Playing With Numbers
The Battle Continues Against Corridor K

By Rick Gehrke, Cherokee Group

Congressman Zach Wamp and State Representative Chris Newton continue to advocate the construction of the contentious Corridor K/Hwy 64 bypass in Polk County, with a whopping projected cost of 1.5-2.3 billion dollars, 20% of which would have to come from the Tennessee budget. Mr. Newton suggests floating bonds as a way to pay our share. They repeatedly point out the safety issue as a strong reason for building this freeway through the Cherokee National Forest, without mentioning the fact that the accident rate on the existing road is below the Tennessee state average. Mr. Wamp is quoted as having emphasized the need to make the existing road safer while waiting for the major project. If the existing road can be made even safer than it already is, why move forward with the new road on safety grounds?

An article published in the Polk County News on March 3rd, 2004 states that Mr. Wamp said “it is important to get information on the economic benefits of the bypass and N ewton agreed, saying they are looking for money for a study.” One might question why these two representatives have long been vehemently promoting the project on its economic merits, without already having in hand solid information on these purported benefits. Given Mr. Wamp’s statement in the same article that “the federal money is there to start drawing down”, one might wonder if the main reason for his promotion of this project is simply to get federal money spent. What I want to know is, why is it so important to “start drawing down” all that money and exactly who stands to get it?

According to the article, both Jones of the Southeast Tennessee Development District is working on raising funds for an Economic Impact Analysis “to justify return on investment.” This seems to indicate that the conclusion has been drawn before the evidence is in. She wants the new road referred to as “the Chattanooga to Charlotte” highway. When Corridor K was conceived under the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, such a highway may have been appropriate. In 2004, we have interstate highways that will get you from here to there just fine.

Mr. Wamp would like for the Ocoee River rafting outfitters to take up his cause, telling them that “We don’t want Earth First! to determine this route. We don’t want a small minority to dictate for the overwhelming majority.” To begin with, it’s not just Earth First! that’s challenging this project. It’s also the Sierra Club, Cherokee Forest Voices, the Southern Off-Road Biking Association, Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, and the Southern Environmental Law Center, among other conservation and enthusiast groups. Just as importantly, many of those opposed are the citizens of Polk County who have been calling on us to help them save their homes and surroundings.

Furthermore, couldn’t Mr. Wamp’s “overwhelming majority” be proven before it’s claimed? Mr. Wamp also stated, according to the article, “it’s important for all local groups to speak up so the 1% can’t intimidate the 99%.” This statement boldly implies that if all local groups were asked, 99% would agree with him. I’d like to see those percentages verified by solid research, and the burden of proof is on whoever tosses them around in support of his pet project. Keep in mind that the Cherokee National Forest belongs to all US citizens. I’d like to see how their views were measured. This is serious money we’re talking about here, and permanent damage to a natural resource that’s rare and getting rarer.

Zach Wamp said in a page from his own website dated February 1999, “The rivers of the Ocoee region were used by an unbelievable 300,000 visitors last year, helping to establish what I call “the crown jewel of outdoor sports and recreation in the Eastern United States.” In my mind, such a statement doesn’t square well with splitting that “jewel” in half with a major freeway. Mr. Wamp also says on the same page of his website that “One of our biggest challenges is to make sure that the area is easy to reach for those who want to enjoy it while preserving its breathtaking natural beauty and its pristine waterways.” Those 300,000 visitors seem to have made it there okay in 1998 without Corridor K. I was one of them. What did we do, fly in by helicopter? No, we used the existing roads.

T DOT has put significant resources into assessing the environmental and aesthetic impacts associated with the Corridor K extension. This evaluation, available to the public, shows that the impacts would be enduring and severe. Add the estimated cost, projected to run as high as $2.3 billion for construction alone, and the long-term economic loss that would result from damage to the aesthetic and environmental quality of the region. Now, balance all of that against an invalid safety argument, a disproved access argument, and an unsubstantiated economic argument, which are the pillars upon which this new road is based.

The safety argument in favor of Corridor K doesn’t hold up to statistics. The recreational access argument is disproved by the fact that the existing roads aren’t clogged with people trying to get into the Cherokee National Forest. The economic benefits being invoked by Corridor K proponents are nebulous. We realize Mr. Wamp and Mr. Newton have a responsibility to represent all of their constituents, including the citizens of Polk County, and we appreciate their hard work and diligence. However, while safety, economic development, and recreational access are commendable goals, there is not enough potential improvement of these aspects to support a decision to move ahead with Corridor K. Let’s drop it now, and quit spending tax money trying to justify it.

Mountain-top Removal Mining
An Environmental Horror Story

by James H. Baker
GCRCC delegate for the Tennessee Chapter

In early April, the Gulf Coast Regional Conservation Committee (GCRCC) and the Appalachian Regional Conservation Committee (ARCC) held a joint meeting in Charleston, West Virginia. The meeting, entitled “Save the Mountains - Coal M-ining:Environmental Justice Workshop” was to draw activists’ attention to mountain-top removal, what drives this destructive method of mining, and its effect on the people in the surrounding communities as well as the environment. The Tennessee Chapter sent Don Richardson and James Baker as the GCRCC delegates and Mary Amatin as the ARCC delegate. Dick Mochow attended as the Southeast Ecoregion Task Force Chair to the GCRCC.

