Johnson City Sierra Residents Take a Stand Against CAFOs

By Dennis Shekinak

Dean Whitworth, Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club CAFO Chairman attended a Thursday December 9th legisla-
tive breakfast along with 15 other members of Johnson
County Citizens Committee for Clean Air and Water
(JCCCCAW) and the State of Franklin Sierra Group
(SOFG) hosting Rep. Jason Mumpower and Senator Ron
Ramsey. The meeting took place at the Main Street Cafe
in downtown Mountain City, TN.

Before the talk got going, Steve Ferguson presented both
representatives with their own copy of Empty Pastures, a
book covering the state of corporate agriculture and family
farming today.

Steve Ferguson, president of JCCCCAW, covered the topic
of the ongoing concern about the unregulated spreading
of human waste from the Mountain City treatment plant
and violations of the Clean Water Act, like the large open asphalt
dump on Hwy 421, run off from which, culverts into Roan
Creek. There is also another location near Forge Creek
where asphalt has been piled up. “We now have 6 streams
in our county on TDEC’s 303d contaminated list for 2004
because of these and other questionable practices.”

The Johnson County Citizen’s Committee’s pending law-
suit against EPA and TDEC was mentioned, but the focus
stayed on the main challenge of investigating and enforce-
ment of regulations covering pollution violations citizens
are reporting in Johnson County. All agreed TDEC staff
from the Johnson City Environmental Assistance office
were willing to do their jobs, but the lack of a workable
penalty system within the state agency, appears to make
compliance by industrial corporations and other entities
unattainable.

Both Jason Mumpower and Ron Ramsey seemed surprised
at the lag between the time a violation is reported and the
time TDEC will issue a penalty (up to a year in some in-
stances). Even when penalties are exacted, they are often
insignificant and not a deterrent.

In JCCCCAW’s opinion, TDEC is violating federal law by
not allowing citizens to have a real voice in the permitting
and appeals process. TDEC agreed to listen to citizens in
two “informal gatherings” in Mountain City in August,
but none of the evidence presented by citizens and consul-
tants was taken into consideration when the permit was
issued within the minimum time possible. Citizens were
actually told by officials that their input would not influ-
cence TDEC’s CAFO permit decision. Anyone who was at
these meetings saw the arrogance and unconcern for the
welfare of local residents that TDEC officials displayed.
This behavior was also evident at the meeting on the Butler
Asphalt Plant Permit held some weeks ago. Citizens were
told by TDEC officials that though they “feel our pain”,
the permit was going to be issued. It is just this behavior
that must be called into account. The Petition and NOI
submitted by the Johnson County Citizen’s group, gives
EPA 60 days to bring TDEC into compliance before a
lawsuit is filed. TDEC is facing vigorous criticism from
citizens all over the state.

Johnson County folks attending the meeting, also expressed
a desire to have state officials discontinue General CAFO
Permits in TN altogether and require that all NPDES
CAFO applicants apply for an Individual Permit. A General
Permit allows operators to regulate themselves during con-
struction and operation, whereas Individual Permits require
supervision by state experts from day one and on a regular
basis during operation. No continuous agency scrutiny
increases the likelihood of soil, air and water contamination
and places the burden of policing onto local residents.

TDEC issued a permit for a CAFO near Mountain City
and for the asphalt plant in Butler in the shortest possible
time frame. Frustration was expressed that TDEC has
rarely held up a permit for further consideration and study.
TDEC officials, under the supervision of Betsy Child, seem
to rubber stamp every permit application that comes across
their desk. Any input from stakeholder citizens seems
to be ignored as is current scientific data concerning the
potential for harm to local residents that these industrial
entities can cause.

The gathering lasted, over coffee and breakfast, for about
1 1/2 hours. Important points made were:

• there is a large voting population in Johnson County who
  are determined to keep this CAFO and Asphalt Plant out
• reframe TDEC creating an agency where citizen input is
  heard and actually considered when decisions are made
• demand higher permit fees to be paid by applicants
  permit fees should help fund TDEC’s enforcement divi-
sion. Polluters should pay the price for their pollution,
  not citizens.
• fair environmental impact assessments must be made on
  existing and proposed polluting business and municipal
  operations
• consideration of the welfare of residential citizens as a
  first priority in consideration of any permit to polluters

Both representatives understand Johnson County’s eco-
nomic future depends on tourism and home construction
and a clean environment. The legislative representatives
also discussed with attendees, the value of some form of
land use planning. Ferguson said that “ all citizen’s must
be guaranteed property rights” if we expect folks to want
to live here.

