Are Our National Parks Relevant?

By Chance Finegan

Are our national parks relevant in the 21st century? It’s a question that has kept many people in the panic over the past few years. Congress has held special hearings on declining visitation levels, and the National Park Service (NPS) has expressed concern that the parks are “no longer speaking to a wide range of people.”

Visitation is down. Even here in Tennessee, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area visitation has declined from 915,000 visitors in 2001 to 622,000 in 2006, and the government and several major universities have undertaken studies to find the cause of this disturbing trend.

Some have said that the parks are not reaching minorities. In a 2003 study, NPS found that African-Americans indicated that they were less likely to visit national parks “because they received poor service from park employees or they felt uncomfortable while visiting parks.” Others, though, have offered a more cynical reason—people in general, but specifically young people, are spending too much time planted in front of a box.

Oliver Pergams, research assistant professor in biological sciences at the University of Illinois – Chicago, authored a major study that backs up this idea. While more than two dozen variables were tested, Pergams said video games, home movie rentals, going out to movies, Internet use, and rising fuel prices explained almost 98 percent of the decline.

“It’s fairly stunning,” he said, but cautions that correlation is not the same as causation. “This is not smoking gun. We’re showing statistically that the rise in use of these various types of media, as well as oil prices, is so highly correlated with the decline in national park visits that there is likely to be some association."

“My concern is that young people are simply not going outdoors or to natural areas, but are instead playing video games, going on the Internet or watching movies. My longer-term concern is that I don’t see how this trend, if it is in fact true, could be good for conservation efforts. But if the trends are correct, perhaps public awareness will lead to some solutions,” Pergams said.

And yet, all of this hype seems to be a bit on the panicky side. The parks have been around for more than a century now, and if you look at the recent entries in the annual Junior Ranger Essay Contest, you’ll see that a love for America’s wild places is alive and well among today’s youth. Indeed, there are several new initiatives, some being spearheaded by the Sierra Club, to get kids outside—namely, the No Child Left Indoors bill the club is pushing for in New Mexico. The bill would place a special tax on TVs, video games and the like, with the funds going to support an “outdoor classroom” program designed to get more kids outside.

Clearly, there is no easy solution and no easy way to raise visitation at our parks. However, Americans can be confident that with a resurgence in the green movement, increasing worries over childhood obesity and the National Park Service’s centennial in 2016, that the parks are here to stay. What we choose to do with them remains to be seen.

Chance is a member of the Upper Cumberland Group and a Sierra Student Coalition Campus Organizer. You can view his award-winning blog at http://tntrailhead.blogspot.com

Dear Tennessee Sierra Club Members,

As many of you know, our Tennessee Chapter has embarked on a campaign to get the state to issue a specialty car license tag honoring the Sierra Club and our Chapter. Here is how you can help:

We have to gather 1,000 signatures from Tennessee vehicle owners who will commit to buying these tags for at least one of their vehicles, once it is issued. Signors do not have to be Sierra Club members. Once we have 1,000 or more signatures we will ask the State Legislature to pass a bill creating our license tag. The specialty tag costs $35 additional over and above the ordinary cost of registering a vehicle, and part of the money will come to our Chapter as long as the Sierra Club license tag is sold in Tennessee.

You can help by circulating the attached petition among those of your friends and relations who are members of, or friends of, the Sierra Club. I would like to ask each of you to gather at least 10 valid signatures. Once you have collected them, please turn them over to your group chair.

The individual who gathers the most signatures will be awarded a $25 gift certificate from REI as our way of saying “Thanks.” Each group will receive a $1 donation from Tom Mozen, the chair of the State of Franklin Group, for each signature it submits to the chapter before or during the April chapter meeting, provided we reach a total of 1,000 or more signatures at that time.

This is a way to ensure both the Tennessee Chapter and the individual groups have strong resources to fight the necessary environmental battles on behalf of everyone in our state.

Please email (krsp@aol.com) or call (615-714-2704) Chapter Fundraising Chair Keith Romig (NPS) if you need a copy of the petition. Please put “petition” in the subject line of your email.

Thank you very much for everything you do for Tennessee’s environment.
Tennessee Chapter, or the Sierra Club. *Smail Mail, clip the Moving? coupon below and mail *Address changes are processed much faster if you include your Sierra Club membership number. To find your membership number, look on the address label of this newsletter.

SEND ARTICLES TO:
Email: lbaker@usw.org
Smail Mail: Lynee Baker, Tennes-Sierran Editor
108 Pepper Ridge Circle, Antioch, TN 37013
(615) 831-6782

ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
Submission DEADLINE is the 10th of the month preceding the new month’s issue.