The morning session was built around the premise that demand for plentiful cheap electrical power drives the decapitation of the Appalachian mountains for the coal they contain. There is the premise that we as a people do not know the true cost of our electrical power. We continue to rely on non-renewable fossil fuels to generate most of our electrical power, and have not diversified to renewable sources. We learned that the technology of coal mining has changed, from sending many local community men into deep holes in the sides of mountains to mine coal, to mountain-top strip mines that are highly mechanized and that employ out of state workers to operate the equipment. This has cost many miners their jobs, and we learned that the unemployment rate is extremely high in the West Virginia coal fields.

We learned about the Apollo Project. This is a ten-point plan that is designed to wean America off its diet of fossil fuels, improve energy security and provide training and jobs, that are desperately needed in West Virginia and in other coal fields as well. The Sierra Club’s own Executive Director-Carl Pope is on this organization’s Board of Directors. Please see www.apolloalliance.org for more details.

We learned the organizers against mountain-top removal

Continued on Page 2
**SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:**

*Email: address_changes@sierran.org
*Mail: P.O. Box 172166, Nashville, TN 37217

*Address changes are processed much faster if you include your Sierra Club membership number. To find your membership number, look on the address label of this newsletter.

**SEND ARTICLES TO:**

Email: TennesSierran@aol.com
Snail Mail: Rachel Floyd, Tennes-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 new month’s issue.

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

2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or .tif file format, whenever possible, then either attached to email messages, or attached files in PC-based formats. Mac users should embed text in body of an email message only.

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

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

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

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Jmcquail@tntech.edu

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Please notify the Editor when changes are needed.
MOUNTAIN-TOP REMOVAL MINING

An Environmental Horror Story
by James H. Baker
GCRC delegate for the Tennessee Chapter

continued from page 1

mining face very real dangers to their lives. We lis-
tened to a panel discussion with apt attention as Julia
Bonds, Larry Gibson and several others told about
their trials and tribulations as they organize and speak
out and share with the rest of America the horrors of
mountain-top removal mining. They also try to get
their elected officials to regulate the coal industry.
There are towns in West Virginia that are located at
the base of massive dams of coal slurry that are formed
when impurities are washed off of coal. These dams
have broken in the past, and people have been killed
and injured, and the environment severely harmed.
With all the trees scraped off the mountains, heavy
rains send torrents of water through these small min-
ing towns. People have died, property has been de-
stroyed, and the survivors have been told by officials
"that was an act of God."

Then it was time to go to Kayford Moun-
tain and the Stanley Family Cemetery, with Larry Gibson, who lives on
part of Kayford Mountain. There was a scent of
wood smoke in the air as the Slash from a newly
clear-cut section of the mine is burned. Standing at
the top of the cemetery, one sees decapitated moun-
tains and mine sites in all directions. When one looks
at photos of a mountain-top mine, one cannot appre-
ciate the massive size of the operation. One sees
a 53-foot long trailer for an “18-wheeler” rig, and it
looks like a child’s toy. One feels and hears a massive
rolling ‘boom’ and realizes that the mine operators
have just detonated many hundreds of pounds of
ammonium nitrate-fuel oil (ANFO) explosives to re-
move the overlying strata of rock to get to the coal
seam. Here is a web site that also will show more
photos than can be shown in this newsletter, http://

After the tour, it was a somber group of delegates that returned to the hotel.
But the worse was yet to come. As bad as mountain-top removal is, there is a more
insidious form of mining that is tunneling its way through southern Pennsylvania -
long-wall mining. It is silent and invisible, until the cracks start appearing in
ones home or land, and ones lake or stream dis-
pears overnight. Here are two web sites, first, http://
www.rayproffitt.org/2001/05062001.htm is an
environmental view. This second site is from the

Listen close, one can hear the sound of the greenhouse warming on the government site.

After the meeting adjourned on Sunday, Don, Dicky, Mary and I stopped to look at Tennessee’s own moun-
tain-top mine, Zeb Mountain. This mine, and its
water pollution issues were discussed at length in a

ON THE COMMENTS

The Zeb Mountain Permit

By Mary Mastin

May 10th is the deadline for written comments on the
application for revision to the Robert Clear Coal Corp.
mining permit for Zeb M mountain mine in
Campbell County Tennessee. This mine permit is for
an area in excess of 2100 acres, and allows three peaks
of the mountain to be blown off to get to a very thin
seam of coal. This huge mine should never have been
permitted on an Environmental Impact Assessment
and Finding of No Significant Impact, without even
requiring a full Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed permit revision would allow Robert
Clear to re-channelize a stream, Dan Branch, and to
construct a massive seven acre rock buttress into Dan
Branch in an attempt to stabilize a massive slide of
the haul road that is currently contributing excess sediment
into Dan Branch, which leads into Lick Fork. Lick Fork
has for over a decade been recognized as a prime
home of a healthy population of the federally
threatened fish species, the blackside dace. Dr. David
Etnier and his crew of fish “seiners” recently found
blackside dace at the confluence of Dan Branch and
Lick Fork.

