

Tennessee Sierran

SIERRA
CLUB
TENNESSEE CHAPTER

Coming Storm in Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Masthead photo by Todd Waterman

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club

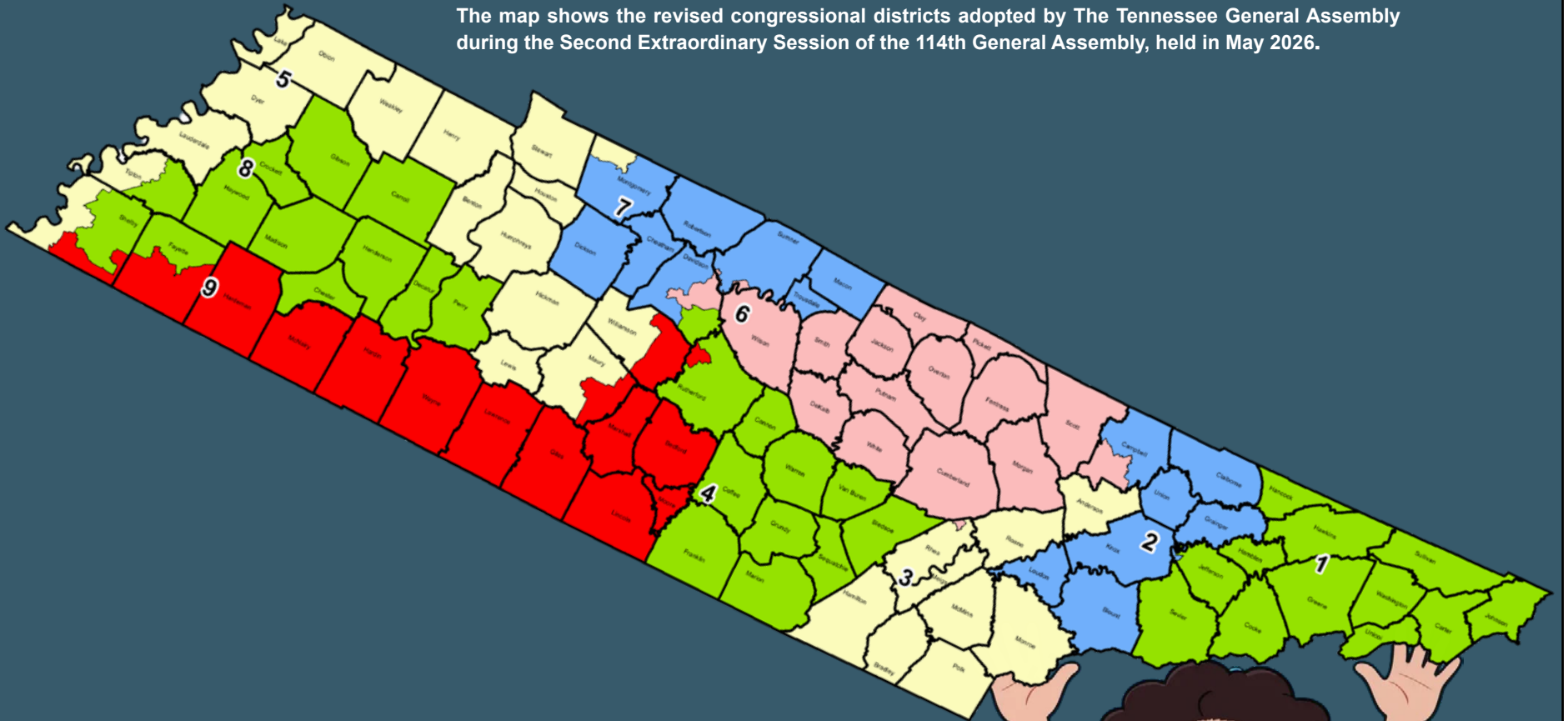
Volume 59, Number 5 — September October 2026

REDISTRICTING TENNESSEE

Will Environmental Justice Be Served?

Page 5

The map shows the revised congressional districts adopted by The Tennessee General Assembly during the Second Extraordinary Session of the 114th General Assembly, held in May 2026.



Chapter's Fall Retreat is October 16-18
at Beautiful Fall Creek Falls State Park

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From Tennessee Chair JoAnn McIntosh

Educate, Advocate, Activate



The other day, I decided to look up the definition of “doomscrolling” because I thought that just reading my daily emails now falls under that heading. I suppose that it doesn’t, if only because I don’t open my inbox intentionally looking for bad news. But I am aware that bad news and solicitations are going to comprise the majority of my emails because of my environmental connections, so I am especially pleased and relieved when I find some good news.

My email address was recently discovered by Climate Action Now (CAN), a group/website/app that sends “Daily Doses of Climate Hope” along with easy actions and editable messages that I can send to my policymakers and industry stakeholders. CAN’s motto: “Action is the antidote to despair.” Last week’s Daily Doses included news about solar panels installed in unexpected places such as between train tracks in Switzerland and over canals in California; energy efficient and affordable modular housing with builders’ incentives in Vermont; carbon dioxide-based batteries for electric grid storage in Arizona and Wisconsin; native bee restoration in Washington state. I sent these good news items to my state and national policymakers, asking that they support these innovations that will benefit their constituents. Will they follow up? Probably not, but at least I am making a noise during this election year’s “climate hushing.” I like to imagine that, if thousands of us send these messages on a regular if not daily basis, our elected officials will start to listen. I also like to imagine that, if our elected officials don’t listen, they will not be reelected.

