Hummingbirds Rule in Tennessee!

Compiled by various members of the Chickasaw Group in Memphis

Members of the Chickasaw Group joined a score of members from the Tennessee Trails Association (TTA) for an amazing look at hummingbirds at the Audubon Society's Strawberry Plains sanctuary near Holly Springs, MS September 6.

Judith Hammond, who arranged the outing, was accompanied by Sierra Club and TTA members Woody and Carolyn Pierce, Dick Mchow and Charlie Rond. Several hiked about a mile of the 15 miles of trails available in the sanctuary, and perused grave-stones at a family cemetery and a slave cemetery along the way.

It was the peak of the hummingbird migration from the Eastern and Southern states and the tiny birds were feeding (drinking nectar) frantically en route to the Gulf of Mexico and the 16-hour flight across the Gulf to Central and South America. A few of them were trapped in nets, weighed, wings and tails measured, aged determined by bill etalon, and then they were banded with leg bands before continuing their journey.

Don't be concerned about the weight of the leg bands; it takes more than 5,000 of them to weigh an ounce. The bands enable scientists to learn more about the migration routes and habits of the colorful miniature birds.

A special treat for the children - and some of the not-so-young - came after the banding. If you held your hand flat and outstretched, a hummingbird would be gently laid in your hand, to rest a few seconds - its heart safely fluttering - until it decided to buzz away. Handlers were so gentle there was no frantic fluttering or attempts to escape. The birds calmly endured weighing and measurement and sat calm and relaxed on children's hands - sometimes for half a minute - before flying away.

There was an expert botanist who described the plants, in a tour, around the beautiful brick ante-bellum home that is central to the 2500-acre sanctuary. The sanctuary and home were given to the Audubon Society several years ago by two sisters who established the Audubon Society.

Top: Carolyn Pierce (left) and Judith Hammond (right) stand behind hummingbird banders at the recent outing to the Audubon Society’s Strawberry Plains Sanctuary, Mississippi.

Bottom Left: A fascinated child holds a newly banded hummingbird as it prepares to take flight at the Audubon Society’s Sanctuary at Strawberry Plains, Mississippi.

Bottom Right: Members of the Chickasaw Group of the Sierra Club and members of Tennessee Trails Association listen as Strawberry Plains’ leader Jim Nolen talks about the Strawberry Plains Sanctuary.

Sierra Club and SOC M File Suit on Zeb Mountain Mining

By Mary Mastin

The Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club, SOC M, the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project, and Appalachian Voices filed suit in federal district court in Knoxville against the Office of Surface Mining (OSM). The suit asks that the permit issued July 3 to the Robert Clear Coal Corporation be revoked until OSM complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and completes a full Environmental Impact Statement.

The Zeb mountain mining operation permit area is one of the largest strip mining operations ever permitted in Tennessee - over 2000 acres. It is mountain top mining. We say that it's mountain top removal (MTR) mining - tho OSM call it "cross-ridge mining" and we do not want it coming to Tennessee.

The permit area is within a quarter mile to a mile of 100 homes and businesses, mostly in the Elk Valley community of Campbell County, Tennessee. There is an elementary school within 4000 feet of the mining area. Residents fear damage to their ground water wells. The mining operation would have No Significant Impact. OSM issued the permit without a comment period on their (preliminary) environmental assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact.

This mine is projected to be in operation for 9.9 years. The permit area is on its way to becoming biologically dead. Already one stream that is home to the federally listed as threatened blackside dace has an excess of sediment and is a dangerous situation.

Residents fear damage to their ground water wells. They have health and safety concerns from the 110 coal truck trips projected to go through the community on narrow winding roads that even OSM acknowledges at some places are too narrow for a school bus and coal truck to pass safely.

Residents fear damage to their ground water wells. They have health and safety concerns from the 110 coal truck trips projected to go through the community on narrow winding roads that even OSM acknowledges at some places are too narrow for a school bus and coal truck to pass safely.

Already one stream that is home to the federally listed as threatened blackside dace has an excess of sediment and is on its way to becoming biologically dead.

The plans for the mining operation rely on numerous - over forty - sediment basins that are set on the shoulder of the mountain - on an old mining bench that contains toxic material from previous mining. Many homes and ground water wells are just below this bench. It is a very dangerous situation.