The construction of this mammoth seven acre rock
“buttress” into Dan Branch and the re-channelization
of Dan Branch will contribute huge additional
sediment to Dan Branch - and likely into Lick Fork.
Dan Branch had already been degraded by the
first six months of mining. In December, it was
found by the Tennessee Department of Environment
and Conservation (TDEC) to be no longer fully
supporting aquatic life in May and August.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is concerned that
the extreme measures called for in the permit revision
application for Dan Branch will have short-term
disastrous effects on the blackside dace. They are also
concerned that the slide will continue to contribute
additional sediment to Dan Branch and that in the
long term will have a deleterious effect on the dace.
The Army corps has not yet approved the plans for
the rock buttress and re-channelization of Dan Branch.

It is not clear that the permit revision has even been
submitted to the Army Corps yet. No one agency
seems willing to take responsibility for approving the

Comments should be made / sent to:
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
530 Gay St.
KNOXVILLE, TN 37902
HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

PROGRAM MEETING: Tuesday, May 11, 2004 - Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. Some of you may have had the opportunity to meet Roger Micklepeake on one of our Big BI outings. If not, come to the May program meeting to meet this interesting fellow who hails from Hot Springs, North Carolina (those of you who have met Roger will need no encourager). Roger works in New Zealand for part of the year and will be presenting a program about that beautiful area, this is the meeting to attend. Call Axel Ringe at 865-397-1840 for more information.

STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)

PROGRAM MEETINGS: Third Thursday of each month, 6:30 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, May 13, at 7:00 p.m. - At the Radnor Lake Visitor Center. Please join us at our next program meeting: “Bigger Isn’t Always Better! Rethinking Shelter Towards a Sustainable Future” by Martha Whitehill, Director of The Big Enough House, a division of Legacy Properties. Martha is an active proponent for a paradigm shift in the way humans conceive of, and utilize natural resources for, shelter. Included in her interests are sustainable communities, affordable housing, individual, environmental, protection, and the impact of space and design on humans. Come get some new and important ideas for how we can, as stewards of the planet, create healthy, earth-friendly environments that contribute to the support of our individual growth and a lighter footprint on Earth.

Light refreshments will be served. If you have any questions, please call Shellie at (615) 260-0030 or e-mail globalapeacelot@hotmail.com.

STRATEGY MEETING: Wednesday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m. - Strategy meetings begin at 5:30 pm. Jeff will also update the community on Highway SR 375, the “Airport Parkway.” SR 375 is a brand new right of way project that will slice through the heart of rural East Tennessee. Barrie will provide opportunities for locals to take action on these and other proposed projects.

PROGRAMS: The night of our monthly programs was changed from Wednesday throughout the month. If any groups or individuals in the community have a special problem or concern, or would like to see a program on a special issue or subject, please contact Judit Rutschman <RUTSCHMAN@troids.edu> at (901) 767-5916.

PROGRAM MEETINGS:

- Thursday May 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - Cakehouse, 653 Normal Street, Memphis, Tennessee. Membership Chair Jill Johnston <jdljodio@memphis.edu> at (901) 278-2713 for more information.

- Thursday May 13, at 7:00 p.m. - University of Memphis Alumni Center, 635 North Main Street, Memphis, Tennessee. Contact Charlie Rond <chasrond@bellsouth.net> (by May 6 to place items on the agenda at (901) 452-8150 for more information. (Note: This is a new meeting site.)

- Thursday May 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - Sierra Club Chair Charlie Rond invites Chickasaw Group Chair, Charlie Rond on Thursday May 27th, 6:00 p.m. - Otherlands, 641 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee. Join us for Chickasaw Group’s “FIRST THURSDAY” monthly gathering where Sierra Club members, activists and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. Contact Chair Charlie Rond <chasrond@bellsouth.net> (by May 6 to place items on the agenda at (901) 452-8150 for more information. (Note: This is a new meeting site.)

- Thursday May 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - Chickasaw Group’s “First Thursday” monthly meeting where Sierra Club members, activists and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. Contact Chair Charlie Rond <chasrond@bellsouth.net> (by May 6 to place items on the agenda at (901) 452-8150 for more information. (Note: This is a new meeting site.)

- Thursday May 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - University of Memphis Alumni Center, 635 Normal Street, Memphis, Tennessee. This meeting of the Executive Committee is open also to all members of the Sierra Club. Contact Charlie Rond <chasrond@bellsouth.net> (by May 6 to place items on the agenda at (901) 452-8150 for more information. (Note: This is a new meeting site.)

TELEVISION PROGRAM: Every Monday at 1:30pm, Tuesday at 4:00pm and Wednesday at 11:30am, CST, The Library Channel, Memphis Cable 18, WYFL. “The Nature of Conservation” is sponsored by the Sierra Club. For May, host Judit Rutschman interviews Chickasaw Group Chair Charlie Rond on issues and programs that are important to the Sierra Club. A different program is aired, usually each month, with the program repeating every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday throughout the month. If any groups or individuals in the community have a special problem or concern, or would like to see a program on a special issue or subject, please contact Judit Rutschman <RUTSCHMAN@troids.edu> at (901) 767-5916.