As the meeting closed the two state representatives were
given the following detailed written statements reinforcing
some of the topics discussed at the table:

1. 69-3-108 which discusses permits and that
only permit applicants can appeal to the Board
or the Court for review; or

2. 69-3-118 which discusses right of citizens to file a
complaint with the Commissioner which she has 90 days
to act on.

Neither of those two are adequate. Also, the act must al-
low permits appealed to be suspended, during the appeal
process, or the appeal is for naught.

Permits issued by a state agency which openly violate the
very CWA law they are supposed to uphold and regulate,
invalidates those permits. The violations are laid out in the
JCCCCAW NOI and Petition.

Understand that the NPDES program is a Federal program
(not a state program) which Tennessee has been delegated
authority to administer and federal funding to implement in
Tennessee. To do that, the Tennessee Water Quality Control
Act MUST be comparable to the Federal Clean Water Act
and regulations. IT IS NOT, and the 6th Circuit has said so.
The reason it isn’t, is the lack of real public participation in
agency decision making, required by the U.S.Congress.

Reform is the ONLY cure.

Photos by Dennis Shekinak

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Reform is the ONLY cure.
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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 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 photo prints returned.
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 cannot 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.

Moving?

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Mail to: Sierra Club
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The Tennes-Sierran
The monthly newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club.

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Please notify the Editor when changes are needed
Up in Smoke

by James H. Baker
Conservation Chair - Chickasaw Group

In late September 2004, Don Richardson, a fellow Gulf Coast Regional Conservation Committee (GCRRCC) delegate and I were travelling to Mountain View, Arkansas for the fall GCRRCC meeting. As we travelled west, along U.S. Highway 64, we counted at least five large smoke plumes that rose thousands of feet into the clear blue sky. As we entered the town of Wynne, Arkansas, we saw the source of the smoke. Between Wynne and Augusta, Arkansas, we saw a number of rice fields had been harvested, and the rice straw was being burned off. Several of these plumes drifted across U.S. 64, filling the car with a strong odor of smoke and reducing the sunlight levels to that of a cloudy day.

As stated on the Sierra Club web page, http://www.siera club.org/defuel/, air is a basic right for all of us. However, the smoke from these fields is getting into the air that you and I breathe. It will travel for many miles. The smoke from this burning contains fine particles of soot that are inhaled deeply into our lungs, and for some, cause or contribute to their having an asthma attack. Consider this fact, as published by the National Center for Health Statistics. "Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality, 2000-2001" January 28, 2003. "By 2001, more than 31 million people had been diagnosed with asthma at some point in their lives, and 12 million Americans (including 4.2 million children) had an asthma attack the previous year." Looking at these statistics, one wonders how many residents in and between the towns of Wynne and Augusta were experiencing asthma attacks in late September and early October.

One wonder if affected residents were complaining to the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). One also wonders what ADEQ is doing "to protect, enhance and restore the natural environment for the well-being of all Arkansans", as is stated on their web page. See: http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/at/branch_ plan/monitoring/html There are no air quality monitors in Cross and Woodruff counties, but there is no doubt in my mind that the 24-hour, 2.5 and 10 micron Fine Particle-National Ambient Air Quality Standards were being violated in these two counties.

The Sierra Club is not about complaining about pollution. The Sierra Club is about offering solutions that not only protect human health and the environment, but also about enhancing our environment, as well as our country’s economy. In a Sierra Club handout, “Sensible Replacements for Everyday ‘Wood Products’, there is a section on “agricultural residue”. Consider the burning of rice straw, as well as wheat straw and corn stalks. These can be harvested as well and used to make paper. The United States generates an estimated 280 million tons of agricultural residue that is suitable for making paper. Using this fiber to make paper generates at least four benefits:

- Stops the burning of wheat and rice straw that contributes to air pollution and health attacks.
- Stops the burning of the wheat and rice straw reduces carbon dioxide emissions that are increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and contributing to global climate change.
- The sale of this agricultural residue can provide extra money for rice and wheat farmers.
- It reduces the need to log our National Forests, for corporate profit, at taxpayer expense.

