Mountians (SOCM) joined forces to file a federal law-the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project (SABP), a permit, several organizations including the Sierra Club, to enforce the laws being broken by this new Robert Clear Coal Corporation “cross ridge” mine on Zeb Mountain.

Prior to the issuance of the permits for this mine, the mining company gets its reclamation bond released, the steep terraces of sterile soil are left to erode into the streams that flow in nearly every Appalachian holler.

Now Mountain Top Removal has moved to Zeb Mountain, located in the heart of Tennessee’s Cumberland Mountains on the west side of beautiful Elk Valley, home to farmers, retirees, and rural families. The Zeb Mountain Mine has been in operation for about eight months, and if allowed to continue for its ten year life expectancy, the post-mining rubble is piled in terraces that cruelly mimic the “original contour” but bear little resemblance to the pre-mining mountain. Once the mining enters other headwaters.

Just eight months into the ten-year project, the embryonic mine now covers over 200 acres but has caused more damage than was ever thought possible by those unfamiliar with massive coal mines. Every month another chunk of mountain is gone and every month the silt in Dan Branch––the first of seven mountain streams into the barren terraced hillsides so common in neighboring Claiborne County. If completed, the Zeb Mountain mine will be larger than any of the mines in Claiborne County.

Despite the Bush administration’s attempts to neuter the Clean Water Act, six organizations and a group of dedicated local residents are forcing the regulatory agencies to enforce the laws being broken by this new Robert Clear Coal Corporation “cross ridge” mine on Zeb Mountain.

Prior to the issuance of the permits for this mine, the local citizens sensed the streams that drain Zeb Mountain and confirmed the existence of a federally listed species of fish, the blackside dace. Ponds that would have been to these mines that the attendance forms required by TDEC to prove they held mandatory pre-permit public hearings are sometimes signed by school custodians who just happen to be present cleaning the empty room.

Residents of Campbell County and Elk Valley continue to keep a close watch on the Zeb Mountain mine. Several times a month they test the water quality of Dan Branch to measure the consistently illegal levels of sediment in the stream. They also test other streams draining the permit area to establish baseline data that will be invaluable if and when the mining enters other headwaters.

From the ground and air, these Zeb Mountain mine monitors photograph illegal ponds being built outside the permit area and existing ponds that are failing and leaking. Based on complaints filed by the mine monitors, Robert Clear Coal Corporation has been issued at least a half dozen notices of violation and orders to correct practices that are...
**Send Change of Address To:**

Email: address.changes@sierraclub.org  
*Email Mindy a clip the M using a coupon below and mail your Sierran membership number to: T ennessee Chapter Membership Address: 3223 Caldwell Road - Ashland City, TN 37015 (615) 792-2590  

**Send Articles To:**

Email: T ennesSierran@aol.com  
Snail Mail: Rachel Floyd, T ennes-Sierran Chief Editor 3223 Caldwell Road - Ashland City, TN 37015 (615) 792-2590  

**ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**

Submission DEADLINE is the 5th of the month preceding the current month's issue.

1. Email and email attached files are preferred. Send to T ennesSierran@aol.com either with embedded text messages, or attached files in PC-based formats. M ac users should embed text in body of an email message only.

2. Photographs should be scanned in .jpg or .tif file format, whenever possible, then either attached to email or mailed via US Postal Service (USPS) on a 3 ½ diskette or CD Rom. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your diskette or photos returned.

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

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

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

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Attach mailing address label in this box, or fill in current name, address & Membership ID# Current Address:

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**Sign on to Save Our Smokies!**

To subscribe to the Greater Smoky Mountains Coalition (a.k.a. Save Our Smokies - SOS) subscribe, just send a blank email to: Greater_Smoky_Mountains_Coalition-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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The Cumberlands Fall to Mountain Top Removal

Continued from Page 1

causing the pollution of Dan Branch.