PUBLIC COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- First Monday of every month, 7pm, Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church. All 50 FG members are encouraged to get active now to help us organize for environmental advocacy in N overnment. FM: Da Grace, Political Committee, Chair, (423) 562-7035, dangrace@worldnet.att.net.

STRATEGY MEETINGS: Second Monday of every month, 7pm, Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church. These Executive Committee Conservation meetings are open to everyone interested in helping to protect upper east TN air, water, forests & family farms. To place an item on the agenda, or for directions to the Church, please contact Linda Modica, Group Chair, (423) 753-9679, lmodica@aol.com.

PROGRAM MEETINGS: Monday, May 24th, 7pm, Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church. Will there be passenger rail in Tri-Cities one day soon? Find out at 50 FG’s May program meeting, presented by Jeff Barrie, Coordinator of the statewide “Citizens for TDOT Reform” (a Sierra Club initiated effort). Jeff will share the latest news regarding transportation issues in the Tri-Cities area and across Tennessee, including the status of TDOT’s Bridge Bypass Memphis passenger rail plan. Jeff will also update the community on Highway SR 357, “the Airport Parkway.” SR 357 is a brand new right of way project that will slice through the heart of rural East Tennessee. Barrie will provide opportunities for locals to take action on these and other proposed projects.

Programs are held monthly on the fourth Monday, and cover many topics such as environmental issues, travel, nature photography. For more information, contact Mary Geakil, Vice Chair, (423) 434-9535, mgeakil@yahoo.com.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

PROGRAM: Thursday May 27th @ 7:00 p.m. - Greenway Farms in Signal Hill. Our May program will be presented by Doug Fritz. Doug works in the Storm Water Management Department of the Office of Public Works for the City of Chattanooga. Doug will be discussing environmental issues related to storm water, erosion control, and water pollution. Come learn about an issue that affects all of us in the Tennessee Valley, and find out what’s being done to protect you and your loved ones.

NOTE: The night of our monthly programs was changed from the third Thursday of each month to the fourth Thursday of each month. The May program will be held on Thursday May 27th. Monthly strategy meetings are generally held prior to the program meetings and everyone is welcome to attend. The strategy meetings begin at 5:30.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

MONTHLY MEMBERS GATHERING: Thursday, May 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - Otherlands, 641 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee. Members are invited to attend our conservation and administrative meeting at 2022 21st Avenue South (the old St. Bernard Academy Building). We try to have signs out front to point the way, but, just in case, we meet on the 4th floor. We welcome each of you to participate or just be with us to learn of the group’s conservation initiatives and community activities. Additions to the conservation agenda should be sent to Christopher Andersen at sustainworld@comcast.net or (901) 478-0596. For additions to the administrative agenda or for more information regarding the meetings, send a message to Kathy Perdilion at Additicia@esol.com or (901) 643-8777 evenings.

UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP (Cookeville)

PROGRAM MEETING: Contact Peggy Evans at 931-432-6680 or mansuns@TWN.Lakes.net for more information on program meeting dates and times.

STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS: First Mon-
News from the Tennessee Chapter Group’s

Chickasaw Group News
Compiled by various members

Wild Oats Cookout - A special thanks is due the Sierra Club members - especially Sierra Clubbers Ralph and Debbie Fox - for the outstanding job of cooking out at Wild Oats Market, Saturday, April 17. Ralph shared the cooking of burgers with Group Chair Charlie Rond, braving the heat from the large grill, while Debbie prepared hamburger buns and did all the other chores of getting sandwiches and “combi”s ready for the steady line of customers. With so many waiting customers, I didn’t hear a single grumble from them. The ambulance took him to the hospital. The father had been a pilot for Eastern Airlines back in the 1930’s. One can only surmise that the burglar, perhaps unable to open the safe, threw it in a storm drain channel, or the Harbor itself. No water damage at all. A small safe was found at the water’s edge, and after it was opened, the contents were not recyclable. It contained papers and memorabilia of the owner’s father (watch, a belt buckle from Eastern Airlines, a small-scale toy electric locomotive, a compass etc.). The father had been a pilot for Eastern Airlines back in the 1930’s. One can only surmise that the burglar, perhaps unable to open the safe, threw it in a storm drain channel, or the Harbor itself.