We need to educate our political representatives, as well as their constituents. There is much misinformation and disinformation circulating that can and should be addressed by environmental groups and their supporters. Sierra Club, still the nation’s largest grassroots environmental organization, is able to mobilize its supporters to take actions, but supporters and the general public need to have the correct information to communicate whenever decision-making is involved. Once we have the facts, we know more clearly what to advocate for, and can make compelling arguments for others to join us.

Educate, advocate, and activate. This is what Sierra Club has done in the past and must continue to do with renewed effort going forward. “Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet” is a fine motto for identifying our mission to newcomers, and the Tennessee Chapter has used “Clean air, clean water, healthy soil” at events where we wanted to cross the aisle. But when new people ask me what we actually do at Sierra Club, I now summarize with these three actions: Educate, Advocate, and Activate – educate being first and absolutely critical to next steps. We do not need to be advocating for or against issues that are misunderstood by our supporters due to their consumption of disinformation or our assumption of a moral high ground, and we certainly won’t activate new followers that way. Let’s be noisier with sharing good information.

Contact JoAnn at mcijoann@gmail.com

New Chapter Volunteer Engagement Coordinator



Riley Douglas joined the Tennessee Chapter in June of 2026 as our first Volunteer Engagement Coordinator. Learn about Riley in their own words.

Riley Douglas (she/they) was born and raised in sunny South Florida, then spent nine years in urban Chicago during their undergrad at SAIC before landing “half-back” in the South, where they have called Knoxville, Tennessee, home for the last eight years. They live there with their partner and a joyfully full household of three dogs, one cat, and thirteen chickens, and spend their weekends in the garden or out riding bikes with friends.

For over six years, Riley has worked as a community organizer, environmental educator, and artist, bringing people together through craft, ecology, and collective care. They have coordinated thousands of volunteers with local grassroots organizations like Trees Knoxville and Beardsley Community Farm, and spent over four years on food justice work across more than 28 community gardens. Alongside this organizing, Riley’s art practice invites folks to get their hands dirty with natural plant dyes, learn the names of plants, and rediscover the natural world as a living, joyful source of connection.

Riley is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Community Development through Future Generations University, studying the SEED-SCALE method, an approach that builds lasting change by growing what already works in a community through local leadership rather than outside solutions. This thinking, shaped by role models like Robin Wall Kimmerer, Douglas Tallamy, Octavia Butler, and Abdullah Öcalan, drives Riley’s belief that finding common ground across history and culture is how we root ourselves in collective resilience and justice.

Riley is thrilled to bring that same spirit to the Sierra Club’s Tennessee Chapter. She is excited to support and grow a volunteer network built on the grassroots, community-driven momentum they have spent their career building, with creativity, organizing skill, and grit for the people and places they love.

Contact Riley at riley.douglas@sierraclub.org.

The Tennes-Sierran

The bimonthly newsletter of the
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Digital Edition

Online with clickable links: <https://bit.ly/TENNSRN>

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Submissions

October Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by September 26
November Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by October 31
November/December Issue of *The Tennes-Sierran* by September 30

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Chair: Gloria Griffith 423-972-1717 GLa4797@gmail.com

TVA's Most-Cost 2026 Integrated Resource Plan

by Joe Schiller, Chair, Chapter Energy Conservation Committee

Like many in the TVA service area, I had to rush to process as much as I could of the TVA preliminary integrated resource plan (IRP) and submit my comments in the brief comment window TVA provided. While I may have missed some details, the broad outlines of the proposed IRP are clear — it is a disaster. TVA has drastically reduced the amount of renewable energy generation and increased the amount of fossil fuel and nuclear generation compared to the previous version of the IRP.

Why do I describe this IRP as a disaster? First, it is a climate disaster. Second, it is an environmental disaster. Lastly, it is a financial disaster.

Farming in Montgomery County

My wife and I are retired professors of biology now farming in Montgomery County Tennessee. Weather and climate play an important role in our farm's wellbeing. We work outdoors every day and feel climate change, and it is making our farming efforts increasingly challenging. In my 70 years, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels have increased over 115 parts per million (PPM), rising from under 315 PPM when I was born to over 430 PPM this year (almost 37%). This is the highest level of atmospheric carbon in all recorded human history. Since TVA conducted its last IRP, the rate of these carbon level increases has accelerated. These rising atmospheric carbon levels have driven unprecedented climate disasters of ever-increasing financial cost. Events such as the winter storm Elliot three years ago, the devastating floods of last year's hurricane Helene, and this year's winter storm Fern are just a few local examples. And such events are occurring with increasing frequency everywhere. TVA's IRP contemplates increasing carbon emissions, not reducing them. TVA's refusal to include these costs in its least cost planning process enlists it as a willing contributor to climate disasters everywhere.

The Magical World of TVA

The science of climate change caused by emissions of climate warming gases is well understood and based on basic principles of chemistry and physics. Assertions otherwise amount to denial of the laws of chemistry and physics. Precise attribution of culpability will increase TVA's future legal liability for increasing damages. TVA's IRP is a climate disaster because in our current climate reality, intentionally increasing carbon emissions by continuing to run outdated coal plants and building more methane gas plants will exacerbate climate disasters.

TVA's IRP is an environmental disaster not only because it will accelerate climate change, but because it will also increase many other environmental damages. Coal mining and gas drilling both have tremendous environmental impacts upon the local communities where they are extracted. Large quantities of air pollutants and water pollutants are produced along the fuel cycle by which they are extracted, processed, and transported to be burned. TVA does not include any of these costs in its IRP modelling. TVA lives in a magical world where only the environmental costs that occur within the fencelines of their generation plants matter.

