The Bi-Monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

# Establishing a new Sierra Club conservation presence in a Tennessee community

Tennes-Sierran

### **Axel Ringe and Mac Post**

The Sierra Club is a large organization with staff and dedicated volunteers at national, regional and local levels. We have a hierarchical structure that works to make sure that all the parts operate as one unified Club working together to protect the environment. The Sierra Club national organization establishes Chapters in regions where there are a large number of activists working on Sierra Club mission activities. Chapters, in turn, establish local Groups that mobilize activists in smaller geographical locations. Groups are fundamental organizing units of the Club, responsible to the Club and their chapters for acting in furtherance of Club policies and rules, and to their members for providing effective opportunities for local participation in carrying out the Club's mission.

However, Tennessee's 5 groups, although they officially cover all of Tennessee's counties, are centered in Tennessee's largest cities – Memphis (Chickasaw Group), Nashville (Middle Tennessee Group), Chattanooga (Cherokee Group), Knoxville (Harvey Broome Group) and Mountain City (well not all are in a large metropolis – Wautauga Group) For a map of these groups see https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/

### local-groups

There is a lot of mostly rural space between these centers of Group activities with a number of local issues to address that is difficult for the established Groups to address. Fortunately there is a mechanism for activist members that find it difficult to participate in Group activities located some distance away to engage. If appropriate, it is possible for the Chapter to empower local activists to represent the Sierra Club in their community through a conservation committee, or by designating a local spokesperson. Committees or designated spokespersons can be assigned budgets, they can use membership lists appropriate to their work, they can hold periodic members meetings and speak out at public meetings, and they can use the Chapter newsletter to inform members about their work and invite participation.

Creating a local conservation committee, or designating a local spokesperson, is often the best way to gain Sierra Club presence in an especially important geographic area that doesn't have a large enough membership to sustain an entire group. This makes most sense in places where there are just a few committed activists who can work well with the chapter ExCom; where they are a distance away from a functioning group; where they're in a place with important elected officials or adjacent to important public lands or key pollution problems, etc. They may function effectively for years without the added burden of meeting the full range of minimum administrative standards for groups.

As with all committees or spokespersons established by the chapter, they are accountable to the chapter ExCom. For information on establishing a conservation committee in your area contact the Conservation Committee Chair Axel Ringe or the Chapter Chair, Mac Post.

Two new Chapter Conservation Committees were recently approved by the Chapter ExCom at the January Chapter business meeting. The Clarksville-Montgomery County Conservation Committee was highlighted in the last issue of the Tennes-Sierran https://goo.gl/UPAGNg

The other team, known as Care NET is centered in the Rogersville area of East Tennessee. Check out their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/northeasttennesseeteam/ for information about this conservation committee and their activities.

## Looking Ahead: Tennessee Chapter Summer Retreat August 3rd thru 5th Cedars of Lebanon State Park

You're Invited! Come explore a part of middle Tennessee's wild side and State Park Civilian Conservation Corp history for a great weekend this August while you meet others from across the state that share your same concerns. Nature lovers and environmentalists will be there. Join us.

Hike with State Naturalist, Randy Hedgepath on Saturday and/or Sunday morning in the Red Cedar Forest and Glades in Cedars of Lebanon State Park at the Tennessee Chapter Summer Retreat. Eight miles of hiking trails meander through the cedar forests and glades. There are four trails in the park from which visitors frequently enjoy glimpses of fox, deer, squirrel, rabbits, and turkey. Cedar Forest Trail is an easy 2-mile hike. Dixon-Merrit Trail is an easy half mile trail. Limestone Sinks is a half mile hike that brings visitors to the cedar glades. Hidden Springs Trail is five miles long. Take a dip in the Olympic size swimming pool Saturday & Sunday 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM when a life guard is present. A nominal Cedars of Lebanon State Park fee and hand stamp allows you to come and go swimming all day during the TN Chapter Summer Retreat weekend. The pool ranges from 4 feet to 12 feet deep with a diving board and a smaller two foot wading pool for children.

meal planning. Check in begins Friday after 4 PM at the Group Lodge. Early Bird Price available until July 27th is \$50/adult. Regular Registration Fee is \$60/ adult.

SPECIAL: ½ off regular fee for first-time attendees! Children15 and under attend free.

Students: \$15 for the whole weekend. Single day only price with meals Saturday \$30. Single day only Sunday price with breakfast \$10. Day only, no meals

\$5. Scholarships are available by request. Chapter Retreats are considered by National as an

ativity that requires people to side the weiver we

bottle and tea/coffee mug. Everyone pitches in to help with clean-up before 11am Sunday bunkhouse checkout. Camping among the surrounding trees is another popular option (cost for the weekend is the same for camping around the lodge as for staying in the bunkhouse)

Breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, and Saturday night dinner are provided. If you wish additional snacks or beverages, you'll need to bring your own. You are on your own for Friday night dinner and trail lunches.

### **Arrival Details & Reservations**

Watauga Group is hosting and reservations may be confirmed by contacting Gloria Griffith at Gla4797@ embarqmail.com or call 423-727-4797 or register online here http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4124392/ August-3-5-2018-Sierra-Club-Retreat. Tell how many adults/children in your party, when you plan to arrive, and whether people are vegetarian or omnivore for activity that requires people to sign the waiver we use for people going on Sierra Club outings. So, when you first arrive at the Retreat, we will have these handy and make sure that it is a part of registering each of you. If youths are coming separately, there is a Minor Waiver, which needs to be signed by the parent/ guardian and brought to the Retreat. See Chapter Retreat Schedule on page 2 for details.