In response to this repetitive pattern of pollution, complaints, inspections, corrective orders, notices of violation and the failure of the water quality of Dan Branch to improve, OSM has finally ordered Robert Clear to come up with a new sediment control plan for the entire 1400 acre permit area. If the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) decides the modifications proposed by Robert Clear to be major modifications of the existing permit, the public will once again have an opportunity to comment on the impossibility of controlling pollution when steep mountains are torn apart.

The organizations and people who love the Cumberlands will continue to work to protect the streams, forests, and mountains. The Zeb Mountain Mine is showing us that the price of vigilance is high, but Claiborne County has shown that the result of neglect is unacceptable.

Appalachia Coal

A Brief History in Coal Mining

Continued from Page 1

M ore coal is being taken out of Appalachia, but fewer people are needed to do the mining. Local economies and communities begin to shrink. The high walls left above the benches prevent wildlife from moving up and down the mountains. Erosion and sedimentation have increased in parallel with the increased scope of the mining. Mine reclamation is a new concept, which is generally limited to some grading and throwing (non-native) grass seed on the spoil.

Fast forward again to the 1970’s. The federal Clean Water Act was passed in 1973, establishing standards and mandating protections for navigable surface waters. The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act was passed in 1977, establishing standards for strip mining practices and procedures for the reclamation of mined lands. Finally some regulatory limits are in place to restrict the ability of coal companies to rape the land and move on, leaving a devastated landscape and impoverished communities behind them.

Unfortunately, enforcement of the federal rules is primarily left to the states, who are mostly less than aggressive or diligent in carrying out their responsibilities. Indeed, in Tennessee, the State’s ability and willingness to enforce acceptable mining practices is so poor the federal Office of Surface Mining does not delegate its authority to regulate coal mining to the State.

We come now to the present day, when the easy pickings for coal strip mines are gone, and the demand for coal to fuel electric power plants and industrial boilers skyrockets due to price increases for oil and natural gas, and the uncertainties of Middle East politics. Technology has advanced also, making it possible for coal companies to economically remove up to 600 feet of “overburden” from coal seams and extract the coal.

His new practice is known, descriptively, as “mountain-top removal mining” or euphemistically as “crosridge mining”. Instead of just gouging strips around the Appalachian mountains, coal companies can now just pulverize the entire tops of mountains and dump them down the mountainsides.

Over 3000 MILES of streams have been buried under “valley fills” by coal companies even though federal regulations prohibit the dumping of fill into streams. And to date over 500 square miles of Appalachian mountains have been denuded of their forest cover, leveled, and left looking like a moonscape.

Although the 1977 SM CRA law requires reclamation of the mined land, only half the mined land has been reclaimed to even minimum standards, with that minimum being planting of lespedeza, an imported weed from China that is inedible for wildlife or livestock. Trees do not grow on the mixture of rock, clay, and subsoil left after regrading.

A federal court decision in 2001 limiting the scope of the Clean Water Act and the authority of the Army Corps of Engineers over “non-navigable” waters provided the Bush administration with an excuse to issue guidance absolving the government of any responsibility to regulate any waters considered to be non-navigable, including headwaters streams, intermittent streams, and wet weather conveyances, all of which are exactly where valley fills end up. The proposed regulation implementing this “guidance” has been withdrawn, but the instruction to the agencies is still there.

In 2002 the Bush administration issued the rule that eliminated an Army Corps of Engineers ban on mine waste and other pollution in waterways, opening the way for increased dumping of mine spoil in headwater streams. In 2003 the same Bush Administration issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement which purported to address the growing environmental impacts of mountaintop removal mining, but which only recommended streamlining the administrative process for mining companies to receive permits for their operations. The DEIS, in spite of acknowledging the severe and long-lasting impacts of mining on Appalachia’s forests, streams, wildlife, and communities, has advanced also, making it possible for coal companies to economically remove up to 600 feet of “overburden” from coal seams and extract the coal.

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UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP (Cookeville)

PROGRAM MEETING: Tuesday, March 9, 2004, Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. Our March program is our slide show introduction to the yearly Harvey Broome Group Outing program. We will have slides of many of the places to which we will be going. And it will be a great opportunity to meet the outing leaders face to face and discuss upcoming trips. Call Roger Jenkins at 865-690-3257 for more information.