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

2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or .tif file format or 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 disks 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 accepted; however, pre-approval from the Editor is required.

5. Pre-approved articles may be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.

6. 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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Your Action is Needed on 2008 Tennessee Environmental Bills

By Stewart Clifton

Every year during the annual legislative session, your legislative committee meets regularly with our lobbyist, Mike Murphy, the Tennessee Conservation Voters lobbyists, myself and my associate, Anne Ross. We go over dozens of bills to keep track of their progress through the legislature. Some are bad, some are good, and some need work to be good or bad.

Legislators need your input to help them decide how to vote on a bill. If you feel strongly about any of the bills discussed later in this article, call or write your state legislator and tell him/her how you feel. But first, check on the website or email/call a member of the legislative committee to find out the status of the bill.

Here are some suggestions to keep up with these bills and contact your legislators:

1. Email Stewart Clifton at stewart-clifton@comcast.net and ask to be added to the weekly updates. He will send a list electronically almost every weekend of the legislative session. There is no charge.

2. Research the bill by clicking www.legislature.state.tn.us/bills/currentga/billLookup.asp and you will be able to look up the bills by bill number and by word search.

3. To find out who your state legislators are: Go online to www.legislature.state.tn.us and follow the instructions about how to find out your legislator and how to get in touch with him/her.

4. To communicate with legislators click www.legislature.state.tn.us/

Please only contact legislators after you have figured out what the status of the bills are.

5. Call or email Bill Terry (615-665-1010; hikebike@comcast.net) or Penny Brooks (615-792-5306; penny.h.brooks@vanderbilt.edu) to find out the status of the bill if you don’t have electronic means.

6. The listing below has the Senate Bill number and the Senate sponsor, then the House Bill number followed by the House sponsor before each bill. You can contact any member of the House or Senate, not just the sponsors.

2008 Environmental Legislation

I selected 12 positive and five questionable bills currently pending in the Tennessee General Assembly. Those chosen are not necessarily the most controversial, the most likely to pass or even the most likely to still be active when this newsletter comes out, so your favorite bill may not be on the list. The bills listed are current as of Feb. 18, 2008 when this article was written and may/may not still be active when you read this.

These bills represent many important concerns dealing with Tennessee’s energy, air, water and land. At least 300 bills and resolutions have been filed and are pending which deal with our environment broadly defined.

These are, in my opinion, some of the most significant bills filed:

Good Bills

SB 0116 Kurita/HB 0348 Buck

Energy and lighting efficiency building standards. Requires improved minimum energy conservation standards for any new residential construction.

SB 1408 Jackson / HB 1829 Turner M.

TN Deposit Beverage Container Act. Passing this bill would mean increased recycling and less litter.

SB 2671 Jackson / HB 2895 Wimminham

Sewerage tax for coal products. Increases coal severance tax.

SB 2872 Kurita / HB 2815 McDonald

Responsibilities of finance and administration.

SB 2873 Kurita / HB 2816 McDonald

Energy impact statements on fiscal notes.

SB 2874 Kurita / HB 2817 McDonald

Participation in energy management program.

SB 3235 Woodood / HB 3368 Harwell

Outdoor advertising permits. Eliminates the right of billboard companies to replace nonconforming use billboards following a billboard’s removal.

SB 3651 Ketron / HB 3521 Buck

Stop work order for violations of Water Quality Control Act. This bill was initiated by the Tennessee Clean Water Network and allows the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) to issue stop work orders for violations of the Water Quality Control Act or for activities that threaten public safety. Currently stop work orders can only be issued in limited situations.

SB 3822 Finney R. / HB 3348 McDonald

Issuance of permits for surface mining. This bill would limit mountain top removal mining and would require a new environmental impact study before surface mining permits are issued.

SB 4198 Kyle / HB 4198 Odum

Enacts the TN Non-Coal Surface Mining Law. This bill is part of the administration’s package to provide regulation and control of surface mining to minimize soil erosion, stream pollution and contaminated water. Commercial rock harvesting would be regulated by this bill.

SB 4210 Kyle / HB 4209 Odum

(continued on page 5)

Dear Tennessee Chapter Members,

Early this month many of you will receive a letter asking for a financial contribution to be used for the environmental work of our chapter. March is the month set aside by the Sierra Club in which chapters may fundraise without competition from the national Club.

The Tennessee Chapter needs your help more than ever this year due to our dwindling financial reserves. We need to raise a minimum of $20,000 this year through March Window contributions in order to continue various conservation initiatives.

Won’t you please consider increasing your donation by $10 this year? If you have never made a contribution to our chapter, I urge you to make a donation of a minimum of $15.