When you arrive at the summer Chapter Retreat Friday evening, get acquainted with other participants and plan to enjoy the night sky. The Group Lodge includes two air conditioned bunkhouse wings each with 19 twin size bunk beds, restroom and shower accommodations at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Various TN Chapter Sierra Club committees will also meet on Saturday and Sunday - feel free to sit in on any or all meetings or workshop/trainings of interest to you.

#### What to Bring

Attendees should bring bunk bed linens or sleeping bag, towels, toiletries, comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots, weather appropriate clothing, flashlight, your favorite beverages, reusable water

#### Cedars of Lebanon State Forest

During the TN Chapter Summer Retreat join us to explore the Red Cedar Forest and Glades, approximately 15 miles east of Nashville, located in the southern part of Wilson County. This forest originated from the Resettlement Administration Program in 1935. TN Dept. of Agriculture, Forestry Division assumed responsibility for the Forest in 1955. Before purchase by the Resettlement Administration, numerous landowners with small acreage held the land. Land use was for row crops, pasture and forests. The Forest is of Natural Heritage significance because it is part of the largest contiguous cedar glade-barren complex in public ownership in middle Tennessee. Part of the Forest is designated a Tennessee Natural Resource Area and contains nineteen rare and endangered species (1,034 acres), Cedars of Lebanon State Park (831 acres) and several in-holdings (304 acres), cemeteries and caves. Eastern red cedar is the predominant species and is found in pure stands on poor soils. On deeper soils it is found mixed in with hardwoods.

### **Explore, Enjoy and Protect**

## Tennes-Sierran

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

SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:

\*Email: address.changes@sierraclub.org \*Snail Mail: clip the "Moving?" coupon on page 8 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: E-mail: c.demetreon@mchsi.com ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Submission Target Date is May 31st for the July/August 2018 issue.

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

 Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or a .tif file format then either attached to e-mail or mailed via U.S. Postal Service on a 3 1/2" diskette or CD RM. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your diskette or photo prints returned.
Hard-copy handwritten or typewritten articles may be accepted; however, pre-approval from the Editor is required.

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

5. Concerns or complaints should be addressed to: Tennessee Chapter Ombudsman, Joel Gearhardt at jgearhardt@yahoo.com. 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.

### Cuttoff Date for the July/August Issue is May 31, 2018.

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

Send material to Chris Demetreon at c.demetreon@mchsi.com



### All Creatures Great and Small



"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense"

### - John Muir

Join Sierra Club and help protect all creatures, great and small.

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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	🗆 \$15	
Standard	□ \$39	□ \$49
Supporting	□ \$75	□ \$100
Contributing	🗆 \$150	🗆 \$175
Life	□ \$1000	🗆 \$1250
Senior	□ \$25	□ \$35
Student/Limited Income	□ \$25	🗆 \$35

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 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32141-6417 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

www.sierraclub.org **F94Q W4300** 1



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Treasurer:	Joel Gearhardt 615-598-0268
	jgearhardt@yahoo.com
Conservation:	Scott Heflinger 615-859-3553
	sheflinger@aol.com

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ALC: NO	Chapter Meeting	Location	Dates
から	Summer -	Cedars of Lebanon State Park	Aug 3 - 5
100	Fall	Pickett State Park	October 19 - 21
ないのか	Winter	Cedars of Lebanon State Park	January 25 - 27
	Spring	Fall Creek Falls State Park	May 3 - 5
	and a start water the		

The Chapter retreat will begin at 4 PM on Friday and end at 2 PM on Sunday. All TN Chapter Retreat participants will be required to sign the standard Sierra Club outings liability waiver when checking in at the retreat location. To review this waiver, please visit http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/sites/content.sierraclub.org.outings/files/forms/local-outings-sign-in\_waiver.pdf

Any attendee under the age of 18 not accompanied by parent or legal guardian will need to have a signed liability waiver and medical authorization form with them when they arrive. To review these waivers, please visit http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/sites/content.sierraclub.org.outings/files/individual\_waiver.pdf and http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/sites/content.sierraclub.org.outings/files/forms/local-outings-minor-release.pdf

### Page 2 - May/June 2018

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### Watauga Group - Northeast Tennessee

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### Chapter Staff: Scott Banbury Conservation Program Coordinator 901-619-8567

Editor: Chris Demetreon

http://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee

### The Tennes-Sierran

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# **Lessons from the Trail, Experience the Wildflowers**

### by Joan Tomlinson, trail name Blue Jay

Over the last few years I have gone on long journeys in the natural world. I try to spend parts of my journeys going at the speed of discovery, that is, at a pace where I can take notice of and study what is around me. I have learned lessons from the natural world, often from the smallest and most simple of things. I've brought the knowledge and wisdom of those lessons

back home with me and incorporated them into my daily life. I want to talk here about what I learned from looking deeply at and experiencing wildflowers.