This mine is projected to be in operation for 9.9 years. Yet, with all the above factors documented, OSM found that the mining operation would have No Significant Impact. OSM issued the permit without a comment period on their (preliminary) environmental assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The suit was filed September 4. A Preliminary injunction has been requested, but the hearing date has not yet been set. Gale Norton, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, which oversees OSM, was also named as a defendant. Advocates see this as a test case for what OSM can let mine owners get away with in Tennessee. We don't want what has happened in West Virginia to happen here.

The Tennessee Chapter wishes to thank Bill Price, the Sierra Club’s Environmental Justice organizer for Central Appalachia, for his assistance in making this happen.
The Tennes-Sierran
The monthly newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club.

SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:
*Email: addresschange@sierraclub.org
*Mail: P.O. Box 52968 - Boulder, Colorado 80322-2968

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.

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Please notify the Editor when changes are needed.

The Tragedy of the Commons

By Carl Leathers

The most reprinted article in the history of journalism was an essay by Garrett Hardin which appeared in 1968 in the Atlantic Monthly. It was entitled, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” and is paraphrased below:

In many New England towns during the 1700’s it was usual to pasture individually owned cattle on an area of land which was owned by the town as a whole. The term was called “the Commons” for obvious reasons. A scat of fact several of our 50 major political entities are popularly called states, but legally they are “Commonwealths.”

Assume for example that there are 10 individuals in the town each who pasture 10 cows on the commons. The herdsmen, or ambitious, herdsman might reason in this way:

If I add 5 more cows to my herd, I will incur no additional cost in feeding the animals but I may increase my profit by 50 percent. Another herdsman might also attempt to double his profit by adding 10 more cows. However, because the size of the grazing area is fixed, the individual enterprise results in overgrazing of the point where all of the herds starve, bringing ruin to every herdsman.

The members of this scenario may be expanded to the Earth as a whole. We share the life support system, including the air, the water, and much of the land. We share the commons. The diversity of life, parks will be reduced and the frustrations involved when things are abused. If we don’t take care of our planet, it will simply mean ruin for everyone.

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Do we need Nature?

by Ron Castle

Royal Dutch Shell Oil and the Economist Magazine, from the UK have sponsored an international essay writing contest the past 4 years. The purpose of the contest is “to encourage future thinking.” You can see previous winning entries at www.shellconomicswritingprize.com.

The question for this year’s competition, which closed at the end of August, was “Do we need Nature?” Considering the ongoing exponential human domination of our planet I think this is a worthy question to pose to us to think about. We are so preoccupied with the short term and day to day hectic pace of life that the long term doesn’t get much consideration. Our domination of Nature is a subject that I have written about previously and I decided to use my essay as the vehicle to present my ideas. I will try to answer my question by offering a personal view on what I see happening in my regional home of Middle Tennessee.

In the required synopsis to my essay, I stated the following: “In 1998, I made a deliberate decision to change my life by making a remote move to Middle Tennessee to become more closely attuned to Nature. I have reduced my dwelling space by 60%, improved my fuel efficiency by 40% and attempted to minimize my human footprint on the planet, a personal human repletion, living largely in cooperation with the rest of life on the planet. Personally, I have been happier and more at home everywhere. My mountain songs report my observations of man made problems resulting from our attempts to dominate Nature as seen in the areas of my home in Middle Tennessee in the United States of America. Do we need Nature? The question should be, “Do we need nature made man?”

How will I fare in the competition? We shall find out before the end of November. In any event, the writing was and is good catharsis for me, and hopefully for you, too. My entry:

My Mountain Song

By most American standards, I live in the wilderness, not as close to Nature as one can get. My modest home is in MIddle Tennessee on the side of the heavily forested north escarpment of the Cumberland Plateau, 3 miles off the pavement and at the end of the electric and telephone lines. The nearest pay phone is 6 miles away. My water comes from a mountain spring. I am surrounded by deer, turkey, raccoons, possums, coyotes and huge trees. Tree frogs and barred owls sing in the trees at night and this morning on my bird feeders I goldfinches, cardinals, summer tanagers, Carolina wrens, a red bellied woodpecker and a ruby throated hummingbird.

