

# Tennesse-Sierran

The monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

Volume 39, Number 6 - June, 2008

## Polishing the Big Apple Sierra Club Members Volunteer at New York Park

By Dallas Smith

The U. S. flag draping the front of the New York Stock Exchange was big as a lawn. The Market was closed for Memorial Day. I stood looking up for a moment and then walked on, glancing down.

Something shiny lodged in the joint between the sidewalk and curb caught my eye. I picked it up. It was a stainless-steel sheet-metal screw, inch-and-a-half long, Phillips head. I walked a few more steps and found something else shining on the walk—a Roosevelt dime, minted 2001, the year the twin towers came down.

Clutching my treasure, I rushed to catch up with the 23 other Sierra Club members with whom I was touring Manhattan. I held the two objects out to Marianne, a quick thinking woman from Chicago.

“Look at the souvenirs I found back there at the Stock Exchange. I wonder what it means. There must be some symbolism...”

She glanced at the shiny objects in my hand, pointing first at the dime. “It means that if you invest this”—then pointing at the screw—“you get this.”

Maybe so, but you’d be lucky if you lost no more than one thin dime.

### Why New York?

Sierra Club? High desert plateaus, soaring snow-shrouded peaks, deep forest glades, such wild places are the usual haunts of the Sierra Club. So what did two-dozen Sierra Club members mean prowling the concrete canyons of Gotham?

The idea was the brainchild of Jerry Balch, Brooklyn native and son of Ukrainian immigrants. His concept was the same as other service trips sponsored by Sierra: Go some place, see the sights and, for good measure, do some volunteer work. Except that in this case the location was anything but the usual wilderness setting; it was New York City.

Our task was to provide some restoration and maintenance for New York’s Riverside Park, a sliver of land hugging the bank of the Hudson River, an area of some 323 acres, four miles long by an eighth of a mile wide.

We did yard work: building and seeding a berm; pulling, digging and cutting weeds; and spreading gravel inside a dog run, a fenced area where dogs are permitted without their leash.

Each day we met Debbie Sheintoch, director of volunteers for Riverside Park Fund, to get our assignment for that day. She and her assistant, Kimberly Green, supplied a pickup truck loaded with the hand tools needed: wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, and so on.

The work was hot and hard. One woman broke her wrist. Debbie skewered her hand on a honey locust thorn.

### Seeing the Sights

We worked by day, but the nights were ours. Our lodging was in the International Youth Hostel on the Upper West Side. We slept dormitory style, four strangers to a room, a tiny space



not much larger than a walk-in closet. After work we’d return to the hostel for a shower and dinner. Then it was showtime!

A couple of Broadway plays, the Emerson String Quartet at Carnegie Hall and ballet at the Lincoln Center were some of the shows we took in. Two other campers and I opted out on the ballet and went instead to Shea Stadium where we watched the Diamondbacks thump the Mets, 5 to 1.

Our first day in town, Memorial Day, in lieu of work we took a 16-hour tour of New York, a walk Jerry calls his “Grand Tour.” What a walk it was! He wore our legs off. We started in Brooklyn, walked across the Brooklyn Bridge, past Town Hall, Ground Zero, Wall Street, Chinatown, Little Italy, Greenwich Village...

One camper carried a pedometer that showed a total of 16 miles for the day, not a bad training distance. And I think its mileage was low. Jerry went fast and, among the crowd, he was hard to keep in sight, a concern for those of us who didn’t know the town.

“I’ve never seen anything like this [town],” Eugene DeMine said. “I feel like if I get lost here, I’ll die here!” Eugene was no country hick; his day job had been in downtown Los Angeles, and he lives in a suburb of that city now.

We finished the day with cheese cake and coffee at Veniero’s on East 11th Street and then ambled through Washington Square listening to a collection of street musicians jamming away the night.

### It’s a Small World

Occasionally a coincident smacks you that seems too remote to be possible, as one did on this trip. On Wednesday we saw the play “Inherit the Wind,” starring Christopher Plummer and Brian Dennehy. The play is based

on the Scopes monkey trial in Dayton, Tennessee in 1925. Schoolteacher John Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution in his science classes. Although I grew up in Tennessee, I’d never seen either the play or movie.

Next morning we reported to work at Riverside Park, near 86th Street. There Debbie introduced us to Charlotte Mayerson, a park volunteer. Charlotte maintains a large flower garden inside a fenced area of the Park. Irises, the Tennessee State Flower, were in full bloom. Our job that morning was to help remove the weeds and rake the leaves from her garden.

Something about the woman’s friendly demeanor and community spirit intrigued me. I hauled out my notebook, an object I’d discreetly kept out of sight until then, and began asking questions.

She has lived at her present location on Riverside Drive at 86th Street for 50 years. In addition to her gardening she organizes a series of concerts in the park.