Let me back up a bit. I'm almost as old as dirt, and I'm a woman. When I was in my early sixties, my dormant adventure gene took root, sprouted, and pushed me onto the Appalachian Trail (AT). For some puzzling reason, I needed to attempt a thru hike and to start my hike solo. My Springer to Katahdin thru hike began in the spring of 2014 and took 6 months and 8 days to complete. I've since completed most of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) that runs from Mexico to Canada through California, Oregon, and Washington. Most of my PCT adventure has been solo, too. Hiking solo on a long distance trail, for me, means having the freedom - and sometimes the burden - of making my own decisions about how each of my hiking days goes: how far to hike, where to camp, what pace to keep, when to dilly dally, when to power up the trail, where my town stops will be. Mostly there are other hikers nearby at camp at night; sometimes I'm totally alone at during the day, although there

have been times on the PCT when I didn't see anyone at all for several days. What I have found about solo hiking is that, in the absence of another person with whom to talk, all my senses become attuned to the natural world around me. My best times on the trail have been when I let my thinking mind go, and I am fully aware of the details of trees, rocks, leaves, birdsong, sky, wildflowers, and other natural things along the trail. When my senses are alert and I'm in a state of awareness, I say that I EXPE-RIENCE the natural world. For me, experiencing the natural world is different and much richer that merely seeing it. During these times, I can understand the deep connections among things around me. Muir, Einstein, and other noteworthy people have spoken about the interconnectedness among things. I feel fortunate to have known in a real and visceral way how one thing needs, supports, gives to, and takes from another. These rich experiences on the trail reside in me, they change me, they

give color to my world.

I spent a career as a computer analyst so I suppose it is natural that upon returning home from a long hike I think about and ponder what I experienced during my time on the trail. Things that I saw on the trail slowly creep into my thoughts at random times, and I have aha moments of clarity. One such collage of thoughts was of the many decaying trees along the ground,



night. I usually see other hikers Trout Lily pic, photo credit to Thayne Tuason via Wikipedia

barely distinguishable as trees any more, so far along was the process of decay. I remember how lovely it was when I saw, and I often did, young wildflowers growing in the decay. Wildflowers like trout lilies would be growing within a barely discernable decaying tree, strictly staying within the perimeter of the old tree. Sometimes a single flower would claim the decay as its own. There was good dirt nearby, but flowers seemed to prefer an old tree. So strong was the connection that it seemed to me that there was no real separation between flower and tree; I saw them as one. I believed that if I tugged gently on the wildflower it would not give up its connection too easily. Like Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything in the universe." Apart from sun and rain, everything that sustained the flowers was given by their trees.

in an abstract, intellectual way; seeing the vivid reality in the natural world planted that knowledge deep in my psyche. I find now that I must know from where the food I eat has come and under what conditions it was raised or grown. This has become important and personal to me. Is the food I'm putting into my body sustaining me? I'm not a fast food junkie, but I must admit to years of enjoying a simple fast food ham-

> burger on a sesame seed bun, with only mustard and pickles. I can't seem to eat those hamburgers any longer because I don't know – and I cringe at the thought of – where the meat in those hamburgers came from. I am led to wonder about concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). The impact to our Earth – our only and beloved planet I might add - is too great. Too great. The TN Chapter of the Sierra Club has put CAFOs on my radar, and through the Sierra Club's efforts I am following legislation about CAFOs in TN. 1 think about the animals and the very restricted lives they lead. More than ever before, I need to know the source of the milk I drink and the eggs I eat, as well as the chemicals on and genetics of the plants I consume. I want to know how far away this food was grown, and thus how much fuel it took to get it to me. I'm being more careful when I shop at grocery stores and when I eat in restaurants. I feel a personal responsibility for being aware of all these things. I won't knowingly support the raising or growing of food that doesn't promote good health for me and good practices for the Earth. I can't complain about such raising or growing

practices if I support them with what I buy or what I eat. Such hypocrisy would leave a bitter taste in my mouth and in my mind.

I consider my physical self to be my vehicle on my journeys. I climb mountains, cross streams, carry my pack, crawl under fallen trees, and sometimes hike beyond the point of exhaustion. Indeed, my physical self is extraordinarily important in my daily life on and off the trail. At my ripe old age, I need to make sure I am sustained physically in the best way possible. Who knew that wildflowers and their trees would speak to me in such a way, to show me the importance of the connections between my self and what I put into my body? I may still go to that fast food place. Now, though, I'll order just a sesame seed bun, with only mustard and pickles, of course.

The connection between flowers and trees has given me new insight into "you are what you eat." I've always known this *Blue Jay may be contacted at BlueJayAT@gmail.com* 

## **Pioneer Solar Generator Speaks Out: Interview with Joe Ozegovich**

### by Dawn Nielsen, Chickasaw Sierra Group

Joe Ozegovich is a ExCom member of the Sierra Club's Chickasaw Group. He was one of the early pioneers for solar generation, building his 9.54kW system starting in 2012. He recently shared details about his experience at the Sierra Club's Chickasaw Group Program Meeting: Residential and Commercial Solar Power.

## Joe, why did you decide to invest in solar?

A grade school teacher who put solar on her home was the spark for me, it just seemed natural. I thought of that spark when deciding to purchase an electric car. I did not want the source to be coal, or add more demand for coal. Also, I wanted to honor my parents and have part of their legacy contribute to clean power. I used my parents' estate to make solar a reality for me. Prior to the solar investment, I had the money in the bank, making less than 1% interest, then paying tax on that 1% interest at the end of the year. Now, my solar investment produces nearly \$2,000 per year for 10 years, then \$1000 per year beyond 10 years, all tax free. A win-win solution.

### Have there been changes to the economics since you installed your system?

Yes, the cost of installing solar has decreased significantly. When I installed my system, the cost was \$5.65/watt (pole mount) for the first installation, then \$3.70/watt for the 2nd installation (roof mount) just over 2 years later. Now, prices are less than \$3/watt. Plus, the tax incentive is still available which reduces the cost per watt to under \$2.10. Coincidentally, the utility has lowered the premium that you can earn for your generation. Right



Joe's solar installation and electric vehicle

now, the utility in Memphis is offering 9 cents per kWh generated. Those factors, decreasing installation costs and decreasing generation premiums, counter-balance each other, making the economics about the same from a return on investment perspective.

