers. Our plan is to have a potluck dinner where each person will bring either an appetizer, main course, or desert to share. The backpack is rated easy to moderate. The driving distance is about 60 miles from West Knoxville. Preregister with BJ and Bob Perlack: perlack@aol.com; 229-5027.

18 Apr (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Biodiversity Tour (Classic Cove hardwood Forest), Cucumber Gap/Jakes Creek/Little River GSMNP. This classic cove hardwood forest is over a century old. The gap was probably named for towering cucumber trees that are numerous here. This loop starts up the Jakes Creek Trail for about 1/2 mile, turn east for about 2.1 miles on the Cucumber Gap trail, where we will see some wildflower displays. We'll head north where the Cucumber Gap trail ends at the Little River. Driving distance one way: 45 miles. For those who did not make the previous week's hike, we'll also talk about hiking in the wilderness, what it takes, generally, in terms of fitness and equipment, and describe this year's Take-a-Hike program. Total distance 5.1 miles, rated easy. One-way drive: 50 miles. Preregister with Mac Post: 865-806-0980; mpost3116@aol.com (email preferred).

25-26 April (Sat-Sun). Backpack, Virgin Falls Trail, Virgin Falls State Natural Area. We will visit what was formerly known as Bowater Corporation's first pocket wilderness on this 9-mile "lollipop" route. Sights include Big Branch Falls, the Caney Fork Overlook, Big Laurel Falls, Sheep Cave and the 110-foot Virgin Falls, whose stream disappears into a sinkhole at the base of the falls. The trail is rocky and has some steep areas. Rated moderate. The driving distance is about 90 miles each way. Pre-register with Rob Davis: 865-202-6661; hikinrob@charter.net (email preferred).

26 Apr (Sun). Dayhike, Cades Cove, GSMNP. We walk Cades Cove Road to Hyatt Lane, then to the other side of the Cades Cove Loop. We will be walking on a combination of asphalt, open fields, and woodlands, although Hyatt will be dirt/gravel and have a stream crossing. I will rate this one moderate as it will be about 8 miles. We'll check out the the cabins and buildings along the way. Remember we will be sharing the road with cars and must be respectful of that. Bring Lunch! We will stop somewhere along the way and picnic. One-way drive: 52 miles. Pre Register with Denise Bivens: denisebivens@gmail.com; 865-384-5138.

2 May (Sat). Panther Creek Paddle and Off-trail hike to Slate Quarries. This trip will start at the Parkway boat launch ramp on Chilhowee Lake. We will paddle along Chilhowee Lake (less than a mile) until we reach Abrams Creek. We will then paddle up Abrams Creek (about one-half mile) and then Panther Creek until we come to an old roadbed. Here we will beach our boats and hike up the old roadbed to see the old quarries and remnants of the slate mining operations. Along the way we will pass by Garner Falls and Anchor Arch. The roadbed is overgrown and we will have to

(continued on page 6)

TVA: Lead the Way on Solar Power in 2015

A joint product of SELC, SACE, Tennesseia and Sierra Club

TVA should increase its investment in clean solar energy to 300 megawatts (MW) in 2015, in order to leverage financial resources, remain competitive with peer utilities, and maximize the economic and environmental benefits of solar energy. We commend TVA for its leadership in conducting a value of solar analysis and for maintaining productive stakeholder engagement in developing the next integrated resource plan (IRP). However, these processes are unlikely to influence TVA's program and budget planning for solar development in 2015, which happens to be a critical year for the nascent solar industry, customers, and the utility. TVA's 2014 allocation for solar capacity was 126 megawatts (MW), consisting of: 10 MW for smaller-scale installations under Green Power Providers; 16 MW for mid-size projects under the Solar Solutions Initiative; and 100 MW typically comprise of much larger utility-scale projects under the Renewable Standard Offer. Our recommendation to increase the capacity allocation to 300 MW in 2015 across these programs would help address the following concerns:

- **Leverage the 30% Federal Investment Tax Credit.** The 30% federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for solar technologies is set to be rolled back at the end of 2016. This approaching deadline is already impacting larger-scale solar developer and investor decisions due to the longer lead times associated with these projects.

- **TVA Falling Behind Peer Utilities on Solar.** Neighboring utilities are taking advantage of this critical window by surging ahead with clean energy investments in 2015. Georgia Power, a utility less than one-third TVA's size in terms of customers served, is planning to purchase over 260 MW of solar in 2015. Similarly, Duke Energy in North Carolina is seeking 300 MW of new solar by the end of 2015.