For the Tennessee Water Sentinels, 2004 can be best described as a roller coaster. There were many ups and downs, some of which are highlighted below.

- A highlight was the release of “Fouling the Father of Waters”, which was a combined follow-up report of the Cypress Creek and Wolf River watershed reports that were released in 2003. The report was sent to Commissioner Betsy Child of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) as a Formal Complaint. Commissioner Child’s lackluster response was just one low point for the year.
- Another highlight was Charlie Rond-the Chair of the Chickasaw Group and myself meeting with the entire Editorial Board of the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper and then being invited to write an Op-Ed column on industry’s lack of compliance - and TDEC’s lack of enforcement. This Op-Ed resulted in a Letter to the Editor praising the work of the Tennessee Water Sentinels. That letter was from Gary Bridgman-the President of the Board of Directors of the Wolf River Conservancy, a local river conservation group.
- Tennessee Water Sentinels was the lead group and then partnered with Memphis City Beautiful and Memphis Public Works in two litter clean-ups in the Spring. A total of 56 people worked these two cleanups and collected an estimated 1,200 pounds of recyclable waste.
ANNUAL PLANNING REPEAT AND POT- LUCK DINNER: Saturday, January 8, 10:00 a.m. at the home of David Reister, 10366 Rather Road, Knoxville. Directions: Follow 74S toward Oak Hill to exit onto Pellissippi Road. A little over a mile away is the Hardin Valley exit, turn right on George Light Road, just after a small office building. Go about 200 feet on George Light and turn right on Rather Road. Travel about one mile on Rather Road to the driveway into David’s subdivision. The driveway is the second road on the right. Pass a barn and three house before you reach David’s garage at the end of the driveway (0.3 miles) from Rather Road. His house is behind the garage. The house and garage look like a barn with Tulip Poplar siding and a tin roof. Call David at 670-8991 if you get lost. And don’t forget to bring a dish for the potluck supper which will follow the meeting.

PROGRAM MEETING: Tuesday, January 11, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. “Kidstown Our” - a documentary by Jeff Barrie. What would you discover if you traced the wires from your light switch to its energy source? Jeff Barrie journeyed across the southeastern US to find out. This important documentary vividly exposes energy-related problems like childhood asthma, air pollution and mountaintop removal. “Kidstown Our” explores the environmental and human toll of our region’s appetite for electricity and presents solutions that may surprise you. Call 690-3257 for more information.

STRATEGY MEETING: Tuesday January 25, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 2931 King-ston 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, January 13) at 7:00 p.m., Maple’s at the Lake Villas Resort and Conference Center, 2270 Crabtree Valley Road, Nashville. The Harpeth River Watershed Association (HRWA) is dedicated to preserving and restoring the ecological health of the Harpeth River through such means as focusing partnerships among homeowners, landscapers, farmers, businesses, researchers, and govern- ment agencies. The HRWA has conducted stream restoration projects, designed and conducted the first fish habitat loss and erosion projects, held watershed workshops for science teachers, and maintained watches on develop- ments that might endanger the health of the river, among many other projects. The Harpeth flows into the Cumberland River; thus, the health of this river affects all of us who depend on the Cumberland for our water. Join us as we welcome GLEN BLANTON of the JHWA, who will present a slide show about rain gardens, storm water procedures. Light refresh- ments will be served; please feel free to bring your favorite reusable cup. For more information on this program, contact Sheila Dimarco at (615) 260-0030. (Enter the Radar Lake area at Orrer Creek Road, accessible only from Granny White Pike.) Everyone is always welcome!

STRATEGY MEETING: Wednesday, January 26*, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. Conservation issues are first on the agenda! Bring your re-usable cup and sack dinner, or snack on refreshments provided by our group and get the news on what’s happening in our Middle Ten- nessee Group. All members are invited to attend our conservation and administrative meeting at 2021 21st Avenue South (the old St. Bernard Academy Building). We will meet at 6:30, and you may be able to learn of the group’s conserva- tion initiatives and commu- nity activities. For additions to the agenda or for more information regarding the meetings, send a message to Katherine Pendleton at kathbug@9590@aol.com or call 943-6877.