The money you contribute stays here in Tennessee to fight environmental battles to make our cities and towns more livable, to preserve our wild places for ourselves and our children, and to ensure that Tennessee does its part to protect and preserve our planet.

We can’t do the work of the Sierra Club without your support. Please give generously this year. If you want your contribution to be tax-deductible, make your check out to The TN Chapter Sierra Club Foundation. Your contribution will make a huge difference.

Have you ever wished you could have a Sierra Club license plate? Sierra Club members in Tennessee may soon be able to get license plates featuring a Sierra Club logo. However, this opportunity will not come to pass without your help.

Please take a look at the article on the front page of this edition for how you can help gather petitions for a Sierra Club license plate in Tennessee. Our chapter has to have a minimum of 1,000 signatures on petitions before we can go before the legislature and have our license plate approved. Please help to spread the word, participate in the contest, and help our chapter with this very easy fundraising campaign.

During the national chapter meeting national board of directors candidates were endorsed by the Tennessee Chapter as follows: Lane Boldman (KY), Clark Buchner (TN), Jeremy Doochin (TN), Jim Dougherty (DC), and Jerry Sutherland (OR). There are five board of directors positions open this year. When you receive your ballot this month please take a few moments to read the candidate statements and vote.

The Tennessee Chapter will be sponsoring a wilderness first aid course again this year on June 7-8 at Fall Creek Falls State Park. The cost of the course is $165 per person, which includes course materials and lunch and snacks on both training days. The training will be provided by a certified NOLS Wilderness Medicine instructor through Landmark Learning in North Carolina. Please contact me for additional information and to register for this training at katibus89@aol.com or 615-943-6877. **Early Bird Registration is $150 if your registration is postmarked by April 1!**

We have several new group chairs this year including Mary Mastin (UCG), Tom Mozen (SOFG), Nancy Ream (CKG), and David Reister (HBI). Continuing group chairs are Rachel Floyd (MTC) and Gloria Griffith (WG). Please get acquainted with your group chair and other members of your executive committee.

Katherine Pendleton,
Tennessee Chapter Chair
**HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)**

**MARCH PROGRAM MEETING:** Tuesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2391 Kingston Pike.

Our Annual Outings Program, presided over by Outings Chair Ron Shrieves. Slide show with photos, descriptions and discussion of upcoming HBG hikes, backpacks, bikes and canoe trips. Outings are scheduled on weekends of every month. We are also contemplating a more impromptu midweek hiking schedule and will seek indications of interest at this meeting. Come out! It’s a great way to meet new people, find out about exciting places, make your plans for the great outdoors, or just see what others are doing. Everyone is welcome. For information call Ron at (865) 922-3518.

**APRIL PROGRAM MEETING:** Tuesday, April 8, 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2391 Kingston Pike.

It’s Flower Time! Beth Willis presents “Tips and Techniques for Better Flower Photography.” Flowers may be beautiful (and uncomplaining) photography subjects, but lighting, weather conditions, and other factors can make taking great shots tricky. This presentation will share some basic principles of exposure and composition to help you capture by camera the beauty you see. It will offer tips for using natural light and weather to your advantage and also suggest ways to edit, share and store your photos. Though her emphasis is on digital photography, many of her principles and tips apply to film photography as well. Beth, an East Tennessee native, is a recent graduate of UT Knoxville and has worked in the UT gardens for four years and is especially interested in garden and wildflower macro photography. As part of her Master’s project, she took more than 8,500 photographs of the flower varieties being tried in the UT gardens last year. Everyone is welcome. For information call John Finger at (865) 573-5908.

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)**

**PROGRAM MEETING:** Thursday, March 13, 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center, 1160 Otter Creek Road, Nashville.

He’s been doing this for 13 years and he knows all the ins and outs of Tennessee natural areas. If you think you have nothing to learn, you will be pleasantly surprised! Brian Bowen of the Tennessee Division of Natural Areas will tell us how we are protecting our state’s natural areas and about some of the management problems we face. The Division of Natural Areas works to restore and protect the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the natural biological diversity of Tennessee. Its staff includes biologists, botanists, zoologists, ecologists and others who focus their attention on conservation and management of Tennessee’s natural resources.

We are all concerned about protecting our natural resources and this is our chance to investigate it further. Come, listen and ask productive questions! A native of Tennessee, Brian holds a MS degree in biology from MTSU.

Please call Martha Wilson at 376-2538 for directions or more information. As always, the event is free and open to the public.

April preview: We have another WOW program from our own National Public Television. Jonathan Harwell presents a spectacular film about solar energy. All Sierra members should see this one!

**ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT:** Sunday, March 16 at 2:00-5:00 p.m. - 2021 21st Avenue South, Suite 436.