- **The High Cost of Dirty Power.** When TVA invests in solar, it protects its customers from

costs associated with current and future environmental regulations, devastating coal ash spills and other public health risks.

- **TVA Can Ramp up its Investment in Solar Energy while Cutting the Budget.** Utilities across the country are finding it economically reasonable to convert dirty, expensive coal plants to efficient natural gas plants, and couple that investment in gas with additional solar power.

- **Solar Power Benefits All Customers.** Although TVA has not yet completed its value of solar analysis, similar analyses that have been conducted across the country are demonstrating that the benefits of rooftop solar investments to all customers exceed costs.

The remainder of this document provides greater detail into each of the bullet points listed above. However, this is not necessarily a comprehensive list of reasons TVA should increase its solar investment. Solar energy also creates good-paying jobs, generates homegrown energy and gives people and businesses more energy options. In addition, the constrained capacity allocations by TVA have created a cycle of boom-bust periods that have hampered growth in the Valley's local solar market.

The Expiring 30% Tax Credit and TVA's Standing with Peer Utilities on Solar

The window for making significant solar investments prior to the expiration of tax credits in 2016 is closing quickly. TVA should act now, increasing its 2015 solar investment to 300 MW, to catch up with peer utilities, re-establish its leadership on solar energy and capitalize on the Valley's solar power potential. The 30% federal Solar Investment Tax Credit has played a central role in making solar energy cost effective for homeowners and businesses, but this credit is set to expire in 2016. Many utilities are taking advantage of this critical window by surging ahead with clean energy investments in 2015 and

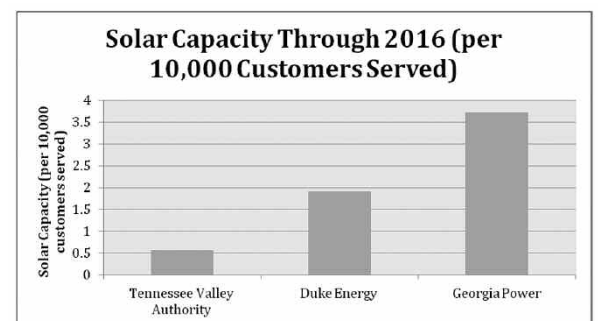
2016. For example, Georgia is now the fastest growing solar market in the nation. By the end of 2016, there will be nearly 900 MW of solar installed in Georgia Power's service territory, mostly through its Advanced Solar Initiative. Similarly, North Carolina ranks fourth in the country in installed solar capacity, and last year \$787 million was invested there to install solar energy.

- TVA will have 254 MW of solar installed or under contract by the end of 2014, and assuming that solar programs remain at 2014 levels, TVA will have 506 MW through 2016.

- Duke Energy (comprised of Duke Energy Progress and Duke Energy Carolinas) will have 414 MW through 2014, and at least another 330 MW by 2016.

- Georgia Power will have at least 887 MW of solar by 2016. Georgia Power will enter into contracts for over 260 MW of solar power in 2015 alone, through its Advanced Solar Initiative. The utility has stated that this solar energy will be procured without putting any upward pressure on rates.

These numbers do not tell the complete story, due to the fact that TVA is a much larger utility



than Duke or Georgia Power. To illustrate this, this graph shows each utility's projected 2016 solar capacity per 10,000 customers served:

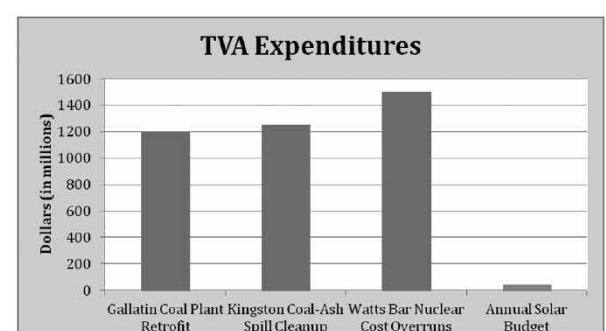
After considering projected additions, Duke Energy will have over 1.9 MW of solar capacity per 10,000 customers, and Georgia Power's solar capacity will be over 3.7 MW per 10,000 customers. **Currently, TVA has less than 0.3 MW of solar capacity per 10,000 customers, and it will have just over 0.5 MW of solar capacity per 10,000 customers by 2016.**

The High Cost of Dirty Power

When TVA invests in solar, it protects its customers from costs associated with future environmental regulations, devastating coal ash spills and other public health risks because solar power systems use a pollution-free resource – the sun. Solar power also protects customers from cost overruns that add up when utilities build large fossil-fueled or nuclear power plants. This is because solar power is bought from independent solar producers, so customers only pay for the energy that is delivered. Solar also acts as an important hedge against rising fuel prices, because when utilities overinvest on fossil fuels like coal and gas and fuel prices go up, customers pay the bill.