My generation will be completely paid for in about 12 years from my install date. After that, the earnings continue to accumulate, tax free!

### What's unique about your installation?

Interestingly, I have two installations, one on my roof and one in my yard. Solar installations don't need to be on your roof! I've seen very attractive pergolas using solar power panels. I've seen farmers using panels to provide a shady spot for their animals. I've seen carports built from solar panels...protecting the car from damaging rays while generating power. What's nice about these installations is that the panels themselves act as the roof while allowing better circulation for the panels which makes them more efficient.

You talk about solar power being an enabler. What do you mean by that?

Since I've installed solar, I'm taking steps to become fully carbon free. I own an electric car, and I'm looking into replacing my appliances with electric versions such as heat pumps for heating/cooling, heat pump water heaters and the like. By replacing these fossil burning units when they are ready for replacement, with an highly efficient electric version, my home will be 100% carbon free.

Additionally, I'm looking at conserving energy. I am caulking my windows and checking my attic insulation. I hope to match my electricity needs with my generation.

### What would you say to someone thinking about solar generation for themselves?

Solar generation is a completely risk-free investment in your home. It's a positive change that will improve our carbon footprint. If enough people do it, this world will be a better place.

Group	Date	Location	Time
Group			
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 5/7, 6/4, 7/2	Pilgrim Congregational Church, 400 Glenwood Dr., Chattanooga	6:00 P.M.
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Wed 5/2, 6/6, 7/11	Cheffie's Cafe, 483 High Point Terrace, Memphis	6:00 P.M.
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 5/22, 6/26, 7/24	The Church of the Savior, 934 N. Weisgarber Rd., Knoxville	7:00 P.M.
Middle TN (Nashville)	Mon 5/21, 6/18, 7/16	House of Kabob, 216 Thompson Lane, Nashville	6:30 P.M.
Watauga	Tue 5/8, 6/12, 7/10	R&D Campground 900 Mining Town Rd. Mt. City, TN 37683	5:00 P.M.
(Mountain City)			
		Group Program Meetings	
(Mountain City)	Date	Group Program Meetings Location	Time
	<b>Date</b> Mon 6/25, 7/23 No meeting 5/28		<b>Time</b> 7:00 P.M.
<b>Group</b> Cherokee	Mon 6/25, 7/23	Location	
<b>Group</b> Cherokee (Chattanooga) Chickasaw	Mon 6/25, 7/23 No meeting 5/28	Location Unitarian Universalist Church, 3224 Navajo Dr., Chattanooga	7:00 P.M.
Group Cherokee (Chattanooga) Chickasaw (Memphis) Harvey Broome	Mon 6/25, 7/23 No meeting 5/28 Thu 5/17, 6/21, 7/26	Location     Unitarian Universalist Church, 3224 Navajo Dr., Chattanooga     Benjamin Hooks Public Library, 3030 Poplar Ave., Memphis	7:00 P.M. 5:55 P.M.

**Page 4 - May/June 2018** 

The Tennes-Sierran

# Meetings

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

### **CHEROKEE GROUP**

**Looking Ahead:** We will not hold a Program Meeting in May, on Memorial Day. Use that time to venture outdoors into Nature. "It was in the forest that I found 'the peace that passeth understanding.'" – Jane Goodall

June 25, 2018, - 7 P.M. - June Program: Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga, 3224 Navajo Dr., Chatta. 37411; off I-24, just east of the Missionary Ridge cut. Take the Germantown Road Exit, turn north onto Germantown Road, take the 2nd left onto Navajo, go about 1/2 mile, UUCC will be on your left, up the hill! We meet downstairs, in the Forum Room.

Rob Moore and Casey York will present "Solar Technology Highlights." Putting your money where your mouth is: You mean I can help the environment without selling a kidney? Rob and Casey are the guys to guide you through. They'll cover real world financial costs and payback timeframes and how that can be figured out. Why solar and where, what makes a good site for solar? They'll also cover types of systems – grid-tied, off-grid, with/without battery storage, single/dual axis tracking, microinverters vs. power optimizers. Come with plenty of questions - these men are ready to answer them.

Rob Moore's primary focus is on finding ways to "leave the world a little better than he found it," which led him to Florida to study natural building practices with Cob and passive solar building design, and more prominently solar photovoltaic system design and installation. He's worked as an independent contractor on various sized PV systems from residential to commercial since receiving his A.A.S. Electrical Engineering Technology degree with a Solar Energy Tech Concentration in 2013. An Associate Level NABCEP certification holder, he's currently finishing his Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering/Power Systems emphasis through Excelsior College.

Casey York is the operations manager at Total Quality Environmental, a company owned and managed by former TVA renewable program manager Rick Carson. With his education being focused on line of sight and satellite communications equipment, Casey went back to school at Chattanooga State where Rick was teaching the solar portion of his degree. Casey received his NABCEP certification and has been working at TQE since. Casey has consulted on and built wind power, hydro-electric power plants, and many solar energy sites. Currently Casey and TQE manage and maintain all of the Tennessee Valley Authority's solar assets, while focusing primarily on commercial scale solar installations.

Letter-writing materials on current issues with talking points will be available for those interested. Hand-written letters do count! Phone calls and e-mails too.

Bring a friend. The public is very welcome! Free as always.