The mountain constantly reminds me that I am an interloper here. The tulip poplar and sugar maples are crowding my view to the valley. Raccoons rob my tomatoes. Ants, the greatest physical mass of life on the mountain other than plants, frequently scurry across my desk and carpet their way to the kitchen counter. They are unstopable so I have resorted to creating food diversions that keep them mostly outdoors. A few rattlesnakes and copperheads, stonewalls and hornets are always nearby. I am at the top of the food chain in this part of the world, but hazards abound to keep life interesting.

I moved here from the big cities of my past life, Houston, Dallas, Chicago and Los Angeles, because I figured out I cannot be whole without being closely connected to nature. I have written a post that sums up my reason for being, and for being here:

My Mountain Song

The mountain has lifted me up
Swallowed me whole
Caught my heart
Opeeded my soul
Poured in God’s images
Of my small role

For Nature’s grand vision
M illusion old.

The mountain and I have become
Butchers of one
Spice, silk, electrolyte
Wind, water, sun
At home with our love
Space for our spirits to run
Helping me rise
Till God’s work is done.

When I read the question “Do we need Nature?” I thought this frivolous for most 21st century men or women. How do you know if you need something you have never experienced? Man has made more technological progress in the past 100 years than in all of human time. Concurrently, we have disconnected ourselves from the rest of life on the planet. We are apart from Nature.

The question would be a total absurdity for a 15th or 19th century American Indian or indigenous native elsewhere on earth. Or a 21st century prediction of life as we now know it. We have to face the reality of what Nature is now. No longer do we have the spirit of sky, earth, wind, water and sun. Our new gods are horsepower, computer, food, movies, travel, the Internet, air conditioning, urban sprawl and most of all, good old filthy lucite. Nature is no more than a backdrop for TV ads making products and services. SUV’s chew up the earth and molest remaining wilderness. Many exterminate all life, all animals, all species for TV ads marketing products and services. Madison Avenue understands man’s subliminal connection to Nature. Most of us do not.

MIDdle Tennessee was settled between 1799 and 1820, when 99 percent of the country here was naturally forested in stands of virgin silver maple as far as the eye could see. Two hundred years later, less than 1 percent of Tennessee’s native forests remain. Every year in Tennessee we are converting 80,000 acres of open space, farms and woodlands to development. We are 7th in the nation in loss of open space, subdivisions, shopping malls and industrial sites. About 1 percent of the land in Tennessee is being developed every 3 to 4 years. In another hundred years there will be no open space. Nature and wilderness, historically essential parts of American and Tennessee culture, is an increasingly rare commodity today and will disappear altogether unless we change.

Development and sprawl have had an impact on MIddle Tennessee’s transportation network. We have no public transportation in the region. In 1990, MIddle Tennessee was one of the least congested areas for its size. In the past ten years the amount of driving per capita has increased dramatically, from about 30 miles per person per day to 37.5 miles per person per day, the highest for a major metropolitan area in the United States. We have sacrificed much of the natural landscape in our part of the world and spend more time sitting in traffic looking at concrete and disposable buildings. We are “home from nowhere” according to the title of a popular book about American sprawl. We have paved the wilderness.

Vehicle miles driven combined with a decrease in vehicle fuel efficiency plus our reliance on coal fired electricity in the US has the potential to disrupt established ecosystems everywhere within my lifetime, or certainly within the lifetime of my adult children.

In May 2002 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the Final Resource and Toxics Management for 2000, Tennessee, still one of the most scenic places in the world, has a lot to be proud of but toxic releases are not one of them. We ranked 9th out of the 50 states in toxic releases totaling 162 million pounds of pollutants that foul our air, poison our waters and contribute to debilitating illnesses. An increase of 20 million pounds over the previous reporting year. Specifically, Tennessee was 1st in the nation in releases - 47 million pounds, 3rd in the nation in air releases - 104 million pounds, 4th in the nation in dioxin releases and 23rd in the nation in water pollutants - 32 million pounds. Mercury pollution makes most of the fish in our rivers and takes 30 years to be cleaned up. Blood analyses of average middle aged Tennesseans reveal traces of more than 20 persistant manmade chemicals in our bodies.

What most Tennesseans want, I believe, is an opportunity for meaningful and gainful employment close to home, clean air, clean water and foods that are grown on healthy soils free from toxic chemicals. Our delicately aligned actions are counter intuitive. We have disconnected our understanding of Nature.