This is a rescheduled meeting for the MTG’s Annual Planning Retreat to be held in February. If you have been wanting to get involved with the Sierra Club but are just not sure how to hook into the issue, this is THE meeting for you to begin with. Our group will meet to set goals and objectives for the upcoming year; plan events, issue strategy and seek volunteer participation in 2008. Contact Betsy Garber at 615-668-1977 or email garberb@hotmail.com for more information, or to register.

**STRATEGY MEETING:** Tuesday, March 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the old St. Bernard’s Academy Building, 2021 21st Avenue South, 4th floor.

Conservation issues are first on the agenda. All members are invited to attend this conservation and administrative meeting to get the news on what’s happening in our Middle Tennessee Group. We welcome you to be with us to learn about the group’s conservation initiatives and community activities.

We will review conservation issues or additions to the conservation agenda, contact Betsy Garber at 615-668-1977 or email garberb@hotmail.com. For additions to the administrative agenda or for more information regarding the meetings, send a message to Rachel Floyd at rfly95578@bellsouth.net or call 792-2590.

**STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)**

**STRATEGY/PROGRAM MONTHLY MEETING:** We will be meeting at The Acoustic Coffee House in Johnson City located in the 400 block of West Walnut Street in Old Town Johnson City at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 5. The group will be meeting the 1st Wednesday of every month at this location for the next 2 meetings after which an annual calendar will be set and fixed. Contact Tom Mozen at mozenet@yahoo.com or 423-232-0827 for more information.

We will be starting a club at East Tennessee University and plan to affiliate with the ETSU Environmental Studies program. Mozen has been in touch with Roberta Herrin to further the club’s advice and helping hand toward getting a completed project of the Schell/Coe’s “Nature’s Harmony”—this is our title; the official name will be announced by Herrin—DVD project. We will be planning an exciting multifaceted approach to gaining membership and attendance.

**UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP ( Cookeville)**

**MEETING:** Every 4th Thursday at 7 p.m. at the downstairs meeting room of the Putnam County Library. Alternating program meeting with planning meetings every other month. For more information, contact Mary Mastin at marymantin@twlakes.net or (931) 268-2938.

**STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)**

**STRATEGY/PROGRAM MONTHLY MEETING:** 1st Wednesday of every month. Starting 6:30 p.m. (Strategy Meeting) and at 7:30 p.m. (Program Meeting). Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Gray, TN, 136 Bob Jobe Road, off Exit 10 (Eastern Star) I-24-26. Contact Vincent Whitright at cleanerswork@excite.com or 423-747-1967 for more information.

**CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)**

**Chickasaw Group Sierra Club Film Night**

“Water on Film” Wednesday, March 5, 7:30 p.m., Power House, 45 E.E. Patterson (between Main and Front)

These films present current efforts underway to preserve, protect and clean up our water from local and national perspectives. Included in the films to be seen will be “Drops of Water in Oceans of Sand and After the Storm.” Discussion after the films will be led by James Baker of the Sierra Club Water Sentinels Program. Sierra Club film night is hosted by Indie Memphis. Admission is free (with donations accepted), and refreshments will be available. For more information contact Tom Lawrence at (901) 237-4819 or bus@theecave.com.

**Monthly First Thursday Members Gathering:**

March 6 & April 3, 5:30-7:00 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. Anyone interested in learning about the Sierra Club is invited. For more information, contact Juliet Jones, Vice Chair, at (901) 374-0582 or juliet101@comcast.net.

**Strategy Meeting:** Monday, March 10 & Monday, April 14, 6:30 p.m. – Prescott Methodist Baptist Church, 961 Getwell, Memphis, Tennessee

This meeting of the Executive Committee is open also to all members of the Sierra Club. Contact Nancy Ream by March 7 (March meeting) or April 11 (April meeting) to place items on the agenda: (901) 295-4816 or nreem@att.com.

**Program Meeting**

“Recycling in Memphis”

Thursday, March 27, 7:00 p.m., Benham Hooks Central Library, 3030 Poplar Avenue

Which plastic bottles can I recycle? How do I pack my cardboard? Joyce Williams, City of Memphis recycling coordinator, will answer these questions and more as she gives an overview of the recycling options in Memphis, including those options available to apartment residents. She will also show data about how much is recycled by the City of Memphis residents turning solid waste into resources. Remove those cans, bottles, paper and boxes from your trash and join your neighbors in learning about what they can do to help — come at 7:00 p.m.; for social time, come at 6:30! For more information contact Tom Lawrence at (901) 237-4819 or bus@theecave.com.