STRATEGY MEETING: Tuesday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. If you’re interested in getting more involved or in finding out about what drives the Sierra Club in this area, this is the meeting to attend. Call Axel Ringe at 865-397-1840 for more information.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

PROGRAM MEETING: Thursday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center in Nashville. Gary, Faith, Andrew, and Rebekah Dodd share the story of how one family turned a random comment by a child into the life-changing experience of a family bicycle ride through the lower forty-eight states. The Dodd family noted their bicycles on a continuous route of approximately 9,500 miles from Seattle, Washington to Cape Elizabeth, Maine. Many television broadcasts, newspapers, and journals have chronicled their once-in-a-lifetime journey across the U.S. Additionally, the Dodd family has been featured on Good Morning America three times and on National Public Radio’s This American Life. As you ride with the Ddds over the back roads of America, you will discover unique places you may want to visit, and you will experience the ride through their colorful vignettes and vivid photographs. You will also be reminded of the good in America as you hear about the encounters of the Dodd family with the people who enriched their journey. Their accounts of the bike ride will inspire you to not be afraid of the unknown, to contemplate ways that you can stretch yourself. Selected by the Audubon Society as the NALS, the Dodds’ new book about their family odyssey, the bike ride through the most beautiful country in the world.

Contact Membership Chair April Smith for more information. She will occupy the Group Lodge where bunks are provided, but bring your own bedding, pillow, and towel. A short program meeting will be held on Thursday March 18th at 7:00 P.M. on the third Thursday of each month at Greenway Farms in Hickson (5651 Gann Store Road). The programs involve active updates, guest speakers, fellowship, and refreshments. This month’s guest speaker will be Celio Sand. He is an author, entitled “Lawless Logging in Tennessee”, will examine impacts of the 2-million acres of native forest that were cut in Tennessee during the 1990’s. For more information contact Chris O’Connor 423-867-4957 or email chris_o77@yahoo.com.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

MONTHLY MEMBERS GATHERING: Thursday, March 4, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. – Otherlands, 641 South Cordova Street, Memphis, Tennessee. The programs involve active updates, guest speakers, fellowship, and refreshments. This month’s guest speaker will be Celio Sand. He is an author, entitled “Lawless Logging in Tennessee”, will examine impacts of the 2-million acres of native forest that were cut in Tennessee during the 1990’s. For more information contact Chris O’Connor 423-867-4957 or email chris_o77@yahoo.com.

TELEVISION PROGRAM: Every Monday at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday at 4:00pm and Wednesday at 11:30am, CST, the TV show that will air in M is on Memphis’ WMC-5. “The Nature of Conservation” is sponsored by the Sierra Club. The TV show that will air in March is on a special issue of the TV show that will air in March is on a special issue or subject, please contact Judith Rutschman <RUTSCHMAN@rhodes.edu> at (901) 767-5916.

UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP (Cookeville)

PROGRAM MEETING: Contact Peggy Evans at 931-432-6680 or maevans@TWLakes.net for more information regarding the program meeting dates and times.

STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)

STRATEGY MEETING: Until further notice, the State of Franklin Group will hold its Strategy Meeting on the second Thursday of every month. Program meetings will continue to be held on the fourth Tuesday. Unless otherwise advertised, all Sierra Club meetings are held at the Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site, 2620 South Roan Street, Johnson City. Please contact Linda Modica at <lmodica@aol.com>, 753-9697 (H) or 676-2925 (C) to confirm a meeting or to place an item on the agenda.

POT-LUCK MEETING: Friday, March 26 at 6 P.M. at Olston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, Gray, TN - Dave Muhly, a Sierra Club staff member who lives in SW VA, will be coming to speak to our next coalition of progressives get-together. He has worked for the Sierra Club for several years, and is very capable of speaking on the Sierra Club’s Campaign to Beat Bush.