TVA's customers are currently paying \$1.2 billion to control pollution at the Gallatin coal plant, over \$1.2 billion to clean up the Kingston coal ash spill, and at least \$1.5 billion in cost overruns at the Watts Bar nuclear plant. In comparison, at most, only \$40 million was budgeted towards

(continued on page 7)



This graph compares TVA's 2014 solar budget with several power plant expenditures in excess of expected operating expenses.

Outings (continued)

cross Panther Creek a few times. However, it should not be too difficult. When we return to our boats we will have the option of paddling another mile up Abrams Creek to the first set of rapids. The off-trail hike is about 3 miles round trip and the total paddle is about 4 miles (6 miles up to first Abrams rapids). The trip is rated moderate. The HBG does not provide boats. Each participant will be responsible for their own kayak or canoe and pfd. Preregister with BJ and Bob Perlack: perlack@aol.com; 229-5027.

3 May (Sun). Dayhike, Bays Mountain, near Kingsport Tn. We will start with a 3.8-mile hike to the Fire Tower on Bays Mountain. This is pretty much a moderate hike, although it gets a little steep nearer the tower. We will have lunch at the tower and take turns going up. Then we will hike down to the lake and back to the visitors center, approximately 2.5 miles, where we can walk around their Nature Center and Wildlife Habitats. Total Mileage approximately 6.5 miles. Rated moderate. There is a \$4 per car fee to enter Bays Mountain. One-way drive: 94 miles. Preregister with Denise Bivens: denisebivens@gmail.com; 865-384-5138.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

Charlie kicks off new year of hikes by leading this moderate 3.7 mile hike at Peeler Park,



Nashville. Here are nineteen fun folks on a beautiful January day. To receive notice of upcoming hikes in the Nashville area, you can join our free meetup at www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures.

March 7 at 10 A.M. (Saturday) — Randy Hedgepath will be giving a lecture on Wildflowers of Tennessee at Mansker's Station, Goodlettsville. Must pre-register at: www.manskersstation.org and click on the Workshops and Special Events tab or call Joy Mayfield (615-851-1192) to register.

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

OUTINGS LEADER NEEDED

We need **YOU** as an outings leader!

All you need to do to become a certified outings leader for MTG Sierra Club is:

- Complete the on-line OLT 101 course (available on Clubhouse) and take the self-assessment quiz at the end

- Have a current Red Cross Basic First Aid certification (we reimburse after you have led 3 outings)

- Assist or co-lead 3 provisional hikes with a certified outings leader before leading an outing solo.

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT! IF YOU EVER CONSIDERED BECOMING AN OUTINGS LEADER, NOW IS THE TIME TO DO IT!

Outings Chair:

Craig Jervis

(cmjervis@comcast.net or 615-400-4309)

Outings leader: Joy Mayfield

(joy.mayfield@comcast.net or 615-851-1192)

TVA: Lead the Way on Solar Power in 2015

A joint product of SELC, SACE, Tennesseeia and Sierra Club

(continued from page 6)
new solar investments in 2014. These three expenditures alone amount to \$439.06 per customer, compared to only \$4.44 per customer invested to purchase new solar energy last year.

TVA Can Ramp up its Investment in Solar Energy while Cutting the Budget

Utilities across the country are finding it economic to convert dirty, expensive coal plants to efficient natural gas plants, and couple that investment in gas with additional solar power. Natural gas and solar energy pair well together for a multitude of reasons: first, natural gas plants have a relatively low upfront installation cost, but a fairly high recurring cost (to buy gas). In contrast, solar power has a higher upfront cost but provides free energy once installed. Investing in both gas and solar at the same time allows for a “cycling” of energy types – much of the needed power comes from solar energy during the middle of the day, and the gas plant ramps up production as needed to meet remaining demand. As a result, utilities can avoid buying significant amounts of natural gas, providing a buffer against rising gas prices and thus saving customers money in the long run.

This reasoning has led several utilities (includ-

ing Xcel Energy and Florida Power & Light) to initiate construction of combined solar and natural gas facilities. According to Xcel Energy, new, flexible natural gas plants “allow” the company to start, bring up and turn down generation on-line in relatively short periods of time as wind and solar generation vary throughout the day.” Where these plants have been completed and studied, they have found the gas and solar combination to be the least-cost reasonable alternative for meeting customer needs. For example, Florida Power & Light’s Martin Hybrid Solar Energy Center will save customers \$178 million in fuel costs over its lifetime. Thus, these combined plants not only reduce pollution and bolster the use of clean energy, but also cut costs, both for customers and their utility.