**TELEVISION PROGRAM:**

WPYL - Channel 18, Memphis, Tennessee – Mondays, 1:30:00 p.m., Tuesdays at 4:00pm, Wednesdays at 11:30am & 11:00pm, Thursdays at 7:00am, Fridays at 2:30pm, Saturdays at 10:00am, and Sundays at 2:00am. “The Nature of Conservation” is the Sierra Club’s Chickasaw Group TV Program on cable channel 18. For complete schedule listings on cable channel 18, please see the website: www.memphislibrary.org/tc/schedule. For more information about “The Nature of Conservation,” or if any groups or individuals in the community have a special concern and would like to see a program on it, please contact Judith Rutschman at (901) 767-5916 or rutschman@rhodes.edu

**WATAUGA GROUP (North Eastern TN)**

**PROGRAM MEETINGS:** Every second Tuesday at 7 p.m. Please contact Gloria Griffith at glagl7979@earthlink.net or 423-727-4797 for more information.
Chickasaw Group News Contributed by various members

January Program Meeting

Daniel Larsen of the Ground Water Institute at the University of Memphis presented facts about local water at the Chickasaw Group meeting on January 24. The Ground Water Institute serves as a data source for ground water issues in the Mid-South region. Its mission is to insure that the water consumed by the general public in 2050 is as plentiful and high-quality as it is today.

Sierra Club program meeting attendees learned about the varying ages of water in the Memphis aquifer. Larsen, associate professor and graduate coordinator in the Department of Earth Sciences at the university, explained why Memphis needs 200 million gallons of water a day. He gave a good overview of the Mississippi Embayment, where all of this water comes from. Questions from the audience showed that many knew a lot already about Memphis’ water supply. Dr. Larsen’s excellent presentation helped them learn more.

Guest column in Memphis Commercial Appeal

Dear members of the Tennessee Chapter, I am writing this guest column that was published in the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper on January 3, 2008. For those chapter members who do not live in the Memphis area or did not see the link to it on the TENNESSEE-NEWS e-mail list, I am reprinting the column here for your edification.

Sincerely,

James H. Baker, a member of the global warming and energy committee of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club.

As we begin the new year, let us resolve to make and keep one resolution for 2008: to put politics and ideology aside and unite to deal with global climate change as the planetary emergency it really is. That is the message in last November’s report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group of 2,500 scientists who constitute the world’s most authoritative voice on global warming. The panel’s lead, Rajendra Pachauri, stated: “What we do in the next two or three years will define our future.”

Government leaders at all levels must pave the way. At the regional and local levels, all the mayors of our municipalities and counties should resolve to follow the lead of Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton and pledge to reduce global warming greenhouse gases by signing and immediately implementing the United States Mayors Climate Protection Agreement or its equivalent county version, the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Initiative.

In other words, water quality and other environmental cases would be tried and decided where the alleged pollution occurs. SB 3621 Bunch / HB 3708 Brooks, Kevin Groundwater quality. Requires TDEC to provide clear and convincing evidence to the board that any water that is subject of a complaint is water that will affect public health and groundwater quality. This would likely chill enforcement of water quality laws.

SB 3288 Tracy / HB 2862 Pinion Public-Private Partnership in Transportation Act of 2008, gives the Tennessee Department of Transportation the authority to solicit private entities for the purpose of entering into public-private initiatives to facilitate construction or improvement of qualifying transportation facilities. This bill would improve drainage but probably not necessarily evil, but we are monitoring all toll road developments to make sure that any toll road developments include full environmental protections. We are also monitoring to forestall unnecessary new roads that could lead to sprawl and a continued lack of emphasis on mass transit, public transit and a chilling of responsible reduction in the use of energy.

SB 3966 Ramsey / HB 2511 Mumpower Enforcement of environmental law - anonymous tips. Prohibits TDEC from investigating alleged violations and enforcing penalties solely on the basis of information received from an anonymous source.

SB 4119 Southerland / HB 4185 McCord Defines limited resource waters. An effort to deregulate “limited resource waters,” thereby removing TDEC’s authority to protect Tennessee’s headwaters. A new and not improved effort to remove protections along the lines of last year’s so-called “ditch bill.”

Stewart Clifton is a lobbyist, for Tennessee Conservation Voters.
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.sierracub.org/outings/chapter/forms/SignInWaiver.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. Assume the risks associated with this travel.

HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)
March 8, Little Frog Wilderness Day Hike (Tennessee).
This is an opportunity to visit an area that is being threatened by the infamous “Corridor K,” a proposed 4-lane (and possible limited access) road from western North Caroline to Cleveland, Tenn., either by widening Highway 64 through the Ocoee River Gorge or more likely by building a new super-highway generally along the route of the gravel FS 68 (also known as the Kinsey Highway). We will drive both roads, and will hike the Dry Pond Lead and Rock Creek Trails between the two roads. This small wilderness is a special place located across Highway 64 from the Ocoee Whitewater Center; it should have good wildflowers in late March. Hiking distance is about 8 miles and it is rated Easy. Pre-register with Will Skelton: H 525-2272; Cell 742-7327; whshome@bellsouth.net.