The State of Franklin Group (Tri-Cities) will host this pot-luck dinner with local progressive groups such as the local Green Party, NAACP, and individuals joining together for fellowship and an opportunity to co-ordinate future activities in the upcoming election. All are invited to join us.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

PROGRAM MEETING: Thursday, March 11 at 7:00 P.M. The Cherokee Group of the Sierra Club holds program meetings at 7:00 P.M. on the third Thursday of each month at Greenway Farms in Hickson (5651 Gann Store Road). The programs involve active updates, guest speakers, fellowship, and refreshments. This month’s guest speaker will be Celio Sand. He is an author, entitled “Lawless Logging in Tennessee”, will examine impacts of the 2-million acres of native forest that were cut in Tennessee during the 1990’s. For more information contact Chris O’Connor 423-867-4957 or email chris_o77@yahoo.com.

UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP (Cookeville)

will describe amazing lessons learned from animals - like monkeys who are continuously shocked while holding onto a tree full of electric ants, who then plunge their hand into a bee hive without getting stung. For more information contact Tom Lawrence at (901) 278-2829.

PROGRAM MEETING: Wednesday, March 24, 2004 - 7:00 p.m. - Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center, 3030 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee. Program meetings are scheduled every month on the fourth Wednesday. Contact Tom Lawrence <tlawrence@memphiscitytn.gov> at 278-2829 or Clark Buchner <cbuchner@cbuchner.com> at 327-2545 for more information.

TELEVISION PROGRAM: Every Monday at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday at 4:00pm and Wednesday at 11:30am, CST, the TV show that will air in M is on Memphis’ WMC-5. “The Nature of Conservation” is sponsored by the Sierra Club. The TV show that will air in March is on a special issue or subject, please contact Judith Rutschman <RUTSCHMAN@rhodes.edu> at (901) 767-5916.

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TENNESSEE Chapter’s Internet Mail List

“SUBSCRIBE TENNESSEE-NWS (Your First Name) [Your Last Name]” Leave the subject blank. Replace the submit with the keywords.

Tennessee Chapter Spring Meeting

April 30-May 2, 2004

Fall Creek Falls State Park

http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/parks/

Hosted by the Middle Tennessee Group

Join us at Fall Creek Falls State Park, which will occupy the Group Lodge where bunks are provided, but bring your own bedding, pillow, and towel. A short evening program is planned.

The cost for the entire weekend is only $30.00 per person (1/2 price for children under 12 years old). This includes lodging, Saturday breakfast and dinner, and Sunday breakfast.

Please RSVP to: Rachel Floyd email: rfloyd557@bellsouth.net telephone: 615-406-9204

Registration Info Needed:
Number of Attendees & Names
Number of carnivores
Number of herbivores
Chickasaw Group News
Compiled by various members
Tennessee Water Sentinels Press Event
In a temperature and wind chill that was too cold to freeze the... (what is that descriptor involving a brass monkey?), the Tennessee Water Sentinels publicly released their follow-up report, Foiling the Father of Waters-2003 in Review, Industrial Storm Water Pollution and the Failure to Regulate. It was seven hearty souls that sailed forth to the banks of the Mississippi River... (the Simms) Tennessee Water Sentinels gave a sound bite for the news camera and for the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper. We thank Charlie Rond and Dan Richardson of the Sierra Club; boat owner Jeffery Laper; Steven Sondheim, Friends of Shelby Farms, Sue Williams, League of Women Voters, and Gary Bridgman, who is the President of the Board of Directors, considered premature by FFOR, that will send the development proposal for the Public Promenade to City Council for final approval. The issue has galvanized community groups and enraged individuals alike. Recent issue since Citizens to Save on the middle of Memphis. Stay tuned for further coverage, and visit the FFOR web site for more details at: www.friendsforourriverfront.org.

New Source Review Town Meeting
The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) held a town meeting in Memphis. The meeting in Memphis was the fifth of six statewide forums held by TDEC to receive public input on whether or not they should approve the New Environmental Protection Agency's New Source Review rules, modify them, or keep their existing rules concerning air pollution from large sources. An overwhelming number of the estimated 75 attendees were elected officials, members of Chambers of Commerce, and representatives of industry. An estimated 200 people, representing environmental interests, heard this focused message from the industry angle.