APRIL 2005

ANNUAL PLANNING RE- TREAT: Saturday, February 19th - We will have a follow up meeting from last year to plan for our year ahead. We will meet on Saturday, February 19th, somewhere in the Nashville area from 9 AM to 4 PM. Potluck dinner so bring something to share with oth- ers. Would you like to participate with the Executive Committee on where our Group focus should be? Do you have ideas for improvements? Any new ideas for outings, volunteer activities, new topics of concern? Join us. We would like to hear from you! NO COST and no sleepovers. Call Katherine Pendleton at 943-6877 or email at kathbug@9590@aol to let her know that you will attend. More precise info to follow in the February issue, but mark your calendars now to attend!

UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP ( Cookeville)

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

STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS: First Monday of every month, 7pm, Holston Valley Unitar- ian Universalist Church. All SOFG members are en- couraged to get active now as we are organized for en- vironmental victory in November! FML: Dan Grace, Pol.Com. Chair, (423) 926-7035, dangrace@worldnet. art.net.

PROGRAM MEETING: 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’s air, water, forests & family farms. To place an item on the agenda, or for direc- tions to the Church, please contact Linda Modica, Group Chair, (423) 753-9067, lmodica@aol.com.

PROGRAM MEETINGS: Fourth Monday of every month, 7pm, Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church. Programs on environmental issues, travel, na- ture photography are among the many topics featured at SOFG program meetings. MCG: Mary Gardner, Ice Chair, (423) 434-9535, mgav@yahoo.com.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

PROGRAM MEETING: For additional information, contact Rick Gehlke 423-843-9625 or email rick. gehlke@comcast.net.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

MONTHLY MEMBERS GATHERING: Thurs- day, January 6, 2005, 6:00 - 8:00pm - 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 Membership Chair Jill Johnston <jilljohnston@memphis.edu> at (901) 278-2713 for more information.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEET- ING: Sunday, January 9, 2005, 1:00 - 3:00pm - Otherlands, 641 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee. Join James Baker, the Conservation Committee in a casual setting to discuss conservation issues and interests that affect the Chickasaw Group. Contact James Baker at (901) 372-6717 or arbury_kim@worldnet.att.net for more information.

FULL CONFERENCE: Friday, January 28, 2005, 8:00am to 6:00pm - The Library Channel, 3313 S. Highland Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee. For more information, call (901) 452-8150.

PROGRAM MEETING: Saturday, January 15, 2005, 6:00 - 8:00pm - Otherlands, 641 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee. Join us for Chickasaw Group’s “SECOND 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 Johnston <jilljohnston@memphis.edu> at (901) 278-2713 for more information.

RUTSCHMANN@rhodes.edu at (901) 767-5916.
The Future of the Cumberland Plateau

A Short Environment Essay on the Cumberland Plateau

By Jim Bennett,
Bemont University Student

Reading and Writing About the Environment - Robbie Pinter, Instructor

The late singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell wrote a line that may unfortunately come true for Tennesseans: “You don’t know what you got till it’s gone.” Arguably, the Cumberland Plateau is one of Tennessee’s richest natural resources. That is why sustaining its rich biodiversity is vital for the future of Tennesseans. Many industries, colleges, and private citizens use the Cumberland Plateau’s natural resources to better the lives of Tennesseans and other people throughout the world. As a result, many business opportunities to financially profit from the Cumberland Plateau develop everyday and are wisely harvested. However, not all businesses are responsible users of the Cumberland Plateau. In fact, new studies by Professor John Evans of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, show that the native forests of the southern United States are suffering. In recent years, “Urban sprawl and the creation of pine plantations have emerged as dominant forces of change and have been predicted to be major causes of forest loss in the future” (iii).

A major reason the abuse is so rampant is that close to 80 percent of the Cumberland Plateau is privately owned. Due to private land ownership, the majority of the land on the Cumberland Plateau is not protected by the rules and regulations that apply to public land. Instead, Forest Certification systems have been developed by environmentalists and industrial groups in an attempt to influence landowners to manage their forests in a sustainable way. However, no standard Forest Certification system exists in the United States and the differences regarding acceptable forest management are significant. In order to secure a healthy and profitable Cumberland Plateau for future Tennesseans, private landowners must be held to higher standards. Being aware of three topics is essential to Tennesseans who wish to cultivate responsibility and positive change on the Cumberland Plateau. 1. The value of biodiversity on the Cumberland Plateau and 2. The significance of Forest Certifications that accurately identify abuse on the Cumberland Plateau.