March 15-16, Backpack, Deep Creek section of GSMNP.
We will start at the Juney Whank trailhead and follow the Indian Creek trail to Martins Gap to camspire #57—for a total of 7.6 miles the first day. On Sunday we will follow Deep Creek trail back to our cars—for a total of 7.3 miles the second day. Rated Difficult due to elevation gain. Pre-register with Steve Harvey: sharvey86@aol.com; phone 865-271-7227.

March 29, Wildflower Day Hike, River Bluff Trail, Norris State Park.
A popular wildflower viewing area the last days of March and through April. The main attraction is rhododendrons but also dogwood, bloodroot, toothwort, toadshade, twinleaf and celandine poppy. Hike: 3.2 mle loop. Rated easy with some steep grades. Driving distance about 32 miles round trip from Knoxville. Pre-register with Robin Ferguson: H 405-8576 or W 215-5060; robin.ferguson@yahoo.com.

April 5, Day Hike, Honey Creek Trail, BSFN-RRA.
One of the most varied, scenic trails in Tennessee, including stream crossings, waterfalls, ladders, boulder passages, an “Indian Rockhouse” and other surprises. Only 5.2 miles but some of the terrain necessitates a slow pace. Rated moderate. Driving distance approximately 70 miles each way. Pre-register with Bill Adams at radvet@frontiernet.net.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (NASHVILLE)
March 25, Outings Leader 101 Training
Are you interested in leading Sierra Club outings? Why not take Outings Leader 101 training and start the process to become a certified Sierra Club outings leader. Meet at 5:00 p.m. at the Sierra Club office in the old St. Bernard Academy Building, 2021 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN on the 4th floor. Light supper provided. Contact Katherine Pendleton for more information and to pre-register at 615-943-6877 or katibug1959@aol.com. (Education)

March 29, Pontoon Boat Nature Cruise
Join us for an afternoon 90-minute nature cruise on the Cumberland River and tributaries near Ashland City. Our host is Blue Heron Cruises (http://www.blueheroncruises.com/Home.html), who will take us out on a partially covered pontoon boat. Narration will include information on the river and surrounding wildlife. Besides the great blue heron, you may see a host of other river birds and mammals. Reservations and prepayment ($50 adults, $8 children) are necessary to insure a spot. Please reserve by March 19. If there is interest, we may go to lunch ahead of time at the Riverview restaurant, located at the dock. Contact Diane Perschbacher at 615-895-1236 or email Diane@Propson.com for exact meeting time. (Education)

March 30, Nashville City Cemetery Walk
Nashville City Cemetery is the burial place of many early Nashville settlers. Did you know that this cemetery is also an arboretum where many species of hardwood trees reside? Nashville historian and Volunteer State Community College professor Carole Bucy will be our tour guide. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to become acquainted with a Nashville landmark. For additional information and meeting time, contact Katherine Pendleton at 615-943-6877 or email katibug1959@aol.com. (Education)

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis) Sierra Club/Park Friends Second Saturday Hike-Saturday, March 8, 10:00-12:00 p.m. (also second Saturday in April) –The Old Forest Trail, Overton Park, Memphis, Tenn. The Old Forest Hike. Hike the trail through the only urban forest of its type in the region. Located in Overton Park, this moderate hike includes portions of the Old Forest Arboretum. Identify native trees and plants in the Old Forest, and learn Memphis History from its original landscape. The hike is co-sponsored by the Park Friends. Meet on the bridge at the end of the Old Forest Lane. For additional information, contact Don Richardson at (901) 276-1387 or donrich@juno.com.

Chickasaw Group Sierra Club Hike in the Middle Fork of the Little Red River, North-central Arkansas, Saturday, March 8 Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Shirley (Highway 9 & 16). The Middle Fork of the Little Red River (MFLRR) is located in Stone County, upriver from Shirley, Fall Creek Falls, and Greers Ferry Lake, a four-hour drive from Memphis. Camping facilities are available at the nearby Van Buren campground (Hwy 330) on Greers Ferry Lake. Motels are available in Heber Springs, Greers Ferry, Shirley and Clinton.