When something bad happens to Nature, like the loss of habitat or the extinction of a species, we have little idea of the real meaning or the ultimate result. What difference does it make. We understand much about living and nothing about dying. Where experts at everything except living in harmony with the rest of life on our planet. Those of us who live close to Tennesseans, who have studied connections and love our planet, know that we are on the precipice of a world we will have to recreate. We are on planet Earth, we must learn to mimic the web of Natural systems by:

- Creating no waste that is not food for some other living organism. Mankind is the only being on the planet that does not do this.
- Valuing natural capital that produces for us clean air, clean water, healthy food, shelter and habitat, that makes life on earth not just possible but enjoyable.
- Natural systems provide these services at no cost. We cannot replicate nature, we can only invent.
- If we destroy the natural capital of Tennessee we also destroy ourselves, our hope and our future.
- Investing in natural capital by restoring ecological diversity, preserving all living species, preserving habitat for other living things, using only what we need to live adequately and respecting all life, human and nonhuman.
- Finding our place in the world not based on our ability to dominate, but by our ability to cooperate. Our ability to dominate is unquestionable. Humans are dominating our world now and now the major cause of change, to the demise all other living things and the quality and quantity of the bounty of Nature and support system on which all life depends. Our ability to understand the string result of human domination is highly questionable.

If we are to have long term success and survival, I believe we have a very short time to start making changes. We need leadership. Politics in Tennesse, and especially at the national level in the US, belong to the corporate and moneyed elite. The issues they debate and the resulting maintenance of the corporate status quo will not soon enough address the pending environmental problems which are all peaking at the same time climate change, water scarcity, collapsing fisheries, population explosion, shrinking forests, desertification, the leveling off of agricultural productivity, species extinctions and the exponential escalation of climate change that has the potential to disrupt established ecosystems everywhere within my lifetime, or certainly within the lifetime of my adult children.

Traditional education will not be able to act and react fast enough to the educational challenge required to inform the population about what is going on and why. Considering that General Electric owns NBC, Westinghouse owns CBS, Disney owns ABC, News Corporation owns FOX, and Siemens owns CNN, we are not likely to see the big picture reported on TV news. One of the shortcomings of the media is the failure to convey the big picture and put local happenings into a global perspective. This is cer-
CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

MONTHLY MEMBERS GATHERING: Thursday, October 2, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - 641 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee. Join us for Chickasaw Group's "FIRST THURSDAY" monthly gathering where Sierra Club members, activists and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. Contact Membership Chair Jill Johnstone at (901) 278-2713 or jilljohnstn1@mindspring.com for more information.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE: Saturday, October 4, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - The Sierra Club Environmental Justice Program Conference, “Be Aware: Check your Environmental IQ.” Look out for video tapes of the lives of the birds you can see, unless otherwise announced in the media. To confirm attendance, please register to: John M. Johnston at (901) 278-2713 or jdjohnstn@memphis.edu for more information.

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION: Friday, October 3, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Legislative Reception for the Shelby County Dignitaries and Opening Reception for the Environmental Justice Conference. Magnolia Room, N.W. corner of Commerce and Monroe in Downtown Square (1 block west of Cooper and 1/2 block north of Union). Come and support our conservation goals.

STRAIGHT STRATEGY MEETING: Thursday, October 27, 7:00 p.m. - Radnor Lake Visitor Center in Nashville. James Lockert and/or comments.

PROGRAM MEETING: Wednesday, October 13, 7:00 p.m. - St. Louis Catholic Church, 200 North Parkway, Memphis, Tennessee. This meeting of the Executive Committee is open also to all members of the Sierra Club. Contact Charlie Rond at phone (901) 327-2545 or coyotem@usit.net for more information.

PROGRAM MEETING: The next program will be in November. Program M etings are scheduled every other month. Contact Clark Buchner at (901) 327-2545 or coyotem@usit.net for more information.

TELEVISION PROGRAM: Every Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. and Wednesday at 11:30 a.m., CST. The Library Channel, Memphis Cable 18, WVLK. "The Nature of Conservation" is sponsored by the Sierra Club. A different program is aired, usually each month, with the program repeating every Tuesday and Wednesday throughout the month. For October the discussion will be the city-wide event of "To Tree or Not to Tree" to educate citizens about how and why to replant trees after the city's devastating wind storm of July which destroyed so many trees. Television program host and director Judith Rutschman will interview Mary Wilder, chair of the event and Dr. Mike Kirby, a professor of urban studies at Rhodes about the event. The Sierra Club will join with City Beautiful and the Volenteer Evergreen Community Association (VECA) in the tree planting effort. If any groups or individuals in the community have a special problem or concern, would like to see a program on a special issue or subject, please contact Judith Rutschman at (901) 767-5916 or rutells@yahoo.com.