### May 7th and June 4th - 6:00 P.M. - Strategy/

**Business Meetings:** Come add your ideas, share your concerns as we resist, insist, persist and enlist! We've got committees on outings, programs, clean energy and climate, water quality, forestry issues, and parks/land protection with room to support YOUR concern. Where: Pilgrim Congregational Church, 400 Glenwood Dr., Chatta. 37404 (at the corner of Glenwood Dr. and E. 3rd Street. Come in the front door! We'll be in the second room on the right. All are welcome!

### **CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)**

May 3, 2018 - 11 A.M. - RECYCLING: Limited to 10 people. Tour where City recycling pick up is sorted. Contact SCMemphisOutings@gmail.

# Outings

The Tennessee Chapter's Outings and activities are always open to the public and members of the Club from across the state! Sponsored by our local Groups, pre-registation with the trip leader is a must for all outings.

May 19, 2018 - 1:00 P.M. - Cherokee Removal Memorial Park at Blythe Ferry Day Trip. Thousands of Cherokee were removed from Blythe Ferry on the Trail of Tears; we will be visiting the Memorial dedicated to 'those who died and those who cried." The park interprets and educates the public about the forced removal of the Cherokees from their ancestral land as well as informs visitors about the unique wildlife in the area; it features a large outdoor map of the Trail of Tears route, visitors center and the Memorial and History Walls. This is a good outing for families with children. Total roundtrip driving distance from Chattanooga is 80 miles; will depart at 1 pm near Northgate. For further details and to pre-register, contact trip leader John Doyal, 423-315-0965 or 2ndoutdoorscha@gmail.com. (Cherokee Group)

Harvey Broome Group For the 2018 outings year, which starts on March 1, 2018 and ends on Feb 28, 2019, the final schedule will be available online by February 7. You may view the calendar on the Outings tab of the HBG website: https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome com for reservation and details.

Our monthly programs are normally held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 5:55pm at the Memphis Main Library, 3030 Poplar Ave, Memphis.

Our business meetings are normally held on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6pm, at Cheffie's Cafe, 483 High Point Ter, Memphis.

Program and business meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information see: http://www.facebook.com/Chickasaw. Group.

### HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

Our monthly programs are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:00 P.M., at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919. For additional information see: http://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/programs

Our business meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at The Church of the Savior, 934 N. Weisgarber Rd. Knoxville, TN 37909 at 7pm. Everyone is invited. These meetings are free and open to the public. See our web page (sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/programs) for details.

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

**No Submissions** 

### WATAUGA GROUP (Northeastern TN)

**Program and business meetings begin at 6:00 PM on the second Tuesday** near Doe Mountain Recreation Area from spring through fall at R&D Campground Pavilion at 900 Mining Town Rd., Mountain City, TN. During the wintertime meet up at The Loft 5902 Hwy 421 south Mountain City, TN. Got questions, contact bmw@icloud.com 423- 534-4804 or GLa4797@embargmail.com 423-727-4797.

Join us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ WataugaGroup

Nashville Outings! - We have an active outings schedule! To check out our outings, please go to http://www.meetup.com/Middle-Tennessee-Sierra-Club-Outings-and-Adventures

All outings require participants to sign a waiver. To review this waiver, please visit https://goo.gl/1BvnK2

Any attendee under the age of 18 not accompanied by parent or guardian will need to have a signed liability waiver and medical authorization form with them when they arrive. To review and print these waivers, please visit https://goo.gl/y9Y976 AND https://goo.gl/ jNieor

# "Martin Luther King Jr's Environmental Justice Legacy and Where Do We Go from Here"

### by Virgie Banks and Mia Madison

Wednesday April 4 was the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis.

The city and various local organizations held many events and proclamations around the city, starting at the National Civil Rights Museum, the converted "Lorraine Motel", which was the site where MLK was shot and killed.

The Tennessee Chapter's Chickasaw

Group was just one of many organizations which had Press Releases celebrating MLK's legacy and his importance to our history AND to our future, asking "Where do we go from here?"

One of the themes of Dr. King's campaigns was environmental justice, and the Chickasaw Group believes that this 50th anniversary should be a pivotal point for environmental advocacy in Memphis. "The Chickasaw Group's recent strategy session highlighted Memphis's "Energy Burden" and the need to "Protect our Aquifer" and our "parklands" as three top environmental justice priorities for our efforts going forward," said Mia Madison of the Chickasaw Group's Equity, Inclusion and Justice committee.

The Sierra Club salutes Dr. King's legacy, and we are proud that our members in the Memphis area are standing up to work with the community on issues which were so important to him.

## **Sierra Club and Friends to TVA: Get Your Ash Out of Our Water!**



### By Todd Waterman

"I don't trust TVA." - Janie Clark, commenting on December 7 at the Kingston Fossil Plant NPDES Draft Water Pollution Permit Hearings at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) office in Knoxville. Fighting back tears, Janie introduced her husband Ansol, who had worked on the cleanup of the notorious 2008 Kingston coal ash spill. She and Ansol had been to a lot of funerals lately, she said. 150 of the 900 who labored on that toxic superfund site - all denied respirators and protective clothing - are now dead or dying. Ansol is slowly dying. To TVA, Janie said, they all were just "collateral damage."

"The waters of Tennessee are the property of the state and are held in public trust for the use of the people of the state ... the people of Tennessee, as beneficiaries of this trust, have a right to unpolluted waters." - Tennessee Water Quality Control Act



licly-owned utility, TVA.