T here were ten of us - including Ralph and me - among the enthusiastic group who were eager to learn the names and special features of wildflowers and, for some, to compare them with domestic varieties of flowers. As well as the Blue Phlox, there were Virginia Bluebells, May Apple, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Spring Beauty, Wild Ginger, Wild Hydrangea, Wild Rose, Blue and Yellow Violets and Solomon’s Seal. Among the early wildflowers we identified, Red Buckeye, American Dogwood, Redbud, Sassafras, Beech, Yellow Violets and May Apple, among the early wildflowers we identified, Red Buckeye, American Dogwood, Redbud, Sassafras, Beech, Solomon’s Shield and beauty, Wild Ginger, Wild Hydrangea, Wild Rose, Blue and Yellow Violets. As well as the Blue Phlox, there were Virginia Bluebells, May Apple, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Spring Beauty, Wild Ginger, Wild Hydrangea, Wild Rose, Blue and Yellow Violets and Solomon’s Shield. Among the early wildflowers we identified, Red Buckeye, American Dogwood, Redbud, Sassafras, Beech, Yellow Violets and May Apple, among the early wildflowers we identified, Red Buckeye, American Dogwood, Redbud, Sassafras, Beech, Solomon’s Shield and Beauty, Wild Ginger, Wild Hydrangea, Wild Rose, Blue and Yellow Violets and Solomon’s Shield.

Well done All!

2nd Row Photo - Volunteers gathered for a group shot after the event.

3rd Row Left Photo - Our host, “Mr. No-Shoulders” (a.k.a. a snake, serpent) watched the clean-up activities from the safety of a tree.

3rd Row Right Photo - Small safe containing personal papers and memorabilia. Great detective work by several volunteers resulted in the safe being re-united with its owner. The safe had been stolen in a burglary about six months ago.

4th Row Photo - The second load of urban flotsam and jetsam is being loaded. The half-ton of trash and debris filled about 70 bags and it took two trips with this truck to dispose of it all.
Ten Essentials for Hiking

Sierra Club outings offer a variety of wilderness and near-wilderness experiences. It is important to realize that while all trips are guided by a leader, it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to operate in a safe manner. To this end, the following is a list of essential items, which should be modified according to the particular type of outing. These are:

1. Adequate map
2. First aid kit
3. Compass
4. Rain gear
5. Extra clothing (it is a good idea to always have a wool hat)
6. Matches
7. Knife
8. Flashlight
9. Extra food, water
10. The tenth essential. You decide what is the most important thing to bring!

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Memorial Day Weekend-GSMNP - 21st Annual Memorial Day Weekend Hike
This year the MTG annual event will take place in the Cosby area of the Smoky Mountain National Park. We will camp at the group camp in the Cosby Campground. Day hikes will leave the campground. The hikes will include one strenuous hike of 10-12 miles and one shorter hike of about 6 miles. Pre-registration required and group size is limited. Pre-register with Bill Terry at 615-665-1010.

Saturday, May 4-6, 2004 - National Trails Day Clean-up and Maintenance - As we celebrate National Trails Day, come volunteer some of your time in a local park (Cedar Lakes or elsewhere) to pick up trash and perhaps perform trail maintenance. Plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. to get an early start. Bring gloves, water, and your enthusiasm to care for the environment. Register with Linda Smithman at 615-822-1795.

Saturday, June 6, 2004 - Day Hike at Long Hunter State Park - Take the jut 2 mile paved Couchville Lake Trail, or continue on with the 4 mile Doak's Gap Trail, which winds along Percy Flick. Watch warblers, water birds, and other wildlife with a long time bird and birdwatcher. Contact Diane Perschbacher at 615-956-1236 or Diane@Propson.com for more information and registration. Hike will be in the early afternoon.

STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (T-Cities)

1st Saturday - Trail Maintenance at BLBW.
2nd Monday of the Month - West Trail maintenance at BLBW or Buffalo Mt Park.
3rd Saturday - Trail Maintenance at BLBW.
4th Saturday (If there is a 5th Saturday) - Trail Maintenance at BLBW or Buffalo Mt Park.

For details & to sign up call John Arwood: 423-426-1425
To be informed of upcoming SOFG outings via email send a request to TrailWorkPlay@msn.com.

Why Do Trail Work? As you may know, the State of Franklin Group has adopted the section of Appalachian Trail which winds through the State of Franklin and Laurel Hill Wildernesses (BLBW), just west of Watauga Lake. The use of power tools is prohibited in such designated wilderness areas and for this reason some members of trail maintenance groups actually oppose the protection that wilderness designation provides. We can show our support for wilderness by performing necessary and timely maintenance of the Appalachian Trail in the BLBW and perhaps, with enough support, adopt other trails through wilderness areas. In addition to BLBW we may trail work on other sections of the AT, AT connectors & in Johnson City Parks, as well as other projects. Volunteers are needed. No prior experience is necessary and you may work on your own pace. Contact SOFG Sierra Club Outings everyone is welcome, so bring your friends.

See the monthly schedule above.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

For information on upcoming outings, contact Chris Bell at 423-077-0738 or chriss77@yahoo.com or visit our web site at http://www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/cheroke/index.htm

We enjoyed another great day on our Canequa River hike. The five and a half mile hike was the day's highlight. The temperature was greeted with warm sunshine, cool water, and a variety of budding trees and early wildflowers.