The Value of Biodiversity on the Cumberland Plateau

Arguably, one of Tennessee’s most valuable assets regarding the Cumberland Plateau is its rich biodiversity. Tennessee’s most significant piece of the Cumberland Mountains is a vast 6,875 square mile region called the Cumberland Plateau. It stretches from the West side of Chatanooga all the way through the northwestern side of Knoxville. Also, the Cumberland Plateau extends south to Birmingham, Alabama and to the northwest corner of Georgia, as well as north to West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky. The Cumberland Plateau is considered one of the world’s most diverse ecosystems because on it may be found a wide variety of animals, birds, flora, trees, and insects. It should be no surprise to Tennesseans that massive clear-cutting is predicted to grow on the Cumberland Plateau. Considering that over a quarter of the world’s paper and 60% of America’s wood products are being produced in the South, there is a lot of money to be made by clearing down the Cumberland Plateau. As a matter of fact, about 80 percent of the Cumberland Plateau is privately owned and the largest part of that private property is owned by the paper industry giants: Bowater, International Paper, Huber, and Mead.

Forest Certification:

The Forest Stewardship Council, “FSC”, another forest certification system, strongly discourages clear-cutting. However, the FSC’s standard has a limitation of 40 acres (some exceptions allow for 80 acres) if the clear-cutting can “maintain a diversity of physical structures in the forest, responds to the silvicultural needs of dominant species, and does not compromise a forest’s ecology.” The policy underpinning the FSC standard is to “minimize damage to the forest during harvesting and other operations.” Clearly, these two certification systems have a different set of goals and does not compromise a forest’s ecology.” The policy underpinning the FSC standard is to “minimize damage to the forest during harvesting and other operations.” Clearly, these two certification systems have a different set of goals. In contrast, the Forest Stewardship Council, “FSC”, another forest certification system, strongly discourages clear-cutting. However, the FSC’s standard has a limitation of 40 acres (some exceptions allow for 80 acres) if the clear-cutting can “maintain a diversity of physical structures in the forest, responds to the silvicultural needs of dominant species, and does not compromise a forest’s ecology.” The policy underpinning the FSC standard is to “minimize damage to the forest during harvesting and other operations.” Clearly, these two certification systems have a different set of goals. In contrast, the Forest Stewardship Council, “FSC”, another forest certification system, strongly discourages clear-cutting. However, the FSC’s standard has a limitation of 40 acres (some exceptions allow for 80 acres) if the clear-cutting can “maintain a diversity of physical structures in the forest, responds to the silvicultural needs of dominant species, and does not compromise a forest’s ecology.” The policy underpinning the FSC standard is to “minimize damage to the forest during harvesting and other operations.” Clearly, these two certification systems have a different set of goals.

Almost every one would agree that Tennessee’s economy needs a healthy forest products industry. However, the massive clear-cutting on the Cumberland Plateau destroys its rich biodiversity. Clear-cutting is the current process that paper industries use to harvest trees. Clear-cutting is similar to General Sherman’s mass destruction of Southern landowner’s property during the Civil War. Not only does clear-cutting annihilate the trees and vegetation in a particular forested area but it also takes from the soil an unhealthy amount of its vital re-growth nutrients.

It is not likely that Tennesseans would tolerate the gross abuses committed by the paper industry if Tennesseans were aware of the magnitude of the devastation on the Cumberland Plateau. The problem is that “beauty strips” are used to conceal the clear-cutting sites. A “Beauty Strip” is the small strip of native forest surrounding the clear-cutting sites. “Beauty Strips” are left behind because they are more aesthetically pleasing than a bull-dozed forest.

Conclusion:

Tennessee needs to hold the paper companies accountable for their massive abuse of the Cumberland Plateau and insist that they change upgrade their forest certification system membership. The FSC standards have the wrong focus if Tennesseans want to keep the biodiversity on the Cumberland Plateau. Their standards that permit the paper companies to average 120 acre clear-cuts have already resulted in 14% of the Cumberland Plateau to be chopped down. In place of the hardwood forests being clear-cut, the Continued on page 8

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Now 2 Shirts to Choose From!

Sierra Club John Muir Quote T’s – NEW!