The hike will begin in the abandoned town of Alberga among an abandoned railroad easement upriver to the Digg’s cabin for lunch. The suggested car route is Hwy 64 west to Bald Knob, Hwy 167 north to Pleasant Plains, Hwy 87 west to Concord, Hwy 25 west to Drasco, Hwy 92 west to Greers Ferry and Hwy 16 northwest to Shirley. Wildlife includes turkey, raptors, deer, otter, beaver, bass and ginseng. There will be a discussion of future plans for the Digg’s property. For more information, contact Walter Diggins at (901) 767-4522, or wldiggs@jointcommission.org.

Signs of Spring Walk Sunday, March 9, 1:00pm – Memphis Botanic Garden in Audubon Park. Meet at the Visitor Center. For more information, contact Judith Hammond,(901) 276-2619.

Outings Leader Meeting Sunday, March 16, 2:00pm, 481 N. McLean – Will plan our summer and fall outings. All members who have suggestions for outings are welcome. Bring your calendar. Contact outings chair, Judith Hammond, (901) 276-2619.

Ten Essentials for Hiking
Sierra Club outings offer a variety of wildflowers and scenic 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. Appropriate clothing (it is a good idea to always have a wool hat)
6. Matches
7. Knife
8. Flashlight
9. Extra food, water
10. The utmost essential: You decide what is the most important thing to bring!

TENNESSEE CHAPTER SPRING MEETING
April 11-13, 2008 Fall Creek Falls State Park Group Lodge
Cost is $40 for the weekend - Includes Saturday and Sunday Breakfasts and Saturday Evening Dinner or $15 for Meals Only.

Please notify Mary Mastin at Marymastin@twlakes.net or 931-286-9298 if you plan to attend. Please include # of people attending & omnivore or vegetarian.

Directions: take HWY 111 north from Chattanooga or south from I-40. Watch for signs for Fall Creek Falls State Park on the plateau between Dunlap and Spencer. Once in the park, follow signs for Group Lodge or Sierra Club signs.
By Josie McQuail, Upper Cumberland Group

If you only see Sean Penn’s film adaptation of “Into the Wild,” you will miss one of the best things about Krakauer’s book: his account of other Lost Boys, those who died young—because they are failures, perhaps the only Christ figures we have in an age where religion and wilderness are both about death. McCandless was the Hero among them, for this exceptional class of men I call the Lost Boys, the only way to find meaning in life is the cheap rush of the thrill seeker, mountain climber, hobo or hippie living on the edge of society. They are not satisfied with the skin-deep American middle class suburban life. They want to break away to the crucial life on the streets of America’s cities.

McCandless is finally talked about because he (like Thoreau) broke away from all that is oppressive and repressive about “Civilization.” But the scariest thing to me about both Thoreau and McCandless’s efforts to break away is that the type of refuge they sought in nature is fast disappearing. Like Thoreau, McCandless proposed to live off the land. One hundred miles from Fairbanks and 10 miles beyond the drivable portion of the Stampede Trail, he installed himself in an abandoned bus he found, set up almost 50 years ago for workers who were to construct a road along the Stampede Trail, a project aborted in the 1960s.

McCandless, it turns out, was himself not far away from three cabins, two private cabins and one provid- ed by the Park Service that were equipped with emer- gency supplies. (It turns out they had been vandal- ised some time around when he arrived in the area, and I think he did this though the Park Service said he is not a suspect.) Krakauer discovers that there was even a way McCandless could have gotten across the swollen Telnkanka river about 10 miles from his bus, via a cable and attached basket built for hydrologists to cross the river. Unfortunately, McCandless intended to leave his campusite and return to “civilization,” but found the fairly shallow river he had forded in April 1992 had turned into a flood by July. He went back to the abandoned bus apparently intending to try again to hike out before winter, but through a series of mishaps which Krakauer convincingly speculates about, he instead met his death in early August 1992 through starvation induced, perhaps, by accidental poisoning.

Seeking a Better Way

I think the reason McCandless has proven so fasci- nating is that he shows what sometimes happens to a certain type of sensitive soul in our time. Discontent with mundane life is fatal, yet those who look for a way out should be our heroes. People want to forget those who are discontent with life in the labyrinth of society—especially those who escape it but die young—because they are failures according to society, which worships “success.” We feel they missed the way and died as a conse- quence, but in reality they are the ones who discover the way out. They are the prophets shooing for change, looking for the new territory just a bit beyond our range of sight or knowledge. Krakauer and Sean Penn both felt this about McCandless, alias Alexander Supertramp. Yet it is a profoundly ambivalent attitude we are left with, see- ing a person like McCandless—or even my friends Pat, Dave and Kirk (the latter still alive, perhaps)—die so young.

Because of Jon Krakauer and Sean Penn, McCandless will be remembered. But whether peo- ple will take from the book and the film treating his life the lesson about the increasing deathliness of mod- ern life and the way the disappearing wilderness compromises our psychological and spiritual well- being is less certain.