CHEROKEE GROUP (C hattanooga)

STRAIGHT STRATEGY MEETING: Thursday, October 2 - This is the first meeting in a long time for the Cherokee Group! It will be held at the house at Spangler Farm in Hixson at 7 p.m. The Spangler Farm (Greenway Farm) is located a few miles down H amill Road from Hw y 155, across the street from Bethel Bible Village. We want to meet other members of the Chattanooga area and find out what you're interested in. The Tennessee Chapter C hair, Liz D iion, will be there to answer any questions you might have about state wide programs. If you are interested in being involved with the group but cannot attend this meeting, please contact D on Vanhook at 423-843-2244 or vanhookc@earthlink.net.

Sierra Club John Muir Quote T's - NEW! M mountain stream picture with John Muir quote "There is nothing more eloquent in nature than a mountain stream".  $12.00 per T's - XX-Large - Qty  _____ x $15/shirt = _____

Large - Qty  _____ x $15/shirt = _____

X-Large - Qty  _____ x $15/shirt = _____

Medium – Qty  _____ x $12/shirt = _____

Small - Qty  _____ x $12/shirt = _____

Total $ - Save Our Smokies t-shirts

Save Our Smokies T's

sizes: Medium - Qty  _____ x $12/shirt = _____

Large - Qty  _____ x $15/shirt = _____

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Total $ - Save Our Smokies t-shirts

Total T-shirt order

Grand Total (from above) + Shipping & Handling (@$3/shirt) Total Enclosed

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Sorry, we cannot accept credit cards. Please make checks payable to Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club and mail to: Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club, 2001 21st Avenue South, Suite 436 - Nashville, TN 37212.

Model Orders - NEw Products:

Sierra Club T-shirt

Sierra Club Long-sleeved shirt

Sierra Club Button

Number of each item:

Total $ - Sierra Club Products

Ordering Information:

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We welcome your contributions, but we do have to charge for our T-shirts to meet our expenses. The costs are as follows:

Sizes:

Small: Qty  _____ x $12/shirt = _____

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X-Large - Qty  _____ x $15/shirt = _____

Total $ - Save Our Smokies t-shirts

Total T-shirt order

Grand Total (from above) + Shipping & Handling (@$3/shirt) Total Enclosed

Shop to:
Name: ______________________
Address: ____________________
City: ________________________ State: ________
Zip: ________________________
Telephone: __________________

Sorry, we cannot accept credit cards. Please make checks payable to Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club and mail to: Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club, 2001 21st Avenue South, Suite 436 - Nashville, TN 37212.

If you would like to be active in the Save Our Smokies campaign, please contact Beverly Smith at 865-531-8480 or blsmithb13000@comcast.com.

Your help would be greatly appreciated!
The Two Hour Activist

By James H. Baker, Chickasaw Group

Two hours a week, equals 17 minutes a day...

Our lives are a balancing act. We balance the needs of our families, the demands of our jobs, the time involved in caring for our residences and possessions with how we spend our "off" hours. If we are involved with the Sierra Club, we add our activities with that group to the mix, and then we juggle it all and strive for balance. In that time that one does "Sierra Club" activities, how much of that involves activism? That is where my concept of "Two Hours per Week Activism" comes into play. By taking small "bite size" pieces of a larger task, less effort will be expended by each individual, yet more ambitious goals may be achieved.

How does one begin to be a two-hour Activist? My suggestion is to look at the National Sierra Club's web-site for the Priority Campaigns to see where your interests and talents might mesh best. Then look at the Tennessee Chapter and your local Group web-sites. Again, see what are the focus campaigns and see where you could best put that hour to its best use.