On the other hand, TVA expresses great concern about the land cost of solar. They equate the acreage occupied by a wind farm or solar farm to the loss of land to a coal or gas plant, or a strip mine, ignoring the fact that farming continues in wind and solar farms but is impossible in a former mountaintop removal mine. TVA ignores the recent scientific evidence that solar farms have improved biodiversity of farmland hosting solar panels. TVA also ignores the fact that when a wind farm or solar farm reaches the end of its commercial life, it must, by law, be returned to its original condition. This will *never* happen to the millions of acres of farmland lost to urban and industrial development each year.

Nuclear, Coal, and Gas Cost More

TVA's IRP is a financial disaster because, contrary to TVA's own estimates, it emphasizes the costliest energy sources — nuclear, coal,

and gas — at the expense of the least costly energy sources, renewables and battery storage. This is despite the many ways TVA has put its thumb on the scales to produce an outcome unsupported by both scientific and financial reality.

TVA's previous IRP found that renewables and storage were competitive with gas and cheaper than coal and nuclear generation. In the brief couple years since that never-completed IRP, renewables and storage have improved in capability and cost and now constitute the lowest cost, fastest to deploy, and most reliable energy sources in almost all parts of the world. Renewable energy accounted for over 88% of USA new electricity generation installed in 2025. Recent geopolitical events such as the Russia-Ukraine war and US-Iran war have demonstrated the economic risks of fossil fuel dependence. Renewable energy and storage provide abundant domestic, safe, stable, reliable, and affordable energy resources that are immune to these vulnerabilities.

Least Cost Resource Plan

TVA emphasizes that its IRP is an exploration of the best strategies to achieve a least-cost resource plan under differing future scenarios beyond its control. Regardless of future scenarios — high electricity load growth, low electricity load growth, carbon emissions regulations, etc. — this goal can only be achieved by installing the most proven, commercially available, and lowest cost technologies available. The IRP fails to do that by imposing arbitrary and unsupportable limitations on the amounts of the least cost technology options, renewables and storage, while allowing wildly optimistic and unsupportable assumptions about the costliest resource options, natural gas and nuclear generation.

In the case of low technological readiness technologies, such as both Gen IV and Light Water small modular reactors, costs are impossible to know because these technologies, by TVA's own acknowledgement, are at too low a level of technological readiness for cost assessment. No commercially successful versions of these technologies have been built to provide a reliable estimate. In the case of low adoption readiness technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), experts and the public are skeptical of both its technological feasibility and cost given that no commercially viable CCS plants have been built.

TVA uses overnight costs in its modelling, and this intrinsically biases the analysis of renewable and storage costs relative to fossil fuels and nuclear. This is because renewables have high up-front build costs, but very low operating costs, while fossil fuel plants have similar build costs but much higher operating costs due to their greater complexity and dependence on fuel. As noted above, TVA's estimate of nuclear costs is speculative at best, but still much higher than renewables and storage. A new report from the Current Energy Group and Grid Lab finds that Utilities are not including up to 30% of the overnight build cost of gas plants by ignoring related mandatory financial commitments to the gas suppliers that enable the gas plants to operate. More about that here:

bit.ly/utilitydive824061stickershock.

(continued on page 6)



TVA began construction on the Cumberland Gas Plant, located adjacent to the Cumberland Fossil Plant, in 2023. The facility is expected to be in operation by the end of 2026.

CHAPTER AND GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Tennessee Chapter and its Groups invite nominations for Executive Committee (ExCom) candidates. You may nominate yourself or another Sierra Club member. The nominating committees will interview and evaluate nominees and develop a slate of candidates. If you wish to be a candidate and are not selected by the nominating committee, you may petition to be on the ballot — 15 member signatures are required. At-large members are elected to serve two-year terms.

The ballot will be published in the November-December issue of the Tennes-Sierran. Candidates should provide a statement of interest of no more than 225 words that will be included on the ballot.

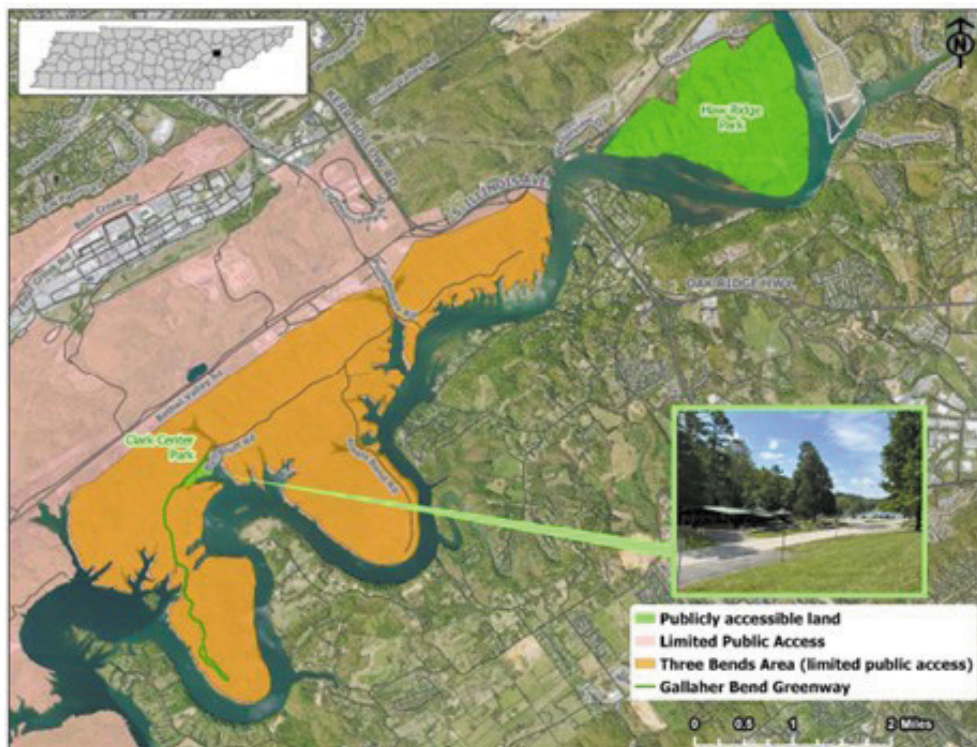
Please send your nomination by **September 10** to:

Chapter: JoAnn McIntosh at mcijoann@gmail.com
Cherokee Group: Dave Hoot sierra.tn.cherokee@gmail.com

Chickasaw Group: Yolonda Spinks sierrachickasawgroup@gmail.com
Harvey Broome Group: Dana Moran morandana2@gmail.com
Middle Tennessee Group: Alan Fister afister@brentwoodlaw.com

Clark Center Park in Oak Ridge

**birding, boating, biking, fishing, hiking, paddling,
picnicking, star gazing, swimming, and wildlife viewing**



Left: Location of Clark Center Park and Boat Ramp (the green shared area) located in the Oak Ridge area. The Department of Energy (DOE) owns the park and is interested in donating it to an entity that will maintain it as a public recreation area. Right: 14-year-old Korbin Crabtree from Overton County with a 50-lb bass he caught at the park in the annual Tennessee Bass Federation youth fishing tournament February 7. Photo by Korbin's mom, Betha Crabtree.

by Virginia Dale, Chair, Land Management Committee

East Tennesseans are excited about prospects on the horizon for Clark Center Park, a 40-acre parcel located at the end of Bluff Creek Road in Oak Ridge, Anderson County. The Department of Energy (DOE) owns the park and is interested in donating it to an entity that will maintain it as a public recreation area. It was established as an 80-acre parcel (half of which was put underwater upon completion of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Melton Hill Dam in 1963). A description and map of the Park's location can be found at <https://aforr.info/clark-center-park/>.

The park offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy birding, boating, biking, fishing, hiking, paddling, picnicking, star gazing, swimming, and wildlife viewing. The newly improved boat ramp is a favorite of local anglers, and the wheelchair accessible fishing ramp allows everyone to enjoy fishing. Clark Center Park is the gateway to the Gallaher Bend Greenway and provides access to Solway Bend and Freels Bend – part of DOE-owned Three Bends Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge Area, which has important scientific, historic, habitat, and biodiversity attributes. While access to protected areas on Solway and Freels Bends are limited, the public is invited to participate in occasional guided walks. The Park adjoins Pellissippi Blueway on Melton Hill Lake.

This hidden gem hosted a youth fishing tournament in February for the group Beast of the East, part of the Tennessee Bass Federation (TBF). More than 100 people came from middle and east Tennessee and launched 33 boats on Melton Hill Lake in pursuit of elusive bass. To his delight, 14-year-old Korbin Crabtree from Overton County caught a 50 pounder. The group enjoyed their visit so much that they voted to return for a tournament next year.

The DOE is interested in donating Clark Center Park to an entity that will maintain it as a public recreation area. This past spring, Tennessee Lieutenant Governor McNally and Representative Scarbrough filed amendments to the budget legislation for appropriation of funds to establish Clark Center Park as a new state park; and the budget has been approved. However, the establishment of the state park requires that the land be transferred to the State of Tennessee and that matching funds be raised by June 30, 2031. Stay tuned to Sierra Club announcements to learn more about ways to raise the required matching funds and to celebrate Clark Center Park.

Contact Virginia at Virginia.dale4@gmail.com

Be a Sierra Club Defender!

by Susan Johnston, Defenders Chair



In Pat Cupples' impressive article in the May/June issue, he details the extensive work that our chapter's champion volunteers do to influence what happens on environmental issues in our state legislature. I am in awe of the dedication of so many of you, who have spent long days talking with those in power about bills with direct impact on our communities, pressing them to do the right thing. I was immensely impressed and tickled by the story of how 1,300 members were asked to contact their mayors, who then put pressure on their representatives and senators to stop the

Tennessee Private Property Vesting Rights Act. The greenbelt rollback bill, which would have benefitted developers wanting to grab more of our farmland, was stopped in its tracks due to the actions and convincing rhetoric by our activists. All this work points to the incredible organization and dedication of many of you.

Thanks to your support of the Defenders Fund, we were able to expand our team this year, which meant more days at the State Capitol than we've ever managed before. Our volunteer efforts were supported by the work of our lobbying team, made up of both Sierra Club staff and contract lobbyists, who sat in committee rooms, grabbed legislators in the hallways, in their offices, gathering information and influencing them on our behalf. When the odds were stacked against us, our team worked

with sympathetic committee members to ask bill sponsors the tough questions — putting them on the record and forcing them to defend bills that couldn't survive real scrutiny. Many of you showed up during Conservation Day on the Hill, where our lobbying team walked alongside you offering advice and encouragement as we advocated for our mission.

That's the kind of access that comes from showing up. From February through April, our team was in the Capitol two-to-three days a week, sometimes even more than legislators themselves. Many late afternoons, we were able to catch a legislative assistant for a conversation after their representative or senator had already headed back to the district. We consistently met with almost every state senator this session, which is why our Tennessee Waste to Jobs Act gained 12 sponsors in the Senate (an incredible feat for a bill of its kind in a super-majority state), and why the Duck River scenic designation bill built such broad bipartisan support — an incredible win for the environment, local communities and everyone who loves to recreate on one of the most biodiverse rivers on the planet.

Your support built this team. Your gift will support the pivot toward running more of our own conservation bills.