She motioned toward a plaza down the hill. “I run concerts here on Sundays. [This] Sunday we have a brass quintet. Next week a soul group, C. Phineas. And the next week a jazz band called the Jacob Rodriguez Family Project.”

First wonder: Denying retirement, she said she was a writer and editor. She had been executive editor at Random House. The woman had presided at the top of the publishing world. She still dips her fingers in that pie.

Here is what a reader may not know; I know it in my marrow from having sent out 75-page book proposals time and again: An unknown author has a better chance of gaining an audience with the Pope than talking with a New York editor.

Yet by the wildest improbability there I stood,  
*(continued on page 3)*

# Tennes-Sierran

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

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\*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:

Email: [lbaker@usw.org](mailto:lbaker@usw.org)  
Snail Mail: Lynne Baker, Tennes-Sierran Editor  
108 Pepper Ridge Circle, Antioch, TN 37013  
(615) 831-6782

## ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Submission DEADLINE is the 10th of the month preceding the new month's issue.

1. Email and email attached files are preferred. Send to [lbaker@usw.org](mailto:lbaker@usw.org) either with embedded text messages, or attached files in PC-based formats. Attached files are preferred. Mac users should embed text in body of an email message only.

2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or .tif file format 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.

**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.**

# Volunteer Needed

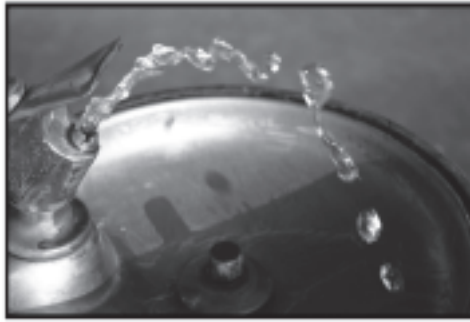
**Volunteer Coordinator needed for the recycle Drop-off Site in Nashville that is sponsored by the Sierra Club.**

**The Volunteer Coordinator will schedule volunteers to staff the Drop-off Site from 9:00 to 12:00 on Saturday mornings from a list of people who have expressed an interest in being there.**

**Interested people may contact Betsy Garber at [garberb@hotmail.com](mailto:garberb@hotmail.com)**



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



## With your help, we can clean up our water.

Over the last 30 years, we've made great progress cleaning up our water. But the Bush Administration is threatening that progress, proposing that "isolated" small streams, ponds and wetlands no longer be covered under the Clean Water Act. Work with us to strengthen the Clean Water Act and its enforcement. Together we can leave our children a legacy of clean water, air and wild lands.

## Keep our water safe. Join Sierra Club.

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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,  
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968  
or visit our website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org) **F94Q W 4300 1**

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## Chickasaw Group - Memphis

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Outings: Vacant

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Bill McCabe, Central Appalachian EJ Organizer  
office - 423-944-3220 fax - 423-944-3221 (call first)

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

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# Sierra Club Members Volunteer at New York Park

(continued from page 1)

notebook in hand, talking with one. I never once said, "I wrote a literary book about running and may write another one or two." That would have been rude, I thought.

Second wonder: I mentioned seeing "Inherit the Wind," innocently unprepared for what would come from her next.

"John Scopes was a friend of mine. He wrote an autobiography...and I published it."

Working on the book, they had become friends; she knew him well. Then Charlotte Mayerson told me this: "He said, 'If you were 20 years older I'd marry you.'"

It was a history lesson, I guess. I'd managed to live close to the biblical three score and ten without ever seeing "Inherit the Wind." Then the very morning after seeing it, I met John Scopes' friend—and publisher.

There on the Upper West Side, in Riverside Park, standing next to the Tennessee State flower, I met Charlotte Mayerson.

## A Little Night Music

Our last night in town, a Saturday, we had a supper of ribs and chicken at a Harlem soul-food restaurant, Miss Maude's Spoonbread Too, on Malcolm X Boulevard at 137th Street. On the way we stopped at the Apollo Theater, home to legendary soul and R&B acts. Jerry had recruited a Harlem expert to tell us a little about it.

We stood in front of the Apollo, and he compared it to the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, a place he'd seen. His comparison was apt, I thought. The two theaters are similar in a

way. Each stands as an historical musical shrine where music bubbled up from the people—country music in the Ryman, R&B in the Apollo.

There was in our group a woman named Jill Gaster, who made her living as a pop singer until age 30, when her daughter was born. She sports a quaking frizz of red hair, the kind of unabashed woman people used to call a rounder. So as we walked away I asked her, "Did that

view of the Apollo Theater make your rock and roll heart skip a beat?"

"You know what?" she answered. "Growing up in North Carolina, I used to stay up on Saturday night to listen to a program from the Apollo. I figured I was the only white girl in the state listening to that show."

Jill is a nurse now. She also attends college on a music scholarship. She applied for the scholarship not knowing an audition was required. She sang a song anyway. It was good enough to win the prize.