Mountain stream picture with John Muir quote “There is nothing more eloquent in nature than a mountain stream”

Sizes: Medium – Qty ___________ x $15/shirt = ___________
Large - Qty ___________ x $15/shirt = ___________
XX-large - Qty ___________ x $15/shirt = ___________
Total $ - John Muir quote t-shirts = ___________

Save Our Smokies T’s

Shirt features a montage of very special shots from our Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Sizes:

Small - Qty ___________ x $12/shirt = ___________
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Total S - Save Our Smokies t-shirts = ___________

Total T-shirt order

Grand Total (from above) = ___________
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Ship to:

Name ____________________________
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Sorry, we cannot accept credit cards. Please make check payable to Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club and mail to:
Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club, 2021 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 865/351-8480 or bsmith1300@comcast.com

Your help would be greatly appreciated!
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!

All participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver before you participate, please refer to: http://www.sierrachub.org/outings/chapter/forms/SignIn-Waiver.PDF or call 415-977-5630, 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, January 22 - 23, 2005 - Winter Backpack, Campsite 18, GSMNP - Join us for this easy winter warm-up backpack. Day one will be a 5.0-mile hike from Laurel Creek Road at the Finley Cane trailhead to Bote Mountain trail and ending at Campsite #18 on the West Prong Trail. Sunday will be a short hike out to our cars at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. Some shuttling back to Finley Cane will be necessary. Please sign up early, the number of participants will be limited. Pre-register with Beverly Smith. Contact the leader no later than 3 days before the beginning of the hike. Evening phone number 865-531-8480; email blsmith1300@gmail.com.

MIDDLE TN GROUP (Nashville)

Saturday January 1 - 2nd Annual New Year’s Day hike at Long Hunter State Park - We will walk the 4 mile Volunteer Trail and perhaps the Couchville Cedar Glade 1 mile trail, then off to brunch somewhere. Meet at 10:00 AM at the Park Office for the first hike of the year! Call Linda Smithyman at 615-822-1979 or limirthymanhbg@yahoo.com to register for the hike.

Saturday January 1 - Canoe the Narrows of the Harpeth - Join a paddle around the Narrows of the Harpeth on New Year’s Day. We will be taking food for a brunch/lunch at take-out. Participants will have to BYOB - bring their own boats. Contact Helseo if you are interested, stillwild@bellsouth.net or 896-6278.

Sat., Sun., January 8 - 9 - 4th Annual Long Hunter State Park Backpack - Let’s begin the year with an easy 6 mile each way backpack to the overnight campsite on the Volunteer Trail at Longhunter State Park. Bring your favorite “gourmet” backpacking meal to share for a potluck supper on Saturday night. For additional information and to register, contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email Karihog1959@aol.com.

Saturday January 15 - Day Hike at Short Springs Natural Area - Hike at the Short Springs Natural Area in Tullahoma Tennesee. Get introduced to a new place close to home. Short but sweet, and if you don’t get enough hiking with this four miles something, continue at Old Stone Fort in Manchester. Call Helseo at 896-6278 or re-mail stillwild@bellsouth.net.

Tuesday, January 18 - Dinner Social Night Out - Meet for dinner about 6:30 PM at O’Charley’s (or another restaurant) on Franklin Road in Brentwood. ANYONE is invited to come and bring a friend(s). Come out to enjoy some like minded company and treat yourself to a nice dinner out. Call Linda Smithyman at 615-822-1979 or email limirthymanhbg@yahoo.com to reserve your seat (so we know how many to expect). We will be sitting in the non-smoking section of the restaurant.

Sunday January 30 - Day Hike at Barfield Crescent Park in Murfreesboro - Barfield Crescent hike in Murfreesboro Tennessee. Trickly footing across lime-stone rocks. Four miles. If you don’t get enough hiking, continue at the Greenway for another six miles, including a visit to a Civil War fortress. Contact Helseo at 896-6278 or stillwild@bellsouth.net.

Saturday February 5 - Sandhills Cranes at Hiwassee Water Refuge - Join us at the Hiwassee Water Refuge, north of Chattanooga, to watch the sandhill cranes. The local school has talks, slide shows, buses to the refuge, all FREE. Buy your own lunch and you need to bring gas money for the carpool, souvenirs, & hot chocolate. Cameras with telescopic lenses take the best photos. People share their telescopes or bring their own. Call Linda Smithyman at 615-822-1979 or limirthymanhbg@yahoo.com to register by Thursday evening to make sure that the trip is on and where/when to meet.