Friday-Sunday May 21-23 - Car Camping - Our next outing is scheduled for at the BIG CREEK CAMPGROUND (Zion) in Smoky Mountains National Park. Join the Carolina Sierra Club and Friends of the Greenway to walk your dog. Even if you don't have a dog, you are eligible for a drawing to win door prizes. Contact: City Beautiful at 615-278-2713 for more information or to sign up contact Chris O'Connor & chris07@yahoo.com.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Sunday, May 2, 2004 - 9:00AM - Wolf River Cleanup - The Float, with the Bluff City Canoe Club, will begin at Bluff City Bridge over the Wolf and end at the town. The clean-up will begin at the Gun Club past the Baton Road Bridge and end at Bluff City Bridge. Be there early as we will float down to Moscow. We will be looking for boats, water bottles, and other litter in the Wolf River. Contact: City Beautiful at 615-276-2819 for more information.

Friday - Sunday, May 7-9, 2004 - Car Camp - Blackburn Springs campground, Sylamore Creek, Arkansas. Cost $7.00/car. Leave Memphis Friday late afternoon. We will meet up with the backpackers on Saturday morning for the Sylamore Creek hike. Saturday night potluck and for those who want it, a trip after dinner in M. View for kayaking and pizza and perhaps in the square. There are hikes to trail, swimming, and at the Visitor's Center updating with the ranges you'll need your head (lights) and tours of Blackburn Springs Caves. The Ozark Fall Center is nearby, Reservations, Judith A. Hammond, 901-376-2819.

Friday - Saturday, May 7-8, 2004 - Sylamore Creek Backpack - Ozark National Forest, Arkansas. Limestone bluffs, waterfalls, night of camping, and a break on this easy back-trip. This is a good beginning backpacker's overnight. It's also an opportunity to see some backpackers who have just started back to let others know your back. This hike is about 3 miles and goes up from Blackburn Springs. Depart Memphis early Saturday morning. Back in Memphis by 8:00PM. For reservations call Jill Johnathan at 901-278-2713.

Saturday, May 8, 2004, 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon, Mt. Ceder Lake Clean-Up at Mem- phis - Meet at 10AM where Jack Carley Causeway goes across to President's Island. Driving directions: get on Riverside Blvd, going south until it becomes Interstate 55. Stay on I-55 till exit 11 (M-Lemon Exit). Exit and go a short distance until one gets to Riverside Blvd (look for Sierra Club sign). Turn right and go a short distance till the road to the left, this is Jack Carley Causeway (look for Sierra Club sign). Stay on Jack Carley till one sees Sierra Club sign being held by a volunteer. Park on the south side of Jack Carley, at the first house with the SOFG sign. Meet at 10AM. We are going to clean up the area and perform some necessary and timely maintenance of the Jack Carley Causeway. Join the group at the first house out of town on Jack Carley Causeway. We will be here at 10AM. Meet there. Bring your own supplies. For more information, contact Bill Rethberg 901-725-9747.

Memorial Day Weekend-GSMNP - 21st Annual Memorial Day Weekend Hike
This year the MTG annual event will take place in the Cosby area of the Smoky Mountain National Park. We will camp at the group camp in the Cosby Campground. Day hikes will leave the campground. The hikes will include one strenuous hike of 10-12 miles and one shorter hike of about 6 miles. Pre-registration required and group size is limited. Pre-register with Bill Terry at 615-665-1010.

Saturday, May 4-6, 2004 - National Trails Day Clean-up and Maintenance - As we celebrate National Trails Day, come volunteer some of your time in a local park (Cedar Lakes or elsewhere) to pick up trash and perhaps perform trail maintenance. Plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. to get an early start. Bring gloves, water, and your enthusiasm to care for the environment. Register with Linda Smithman at 615-822-1795.

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We enjoyed another great day on our Canequa River hike. The five and a half mile hike was the day's highlight. The temperature was greeted with warm sunshine, cool water, and a variety of budding trees and early wildflowers.
DISCLAIMER: The following activities are not sponsored or administered by the Sierra Club. They are published only as a service to our members. The Sierra Club makes no representation or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of these activities. 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.

Saturday, May 14, 2004, 10:00 am - O'erton Park, Mem- phis, Tennessee. “Second Saturday Hikes.” Explore the only urban old growth forest of its kind in America. Learn about the forest’s history, identify big trees and wildflowers and observe firsthand the impact of natural and human forces on forest in an urban setting. Meet at the bridge next to the parking lot at the end of Old Forest Lane in the center of O’erton Park. The informative and entertaining trail map to the self-guided mile-and-a-quarter mile loop hike with seasonal bird watching and wildflower-viewing guides is available for free at the Gulf House in O’erton Park at all other times. For additional information, contact Don Richardson <donrich@juno.com> at 901-276-1387. Sponsored by Park Friends.

Saturday-April 24 - Radnor Lake Volunteer Day - Every fourth Saturday is Volunteer Day at Radnor Lake Natural Area. Show up at the Visitor Center about 9:00, and you will be able to choose among such activities as mulching trails, pulling out bush honeysuckle and other invasive plants, or planting wildflowers near the parking areas. If you are unable to get there right at 9:00, come as soon as you can, and the nice staff at the Visitor Center will point you in the right direction. You may call the Radnor Lake office at 373-3407 during the week prior to Volunteer Day to find out what activities are planned or to get more information. This is not an organized outing with a Sierra Club leader, but you may want to mention to the staff that you are there as a Sierra Club volunteer. Radnor Lake is the only Tennessee Group use their facility for our monthly group meeting, and this is a way we can give back. Hope to see you there!