## A Gentler New York

New York is a kinder and gentler place these days, a running friend told me, somehow sobered by that tragedy of September 11. At lunch one day, I sat in the grass by the river with Kimberly, the park assistant. She is a willowy black woman who looks 30 but claims 50. I asked her why she works for the Park. Was it to be outside?

No, she just didn't want to be in the tall buildings anymore. She'd worked for a bank as an administrative assistant.

"The Empire State Building and the twin towers, those were my views. I saw the towers come down. The antenna stayed straight all the way down. That stuck in my mind. My last two shots [photographs], it was coming down."

She tried to get home. "I went into a subway that was still working. Then I heard two loud explosions, and I went running out of there like a bat out of hell."

She was shaken. For the next year and a half her daughter had to walk her to work each day. So she changed jobs to get out of the big buildings. She still tries to understand what happened in 2001.

"Why did they do that?" she asks. "I mean, we don't hate anybody because of their religion. We're just working, trying to pay the rent."

Her question searched through the wind out over the Hudson, finding no answer.

## Corner

### The Chair's

## Dear Tennessee Chapter Members,

Last month I wrote to you regarding a landfill issue in Marshall County. I am pleased to report that the waste management company proposing the landfill has withdrawn its permit request after 1,000 people in the community showed up in opposition of the landfill at a public hearing. Many thanks to our members in Marshall and Giles counties who supported the efforts in opposing the landfill.

The middle of May I attended the quarterly Sierra Club Board of Directors meeting in San Francisco. Changes are being made in the structure of our club referred to as Project Renewal. The national governance committees have been dissolved. As I receive more information regarding how these changes will impact our chapter I will keep you informed.

During May I visited the Chickasaw and Cherokee Groups. I appreciated the warm hospitality shown to me during my visits. It was good to see many of you. This month I will be visiting the State of Franklin Group and Watauga Group. I look forward to meeting and discussing issues with members in those groups.

The March Window appeal to date has raised \$14,400. Thank you for your contributions.

There are several areas that our chapter needs your help. We need members to help on a variety of committees including fundraising and membership. If you are interested in helping with either committee please contact me and I will direct you to the appropriate committee chairs.

We have had great response to our Wilderness First Aid course to be held June 7 & 8 at Fall Creek Falls State Park. We will continue to accept reservations until June 5.

The Tennessee Chapter is sponsoring an Outings Leader 201 training September 26-28 at Laurel Fork Lodge near Hampton, Tenn. Complete information will be available in July.

Please make plans to attend our summer chapter meeting July 25-27 at Laurel Fork Lodge near Hampton, Tenn. Watauga Group will be hosting. Laurel Fork Lodge is nestled in the Appalachian mountains near the Appalachian Trail. Remember that this is a family friendly event! I look forward to seeing you there!

**Enjoy, explore, protect the planet,  
Katherine Pendleton, Chair**



# Meetings

## **HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)**

**JUNE PROGRAM MEETING: June 10, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike.**

Architect Elizabeth Eason (AIA, LEED, AP) presents "Sustainable Design—It's Only Natural," about how our approach to the built environment should more closely mimic design principles found in nature and displayed in vernacular styles while taking full advantage of rapid technological developments.

A native East Tennessean, Elizabeth received her degree in architecture from UT and has over 19 years of professional experience. In 2003 she founded Elizabeth Eason Architecture with the goal of focusing on sustainable design projects for residential and commercial clients. She is also an accredited professional with the US Green Building Council's LEED certification for sustainable design and is chair of the USGBC East Tennessee Chapter. She serves on Mayor Haslam's Energy and Sustainability Task Force and the City of Knoxville Tree Board and has recently been named to serve on Governor Bredesen's Energy Policy Task Force.

Everyone is welcome. For information call John Finger at (865) 573-5908.

**JULY PROGRAM MEETING: July 8, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike.** (Still in the planning stage.) Topic: The forthcoming political prospects in Nashville of important state and local environmental issues.

## **MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)**

**PROGRAM MEETING: Thursday, June 12, 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center, 1160 Otter Creek Road, Nashville.**

"The Hidden Destruction of the Appalachian Mountains" will be presented by Kentucky Sierra member Dave Cooper. This timely program addresses a critical environmental problem that has moved into Tennessee after bringing devastation to the beautiful mountains in neighboring states.

In West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, coal companies now blast as much as 600 feet off the top of the mountains, then dump the rock and debris into mountain streams. Over 300,000 acres of the most beautiful and productive hardwood forests in America have already been turned into barren grasslands. Mountaintop removal mining increases flooding, contaminates drinking water supplies, cracks foundations of nearby homes, and showers towns with dust and noise from blasting.

The Mountaintop Removal Road Show includes a stunning slide show about the impacts of the mountaintop removal on coalfield communities. It features traditional Appalachian mountain music and shocking aerial photos of decapitated Appalachian mountains.