Please consider adding your contribution this year at:

bit.ly/SCTN-Defenders

OR write a check payable to: TN Chapter Sierra Club, P.O. Box 113, Powell TN 37849 Attn: Defenders. (These donations are not tax deductible because they support our lobbying efforts.)

Contact Susan at susan.johnston2011@gmail.com

Tennessee's Redistricting

Environmental Justice and Organizing to Defend Our Democracy

by Rick Herron, Chapter Political Chair

Three months ago, our Tennessee State Assembly attempted to roll the clock back to the 1960s.

In the wake of a Supreme Court decision weakening the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the crowning achievements of the civil rights movement, Governor Bill Lee called the legislature into a special session so that the state legislature could redraw our congressional districts and break up Memphis's 9th Congressional District.

It was plain to see from the map, which cracked Shelby County across three different districts, that this was a racial gerrymander. One lawsuit challenging the redistricting noted the "almost comical dishonesty" from legislators pushing for the new gerrymandered maps who needed to avoid this fact. Senator John Stevens, the lead sponsor of the redistricting legislation in the State Senate, publicly claimed with a straight face that he did not know whether or not Memphis is a predominantly Black city, and that he did not know whether or not the old 9th Congressional District was a majority-Black district.

Memphis has a long history of facing environmental injustice. From Superfund sites to TVA's old Allen Plant, from xAI's giant gas turbines, to various threats to their drinking water in the Memphis Sand Aquifer, Memphis today faces a disproportionate burden of pollution and environmental injustices stacked on top of one another. To weaken the Voting Rights Act and diminish the power of black voters is to spit in the face of everything that so many Memphians fought and even bled for in the struggle for civil rights and racial equality. Memphis voters deserve to be heard, not carved up.

Voters should pick our leaders, not the other way around. Maps should protect communities, not political power.

There are two truths that we have to hold together: these new congressional maps are a setback for democracy in Tennessee. But there is hope on several fronts for turning things around.

First, we are seeing the seeds of a popular backlash to these egregious anti-democratic actions, with outraged voters turning out in higher numbers. *The Washington Post* reported that, in the August 6th U.S. House primaries, voter turnout in Shelby County was at its highest level in at least a decade. Advocates across Tennessee and across the South are pushing back against this attack on the Voting Rights Act.

Second, Congress does have the power to end gerrymandering. However, whether it will or not is up to us — we have to organize a pro-democracy movement strong enough to elect enough pro-democracy candidates to Congress, and then push them to get a ban on gerrymandering passed into law.

Finally, gerrymanders can sometimes overextend themselves in their greed. Those who divide and break up communities to dilute their political power can draw maps that, over time, end up backfiring as political tides turn.

Simply put, the way out of this is through the honest, meaningful work of organizing together in our communities to defend our democracy, which is one of Sierra Club's core values. It is up to all of us to answer the call, to not stand on the sidelines but instead to lead, to contribute in whatever ways we can. Our Tennessee Chapter will be working hard this fall to defend democracy, and I hope you will join us.

Contact Rick at rick.m.herron@gmail.com

From the Tennessee Lookout tennesseelookout.com, published May 18, 2026

Redistricting: Tennessee Has Entered the Twilight Zone

by Saralee Terry Woods, Tennessee Lookout

Tennessee once had a two-party system that followed state laws and worked for the good of constituents. That time is over.

Ever watch the classic television show "The Twilight Zone"? I was always grateful to get back to reality when the episode ended.

"Twilight Zone" creator Rod Serling could have filmed the recent special session of the Tennessee Legislature. He could have opened the show explaining the year 2026 and telling the viewers to watch and see if Tennessee decides to roll back all the progress of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. When I watched what our leaders did last week I was horrified as if it was a nightmare and I cannot imagine how African-American Tennesseans feel.

Y'all, I am a white woman who is a Baby Boomer and a new septuagenarian. I am a person of faith, but I confess that I sinned and I need an altar call every day because I did not do enough about racial injustice when I was young.

I believe white people who came to America did not treat Native Americans fairly and that we assaulted and kidnapped African-Americans from their homeland and sold them as slaves to build our country.

The good people of the United States should continue to atone for that and the modern Civil Rights movement was a courageous start toward atonement for our nation. According to my husband, Larry Woods, who teaches constitutional law, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 "was the primary success because it created political power for minorities in our country by guaranteeing them the right to choose and vote for candidates."

I think it is important to study the facts of Tennessee racial history. Tennessee's U.S. Sens. Albert Gore, Sr., and Ross Bass voted for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as did U.S. Rep. Richard Fulton, who later became Nashville mayor.

The political party in power has always changed the lines of congressional districts after the results of the U.S. census that's conducted every 10 years, just as our state constitution provides. Until 2022, major Tennessee cities — including Nashville and Memphis — were represented by one member of Congress.

When the U.S. Supreme Court gutted a crucial part of the Voting Rights Act earlier this month, President Donald Trump reached out to the "red" states to change their state laws purely for immediate political gain, no matter the long term cost of people's loss of faith in the integrity of their leaders. Our state leaders could have said no but they did not. Instead they repealed the laws that both Republicans and Democrats have followed for decades.

What I saw happen last week was not normal — it was vindictive and mean and done just to please a person who will not always be president, but our actions will go down in history as something we should be ashamed of.

After the 2020 census results the majority Republicans redrew the Congressional maps to their advantage. Democrats did the same thing when they were in power. To the victor go the spoils.



Rep. Shaundelle Brooks, a Nashville Democrat, after the special legislative session that cut out Tennessee's only Democratic-leaning congressional district, which also happens to be predominantly Black. (Photo: John Partipilo/Tennessee Lookout)

I was unhappy with the 2022 results of redistricting because my city, Nashville, was divided into three Congressional Districts.