The notorious Kingston coal ash spill nine years ago, and now the illnesses and deaths attributed to its cleanup, have focussed a national spotlight on the very real threat of coal ash contamination from mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic, and a Pandora's box of other toxins - necessitating stringent new national Effluent Limitation Guidelines (ELGs) for contaminated water. TVA had announced it could meet the new ELGs by early 2021 - that is, until the Trump administration announced it was reviewing them. Now TVA is pressuring TDEC to allow it to delay implementing those very ELGs at the very plant that compelled them - and at their Bull Run, Gallatin, and Cumberland coal-fired plants, too - until late 2023.

So, we would turn out in force to call TVA's bluff! Well ahead of the first hearings, field organizer Bonnie Swinford of Sierra Club's Beyond Coal had mobilized our team: Adam Hughes and Ann League of long-time Sierra ally Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM) joined regional pros from Sierra Club and several other environmental organizations to handle recruiting, scouting, publicity, advertising, commenting guidelines, on-line commenting and petitions, social media, and press. I was the neophyte volunteer.

Staff Attorney Amanda Garcia of the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) would distill talking points for the rest of us from her masterfully thorough, detailed legal comments - 57 pages for Bull Run alone - which, like each of our own comments, TDEC would be required to consider and answer. Besides the obvious threat of contamination of downstream drinking water, Amanda said, every year they continue to operate, Kingston's and Bull Run's cooling water kills thousands of adult fish trapped by their intake screens, then cook millions of juvenile fish, larvae and eggs, and then return that water to the Clinch River at a temperature far above that lethal to native fish (was that why Adam, Bonnie, and I had seen a multitude of vultures perched opposite Bull Run?). Toxic discharges make fish already too toxic to eat even more toxic. Ecological and water quality testing are inadequate. And what about those coal ash ponds TVA wants to leave right next to the Clinch River? I asked Oak Ridge's Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Smith, who in her career as an ORNL Environmental Scientist has researched many an NPDES permit like these Draft Permits. She had good news: as the years went by that coal ash would become less

and less toxic. The bad news was, that's because most of the arsenic, lead, cadmium, mercury, and other toxins would by then have leached into the river. It was just crazy, she said, to use a scrubber to remove, expensively and for very good reason, all those heavy metals, carcinogenic particulates, and other pollutants from our air and to then put them right back where they would end up in our water.

Each Hearing was to be preceded by an hour-long Informational Session, an excellent PowerPoint on the research and reasoning behind TDEC's Draft Permit by TDEC's very knowledgeable Permit Writer Bob Alexander, followed by a lively Q&A with Bob and Vojin (pronounced Voyin) Janjic, the expert Manager of TDEC's Water-Quality Systems Unit, sometimes joined by TVA's Senior Water Quality Manager (and aquatic life expert) Terry Cheek.

Adam and I, the wide-eyed optimist, had planned a press conference at the first Kingston Hearing on the afternoon of December 7 in Knoxville, complete with sign-waving volunteers, but called it off when it turned out the organization issuing the press release (from North Carolina) hadn't included it. But though no TV stations showed up, the Knoxville News Sentinel broadcast our message to the public with an advance article, an op-ed from Sierra Club's Tennessee Environmental Chair Axel Ringe, and then a report on the Hearing itself featuring Janie and Ansol Clark.

Among the 34 who turned out in Knoxville, 11 commented, many with deep knowledge of TVA and environmental protection: in addition to Janie Clark, Sierra Club's Ron Shrieves, Joan Tomlinson, Tennessee Chapter Environmental Chair Axel Ringe, and myself; SOCM's Patrick Morales, their Director Ann League, and Erica Davis (since elected to both HBG's and the Tennessee Chapter's Executive Committees); Lucia Capozzoli of Greater Knoxville Citizens' Climate Lobby; and Megan Spooner of Chickamauga, Georgia. SELC Staff Attorney Amanda Garcia herself came over from Nashville to comment - and then stayed on to question Bob and Vojin exhaustively. The second Kingston Hearing was that evening in Kingston at the Roane County Courthouse. Another 34 turned out there, most of them from the still-reeling Kingston community. Commenting there were Sierra Club/SOCM Lawyer Brian Paddock, and two locals, one of whom echoed Janie's distrust of TVA.

"I want clean water!" - a four-year-old girl, commenting at the Bull Run Fossil Plant Draft Water Pollution Permit Hearings at TDEC in Oak Ridge.

There were more exhaustive comments, but the little girl summed it up, adamantly standing up, on the seat of a chair, for the billions of children who will live with our pollution. At TDEC Hearings on Kingston's Water Pollution Permit in Knoxville and Kingston, then on Bull Run's Permit in Oak Ridge, then on Gallatin's Permit in Gallatin, near Nashville (on which I was only remotely involved), we showed up to ask TDEC to do its job: to protect us from our own pub-

Though I assured them there were plenty Continued on page 7...

### Page 6 - May/June 2018

## Con tinued from page 6...

of activists in Oak Ridge, our team expected a smaller turnout for the Bull Run Hearing. So Adam came to Oak Ridge to recruit at our Citizens' Climate Coalition meeting, presenting an informational webinar that Beyond Coal Southeastern lead Jonathan Levenshus and Bonnie had done up for Kingston. We all called, emailed, and posted on Facebook. At the Hearing, including a few TDEC staffers, 42 would turn out, and 17 would comment. SOCM's Taylor Prince, David Wasilko, Katie Myers,, and Adam all weighed in. Brian Paddock, disgusted by years of TVA's foot-dragging, lit into the monopoly utility: "In 2023, they'll be right back here saying they've been too busy, and asking for more time." Axel Ringe followed. Tennessee Clean Water Network Attorney Shelby Ward had strong words for TVA, too. Then, that little girl. Then several TVA-skeptical local citizens. Oak Ridger Jim Nelson, once a Bull Run Environmental Engineer, dismissed TVA's avowed intention to retroactively line its coal ash ponds as "impossible." "I wouldn't ruin my career on that project." Jim would follow up with a written Comment - an expert, devastating analysis of "the most lax NPDES permit I've ever seen."