Dave Cooper, after 20 years working as a mechanical engineer, decided to devote his full attention to environmental issues after seeing a mountaintop removal mine. He worked for a year as a coalfield organizer for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC). Since 2003 he has been on a national speaking tour to educate communities across America about mountaintop removal.

This program is free, and the public is invited.

**JULY PREVIEW: Walden's Puddle, wildlife**

rehabilitation and education facility.

**STRATEGY MEETING: Tuesday, June 24 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 more information regarding the meetings, send a message to Rachel Floyd at rfloyd557@bellsouth.net or call 792-2590.

## **STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)**

**STRATEGY/PROGRAM MONTHLY MEETING:** Contact Tom Mozen at mozenetc@yahoo.com or 423-232-0827 for more information.

## **UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP (Cookeville)**

**MEETING: Every 4th Thursday at 7 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the Putnam County Library.** Alternating program meeting with planning meetings every other month. For more information, contact Mary Mastin at marymastin@twlakes.net or (931-268-2938).

**STRATEGY/PROGRAM MONTHLY MEETING:** The SOFG June meeting will focus on Green Building Initiatives in the Tri-City area. For the date, time and place, contact SOFG chair Tom Mozen at mozenetc@yahoo.com or 423-232-0827.

**SOFG NEWS:** At the May SOFG meeting, Dan Reesa spoke. He is the chairman of the Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance and is a spokesman for the Friends of the Tweetsie Trail—an abandoned railway in and out of Johnson City, Tenn.

SOFG chair Mozen attended the National Association of Home Builders Green Building conference in New Orleans. One of the featured speakers was Patrick Moore, past co-founder of GreenPeace.

SOFG promoted the E-cycling attempt of East Tenn. State University in mid-May.

In June we will have an audience with Johnson City's mayor and House of Representative candidate Phil Roe to gain their acceptance to sign onto the Mayors' Climate Control Initiative.

## **CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)**

**Monthly First Thursday Members Gathering: June 5 & July 3, 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 at (901) 374-0582 or juliet101@comcast.net.

**Strategy Meeting: Monday, June 9 & July 14, 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 Nancy Ream by June 6 (June meeting) or July 11 (July meeting) to place items on the agenda: (901) 759-9416 or njream@aol.com.

**Chickasaw Group Sierra Club Film Night, Willie Bearden's "Overton Park, A Century of Change" Wednesday, June 18, 7:30pm - Power House, 45 G. E. Patterson (between Main and Front) –** Overton Park has been the stage for much of Memphis' history for over 100 years. In its earliest incarnation, it was the shining jewel of the Progressive Movement in Memphis; it was the public's backyard and front porch. In its boundaries lies the only old growth forest to be found in any urban setting. By the 1960s, efforts by powerful federal and state government agencies nearly spelled its doom with a plan to split the park with an interstate highway system.

"Overton Park, A Century of Change" is the story of the park's founding, its brush with disaster, and its renaissance. Filmmaker Willie Bearden will be on hand to discuss the film. Old Forest steward and surveyor Don Richardson will discuss some of the threats still facing the park after 100 years.

Sierra Club film night is hosted by Indie Memphis. Admission is free (with donations accepted), and refreshments will be available. Come early to get a good seat. For more information contact Tom Lawrence at (901) 237-4819 or bus@thecave.com.

**Program Meeting – "DTV Transition and the Environment" Thursday, June 26, 7:00pm, Benjamin Hooks Central Library, 3030 Poplar Avenue.**

You may have heard the rumors that television is undergoing a dramatic change. It's true. On February 17, 2009, per a federal law, television broadcasters will be required to shut off all analog broadcasts. This means that you must be able to receive digital television by that time or shut off your television for good. But does this mean that you have to buy a new television and throw away all of your old ones? Not necessarily.

WKNO Promotions Manager Teri Sullivan will deliver a presentation on the digital television transition and the analog shutoff and how you can be prepared. She'll talk about how you can convert your current television into digital (without throwing out the old TV) and dispel a few myths about the DTV transition. She'll also offer information about how to properly dispose of your old TV (without harming the environment) if you do decide to replace it. For more information contact Tom Lawrence at (901) 237-4819 or bus@thecave.com.

## **Save the Date!**

**Sierra Club 4th of July Picnic, 1:00-6:00pm, Johnson Road Park**

In Germantown, just north of Germantown Baptist Church. Bring a side dish or dessert. Lake for fishing. Bike riding available. Questions? Call Nancy Ream at (901) 759-9416.

**TELEVISION PROGRAM: WPYL - Channel 18, Memphis, Tennessee, - Mondays at 1:30pm, Tuesdays at 4:00pm, Wednesdays at 11:30am & 11:00pm, Thursdays at 7:00am, Fridays at 2:30pm, Saturdays at 10:00am, and Sundays at 2:00am.** "The Nature of Conservation" is the Sierra Club's Chickasaw Group TV program on cable channel 18. For complete schedule listings on cable channel 18, please see the website: www.memphislibrary.org/tlc18/schedule. For

*(continued on page 5)*

# Chickasaw Group News

## Contributed by various members

### April Program Meeting

The Chickasaw Group's meeting on April 24 featured a presentation by Jim Holt of the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department. Did you know that 600 pounds of coal is not burned for each light bulb we change to fluorescent?