Similarly, TVA’s Allen Fossil Plant represents an opportunity for TVA to cut its budget while simultaneously increasing its use of clean energy. TVA is currently deciding whether to retrofit Allen with expensive pollution controls; \$650 million dollars has already been approved for this purpose. This expense can be considerably reduced, especially in the long run, by converting Allen to a natural gas plant and combining that plant with additional investments in solar energy. This would be a win-win-win for TVA and its

customers: protecting customers from the rising costs associated with coal; ushering in additional clean energy; and lowering rates.

Solar Power Benefits All Customers

TVA is currently undergoing an evaluation of the benefits and costs of solar power. Unfortunately, this analysis will not be completed in time to inform the 2015 budget. However, other similar analyses that have been conducted across the country are finding that the benefits of rooftop solar investments exceed any costs. For example, Austin Energy has determined that its net value of rooftop solar is 10.7 cents/kWh, which exceeds its retail rate. A similar analysis of North Carolina utilities found that the benefits of rooftop solar, when credited at the retail rate, exceed costs by about 30 percent. This comports with common sense, since the sun shines brightest during the heat of the day, when power is most expensive to buy. Investing in solar saves fuel costs, since sunshine is free, and helps avoid the need for expensive new power plants and transmission.

TVA can and should act now to expand its investment in solar power, being confident that based on a growing body of analysis, solar energy is a prudent and cost-effective investment.

April Chapter Meeting: April 10-11-12, 2015 Natchez Trace State Park Group Lodge

Our Quarterly Chapter Retreats are a great way to get to know folks across the state with the same perspective, to learn the latest on conservation issues in Tennessee and to explore new sections of our state parks and forests! All while you meet new friends.

We'll be staying at the Group Lodge and its cabins, with outings to check out the state forest surrounding the Park, and other hikes both days to view Spring wildflowers. Chapter committee meetings will be happening during the weekend as well. Sit in on one or all, or take off and enjoy the park and its many offerings. Saturday evening we'll have a special program. (Details on events coming soon.) And there is our Spring Auction to benefit our Legislative program -- check your closets/bookshelves/hiking & camping gear for something to donate for a great cause.

Within the Park and Forest are hiking trails, lakes, and equestrian trails (with a riding stable with reasonable fees for rides.) If you're so inclined the Park also has a shooting range.

Prices for the Weekend are low and include breakfasts and Saturday night dinner. You need to bring your own linens or sleeping bag, towels, toiletries, plus Saturday and Sunday trail lunches and beverages. Plan for fun!

Lodging accommodations at the Group Lodge are air-conditioned (4 cottages and a bunkhouse,) enabling couples/families to lodge together, with the bunkhouse providing lodging by gender. Though the cottages have kitchens, we'll be meeting and eating in the adjacent Group Lodge. We share the cooking and cleanup duties, so be prepared to sign up for a chore when you check in with us!

Our hosts, the Cherokee Group, will be on site by 4 P.M. Friday evening, ready to welcome you. We suggest sharing Friday Supper with Sierrans (Dutch Treat!) at the Park's main Pin Oak Lodge/Restaurant, but keep in mind that it closes at 8 P.M. Central.

If you wish, tent or truck camping is available at our site, for the same fees listed below:

Early Bird Price - e-mail your registration by Friday, April 3rd - \$40
Children 15 and under are free.

Regular Price - \$50 College Students - \$15.

SPECIAL: 1/2 price for first time attendees
1-day only price with meals: Sat/\$15 and Sun/\$10
(Note: a limited number of partial scholarships are available by request to Barb Kelly, bk1rivers@gmail.com)

TO REGISTER: Email barbaraduckhurst@hotmail.com
(Specify Vegetarian or Omnivore!)

Once you have registered, you'll receive the updated list of activities!

PAY: When you arrive and receive your cabin or bunkhouse assignment.

The members of the Cherokee Group hope to meet you there! Come prepared for an engaging, informative and FUN weekend.

Directions: Natchez Trace State Park Group Lodge at 5 Points
The Park is located 97 miles west of downtown Nashville, just off I-40. After exiting the Interstate at Exit 116, turn south and you'll soon find yourself in the Park. The Natchez Trace State Forest surrounds the Park. We are at the Group Lodge at 5 Points. Go here to download maps and get further information: <http://tnstateparks.com/parks/about/natchez-trace>

The State of the State Assembly

Out of state interests headed by the billionaire Koch brothers are usurping the people's voice in the Tennessee General Assembly by plying our legislators with record amounts of campaign contributions in the 2014 elections and attacking and threatening our lawmakers with aggressive ads around particular votes. A wide array of public interest law is being targeted and the protection of our air, water, climate and public lands figures prominently in this highly coordinated and grossly funded assault on our commonwealth and natural heritage.