Bonnie, Adam, and I were gratefully grinning. The next day, Ben Pounds covered the hearings in The Oak Ridger. We were on a roll to Gallatin - and another big win: turnout there earned a Tennessean article featuring hard-hitting quotes from Sierra Club's Grace Stranch, Sandy Kurtz, Joe Prochaska, and others.

TVA, once a clean energy leader under Dave Freeman's Chairmanship, has under Bill Johnson's Chairmanship fallen far behind regional giants like Duke Energy. Once a champion of the people, TVA now faces ever-rising public outcry not just over coal ash pollution, but also over rate increases; over anti-clean energy, anti-energy-efficiency, anti-poor mandatory fees; and over an Integrated Resource Plan that only pretends to address the looming climate crisis.

TVA knows it must soon shut down its four remaining coal plants. TVA has an historic mandate to provide us with affordable, reliable power, while also protecting our environment, and it knows that cannot be done with coal, the dirtiest, most polluting fuel of all. It's not just about coal toxins. Kingston, Bull Run, Gallatin, and

Cumberland spew almost 30 million tons of CO2 into our atmosphere every year, where for centuries it will curse the lives of our children's children's children, and destroy much of the social progress and environmental protection for which we have fought so very long and hard. Yet TVA's Chair just killed the largest renewable energy project in Southeastern history, the Clean Line wind energy contract that would have brought us truly clean power for less than TVA now pays for truly dirty power.

All of you who helped, who showed up, who commented, you did a fine thing. A great many of you commented online and signed petitions. TDEC and TVA heard you loud and clear: TDEC's finalized Kingston NPDES Permit requires TVA to comply with ELGs for mercury and arsenic discharges in scrubber wastewater two years earlier than in the Draft Permit you discredited, and it restores protection of groundwater from coal ash and other on-site pollution.

TDEC and TVA know you're never going away. And they know you're a force that cannot be held back.

## "Solar Energy- Residential and Commercial"

### by Joe Ozegovich

The Chickasaw Group is focusing a lot of attention on clean energy these days. Using a three-legged stool metaphor we represent the three major "dimensions" of a clean energy future- renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy conservation.

The Chickasaw Group's March 29th program was all about one type of renewable energy-solar. The solar projects of some members and two local commercial installations were shown as examples. The Solar owners provided background and details of their installations including; costs, energy

production, Return On Investment (ROI), utility bill impacts, and lessons learned.

Becky Williamson from MLGW (the local utility) described various programs to help make solar more affordable. She also provided program examples and advice. Your utility should work with you to help find the right program for you.

Dr. Solar, a local installer described various solar products, costs, and ROI, plus examples of varying types of installationspole mount, ground mount, rooftop, parking lots, solar farms, etc.

There wasn't enough discussion on how

the new solar panel tariffs might impact the US Solar industry.

At the very end there was a workshop for interested individuals who wanted to find out the feasibility of solar for their home- instant numbers based on their own address.

A great crowd of about 50 people attended and asked many questions during and at the end of the presentations. Our April 19 Program will cover the second leg of the stool- Energy Efficiency, Residential & Commercial, and May 17 the third leg- Conservation, Residential. We'll report on these in a future article.

## Chickasaw Group Strategy Session

### by Mia Madison and Dawn Nielsen

On March 24, the Chickasaw Group Excom, Leaders, and a few other special invites participated in a Strategy planning session.

The whole thing started when new Excom member Dawn Nielsen "stood up" in her first Excom meeting and said "I want to know more about the Sierra Club Chickasaw Group- our strategies, focus, priorities and resources, that kind of thing". The entire Excom said "Let's Do it!" and the ball started rolling, eventually leading to our March 24 session. Dawn and Mia Madison, another new Excom member, with a little help from the Group's Chair, took care of organizing and coordinating all the details. The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis made their great space available for our meeting. We decided that we wanted a professional facilitator to lead our discussions at the strategy session. Ms. Lisa Moore of Girls Inc and Dancing Water USA accepted the challenge. We made it tough for her by shoe-horning the entire activity into a 3.5 hour time window (including 30 minutes for coffee and sweet rolls before the "work"

started).

Lisa started us with a "Welcome & Introductions" activity, which included answering the questions- "One word that describes how you feel about the Sierra Club?" and "One take away you hope for today?". Some of the words suggested were- impressed, curious, empowered, excited, engaging, anxious, and hopeful, among others. The take-aways included- focus and motivation, clarity, clearly defined, meaningful strategies, perspective and direction, and ability to engage others. It sure seemed like the session attendees were motivated, and focused on having a great session! Next was brainstorming, where we came up with a long list of issues, ideas, strategies and tactics. Then, we separated the "issues" from the procedural "strategies" and "tactics", and voted on our preferred issues, leaving the strategies and tactics for future discussions.

3- environmental justice 4- parklands

Four small teams then took about 20 minutes to define the top 4 issues in more detail (one issue per team), and to develop lists of actions and resources for the next 6 months to 12 months. The teams then briefly summarized the planned actions that their team proposed listed for their issue.