As a result, industry may leave Tennessee for those states, causing a loss of jobs—and the spin off income from those jobs. Several elected officials and Chamber of Commerce members stated things like: "we are a small population county with one major employer, and a single industrial plant closing can double the unemployment rate overnight." No elected official wants to have the financial hits of losing approximately 200 in their successful efforts to halt construction of a bridge. The issue of this bridge construction has been a hot-button topic in local media and during this panel discussion, centers on the political process supported by Sierra Club and other community organizations.

Continued on Page 7

Final Defender Update
Our sincere thanks go to this month's contributors to the Defender campaign, and to all of you who have contributed to this fund that supports our critical lobbying and advocacy activities. We are not nearly as well-off as we would hope to be, but we are hopeful that this will, with the help of you, our members and friends. This month's Defenders (January 1 through February 10) include:

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Russell Yttri
Susan M. Codd and Roger Jenkins

The Defender's campaign is a special annual fundraising effort that supports our critical lobbying, and advocacy activities. We are proud of the progress we have made. The Sierra Club has become a stronger and more visible presence in the state legislature, which allows us to work more effectively towards passage of legislation that protects our air, water, and forests; and promotes environmental justice and smart growth. Because the Defender fundraising is a voluntary, non-deductible expense and 100 percent of your contribution goes to program expenses.

We know that in these economic times, you may not feel that you can make a large donation. BUT...if each of you would send just $5 or $10, we would be able to reach our goal. Please help put us over the top by joining the Defenders of Tennessee. Donations are NOT tax deductible. Please return the form below, along with your check made out to Sierra Club Defenders Fund, to Addie Wood, 4861 Villa Green Drive, Nashville, TN 37215.

THANK YOU!

Amount of donation: [ ] $50 [ ] $125 [ ] $250 [ ] $500 [ ] Other

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conclude at the Pinnacle D overlook on the Ridge Trail. Along the way we will take a short side trip to explore Skyline Camp. Day 2: 3 miles + exploration. Depending on weather and willing participants, we will stop at the town of Cumberland Gap to look at the Rail Depot and Iron Furnace. RT Drive 120 miles to the town of Lebanon. Call Linda Smithyman at 615-822-1979 or lsmithyman@bellsouth.net for information and to register. Contact hike leader soon since the hike is already filling up. Evenings and nights the temperature number 84/80. email lsmithy130@comcast.net

Sunday, March 28, 2004 - D Day Hike, Charlie’s Bunion, Great Smoky Mountains National Park - Join us on this classic hike, with nearly continuous sweeping views along the spine of the Appalachians. A great way to limber up those winter-stiffened muscles. We will probably hike a little past the Bunion for a nice lunch spot. Yeah, you are going to see people, but the views more than make up for it. About 3 miles round trip. Please register at least 4 days in advance with the hike leader: Ron Shires, 865-974-1722 (daytime): 865-922-3138 (evenings); email: rshires@utk.edu

MIDDLE TN GROUP (Nashville)

Saturday, March 13th – Wildflower Walk. Wildflower hunting possibility at Cedars of Lebanon. Call Linda Smithyman at 615-822-1979 or lsmithyman@yahoo.com for info and to register.

Friday/Saturday, Sunday, March 12-14 - Fiery Gizzard Backpack. We will camp Friday night at the CCC campsite approximate 1/4 mile from the trailhead on the Grundy Co. side of the Fiery Gizzard Trail. Saturday, we will hike approx. 11 miles to the Smoky Wilds campsite and Sunday finish with an easy 2 mile hike to the Foster Falls Trailhead. This trip will require车辆的运输, since it is a loop hike. Pre-registration is required. For additional information and to register, contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email Aedgec1@aol.com.

Friday/Saturday, March 19-20 - Savage Gulf Backpack. A weekend for those experienced in rappelling and have their own gear. We will camp at the Stone Door Ranger Station campground on Friday night and Saturday morning rappel near Stone Door. For additional information and to register, contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email Aedgec1@aol.com. In case of inclement weather, this trip will be rescheduled.