Bills drafted by the Koch funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) are being pushed by the Koch funded Tennessee Chapter of Americans For Prosperity's three registered lobbyists and two more lobbyists from the Beacon Center. As this issue of the Tennes-Sierran goes to press, only some of the bills that will be heard this session have been introduced, but a few of the worst so far include:

SJR0002 by Senator Mark Norris – Resolution urging the proposal of a US Constitutional amendment requiring Congressional approval of federal regulations. On a federal level this is known as the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act.

SJR 0067 by Senator Mike Bell – Resolution making application for the calling of an Article V convention under the United States Constitution to consider amendments to impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress.

HR 0005 by Pody – Resolution urging Congress to approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

We also fully expect to see ALEC modeled legislation attacking the EPA's Clean Power Plan and new rule defining the Waters Of The United States as including headwaters streams and adjacent wetlands.

Other bad legislation includes:

SB 0204 by Senator Frank Niceley – Specifies that it is not an offense to take a

black vulture in this state and that state resources may not be used to enforce any prohibition against taking black vultures in this state. We're not sure what Senator Nicely has against Vultures, but as naturalists we know that these magnificent birds play an essential role in the decomposition cycle.

SB 0390 by Niceley – Authorizes the activity of "noncommercial gold mining" in streams of this state under general permit conditions. This bill would allow "amateur" miners to operate motorized dredges that would destroy the bottom of our streams in pursuit of gold that really doesn't exist in any meaningful quantity in TN.

HB 0216 by Daniel – Requires, instead of authorizes, the government operations committees to review every rule promulgated pursuant to the UAPA; decreases, from 25 to 10, the number of persons that must petition an agency to compel a public hearing on a proposed rule; requires the committees to consider the effect of a rule on small business and the arbitrariness and capriciousness of a rule. This rule grants legislators expanded power to second guess the administration's efforts to enforce regulations.

HB 0406 by Faison – As introduced, authorizes agencies to amend a rule pursuant to a request from the government operations committee without having to initiate a new rulemaking process; an amendment to a rule will still be filed with the secretary of state, reviewed by the attorney general and reporter, and reviewed by the government operations committees. This bill would subvert the public's right to have a hearing and make comment on legislator driven amendment of administrative rules

We will also face another attempt by the Tennessee Mining Association to make the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation take primary responsibility for issuing coal surface mining permits. The Mining Association claims this would lead to a 3-4 fold increase in strip mining with as many-fold increases in water pollution, destruction of ridge lines and subsequent contributions to climate change.

On a positive note, Senator Steve Southerland and Representative Bill Dunn are carrying a really GOOD bill, drafted by our own TN Sierra legislative committee. HB 0237 by Dunn enacts the "Property Assessed Clean Energy Act" (PACE). This bill authorizes local taxing authorities to put in place financing programs for residential and commercial property owner to make major energy efficiency or water conservation investments and/or install renewable energy technology. The thing that makes PACE so great, is that the loan is paid back as an increased assessment on the properties tax bill, keeping the repayment of the loan with the property benefiting from the investment.

SAVE THE DATES:

Sierra Club members will join other conservationists at the General Assembly on March 3rd for the annual Conservation Lobby Day. We will turn out in mass again on March 17th for Put People First Day.

Read more about Property Assessed Clean Energy at pacenow.org

Learn more about the American Legislative Exchange Council's agenda at alecexposed.org

Track Tennessee legislation, contact your representatives and watch hearings at wapp.capitol.tn.gov

If you have any questions about the Chapter's lobby program, would like to join us on lobby visits or want to receive weekly legislative alerts, contact Scott Banbury at 901-619-8567 or smbanbury@gmail.com

Moving?



Attach mailing address label, or fill in current name, address & Membership ID#

Current Address: _____

Member ID# _____

My new address is:

Name _____

Address _____

City/St/Zip _____

Mail to:
Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041,
Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB

We send out an appeal in March to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget.

When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able - and remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.

Mail your contribution to:
3712 Ringgold Road, #156, Chattanooga, TN 37412-1638

The Sierra Club-Middle TN Group
Tennes-Sierran
3712 Ringgold Road, #156
Chattanooga, TN 37412-1638

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