NOTE: Places and times are subject to change. Contact the outings leader for further information, and check the newsletter or website (http://tennessee.sierracub.org/mgs/mgoutings.htm) for updates. Also, all participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. Transportation to the outing, including carpooling, is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

For information on upcoming outings, contact Chris O’Connor at chris-o77@yahoo.com or visit our web site at http://www.tennesseesierraclub.org/cheroke/index.htm

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

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 representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of these activities. Transportation to the outing, including carpooling, is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

OLD FOREST HIKE: Saturday, January 8, 2004 - 10:00 am - The Old Forest Trail. 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 forests in an urban setting. Meet at the bridge next to the parking lot at the end of Old Forest Lane in the center of Overton 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 Golf House in Overton Park at all other times. For additional information, contact Don Richardson <donrich@bellsouth.net> at (901) 276-1387. Sponsored by Park Friends.

Tennessee Water Sentinels:

continued from page 3

and non-recyclable material for proper disposal.

· Comment letters were written during the year regarding types of draft water quality permits. These took many hours to research and any camera at the ready, and the most involved of all my letters, was an attempt to get TDEC to create and certify County. I should add that for medium sized Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). Despite much hard work on the comments letter, the resultant permit was finalized as essentially drafted. Another low point for the year.

· A highlight of the last few months has been the complete overhaul of the Tennessee Water Sentinels web-site. This new site includes:

1. All new cover page and photos, which required photos reconnaissance and public record audits at TDEC for the “Fouling the Father of Waters” update.
2. The “Fouling the Father of Waters” report of January 2004 has additions as of early September, hence the title is “September 2004 Update-Fouling the Father of Waters”.
3. The update begins on page 25. This is a set of follow-up file audits of the six facilities that were on the original “Fouling...” report, pages 19 – 24. This update also includes photos of each of these 6 facility’s signs - taken from either the public street or sidewalk.
4. A “pop-up” page-called “accomplishments” has several photos of Tennessee Water Sentinels shoreline clean-ups.
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Point of interest - through casual conversation, I have learned that the Tennessee Water Sentinels web-page is regularly checked at the offices of TDEC. Our Chapter and Group web pages can be as well.
The presentation of the “Paving Paradise” award to the Riverfront Development Commission was the highlight of the recent Chickasaw Group Holiday Party at the stately law offices of Burch, Porter and Johnson in downtown Memphis. The award was given for the RDC’s “myopic bold vision to animate the riverfront with new apartments, offices and a grand esplanade shopping strip which will make us a bluff-less city on Wolf River Harbor Lake - all for a mere $292 million.”

The award was one of seven given that night. The “Outstanding Volunteer Service Award” was given to Becky Barnhardt for her “commitment to the democratic process and her tireless efforts during the 2004 Presidential and local elections.” Former ExCom member Jeff Lehr was given a “Culinary Delights” award for “his creative ideas that were expressed in the wonderful food that was served at the 2004 Legislative Reception…” And the Friends of the Riverfront won a “Smart Growth” award for “their continuing actions in insisting that the promises for the Public Promenade by Memphis founders be kept by our elected officials and the Riverfront Development Corporation.”

Environmental Justice Coordinator Rita Harris presented one “Environmental Stewardship Award” to the Memphis & Shelby County Fire Department Engine 40 C-Shift and another to the Rescue 1 C-Shift for “outstanding efforts in managing the cleanup of a toxic oil spill on Shelby Drive near Tchulahoma Road.”

The surprise “Unsung Heroine” award was given to Program Chair and Publicity Chair Teri Sullivan for her outstanding dedication and service to the Chickasaw Group this past year chairing and organizing numerous successful events, including the Legislative Reception, the Holiday Party, the planned Walkin’ Jim Stoltz Concert and others.

Scores of Chickasaw Group members, friends and guests enjoyed a rich selection of foods, desserts and wines as they reviewed and reminisced over the year’s events. And a downtown fireworks display surprised and

On the web, see: http://www.sierraclub.org/watersentinels/tennessee/

I have mentioned the highlights, but have made reference to low points. A low point is working extremely hard on a report or a comment letter, and then TDEC goes right ahead and “drops the ball” on enforcement issues, or issues a final permit that is, in my opinion, not protective of human health and the environment. Another low point is that Region IV EPA has never responded to any letter that I have copied them on.