Without belaboring all the details, we multi-voted which brought 4 issues to the top:

1- energy efficiency mindset + reduce / reuse / recycle

2- water / aquifer

We ended the strategy session with each participant writing their own personal "I will ..... " statement to reflect their commitment to these issues over the next 6-12 months. We finished with standing in a circle and singing "kumbayah". NO! Not really! ;-) . We did stand in a circle and verbally recall our individual "I will" statements. It was a good "cherry on top" of our strategy ses-

It was a fun and challenging experience to squeeze into a 3 hour session.

sion.

We all thanked Lisa for her great work and friendship in facilitating our efforts. We all went away excited and motivated! Thanks again to everyone for their participation!

### The Tennes-Sierran

## **TVA Board Meeting Comment**

### Todd Waterman, Feb. 16, 2018

I'm John Todd Waterman. I'm a full-time volunteer climate activist. I tell people I have no time, no money, and no regrets because I get to live from the heart. I truly appreciate your hearing us, your customers.

We quickly regret and forget those who stand in the way of progress whose time has come. We quickly regretted the guy who said,

"Segregation now, Segregation tomorrow,

Segregation faw-ever!"

The scientists and the satellites have been telling us for a long time now we can't keep burning fossil fuels forever, either. The time has come to do all we can to stop pumping CO2 into our atmosphere that will curse our children, our grandchildren, and their grandchildren. The time has come for sustainable energy, for energy efficiency, for energy justice.

We will never, ever regret or forget the guy who said,

"I have a dream," and then gave his life to make that dream come true. We made his birthday a national holiday.

You of the TVA Board can choose to be the fossil-fueled Fossil Board. But you all know you cannot possibly fulfill your historic mandate to provide us with affordable, reliable power - while protecting our environment - using fossil carbon that pollutes our air and our water, and locks in irreversible climate change. If you're worried the wind's not reliable, don't kill the greatest, cheap renewable energy project in Southeastern history. Just read the weather report for Oklahoma - and burn obsolete, polluting coal only when you must. Help us insulate our homes. Help us get solar panels. And shut those coal plants down.

You could choose to let progress whose time has come roll right over you; to be quickly regretted by your own children, your own grandchildren; to be reviled by all the world's children to come.

I hope instead you'll choose to be heroes to your children, heroes to our children.

I hope you'll choose to be remembered and revered - for leading your historic agency, our great region, and our great nation, guiding the way to a clean, green future - for leading us to a future in which we all share in truly sustainable prosperity. Thank you.



# IN MEMORIAM Linda Harris September 8, 1940 til

## November 15, 2017

Linda Harris was a 20 year employee with TVA involved with water stewardship. She was the president of Chattanooga Audubon Acres and an educator at the Chattanooga Nature Center. Linda worked tirelessly protecting the South Chickamauga Creek watershed and throughout our Tennessee Valley. She was strong, with a beautiful heart and soul, devoting her life to environmental efforts, family and friends. Linda inspired many people from all walks of life, and has been referred to as a "Warrior for Environmental Conservation".

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## **Call for Nominations** for our Chapter At Large Executive Committee

This year three of the seven members of the Chapter's At Large Executive Committee (ExCom) reach the end of their term. The Sierra Club uses democracy to hold itself accountable to its membership, so we need good candidates to best represent our members' interests. The Chapter's Nomination Committee is seeking candidates to run, so we're looking to you to self-nominate or suggest nominees!

The ExCom sets the Chapter budget and strategic direction, reaches consensus on conservation positions, raises money, appoints officers and committee chairs, and approves litigation and electoral endorsements.

To accomplish all of this, the Chapter ExCom meets quarterly, and there is e-mail correspondence between meetings. The Ex-Com also plans additional important events Candidates may also get on the ballot by petition. Candidates get space on the ballot to advocate for their election. Candidates receiving the top votes will start their twoyear terms in January 2019.

Any Sierra Club member wishing to be considered as a Nomination Committee candidate should indicate their intent to do so by emailing Russ Gillenwater at commissar67@gmail.com by September 1st.

Key responsibilities of the committee include:

(1) Plan and conduct outreach to volunteer leaders through multiple channels to cultivate interest in service on the Ex-Com, and encourage qualified candidates to apply. Much of the work is delegated amongst committee members and managed through email and conference calls. The bulk of the workload occurs from May of every applicant.

(4) Work as a team to select the best slate of candidates for nomination.

Essential skills, knowledge, and abilities for committee members:

(1) Have a basic understanding of, and a readiness to learn more about, Sierra Club structure and internal dynamics, tradition, and general organizational operation. Additionally, familiarity with current and recent issues before the Board is desirable;

(2) Be, or become, knowledgeable about the applicable election Bylaws, Standing Rules and Guidelines that govern the responsibilities of the NomCom;

(3) Work with a high level of confidentiality and engender trust within the committee -- due to the sensitive nature of evaluating candidates, this quality is of paramount importance;

(4) Be knowledgeable about the Nom-Com schedule and be willing to spend extra hours at the critical times, responding quickly and efficiently and completing assigned tasks promptly.

throughout the year. through

After receiving your nominations by July 1, 2018 the Chapter Nominations Committee will consider and recommend candidates for the ballot, which is published in the November/December edition of the Tennes-Sierran bi-monthly newspaper. through September.

(2) Become familiar with the functioning of the ExCom and the roles and responsibilities performed by Delegates and Officers. Identify particular strengths and skills to look for in ExCom candidates.

(3) Conduct discrete but thorough checks

Nominations Committee members cannot be Chapter ExCom candidates.

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