Holt talked about how air quality is monitored in Memphis. He described the different kinds of air pollutants from volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to ozone to different sizes of particulate matter, and explained the functions of the health department's air quality section. It produces the Air Quality Index (AQI) that tells us how clean our day will be.

Meeting attendees asked the kind of questions that show their knowledge of and interest in controlling pollution in Shelby County.

### Earth Day Celebration at Lichterman Nature Center

Earthfest, held on Saturday, April 19, was Lichterman Nature Center's celebration of Earth Day in Memphis (though Earth Day was actually Tuesday, April 22).

The Chickasaw Group had a table at Lichterman in addition to lots of other environmental and nature organizations. There was food courtesy of Jarret's, fun games for kids provided by the Nature Center, as well a series of short films, including Pare Lorentz's classic 1939 documentary, "The River." "Mother Nature" and her animal friend led colorfully-costumed, nature-themed paraders around the grounds.

County Commissioner Steve Mulroy dropped by the Sierra Club table, and much good information about the club's activities in West Tennessee was handed out!

### Meetings

(continued from page 4)

more information about "The Nature of Conservation," 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.

#### Yahoo News Group

Sierra Club-Chickasaw Group and Friends is a Yahoo group for members and friends of the Chickasaw Group of the Sierra Club (Memphis/West TN). It is an announcement-only email list to send notices of upcoming events and other "green" information of local interest. All announcements are accessible to the public, so you can look up the latest posts anytime! To view and/or join the Yahoo group, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sierraclub-chickasaw/>

#### WATAUGA GROUP (North Eastern TN)

**PROGRAM MEETINGS:** Every second Tuesday at 7 p.m. Please contact Gloria Griffith at [gla4797@earthlink.net](mailto:gla4797@earthlink.net) or 423-727-4797 for more information.



Photo: David Carter

"Mother Nature" brought a friendly opossum to EarthFest at Lichterman.

### Chickasaw Group at the "Down to Earth" Celebration at Shelby Farms

Thousands celebrated Earth Day at Shelby Farms Park's "Down to Earth" festival on Sunday, April 20. The Chickasaw Group of the Sierra Club had a booth there along with dozens of other environmentally-conscious organizations. Guests at the daylong event enjoyed music, food, and activities as well as information.

Cities around West Tennessee may have been slow to recognize the advantages of environmentalism, but they now qualify as "green."

Germantown, for example, recently purchased eco-friendly hybrid sport utility vehicles for its Parks and Recreation Department. The city also uses solar-powered gates in its parks. Germantown fire-fighters use compressed-air foam, which uses less water and causes less damage to buildings and vehicles.

The Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) and the Memphis Light, Gas, and Water Division (MLGW), as well as the City/County Health Department are now using both hybrids and biofuel vehicles. MLGW offers energy credits to those who want them via its "Green Power Switch" program.

Though much more can be done by cities and their agencies to promote environmentally-con-

scious activities, the festival at Shelby Farms Park gave them and many eco-themed organizations a chance to tell their stories to the public.



Photo: David Carter

The Chickasaw Group booth at Shelby Farms.

**Shelby County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility**  
**6305 Haley Road, Memphis, TN 38134 (off Farm Road between Walnut Grove and Mullins Station)**

**Hours and Days: 8:30am-1:30pm, Tuesdays and Saturdays**

No fee. For residential citizens of Memphis and Shelby County only. No commercial or industrial wastes.

15 gallons or 100 pounds of material 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.

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

# 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/SignWaiverPDF>, 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.

## HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

### June 14-15. Beginner Backpack, Elkmont area of the GSMNP.

This is a short-drive, easy-to-moderate rated hike with an emphasis on accommodating new backpackers. We start at Elkmont and go a short ways up the Jakes Creek trail to its junction with the Meigs Mountain Trail and then west on the latter trail to back country campsite #20 (about 2.4 miles total).

We'll utilize the remainder of Saturday afternoon to share experiences and information about equipment, supplies, techniques, and destinations relating to backpacking. On Sunday we hike west on the Meigs Mountain Trail to its junction with the Curry Mountain trail, then down the Curry Mountain trail to reach our shuttle vehicle at the Metcalf Bottoms picnic area (about 5.2 miles).

Preregister with Ron Shrieves: 922-3518; [ronaldshrieves@comcast.net](mailto:ronaldshrieves@comcast.net).