Since TDEC and EPA will not fulfill their obligations under the Clean Water Act, it will be up to us citizens to continue to monitor polluting facilities by reviewing public records, photographing violations, taking water samples, and writing TDEC and EPA. Additional actions may have to be taken if TDEC and EPA continues to fail to secure your clean water rights as promised by the Clean Water Act.

If you are a Sierra Club member and are interested in a Water Sentinels project in your area, contact James H. Baker, the Tennessee Chapter’s Water Sentinel Project Director at: aubrey_kimo@worldnet.att.net or 901-526-2448.

Volunteer Opportunity!

To help the Middle Tennessee Group, to help our senior and disabled recyclers, to have fun and to meet other Sierrans, please consider volunteering at our recycling site at the Elysian Fields Kroger in Nashville. 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, monthly, quarterly, or every few months. Please call Recycling Coordinator David Bordenkircher at 333-3377 (H) or 741-1597, or e-mail him at dabordenkircher@mindspring.com.

Many thanks to Darius Thieme for many weeks of devoted work at our recycling site!
Defenders of Tennessee 2005 NEEDS YOU!

The Tennessee Sierra Club’s annual Defenders of Tennessee campaign funds our advocacy and lobbying activities, and we ask new members, as well as continuing members who have not yet joined the Defenders, to do so as your 2005 gift to the environment. The Legislature reconvenes this month, so now is the time.

During the past 8 years, this program is one that has been very effective in representing the Sierra Club’s environmental agenda on Capitol Hill. Our Defenders can be very proud of the work we have done and the accomplishments of our Legislative Committee and our lobbyist, Mike Murphy. The Tennessee Chapter is able to hire a lobbyist such as Mike only because you and other dedicated members donate to this once-a-year solicitation.

Your contribution is not tax-deductible but is critical in enabling us to continue to have an advocate on “the hill”. In essence, if we don’t have a lobbyist, we don’t have a voice. Whether you give a little or give a lot, each contribution is very important in enabling us to continue this vital program. The Defender campaign brings in only a portion of the funds that we need to carry out our legislative and lobbying activities, and we must make up the balance out of our dwindling reserves.

The Tennessee Chapter thanks the following contributors (through December 5):

Andrew Abernathy  
Annelies Raetzer  
Betsy Garber  
Bob and Anne Brandt  
Clark Buchner  
David Bate Parsons and Theresa Ball  
David Reister  
Dr. Alan Solomon  
Dr. David Carleton and Dr. Lisa Langenbach  
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Mary Lynn Dobson  
Nancy and Nick Fariello  
Richard and Sherry Loller  
Roger Jenkins and Susie McDonald  
Wendy Johnson  
Will Skelton  
William Manier III  
Anonymous

We invite you to join the Defenders. Please fill out the form below and send your check made out to Sierra Club Defenders, c/o Adelle Wood, 4641 Villa Green Drive, Nashville, TN 37215. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Bill Terry, Legislative Co-Chair  
Penny Brooks, Legislative Co-Chair

Amount of donation:  
( ) $50  ( ) $125  
( ) $250  ( ) $500  
( ) Other

Name: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________

May we publish your name in the TennesSierran as a donor?

Yes _____  No _____

(Optional) Your e-mail address, if you prefer to receive acknowledgment of your donation electronically (We will not use this for other purposes).

The Future of the Cumberland Plateau  

A Short Environment Essay on the Cumberland Plateau

By Jim Bennett,

Continued from page 5

the paper companies’ solution has been to create pine plantations, but the pine plantations do not have the ability to maintain the biodiversity that is essential for a vibrant Cumberland Plateau. If Tennesseans don’t respond soon to the paper companies’ clear-cutting abuses, the Cumberland will suffer irreparable damage.

- Over a quarter of the world’s paper
- 60% of America’s wood products are being produced in the South

The low Forest Certification System standards are a direct result of the paper companies’ massive financial gain in chopping down Tennessee trees. Unless Tennesseans develop an attitude that demands responsible forestry management and insists that the paper companies upgrade their current forest certifications, the rich biodiversity of the Cumberland Plateau will be gone.

Works Cited


The Sierra Club-Middle TN Group  
TennesSierran

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