Saturday, April 3rd - Moonlight Hike. A night hike on the Fiery Gizzard Trail. This hike is only recommended for hikers interested in seeing the night time flora and fauna. Contact Chris O'Conner 423-867-4957 or e-mail chris@717@yahoo.com

Saturday, March 13th - Rock Climbing – Join Cherokee Chair Rock Guide as he leads adventures on a rock climbing outing in nearby Prentice Cooper State Forest. This outing is for all abilities and equipment is provided. For information contact Chris O’Connor 423-867-4957 or e-mail chris@717@yahoo.com

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Sunday, March 14th - 11:00 am - Signs of Spring Walk - Memphis Botanic Garden, 750 Cherry Road, Audubon Park, Memphis. A walk through the garden. This is the 2nd in a series of stroll that will let us see how the plants and garden look in the winter and see Spring arrive, as early wild flowers begin to bloom. We will walk through all the special areas of the garden. Free to Sierra Club members and Botanic Garden members. Leader Judith Hammond (901) 276-2819.

Sunday, April 11th, 2004 - 10:00 am - The Old Forest Trail, Second Saturday Hikes! Explore the story of old growth in the Natural World, the first and last in the series of these hikes. For information and to register contact Don Richardson <dorichardson@uno.com> at (901) 276-1387. Sponsored by Park Friends.
STATE NATURAL AREAS WEEK
MARCH 29 through APRIL 4, 2004

Tennesseans from across the State are encouraged to join together in a weeklong celebration of State Natural Areas Week to be held March 29 – April 4. Natural Areas Week will be celebrated across the state with hikes, canoe floats, and interpretative programming at many of Tennessee’s 68 State Natural Areas. These unique lands are preserved in perpetuity, and protect habitat for many species of rare plants and animals.

The State Natural Areas Program was established in 1971 by the Tennessee Natural Areas Preservation Act. Today, there are 68 Natural Areas located throughout the State covering more than 186,000 acres of ecologically significant lands. State natural areas are diverse landscapes that are often cooperatively managed with county, state and federal agencies and non-profit land trusts. They protect some of Tennessee’s most pristine wetlands and swamps, globally rare glades and diverse barrens, vast gulf forests, and mountains landscapes.

For more information about Natural Areas Week events in each state region call: (northeast) 865 594–5601, (south-central) 615 741-9205, (west) 731 512-1369 or go to the natural areas webpage at www.state.tn.us/environment/nh. The Natural Areas Program is administered by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

2nd Annual Wilderness 1st Aid Training
April 24th and 25th

By Katherine Pendleton and Gary Bowers, Co-organizers

Please join us for the second annual Sierra sponsored wilderness first aid training (WFA) the weekend of April 24th and 25th at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Landmark Learning, LLC, a long term partner with SOFG (Stonehenge Open Learning Opportunity) will perform the training again this year. Landmark’s WFA training as described on their website:

WFA - Wilderness First Aid - 16 hours / 2-yr certification. Originally called Backcountry First Aid, this course was the first wilderness medical training to be taught anywhere in the world. WFA covers the basics and the most common traumatic, medical, and environmental issues that occur in the backcountry.

This class includes the anatomy of a crisis; the correct procedure to protect yourself and others on your trip while caring for the injured; the patient assessment survey; vital signs; the physical exam; shock; blisters; burns; hypothermia; frostbite; lightning; allergies; muscular skeletal injuries (ie, sprains and strains); fractures; splints; dislocations.

Please join us for this educational weekend that features top notch first aid training in an outdoor setting by instructors that have actual in the field experience. Last year’s training featured hands on learning, fellowship, group dining and just plain fun. Here are some quotes from last year’s participants.