Contact your Group Conservation Chair to coordinate efforts and to eliminate unneeded duplication of efforts. The Conservation Chair may wish to have you contact the Issue Leader for further direction and/or training. Example:

You are interested in water quality and you are a two-hour activist. You have been placed in contact with the water quality Issue Leader. There may be a large construction site on a route you go by on Sunday on your way to or from church and you see that mud is washing into the streets when it rains. The Issue Leader agrees to train you in the basics of erosion control and what can be seen at this site from this public road or sidewalk and the techniques of documenting poor erosion control practices. Every Sunday, you stop, take some brief notes and photos and forward that information to the Issue Leader. If the site is not brought into voluntary compliance by the developer and the mud keeps washing off-site, the Group Conservation Chair may need to write a Formal Complaint letter to the regulators charged with enforcing the water pollution laws. Your notes and photos become part of that complaint. Your time on this task is less than two hours a week. You become the eyes and ears of the Group for that issue, and as you are already in the area, no one else has to expend precious fuel and time resources getting to the site to question. Another person can be working another site.

Here are some additional suggestions for two-hour activists. Contact your Group Conservation Chair for help and advice.

- Checking the Legal Notices section of the newspaper. Often, this is the only "Public Notice" there is for issues that need to be brought to the attention of the Group Conservation Chair or Issue Leader. Legal Notices should be checked daily.
- Checking the web-site of the United States Army Corps of Engineers to look for Public Notices for wetlands alterations and Public Comment periods. Wetlands alterations mean that a site may be slated for development in the near future. Check weekly.
- Checking the web-site of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for various permit application/renewal notices. Check weekly.
- Checking the web-sites and bulletin boards for meetings of the City Council/County Commission/Land Use Control Board/Air Quality Board and other bodies. The two-hour activist that likes to do this may need to be placed on their mailing lists. Check weekly.
- The web-site of the Local Emergency Planning Committee should be checked monthly.
- Checking the Right to Know web-site to research on toxic chemical releases to the land, water and air. Check monthly. One could collaborate with others to report those releases in an article in the Tennes-Sierran.
- In this Internet Culture, Public Notices of meetings and Public Comment periods are on the Internet as a matter of course. There are paper copies on bulletin boards and there are mailing lists for some of this, but the Internet is far more convenient. It has been my experience, if one sees an issue early enough, one has a far better chance of resolving that issue with success than letting it get so close it will be fall, or one person who over commits, will experience "environmental burn-out." Another benefit is that these notices and web-sites should be checked, and regularly and make regular reports to the Issue Leader(s) and Conservation Chair.
- Speaking of meetings. To my knowledge, all of the above meetings are Public Meetings, as required by law. Big problem in Memphis, and maybe elsewhere, these meetings are held in the early afternoon, when most people are at work, doing the "9-5." Here is where retired and self-employed two-hour activists come into play. They may have the more flexible schedule, without having to take vacation time or other personal leave. These meetings last often more than two hours, but that is the price to pay. These members have the best chance of attending these meetings and reporting back to the Issue Leader and Conservation Chair what transpired. Then if additional mobilization is needed, then it can be done in a systematic fashion.

What are the benefits of two-hour activism? "Many hands make light work." The Tennessee Chapter has slightly over 6,000 members. If each member did two hour's work a week as an activist, that means that 12,000 hours a week of activism would be generated. Now instead of a core group of activists working many hours on a limited number of issues, a larger group can work on a larger number of issues, with less time per person being expended. Go back to the first sentence in the article, "Our lives are a balancing act." When too much is being balanced, something may or will fall, or one person who over commits, will experience "environmental burn-out." Another benefit is that group members who participate in two-hour activism will feel ownership of the issue and the self-esteem that will result. A more active membership is another benefit as the word spreads that one is needed just two hours a week...17 minutes a day.

The clock is ticking; won't you join us for a two hour a week activism?
starting at Betty Gap and the River's headwaters. Plan on lots of water crossings but the water level should be doable this time of year. This backpack is rescheduled from last year. Rated M. Preregister with W. Shklar: H ome 865-523- 2272; Work 865-521-5683; email wshklar@bellsouth.net.

Saturday, October 12, 2003, Smoky Mountains Day hike.

The Cohutta Wilderness (Ga) and adjacent Big Frog (TN) Wildernesses together total 45,050 acres, the 9th largest protected National Forest Wilderness areas. Using a car shuttle, we will hike about 13 miles to bring!

Saturday, October 13, 2003, Smoky Mountains Day hike.