### June 21. Canoe – Wildlife Float, Rankin Wildlife Management Area, Douglas Lake.

Experience this unique complex of lake, river, swamp, and mudflat on the Rankin Bottoms Project. We'll explore backwaters accessible only by canoe or kayak and get acquainted with some of the wildlife that inhabits this wetland paradise. The float is suitable for paddlers of any skill level—no currents to contend with.

Rankin is best appreciated at a slow pace. We'll set out at 8:30 AM, and return in about 3 to 5 hours, depending on the mood of the group. Sorry, you'll have to arrange your own canoe rentals if you need a boat. Driving time from Knoxville: approx. 1 hour.

Preregister with Ron Shrieves: phone 922-3518; [ronaldshrieves@comcast.net](mailto:ronaldshrieves@comcast.net).

### June 28-29. Backpack, Panthertown Valley (North Carolina).

A late 2007 Knoxville News-Sentinel article featured this mountain valley and Burt Kornegay, who operates Slickrock Expeditions and leads trips into the valley.

Panthertown Valley is located near Cashiers, NC, and has been called the "Yosemite of the East." That description is perhaps a bit overblown; however, it is a beautiful high elevation valley ringed with mountains and cliffs and features numerous waterfalls.

The US Forest Service acquired most of the valley from Duke Power Company around 1990 with the assistance of the North Carolina Nature Conservancy. So it is a fairly new area that should be great for a weekend backpack.

We will probably start at Owens Gap on NC 281 and hike into the valley where we'll camp along a creek and do some exploration. Hiking distance is about 8 miles (with optional added miles day-hiking) and it is rated Moderate.

Preregister with Will Skelton: H 523-2272; Cell 742-7327; [whshome@bellsouth.net](mailto:whshome@bellsouth.net).

## STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP

Contact Tom Mozen, SOF Group chair, at (423) 232-0827.

There is a tentative outing scheduled for Roan Mountain and this may include a high school special focus study group. For more information contact SOFG chair Tom Mozen at [mozenetc@yahoo.com](mailto:mozenetc@yahoo.com) or 423-232-0827.

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (NASHVILLE)

### June 7-8, 2008, Wilderness First Aid Training

The Tennessee Chapter will be hosting its 6th annual WFA at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Registration will continue until June 5. Cost of training is \$165 and includes training, lunch, and snacks both days of training. For registration information contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-360-3481 or email [Katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:Katibug1959@aol.com).

### June 7, 2008, Organic Farm Tour

All organic lunch and tour of Long Hungry Creek Farm in Red Boiling Springs. Long Hungry Creek Farm is the oldest and largest organic farm in Tennessee. Jeff Poppen, farm manager, is a noted author, lecturer and speaker on organic and biodynamic farming. Many people will also recognize him from his organic farming series on Nashville PBS station WNPT Channel 8. \$5 for lunch. Meeting place to be determined. Contact Joy Mayfield at 615-851-1192 or [joy.mayfield@comcast.net](mailto:joy.mayfield@comcast.net).

### June 21, 2008, Bell's Bend Hike

Bell's Bend is one of the only undeveloped areas left in Middle Tennessee. Bell's Bend Park is a new city park in that area. This park has several hiking trails and it is a lovely place for bird watching. Last winter, several whooping cranes took up migratory residence in the Bell's Bend area at George West's farm. We will take a leisurely walk on one of the trails and do some bird watching. Be sure to bring your binoculars. Meeting time and place to be determined. For additional information contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-360-3481 or [Katibug1959@aol.com](mailto:Katibug1959@aol.com).

### June 26, 2008, Outings Leader Training

Outings leader training 101 is a requirement for Sierra Club outings leaders. This 3-hour course is

## 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!

informative and interactive. Additional leader requirements include first aid training and co-leading two outings. The training will begin at 6 p.m. A light supper will be served. Please contact Katherine Pendleton for meeting place and additional information at 615-360-3481 or [kati-bug1959@aol.com](mailto:kati-bug1959@aol.com).

### July 12, 2008, Dunbar Cave Tour

Dunbar Cave tour and 1.9 mile hike on one of the nature trails afterwards. Dunbar Cave is located 60 minutes northwest of Nashville in Montgomery County. Dunbar Cave is the most prominent of several caves located in this designated natural area. Meeting place to be determined. Contact Joy Mayfield at 615-851-1192 or [joy.mayfield@comcast.net](mailto:joy.mayfield@comcast.net).

## CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

### Sierra Club/Park Friends Second Saturday Hike Saturday, June 14, 10:00-12:00pm (also second Saturday in April) –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 native trees and plants in the Old Forest, 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 Naomi Van Tol at (901) 278-2396 or [naomi@spiny.com](mailto:naomi@spiny.com).

## Middle Tennessee Group Offers Volunteer Opportunity

MTG has a great volunteer opportunity for someone who would like to help the Sierra Club through a specific task. Our program chair has retired from the position after two years, but she has already scheduled speakers through the end of the year! This means that a new volunteer could have time to ease into the responsibilities. Training provided. Contact Adelle Wood for more info. 665-1010, [adelleintn@juno.com](mailto:adelleintn@juno.com).