Before we were divided into three parts, I knew who my congressman was as he represented all of Davidson County. I had access to get my questions answered about the federal government.

Since 2022, I have not been able to find a Nashville office for any of the three congressmen that we have today and to me that says they don't care about Nashvillians.

When I was younger I identified with the "Party of Lincoln," because my father, George A. Terry, served in the Tennessee legislature as a Lincoln Republican during the 1950's and 1960's and his best political friend was a Democrat. I thought Tennessee would always remain a state with two strong political parties that would work together after the elections for the good of the people. Do we do that now?

Tennessee went from a state where in 2006 almost half of us voted for U.S. Rep. Harold Ford, Jr. of Memphis, who lost a close race for U.S. Senate to Bob Corker, former Mayor of Chattanooga. Ford is Black.

Barack Obama was told not to bother to come here and campaign for president just two years later in 2008. It seemed to me that leaders in the Tennessee Democratic Party had forgotten how effective Obama was when he came to Nashville to campaign for Ford in 2006.

When Obama was elected in 2008 I hoped that our country was finally turning into a country where we could all get along. I did not pay much much attention to the Tea Party and assumed educated Republicans would ignore them, but I was wrong. I tried to keep an open mind about Trump, but he lost me when there was (continued on page 6)

Federal Rollbacks to our Water and Air Quality Regulations

by Axel Ringe, Chapter Litigation Chair

Donald Trump has consistently sought to undermine and roll back or loosen the protections to the nation's air and water quality, and the environment in general. Since January 2025, federal agencies have revoked or rolled back almost 70 rules protecting the public's, and the environment's, health. The following is an annotated listing of the most significant of what we have lost in air and water quality protections:

Regional Haze Rule. EPA has established a new nationwide policy easing Regional Haze planning obligations. The primary pollutants that cause regional haze, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), are linked to serious health effects including premature death.

New Source Review. The NSR program is a long-established set of rules that safeguards communities from increases in pollution when a new facility is built or an existing facility is modified. When EPA interprets the law more leniently, industry is allowed to undertake more construction projects that increase emissions without installing and operating emissions control technology.

Clean Car Rules. EPA rescinded all greenhouse gas vehicle standards. The administration is also working on a proposed rollback to fuel economy standards.

Coal Ash Rule. On Feb. 6, 2026, EPA announced a final rule to delay deadlines for coal ash regulations.

PFAS in Drinking Water. EPA proposed two rules to rescind regulations for PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and Hazard Index mixtures, and to extend the compliance deadlines for the PFOA and PFOS Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for two additional years, until 2031. These "forever" chemicals are known carcinogens.

Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) limit the amount of mercury and other toxic emissions from power plants. On Feb. 20, 2026, EPA finalized its repeal of the Biden administration standards regulating Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) from coal- and oil- fired power plants.

Power Plant Effluent Limits. Power plant discharges include arsenic, lead, mercury, selenium, chromium, and cadmium. In 2024, EPA issued final effluent limits for steam electric power plants. In 2025, EPA published a final rule extending compliance deadlines set by the 2024 rule. In 2026, EPA proposed a rule to loosen the 2024 limits and standards for unmanaged combustion residual leachate.

Regulating Greenhouse Gases for New and Existing Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants. On Feb. 12, 2026, EPA finalized its rescission of the Endangerment Finding — the 2009 conclusion that greenhouse gas

emissions are air pollutants under the Clean Air Act. EPA also rescinded its regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from US vehicles.

Cross-State Air Pollution Rule/Good Neighbor Plan Rule - The Clean Air Act's (CAA) Good Neighbor provision requires upwind states to ensure that the air pollution they create does not affect downwind states' ability to meet ozone standards. On Jan. 30, 2026, EPA announced "phase 1" of its plan to roll back the Good Neighbor Plan.

Ethylene Oxide (EtO) Emissions Standards for Commercial Sterilizers. In 2024, the Biden EPA finalized a rule to reduce emissions of ethylene oxide (EtO), a potent carcinogen, from chemical sterilizers by 92 percent. In March 2025, EPA invited industry to seek exemptions from the rule, and in July granted exemptions to 41 facilities. In March 2026, the Trump EPA proposed rolling back many of the 2024 rule's tightened emissions standards.

Paris Climate Agreement. On Jan. 27, 2026, the United States withdrawal from the Paris Agreement became effective after a year-long process.

Section 401 Water Quality Certification. In January 2026, EPA proposed to revise its Section 401 implementing regulations reducing the ability of state and tribal certifying authorities to reject federal permits for projects that pollute local waterways.

Defining Waters of the United States (WOTUS). On Nov. 17, 2025, EPA and the Army Corps proposed a rule to narrow the definition of WOTUS. The result in Tennessee has been the loss of protection for 80% of the state's wetlands.

Municipal Landfill Emission Standards for Methane and Other Pollutants. Methane emissions from municipal solid waste landfills are estimated to make up over 14% of the United States annual methane emissions. All Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfills are currently subject to the requirements and standards set in the EPA 2016 New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) and Environmental Guidelines (EG) for methane emissions. On Sept. 16, 2025, EPA proposed to eliminate the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program for landfills.

The good news is that most, if not all, of these rule rollbacks or rescissions are being challenged in court and haven't actually come into effect yet. The bad news is that there will be more coming. And, if you're not already sufficiently cheered by the above list, next time I will be writing about rules and regulations governing public lands and wildlife. Stay tuned. If you want to take a deeper dive at the Trump Administration's regulatory agenda, go to this link: bit.ly/Reg-Tracker.