Sierra Club Outings offer a variety of opportunities to enjoy nature. To this end, the following is a brief description of a select few outings. For specific details, please refer to: http://www.sierracub.org/outings/chapter/forms/SignUp/Id=0, for a printed version. Transportation to the outing, including carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar, is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

Saturday-Sunday, October 4-5, 2003, Back- pack, Cohutta Wilderness (GA) - The Cohutta (Ga) and adjacent Big Frog (TN) Wildernesses together total 45,050 acres, the 9th largest protected National Forest Wilderness areas. Using a car shuttle, we will hike about 13 miles to bring!

Saturday-Sunday, October 18-19, 2003, Fall Color Backpack, Sheep Pen Gap via Wolf Ridge - A long gradual climb through fall colors leads us to Parsons' Bald and on to one of the finer high elevation tent sites in the Park. On Sunday, if the weather cooperates, we should have great views down into Cades Cove from Gregory Bald. We will return to the Twenty Miler Ranger Station via the Long-Hungry Ridge Trail. Because of the elevation gain, we have to rate this hike as difficult, but the well graded trails make this an easy "difficult." There is a limit of 8 on this trip, so sign up early. Pre-register with Roger Jeske (865) 690-3257 (h), (865) 574- 4871 (w), email: mcdonald@jesske@twiggers.org.

Saturday, November 1, 2003, Day Hike, Schoolhouse Gap Camp Turpentine Ridge, GSMNP - We will start this easy 4.7 mile hike on Schoolhouse Gap Tr. off Laurel Creek Rd. out of Townsend and continue onto Turkey Pen Ridge Trail. With leaves just past their peak and many fallen we should have beautiful views of nearby ridges as we trudge along Laurel Creek Rd. There will be a short 2 mile car shuttle back to the first parking lot. M in front of Books A Million at Walker Springs exit. Pre-register with Priscilla Watts (865) 966-4412.

Saturday-Sunday, November 1-2, 2003, BackPack, Fork Ridge/ Deep Creek Gap, GSMNP - After a short car shuttle from the Deep Creek Trailhead (Newfound Gap Road), we will begin our backpack at the Fork Ridge Trailhead (Clingmans Dome Road). We will drop 2880' over 5.5 miles to our campsite, #53, also known as Poke Patch. The campsite located off the South Old Mac Trail from the junction of Fork Ridge and Deep Creek trails. The hike is rated moderate. Pre-register with Beverly Smith, (865) 966-4412, cell 865-922-3489, craigSDyerCDT@mindspring.com.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

Saturday October 11 to Friday October 17 - Smokies Backpack on the AT - Several groups associated with Sierra Club LC and TTA are planning to backpack the AT in the Smokies from Fontana Dam to Newfound Gap Road. Rate SH. Experienced backpackers only. For additional information, contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email Adelicia allegioal.com.

Sunday, October 19 - North Chickamauga Creek Pocket Wilderness - Come out for another adventure with Elysian Fields Recycling Site. A hike of about 5.5 miles with possibility of adding mileage along Bradley Fork Trail. With elevations ranging from 2200' to 3500', the hike is rated moderate. Meet at 8:00 AM at The Koger's on Northshore Road just off of Pellissippi Parkway. Call Linda Smithyman at (615) 822-1979 by Thursday night, Oct 14, 9:00 PM.

Saturday, October 25 to Sunday, November 2, 2003 - Smoky Mountains Dayhike - The Cohutta Wilderness (Ga) and adjacent Big Frog (TN) Wildernesses together total 45,050 acres, the 9th largest protected National Forest Wilderness areas. Using a car shuttle, we will hike about 13 miles to bring!

Sunday, October 26 - Murfreesboro Greenway Dayhike.

Thank You!!

Any good friend of the earth who can donate 2 or 3 hours a year, can join the fun at our Kroger Elysian Fields Recycling Site. We need you!!! AND, your efforts directly contribute to the environmental campaigns of your local Middle Tennessee Group.

To volunteer contact D avid Bordenkircher at 333-3377 or email dabordeck/richer@ mindspring.com

Will you take the challenge and make a difference?

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on Friday and hike the Low Gap trail to the AT spending the afternoon. Contact Judith Hammond @ 901-276-2819 or JHammond@tnqp.sdps.org.