Rita Harris staffs the Environmental Justice Booth in Frayser.

# Chickasaw Group News (Continued)

## Environmental Justice in Frayser

Rita Harris, an environmental justice coordinator for the Sierra Club, had a booth at the Frayser Spring Fest on Saturday, May 3. The event, held at the Ed Rice community center in Frayser, Tenn., was a chance to pass out environmental education information to lots of adults and children. There were about a dozen informational booths and a similar number of food booths. The festivities included a parade with high school bands and majorettes. There was also a stage for various dance and song performers. Rita made many new friends there—people concerned about environmental justice in their neighborhoods!

## Outdoors, Inc. Canoe and Kayak Race

Saturday, May 3 was a perfect sunny day for the Outdoors, Inc. Canoe and Kayak Race on the Mississippi River. In fact, the slight breeziness

made for somewhat faster race times.

The Chickasaw Group had an information tent there in Jefferson Davis Park right near the race's finish line. The many other exhibitors included suppliers of canoe and kayak paraphernalia. After the race, canoers and kayakers partied to the sound of live music. Food and drink were also available. Not even some awkwardly-placed fire ant mounds (spotted by an alert Sierra Club member) could stop the festivities! Information tents like the Sierra Club's were popular with the attendees.

## Wolf River Cleanup

Sunday, May 4 was the day for intrepid canoeists to clean up flotsam from the Wolf River near Moscow, Tenn. Several Sierrans joined a "Green Group" including members of



Photo: David Carter

A "War Canoe" pulls into the finish line at the Canoe & Kayak Race.

the Bluff City Canoe Club and the Wolf River Conservancy. There were three tandem canoes, three kayaks, and one solo canoe.

The cleanup was especially fun because the Wolf was running at about 11 feet on the LaGrange gauge. That's very high, and resulted in a strong current between Bateman Bridge and the city of Moscow. Fifteen bags of trash were collected, plus two tires, including one on the rim.

## City of Memphis cleans up near Harbor Town and McKellar Lake

The recent flooding along the Mississippi River near Memphis refloated many tens of thousands of plastic beverage containers as well as foam cups and all sorts of other debris that fouled the backyards of many of the homes and the marinas around Harbor Town in downtown Memphis. Also fouled was a section of McKellar Lake along Jack Carley causeway.

Angry citizens used letters and the power of the press to pressure elected officials to act and as a result, the City of Memphis Public Works Department sent employees and equipment to clean up both these areas. This cleanup netted over 650 tons of debris and cost Memphis taxpayers \$12,000 in landfill fees alone to dispose of the mess.

And where did the vast majority of this flotsam come from? Well, it didn't fall from the sky. The tens of thousands of plastic beverage containers, foam drinking cups, along with other urban flotsam was courtesy of those citizens of Memphis that choose to litter instead of recycling what can be recycled and putting the rest in the garbage. That litter washed down the storm drains of Memphis into Wolf River Harbor, McKellar Lake, as well as all other storm drain outlets in Memphis.

This year, Memphis government is planning to install a screening system at the Gayoso Bayou pumping station that will cost \$500,000 and is planning to buy a trash-skimming boat that will cost around \$300,000. Both of these projects will be funded by Memphis' storm water fee.

Citizens of Memphis deserve cleaner waterways, and while a screen system and a trash-skimming boat will clean up some of the mess, these tools are like mopping the floor while the faucet is flowing. Memphis government needs to turn off that litter faucet, and here are some recommendations to make real progress:

- The City of Memphis, along with the other municipalities in Tennessee, should legislatively support passage of Container Deposit Legislation.
- The Memphis City Beautiful Commission should have increased funding to get the anti-litter message out to a wider audience.
- The City of Memphis and the Memphis City School system should have a recycling program to teach students how to properly manage waste.
- With the increased funding coming in from recycling tons of paper collected from the schools, Memphis should do a better job publicizing its

curbside recycling program, with the goal of increasing participation in the program.

- The City of Memphis has a legal tool to reduce litter. It is the storm water Ordinance 4538, Section 33-207 (A)(1). It states simply that disposal of trash and debris into the storm drainage system is unlawful. The appropriate authorities could use this tool to reduce littering. Penalties could be a fine or community service – such as cleaning up several miles of roadside.

**Right: Harbor Town backyards filled with urban flotsam, such as recyclable beverage containers and foam cups.**

**Below: The majority of the debris in this photo is recyclable beverage containers.**



Photo: James Baker

Photo: Karen Soro

# Organic Farming Positively Impacts Local Communities

By Teresa Campbell

The benefits of organic agriculture go far beyond providing chemical-free food for the people who buy it. A nationwide study of farms and their communities by Luanne Lohr, University of Georgia,\* shows that "nearly every indicator tested across the range of economic, social, and environmental benefits favors organic systems." Even though organic farmers constitute a small percentage of total U.S. farmers, their influence is being felt in counties across the country in a variety of ways.