"An excellent course very informative very knowledgeable creative instructors a must for all trip leaders or anyone who hikes outside organized trips." — Miram McClenon

"There is no way that anyone should venture into the backcountry without a basic level of competence in first aid. The WFA course should be at the top of everyone’s skill acquisition wish list. Simply outstanding." — Tim Scholz

"A highly recommended course...essential learning for anyone who ventures into the backcountry and a great group of folks with similar interests. I thoroughly enjoyed it." — Robin Johnston

Wilderness first aid classes of this caliber often cost at least twice this amount. Sierra’s goal in providing this training is to help insure the safe enjoyment of the great outdoors and we price this course accordingly for our members. Space is limited, so enroll now. To enroll, please complete contact Katherine Pendleton at 615/943-6877 evenings or email at Adelicia@aol.com. Katherine must receive your check by March 31st to insure your reservation in this top notch training program.

2nd Annual Wilderness 1st Aid Training Registration Form

When: April 24th and 25th
Where: Fall Creek Falls State Park

What is included: Training by highly qualified instructors, mid-morning snacks, lunch, mid-afternoon snacks
What is not included: Breakfast, dinner, lodging

Lodging: We plan to camp in the state park. Make your own arrangements.
Cost: $125, non-refundable (we commit to Landmark, you commit to Sierra)
Other: Membership in Sierra is required. You can join online at https://www.sierraclub.org/membership

or Katherine an send you a membership form. Introductory memberships are $25.
Questions: Contact Katherine Pendleton at 615/943-6877 evenings or email at Adelicia@aol.com

Please send payment to:
Katherine Pendleton - 105 Catamaran Court -Nashville, TN 37217

State of Franklin Group (Tri-Cities)
Needs Outing Leaders

SOFG needs volunteers to help with the effort to offer a schedule of year-around outings. There are numerous possibilities for fun & informative outings, a great form of outreach to our membership & would-be members, such as:

Day Hikes (leisurely to fast paced)
Overnight/Multi-Day Backpacking
Campground Based Camping
Trips to Points of Interest
Interpretative Walks (flora, fauna, geology/history, etc.)
Family Oriented (with kids, single parents, etc.)
Star/Moon/Meteor Gazing
Development of Wilderness Skills
Trail Work
Tree Planting/Restoration Work (combinations of the above)

If you have an interest in helping to promote a love & understanding of our natural environment, within and without, through SOFG Sierra Club outings, please contact:

John Arwood - SOFG Outings Chair

Chickasaw Group News
Compiled by various members

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children with asthma.” If TDEC begins formal rulemaking, every Sierra Club member should make the supreme effort to turn out for those hearings, and “back the house” at every public meeting venue. In these future hearings, one of the Tennessee Chapter’s main challenges will be to tell the fact that “environmental protection does not cost jobs”, despite what industry is saying. We will do our best to let you know when this will happen.

Chickasaw Group Planning Retreat
Members of the Chickasaw Group ExCom, as well as others, attended a daylong planning retreat at the Mount Vernon Church. With the retreat theme of “many hands make light work”, this was to plan our activities in this pivotal year in the history of the United States and 30 years of environmental protections.
"Solving" the Forever Unresolved Problem of Radioactive Waste

Frances Lamberts, State of Franklin Group

A Washington Post article on November 18, 2003 announced introduction of a new Regulatory Agency to seek "an important role" which would allow disposal of "low-level radioactive material in ordinary landfills and hazardous waste sites." EPA head Carol Browner had stated that "any loosening of regulations would not compromise the environmental and public health protections available under the currently applicable standards of the EPA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

The last sustained, sustained effort at deregulating categories of radioactive materials appears to have been in the late 1980s and early 90s, when the NRC proposed and implemented policies known as "Below Regulatory Concern" and "Exempt from Regulatory Control." Unsurprisingly, the deregulated radioactive waste could be disposed in municipal landfills or sewers, or incinerated. Under the latter, it could, in addition, be recycled, and to a lesser extent, material made into consumer products. And as with landfills, terrorism and land-use would be released for unrestricted use by the public.

The policies generated intense public opposition and standard state laws passed regulations denying deregulation of low-level radioactive waste and mandating its continued regulation within their borders. The Congress then revoked the policies in the 1992 Energy Policy Act, and EPA added statutory rights in maintaining stronger regulatory programs.