Saturday, October 12, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Wolf River Harbor Clean-Up, Memphis - Meet at 10 AM at the public boat ramp under the Auction Avenue bridge. If needed, please contact Wolf River Harbor cleaner. Join Chickasaw Group members and the new Sierra Club Water Sentinels program as we partner with the City of Memphis’ Public Works Department to pick up trash along the banks of the Harbor. Scott Dyce, Director of the national Sierra Club Water Sentinel program will be joining us. Trash bags and gloves will be provided. Participants will receive a Water Sentinels t-shirt and an appreciation gift. Participants will be eligible for a drawing to win doorprizes from Out door Inc. After the event, please join us at Cafe Francisco at 3rd and Jackson for snacks and drinks.

Contact James A. Baker @ (901) 372-6717.

Sunday, October 18, 8:00 a.m., Fort Pillow State Park Fall Hike - This is the site of a Civil War battle in the Mississippi River bluff. The river has moved, but the battles and the battlements are still there. The flora of the Eastern hardwood forest is interesting, as is the Visitor Center history of the African American troops who fought Gen. N B Forrest here. Bring lunch and we’ll eat on the trail. The hike is about 5-6 miles RT and will be slow-paced, as the trail is a tad bit hilly in some places. If you have the time you can visit Alex Haley’s boyhood home on your return. Meet at the old Penny’s parking lot, north end of Raleigh Springs Mall. Wolf will depart at 8:00 AM and return around 3:30 PM. Contact Judith Hammond @ 901-276-2919 or Stanley Abel @ 375-0239.

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Do we need Nature?

by Ron Castle

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truly in Tennessee where environmental issues go largely unreported or underreported except in the context of a specific news event. I am personally aware of any specifically “environmental reporters” at any of the major newspapers in our state. Reporting on the environment apparently doesn’t make big advertisers happy and the prime mission of most corporately owned newspapers today is to make advertisers happy.

So, if we are not getting leadership from our political representatives and we are not getting leadership from the press, where do we get our leadership? Poorly par-

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Humingbirds

Rule in Tennessee!

Compiled by various members of the Chickasaw Group

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a trust for the perpetual support of the historic facility. The sisters are descendants of Eb Davis, the original owner who established the cotton plantation and, in addition, once owned 40,000 acres in Alabama and 40,000 acres in Arkansas.

Bats were also a feature of the Saturday event, with an expert showing the audience three varieties of bats including the giant fruit bat of South America. As he walked through the audience holding the bat, an electronic converter allowed you to hear the echo location sounds the bat uses to catch insects and to avoid obstacles. If any myths were exploded: bats are not blind, they will not become entangled in your hair, although they can become infected with rabies, they are no more prone to it than any other animal.

Another expert talked about alligators which have returned from a threatened species situation a number of years ago to thrive now in the Mississippi Delta. He also taught the audience to identify threatened species turtles and beetles, which could go the way of the extinct passenger pigeon.
From Tennessee to Machu Picchu!

By Barry Faust - Knoxville, Tennessee

My wife, Debbie and I just returned from a 17 day Sierra Club trip to Peru with John O’Donnell. We left on July 10th returning July 27th. The trip was the culmination of a lifetime! We visited the Wildlife Refuge in Paracas, spent 5 days in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, 3 days at Machu Picchu, 5 days in the rainforests, and we even flew over the Nazca Lines in a small Piper cub. We visited Lima, Cuzco, Puerto Maldonado, the Tambopata Research Center, Chinchero, hiked part of the Inca Trail, and visited several local markets. It was the most beautiful and wondrous trip of our lives. The people of Peru and the country were beautiful beyond words. We had zero problems and loved every day of the trip. Even when I had to get out and help push the dugout canoe up the river 5 times. Our guides were excellent as well as the food and lodging. Special thanks to Pepe, Jackie, Nilton, Hans, Lucretia, and everyone who helped make our journey so memorable. We will go back to Peru again. The Incas were right when they said it was the Center of the Universe. Thank you Sierra Club for the opportunity. Thank you Peru and your people for your Spiritual Healing. Wisdom, love, and respect for the planet.

Below First Row Left: Barry and Debbie Faust stop to pose for a quick photo taken by very nice French lady who was also visiting the area.

Below First Row Right: Inca Jamming – Barry Faust plays his harmonica with a local flute player in a market in Chinchero. He I traded harmonicas for pan flutes on two occasions, and says the people were wonderful.

Below Bottom Row: The Sacred Valley of the Incas.