## Measurable impacts:

- Counties with organic farms have stronger farm communities that contribute more to local economies through sales, taxes, payroll, and purchases of farm supplies.
- Counties with organic farms have more committed farmers, give more support to rural development and have more resident full-time farmers.
- Organic farm price premiums are 70%-250% more than what conventional farmers receive.
- Counties with organic farms provide better bird and wildlife habitat and have more land devoted to cover crops or remaining idle.
- Counties with organic farms statistically have more land enrolled in CPR (Conservation Reserve Program) or WRP (Wetlands Reserve Program).
- Watersheds with organic farms have reduced agricultural impact and lower runoff risk from nitrogen and sediment.

## Unmeasurable impacts:

- Organic farming avoids social and economic costs such as pesticide poisonings. The EPA estimates there are 10,000-20,000 cases of acute pesticide poisoning among agricultural workers every year.
- The market in organic foods is more efficient than for conventional foods because prices reflect the cost of desirable production outputs such as clean water, reducing the need for costly government intervention to obtain these benefits.
- Innovation and openness to new ideas are necessary for growth in organic farms, and the development and sharing of ideas is pulling conventional farmers closer to sustainability, finding solutions to problems that confront all farmers.

By purchasing local organic foods consumers reap benefits ranging from taste and health, to helping build strong sustainable local communities, to chipping away at some of the causes of global warming.

The Center for Food Safety's "cool foods" campaign, (take a bite out of global warming), says consumers can impact global warming by reducing their "foodprint." <http://coolfoodscampaign.org/what-you-can-do/>

A "foodprint" reflects the amount of greenhouse gases created in the production and shipping of food. The "coolest" foods have a low foodprint. How do you know if your food is "cool?" Ask yourself five questions:

1. Is it organic?
2. Is it made from an animal? Organic meats are produced without energy intensive synthetic pesticides and antibiotics.
3. Has this food been processed?
4. How far has this food traveled?
5. Is this food excessively packaged?

Clearly, organic food is not just good for our bodies. Organic agriculture is good for rich, local communities. On a global level, producing and consuming food sustainably grown can help decrease greenhouse gases.

Support local organic farms with your food purchases. Tell your local policymakers you want programs that will encourage more organic farming in the area where you live.

\*"Benefits of U.S. Organic Agriculture" Copyright 2002 by Luanne Lohr, Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-7509



## Italian Nuclear Waste Stokes Fear of a Toxic Precedent

By Gloria Griffith

For many of those familiar with the industry, nothing less than the whole system of managing nuclear waste is on the line—the ability for states to say "no" to Italian radioactive waste. In the big picture, they argue, nothing less than a national policy on government control over nuclear material is at stake.

EnergySolutions plans to take about six railroad cars of radioactive waste from Italy, process it in Tennessee and then send the leftovers to Utah.

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's (TDEC) current licensing for the EnergySolutions facility in Shelby County in part states: "Energy Solutions will transport, and transfer and release for unrestricted use in the performance of the Memphis Facility operations...."

EnergySolutions also has nuclear waste processing facilities in Roan and Anderson counties.

The EnergySolutions proposal to import 20,000 tons of waste from Italy—reduced to 1,600 tons after it is processed in Tennessee and then shipped to Utah—has drawn plenty of opposition. Simple math: 20,000 tons less 1,600 tons equals 18,400 tons staying in Tennessee's air after incineration or dumped in regular Tennessee landfills or sold off to local recycling companies.

If you wish to comment to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission opposing this company's application, please reference APPLICATION NUMBERS IW023 and XW013. Note the deadline for NRC comments is June 10th 2008. For more information go to: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-2484.pdf>

**Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555  
Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications**

An eight state compact has said "NO" to foreign nuclear waste. Utah's governor wrote to the NRC in strong opposition to accepting imported radioactive waste. Governor Phil Bredesen has yet to make his opinion known.

In Congress, U.S. Reps. Jim Matheson of Utah and Bart Gordon of Tennessee have proposed legislation that would ban low-level nuclear waste imports.

"The statements from all the stakeholders and their claims about who has authority—it just simply validates the need for this bill," Matheson said. "I'm going to keep pushing on this hard."

The forum where these debates are expected to play out next is a federal courtroom. That's where the fast-growing Salt Lake City nuclear services company hopes to persuade a U.S. District Court judge that a regional panel called the Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste has no authority over EnergySolutions' Utah landfill.

Meanwhile, industry and regulators are closely watching the outcome too. The company, which touts its disposal facility and processing sites as a marquee selling point to customers, has potentially lucrative foreign contracts on the line.

If EnergySolutions was to win its federal court case, that would set a precedent that no Tennessee or national disposal sites could be stopped from admitting worldwide nuclear waste.

## Moving?

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

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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