Backpack the “Road to Nowhere” Teen High Adventure Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont July 12-22, 2004 Cost: $370 for Ages 13-17

Send your teenager to Teen High Adventure, a 7-day back- pack trip exploring an isolated area slated for road con- struction in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Con- struction of the North Shore Road - also known as the Road to Nowhere - was halted in the 1960s. Now there are plans to complete a project that would cut through one of the larg- est roadless areas in the eastern United States. During this 10-day program, teens will hone their outdoor living skills, acquire knowledge about the natural and cul- tural history of the Park - and learn firsthand about the vital North Shore Road issue facing Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Each trip includes ten teenagers plus two experienced Tremont teacher/naturalists. Program lasts from Monday mid-afternoon through the second Thursday morning. Along with a 7-day/6-night backpacking adventure, a day is spent whitewater rafting on the Pigeon River. Wildlife, great friends and spectacular scenery will accompany your journey.

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont 9275 Tremont Road - Townsend, TN 37882 Phone: (865) 448-6709 - Fax: (865) 448-9250

Volunteer Opportunity!

As Sierrans with the volunteer spirit, almost all of us recycle and support recycling as much as we can. The Middle Tennessee Group supports its conservation efforts and office expenses through our recycling site at the Elysian Fields Kroger in Nashville. We can always use more volunteers to give out information and to help older recyclers and recyclers with disabilities to unload their newspapers, glass, plastic, aluminum, steel and cardboard. The site is open Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 12:00. You will have at least one other person working with you, and you can choose to volunteer only when it is convenient for you, whether that is just one time, every few months, or on a regular monthly or quarterly schedule.

Please call Recycling Coordinator David Bordenkircher at 333-3377 (H) or clean.water@sierraclub.org

We want to give special thanks to Hal May, Charlie High and Steve Vining, who have tried to be at the recycle drop off site every month. And very special thanks go to Darius Hinds. He is there virtually every week, and many of our “regular customers” ask about him if he hasn’t arrived yet when they drop off their recyclable’s. This is a great job, folks, and we hope you will join our corps of great volunteers.

Something Stinks: The Bush Administration Exposes Americans to Poorly Treated Sewage

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are an estimated 7.1 million cases of mild to moderate and 560,000 cases of moderate to severe infectious waterborne disease in the U.S. each year. Even though the Clean Water Act requires municipalities to treat raw sewage to remove health-threatening viruses and parasites before it is discharged into our rivers, lakes, streams and drinking water sources, the Bush administration is crafting a new policy that would likely allow more Americans to get sick from waterborne illnesses.

Heavy rains often overload wastewater treatment facilities in most major cities. When sewer systems are overloaded it can mean sewer backups into basements or the release of untreated or poorly treated sewage into our rivers and streams.

On November 3, 2003 the EPA released a draft “blending” guidance that allows publicly-owned treatment works to “blend” partially treated sewage with treated sewage and discharge it into our waterways during rain storms. The partially treated sewage undergoes only primary treatment (removal of solids) and basic disinfection. Sewage that has only undergone primary treatment may still contain pathogens that sicken people, such as giardia and cryptosporidium.

This means that bacteria, viruses and other pathogens will likely be discharged into our waterways with treated sewage and will cause disease in people. The Bush administration has moved to promote irresponsible ways of addressing the problem.

The American public deserves protection from illness due to exposure to raw sewage. Send a letter to President Bush and urge him to enforce the current Clean Water Act and continue to require that wastewater meet proper treatment standards prior to discharge. Remind the President that, rather than simply accepting heavy storm runoff as a way of life and weakening Clean Water Act protections, his administration should focus on ways to reduce runoff, including: rain barrels, green roofs, porous materials for parking lots and water absorbing landscaping. In addition, the administration should ensure adequate funding for needed upgrades to our sewage infrastructure. This will move us toward a solution that does not leave our communities vulnerable to the hazards of partially treated sewage in our waters.

You can write to President Bush at: 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. Washington, D.C. 20500

For more information contact Ananda Hirch at 202-675-6693 or clean.water@sierraclub.org

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The Tennes-Sierran
American Hornbeam and Honeysuckle were among the trees that had begun to bud but had characteristic burls that aided identification.

At the halfway mark we stopped at the Woodland Trail, a sturdy rectangular “gazebo,” that was occupied by hikers from the Tennessee Trails Association who had started their hike earlier and were having lunch. Less than a half mile into the forest, after lunch, we were surprised by a two-foot-long, long-garter snake that slithered out of the leaves a few feet from the trail. Long light-colored stripes down its back and sides were unmistakable as it paused to see what we would do. It watched for a few moments and then made its escape, adding a touch of excitement to the afternoon.