It appears that during this earlier period, the NRC's deregulation effort lacked strong support from the EPA. At the last, EPA officials saw no public benefit from deregulation and were quoted in an editorial as expressing doubt that anyone apart from the "nuclear industry" and the NRC will benefit from it. It also appears, from my own reading of the advance notice, that the EPA may now be the forerunner and least agency in seeking change of the rules for radioactive waste disposal, and will work closely with the NRC toward this end.

On the day of the Washington Post article, i.e. November 18, the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) from the EPA was published in the Federal Register. Before its publication, a coalition of national groups including Sierra Club, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Nuclear Policy Research Institute (NPR), NRDC, and the Washington Environmental Law Group invited EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt to block release of the notice and commit to upholding regulatory controls over human-generated nuclear waste, rather than reducing the regulatory requirements.

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) has prepared a two-page alert and analysis of the ANPR and the regulatory changes being considered in it. The alert and further analysis is being maintained on Diane D. Garadzis of NIRS (dianed@nirs.org) or from the NIRS website (www.nirs.org).

The alert states five main points about the ANPR:
- Radioactive materials from many sources would be "redefined" following an EPA risk-projection process and would supposedly not need regulatory controls.
- Mixed wastes (i.e. radioactive and hazardous) could then go to landfills now only designed and permitted to accept hazardous wastes.
- Radioactive-only wastes (i.e. not mixed with hazardous waste) could then go to landfills without radioactive waste disposal, regulation, such as municipal solid landfills or incinerators.
- The ANPR suggests a "non-regulatory" approach as an option to management of radioactive waste, and it contains no prohibitions on recycling use of these materials in commercial consumer products.
- Below some of my thoughts as I perused the ANPR, which is prepared a two-page alert and analysis of the ANPR and the proposed new disposal framework is that LAMW is a "conceptual term that does not have statutory or regulatory meaning," at this time and how this changes to radioactive waste disposal in the future is one of the matters on which the public's input is sought.

The Sierra Club-Middle TN Group

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The bulk of the ANPR deals with many variables that would be involved in the proposed new disposal framework, and EPA would determine safety characteristics of the new LAMW for containment in Subtitle C (hazardous waste) landfills, human exposure, and other standards.

It seems that EPA does not intend to marshal much help from the scientific literature on environmental and health-related effects of low-level radioactive waste, or human exposure potential. It states that "we plan to conduct modeling" and "will also examine NRC and RCRA disposal regulations to support the model building efforts" (p. 38). Though I am lacking practical familiarity with the relevant scientific research on radiological effects from low-level waste, its blanket dismissal in government endeavors to formulate new national policy seems to me highly unwise, if not irresponsible. If anything, an approach of ignoring or merely stating factual information might be to mandate the public to make them will know. In evaluating whether you will participate in the public-response effort (Please do), remember the recent withdrawal of rulemaking on the Clean Water Act.

If rulemaking were to go forward, the EPA does not intend to propose a new regulatory approach for radioactive waste, but rather to receive the newly defined radioactive waste. EPA is mentioning "if affected entities demonstrate support for such a rulemaking approach, we would take into account the practicalities of implementing LAMW disposal at RCRA-permitted hazardous waste landfills, rather than transforming them into more AEAA-like facilities (emphasis added)."

Actual development and implementation of new policy may not be a predetermined decision but depend on public response. NRC has written in the Federal Register that "... at the end of this [review] we may decide no change is necessary" and this statement from page 17 of the ANPR (p. 38) "if affected entities demonstrate support for such a rulemaking approach, we would have a strong basis to pursue this beyond the ANPR stage."

My suggestion is that we take EPA by their word and demonstrate that there isn't support for rulemaking to deregulate radioactive waste, even 10 years after the previous deregulation attempt.

Comments may be e-mailed (a-and-r-Docket@epa.gov) or sent via postal mail (Air and Radiation Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, EPA West Area Room B108, M 6102T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20460). All comments must be referenced to: Docket ID No OAR-2003-0005 and must be received before March 17, 2004.


The Tennes-Sierran

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