Contact Axel at onyxfarm@bellsouth.net

TVA (Continued from Page 3)

TVA's cost estimates in this IRP seem badly out of date. This is a critical flaw that calls into question the validity of the entire IRP. For example, TVA cites a cost for four-hour lithium ion battery storage of \$2158/kW, whereas an online search yields \$400-600/kW. TVA cites solar single axis tracking costs at \$1698/kw, similar to the \$1600/kW obtained through an online search. However, TVA lists solar and storage costs separately whereas an online search for solar + storage yields an estimate of \$1300-1600/kW. This is because combining solar with storage captures synergies that TVA's analysis misses. Perhaps more importantly, these costs are declining over time. TVA says it bases its solar estimate on its actual past solar costs, but a retrospective cost estimate of a technology that is consistently declining in cost guarantees an inflated future cost estimate.

While neither TVA nor any other utility has ever built a light water small modular reactor, TVA estimates costs of \$17,263/kW for the first one

ever to be built, and confidently projects that costs will drop to \$8743/kw by the time they complete the 9th unit in a decade. These estimates are not only speculative and wildly optimistic given consistent long-term trends in the nuclear power industry, but they are also foolhardy, exposing TVA customers to undue cost risks. It is critical to note nuclear generating sources, by TVA's own estimate, cost at least five times more than solar, but these are only the costs to build (overnight costs) the plants. Not included are costs of fuel, maintenance and operation which are greater than renewables by an even larger multiple!

Each of these three IRP disaster realms result in high future environmental and economic costs to TVA rate payers. TVA endlessly emphasizes its legal requirement to pursue a least cost planning process; yet it chooses the costliest, both financially and environmentally, resources in its IRP. I am compelled to ask, "How is this least-cost planning?"

Contact Joe at joeschiller8@gmail.com

Redistricting (Continued from Page 5)

protest led by white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. Someone was killed and Trump said there were very fine people "on both sides." I expected quick condemnation from Republicans, but that did not happen.

Newsflash: The South lost the Civil War.

Tennessee Republican leaders did not stand up to the 2020 election deniers and many of our former Tennessee leaders and "statesmen" remained silent when Biden won in 2020. They did not accept the official returns of Biden's victory over Trump. What happened to upholding the constitution and honesty?

Trump fairly won the election of 2024 and Tennessee Republicans were silent when he pardoned those who stormed the Capitol on January 6.

Now they have punished Memphis which has a population that is at

least 65% Black.

I am ashamed of the way Memphis voters and their families were treated. It was unkind and wrong. I hope Tennesseans wake up, read the facts of history and help me explain to my grandchildren that this will go down as a low point in Tennessee history.

I am angry, sad and embarrassed. I would be mad as hell if my ancestors were enslaved. What I saw our Tennessee Legislature do to Memphis last week made me want to "flip some tables," like Jesus. In the Bible, verses in 2 John tell of how Jesus turned tables over in the Temple, a sacred place of worship where money changers were set up to cheat people entering the Temple.

If it was good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me. I'm ready to overturn some tables at the Legislature and make our voting system fair in Tennessee.

Make Plans for **THE CHAPTER FALL RETREAT** October 16 - 18 at Fall Creek Falls State Park

Autumn at Fall Creek Falls State Park is one of most beautiful times of the year at the largest of Tennessee's state parks! Join fellow Sierrans for a weekend of fellowship, networking, leaf-peeping and waterfall hikes, good food, and great entertainment. Friday night you can participate in a night hike and stargazing led by Chief Park Naturalist Amparo Deweese. Saturday evening activities include a presentation by Dana Mills, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Tennessee, on the importance and conservation of freshwater mussels, and, of course, the traditional auction. After that, there may be time for some music, so bring your instrument or voice and entertain us with music or poetry!

CHECK IN

After 4:00pm Central Daylight Time. Pay your registration fee and find your bunk. Bring your own pillow and linens or sleeping bag, plus personal toiletries. You may also camp or rent a cabin or room at the park hotel at your separate expense.

FRIDAY

Have supper in the park hotel restaurant or prepare your own supper in the lodge kitchen. Bring snacks or adult beverages to imbibe or to share if you like. A bonfire on the patio, with impromptu singing or storytelling, is very likely. The park has also offered the opportunity for us to go on a night hike on the golf course to see deer, raccoons, 'possums and other night critters and, if the night is clear, to do some stargazing with a telescope. The hike will start at the Visitors Center at 8:00pm CDT.

SATURDAY

Hike with the group morning and afternoon or hike, paddle, fish, swim, or bike on your own. The traditional auction to support our Tennessee Legislative lobbyist will be open all afternoon. Please bring a nice item or two you no longer need and make your bids on items provided by your fellow Sierra Club members! Evening program: "Decline and Conservation of Freshwater Mussels" by Dana Mills. Then another bonfire!

SUNDAY

Breakfast, Pack Up, Clean Up, Hike Again with the group. Go home smarter, happier, and inspired.



Swinging bridge in Fall Creek Falls State Park.
© Ron Shrieves

Learn More & Register:

bit.ly/SCTN-Fall2026Retreat

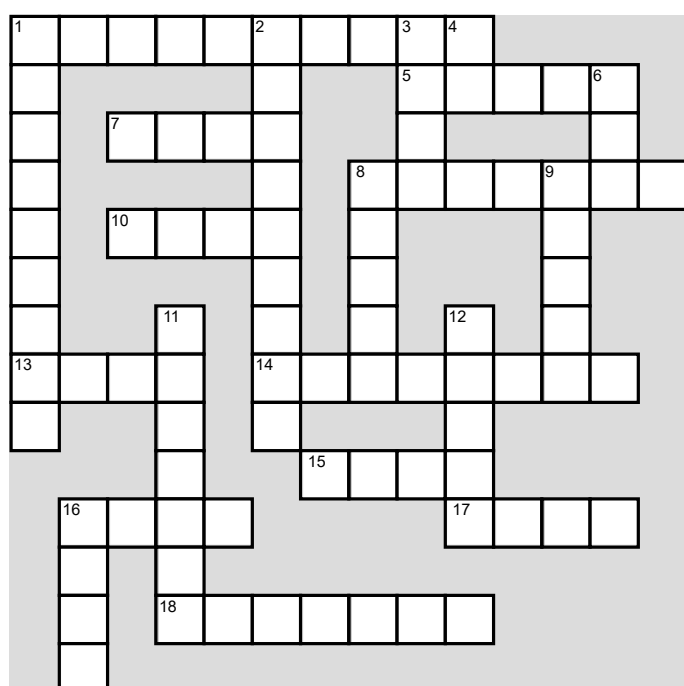
Rates

Registration for the weekend covers dorm lodging, 2 breakfasts, & Saturday dinner (Vegetarian options). Cash or check only at check-in.
Adult Registration: \$60 (by Oct 8); \$70 (after October 8) First-time attendees: \$40;
High school & college students 16 years and older: \$30; Under 16 years: free!
Saturday Only (dinner): \$35; Sunday Only (breakfast): \$10

Questions? Contact Jerry Thornton
gatwildcat@aol.com or 865-719-9742

GOING BUGGY

Our First Ever Crossword Puzzle. Created by Nancy Bell
CareNET Conservation Committee



Across

- 1 POISON FOR UNWANTED INSECTS
- 5 MAIN ARTERY TO BODY
- 7 SOUND HEARD IN CAVES
- 8 THEY ARE 40% OF ALL INSECTS AND 25% OF ALL EARTH'S LIFE FORMS
- 10 WHAT YOU SAY TO A FLY
- 13 STAPLE FOOD OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, AFRICA, & MICRONESIA
- 14 INSECTS THAT DESTROY HOUSES
- 15 ANIMAL EXCREMENT
- 16 PLACE TO SEE FRIENDS, PLANTS, & INSECTS
- 17 RESPONSE TO A MOSQUITO
- 18 TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT ENDANGERING INSECTS

Down

- 1 UNITE MALE POLLEN WITH FLOWER OVA
- 2 TYPE OF MIDGE THAT AIDS CACAO PLANT POLLINATION
- 3 PLACE FOR WASP NEST
- 4 THEREFORE
- 6 DRINK MADE FROM FRUIT
- 8 BLACKBERRY PICKERS' HAZARD
- 9 WHAT BEAVERS BUILD
- 11 QUEEN OF LEPIDOPTERA
- 12 ADAPTATION ALLOWING WORLDWIDE SPREAD
- 16 CUTEST BEATLE

Answers Below

You, Too, Can Go Paperless!

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To Make Your Request, Scan the QR Code

or Follow This Link: bit.ly/Stop_My_Paper_Copy

Online with clickable links at: <https://bit.ly/TENNSRN>



GOING BUGGY CROSSWORD ANSWERS:

Across: 1 pesticides 5 aorta 7 echo 8 beetles 10 shoo 13 taro
14 termites 15 dung 16 park
17 slap 18 housing
Down: 1 pollinate 2 chocolate 3 eave 4 so 6 ade 8 briar 9 lodge
11 monarch 12 wings 16 Paul



SAVE THE DATE

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency invites all nature enthusiasts, from professionals to back yard wildlife watchers, to the second annual Tennessee Biodiversity Summit. This event celebrates the actions taking place for the betterment and longevity of Tennessee's species. This year's theme is *Moving the Needle*.

OCTOBER 21, 2026



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Contributing	☐ \$150	☐ \$175
Life	☐ \$1000	☐ \$1250
Senior	☐ \$25	☐ \$35
Student/Limited Income	☐ \$25	☐ \$35

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**JOIN US
for Sierra & Suds
at Fait La Force**
Every 1st Wednesday, 6-8pm

A monthly idea exchange meet-and-greet for people who want to save the planet (or make a difference in their neck of the woods). Every pint raised raises \$1 for the Middle Tennessee Group, which is Sierra Club's boots on the ground on critical local environmental issues.

Questions? Ask Rebecca at rebeccanewton8@icloud.com

Follies

by Carl Sandburg

Shaken,
The blossoms of lilac,
And shattered,
The atoms of purple.
Green dip the leaves,
Darker the bark,
Longer the shadows.

Sheer lines of poplar
Shimmer with masses of silver
And down in a garden old with years
And broken walls of ruin and story,
Roses rise with red rain-memories.
May!
In the open world
The sun comes and finds your face,
Remembering all.

This poem is in the public domain.

TENNESSEE VALLEY SOLAR + STORAGE CONFERENCE

September 1-3, 2026 | Chattanooga, TN

Bringing together utility executives, policymakers, project developers, manufacturers, technology providers, and energy innovators, this conference provides a unique forum to explore the opportunities and challenges shaping one of the nation's most dynamic energy markets.

WHY ATTEND?

- Understand the future of energy in the Tennessee Valley
- Stay ahead of TVA & policy developments
- Explore emerging opportunities
- Connect with industry leaders
- Position your organization for growth

Register NOW: www.tenneseiasolar/conference/



Franklin State Forest/Head of the Crow Hike

Sat, Sep 19, 2026; 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM (Central)

Location: 141 Main St, Kimball, Tennessee
Hosted by the Cherokee Group

Get ready for a fun and educational hike on the South Cumberland Plateau.
Learn More and Register: <https://bit.ly/Cherokee-FSFHike>
Contact Davis Mounger at 423.877.4616 for more event information.
Contact Dave Hoot at 423.503.9482 for logistical/registration help.