**Toxic Tour** - The “toxic tour” led by Rita H. ariss was eye-opening and - nose-closing - exposure to some of the worst of the toxic-producing industries in the Memphis area. It was appalling to see that some of the industries were so near schools and across the street from public parks used primarily by low socio-economic groups of citizens in the city. It was a classic illustration of the lack of “economic justice” in Memphis and how difficult it would be to eradicate these communities from the tentacles of industries that have a long history of operations despite repeated leaks, emission of clouds of toxic products and dissemination of various known and unknown pollutants into the air and into groundwater.

We traveled in the northwest part of the city through the Crump and Douglas communities to see Penn Specialty Chemical, Velox Chemical, Southen, Cotton Oil, Crompton, Enenco, Buckman Laboratories, and the E lloyd D ump - a Superfund site - that lie within a six-mile radius of the communities. Then we went south to see the Premcor, Inc., refinery that sits on the southern boundary of the Martin Luther King Jr. park on the Memphis riverfront.

Finally, we drove south to see - and smell - the Allen C oney, C ommonwealth Caribbean, C ombustion Engineering, and the Hollywood Dump - a Superfund site - and then the Crump and Douglas communities to see Penn Oil and Chemical, and the Hollywood Dump - a Superfund site - and then again the Premcor, Inc., refinery that sits on the southern boundary of the Martin Luther King Jr. park on the Memphis riverfront.

With 1,240 toxic waste sites still in need of cleanup, the ramifications of a diminished polluter-funded Superfund trust fund to clean up toxic waste sites places our communities and environment at risk. As cleanup slow from an average of 87 completed per year in the late 1990’s to an average of 40 completed per year during the Bush Administration, communities all across the country are living near toxic waste sites for increasingly longer periods. Already, one in four Americans, including 10 million children, lives within a short bicycle ride of a toxic waste site. Without an effective funding mechanism for Superfund cleanups, dangerous chemicals will continue to seep into our air, water, and soil and contaminate our children’s playgrounds.

For more information, visit www.besafenet.com/superfund for Calendar of Events. Sign on to Save Our Smokes! To subscribe to the Greater Smoky Mountains Coalition (aka Save Our Smokes - SOS) listserv, just send a blank email to: Greater_Smoky_Mountains_Coalition-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

You will receive a subscription confirmation message. Just reply to the confirmation message, and your subscription will be complete.

If you run into any difficulties, just email Liz Dixon at 3xanncs.ark.us.

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**Middle Tennessee Group News**

By Catherine Butcher

MTG’ers Gather at Post Offices on Tax Day, April 15th - Nashville, TN - M T nesses of the Sierra Club held “Polluter Pay” Tax Day Event. - Last minute tax filers were greeted at the East Nashville Post Office on April 15th by citizens concerned that their tax dollars are paying for the clean up of Superfund toxic waste sites, while polluters are let off the hook. Armed with the message that polluters-not taxpayers-should pay for the clean up of toxic waste sites, the M T nesse of the Sierra Club educated their community about the amount of money the Bush administration is asking taxpayers to pay in Tennessee, with the release of a new analysis outlining the cost of Superfund to taxpayers.

The M T nesse of the Sierra Club, joined the BE SAFE network, including the Center for Health, Environment & Justice, US PIRG and National Environmental Trust, to hold “Polluter Pay Tax Day” events in more than twenty states across the country to promote protection of public health and the environment through a precautionary approach and “polluter pay” policies. Groups held events at post offices to remind taxpayers that they are now footing the bill to clean up abandoned toxic waste sites and urge reindemerit of the “polluter pay” taxes to replenish the Federal Superfund. (Visit www.besafenet.com/superfund for Calendar of Events.) Last October, the Federal Superfund toxic waste cleanup program ran out of polluter-contributed funds, leaving taxpayers to shoulder the financial burden. Reinstating the “polluter pay” fees is a fair and fiscally sound solution that would ensure the cleanup of toxic waste sites and protect the health of American communities.

With the BE SAFE network, the ramifications of a diminished polluter-funded Superfund trust fund to clean up toxic waste sites places our communities and environment at risk. As cleanup slow from an average of 87 completed per year in the late 1990’s to an average of 40 completed per year during the Bush Administration, communities all across the country are living near toxic waste sites for increasingly longer periods. Already, one in four Americans, including 10 million children, live within a short bicycle ride of a toxic waste site. Without an effective funding mechanism for Superfund cleanups, dangerous chemicals will continue to seep into our air, water, and soil and contaminate our children’s playgrounds.

For more information, visit www.besafenet.com/superfund.htm for a Calendar of “Polluter Pay Tax Day” Events, State-by-State Tax Analysis and resources.

The BE SAFE initiative is coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment & Justice and includes over 300 organizations. Over the next year, BE SAFE is gathering thousands of endorsements for the BE SAFE Precautionary Platform to present to the newly elected President in 2005 during the first 100 days of office. T e Platform outlines the critical need for government and industry to institute a “better safe than sorry” approach motivated by caution and prevention to protect children from harmful toxic exposures and avoid illnesses. (www.besafenet.com)

RELEASE CONTACT:  C athy Butcher, M T nnesse Co-Conservation Chair 347-1480

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**Sign on to Save Our Smokes!**

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