Chickasaw Group

(continued from page 5)

Environmental Responsibility; and David Conrad, senior water resources specialist with the National Wildlife Federation and a founder of the national Corps Reform Network.

Some of the other speakers and moderators included Diane Threadgill of the Mississippi River Corridor, Hank Graddy, a member of the Sierra Club’s agriculture committee, and Cynthia Sanahoo, executive director of the Gulf Restoration Network. The government panel consisted of Richard Rebich, a supervisory hydrologist with the United States Geological Survey; Doug Daigle, the coordinator with the Lower Mississippi River sub-basin committee on hypoxia; and Tennessee State Senator Mark Norris (R-District 32).

The Thursday lunch speaker was Jeff Jacobs, senior staff officer with the National Academy of Sciences. He gave a presentation on the Army’s recent report Environmental Modeling of Pollutants using a Geographical Information Systems with a tool called SPARROW.

Presentations were given by Albert Ettinger, senior staff attorney with the Environmental Law and Policy Center; Barry Sulkin, director of the Tennessee Chapter of Public Employees for Quality and the Clean Water Act: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities.”

The caucus closed with a brainstorm session about what is needed to clean up the lower Mississippi River and reduce or eliminate hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.

Shelby County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

6305 Haley Road, Memphis, TN 38134

(abs Farm Road between Wolven Grove and Millin Station)

Hours and Days: 8:30am-1:30pm,

Tuesdays and Saturdays

No fee.

For residential citizens of Memphis and Shelby County only. No commercial or industrial wastes.

Acceptable items: Aerosol spray cans, automotive fluids, batteries, cleaners, construction and home repair products, light fixtures and light starters, electronics, car tires and unidentifiable materials.

Unacceptable items: Ammunition, commercial and institutional waste, explosives, medical waste, fire extinguishers, gas cans, lights, metal, paint strippers, light bulbs, herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, paint and paint thinners, pool chemicals, moth balls, insect repellent, mercury and thermostats.

For more information, please contact Lisa Williams with Shelby County Environmental Programs at (901) 379-4480.
Experienced Riverkeeper © HIRED

By Gloria Griffith, Chair
Watauga Group Sierra Club

Donna Lisenby was recently hired in a joint effort by the Waterkeeper Alliance and Appalachian Voices to keep a watchful eye on the headwaters of Upper Northeast Tennessee. Two hundred seventy square miles of Johnson County and Carter County are included in this initial project. With an impressive ten-year track record Donna is hitting the ground running, already working in the Upper Watauga Watershed before taking the time to move to her new home or hire additional staff. What a RIVERKEEPER©! Allow me to introduce Donna Lisenby and tell you a little bit about her work during the last decade.

Donna spent endless hours and energy in the last 10 years analyzing water issues, educating stakeholders and aligning the activities of hundreds of citizens from the foothills of North Carolina to the sand hills of South Carolina. Her personal passion was contagious, as many river stakeholders were motivated to become activists. Hundreds attended and participated in public forums. Another achievement was generating support for issues at the local and state government level.

Highlights of Donna Lisenby’s last ten years as The Catawba RIVERKEEPER©:
• United communities, including county and municipal governments, Marine Commissions and the SC General Assembly to oppose one of the largest interbasin transfer requests in the history of North Carolina.
• Provided leadership in the Duke Hydropower Relicensing process and with alliance partners, obtained land preservation, restoration of the Great Falls, and more than $60 million in recreation and water quality enhancements for the future.
• Settled a lawsuit with Crescent Resources, resulting in a 2,900 acre expansion to the Lake James State Park and establishing greater environmental protections for the remaining 4,000 acres of undeveloped land in Burke County on Lake James.
• Stopped Wal-Mart, the world’s largest retailer, from illegally storing herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers in parking lots where rainwater was washing pollutants into public drinking water supplies.
• Responded to numerous sewage spill reports, pressuring EPA and states to levy more fines.
• Achieved the timely designation of the Catawba River below Lake James as a trout stream, taking the issue to the NC Superior Court to overcome significant opposition.

Donna’s area of jurisdiction in the Upper Watauga Watershed encompasses 205 square miles in North Carolina and 270 square miles in Tennessee, with the potential to expand an additional 393 square miles in Tennessee. Mid-term expansion plans include extending the RIVERKEEPER© area of responsibility downstream to bring much of the industrial and commercial areas of tri-cities and the South and Middle Forks of the Holston River under observation.

Donna, the first Tennessee RIVERKEEPER©, will make a difference in the health and future of Tennessee’s water resources. I look forward to RIVERKEEPER© programs expanding across Tennessee since they work to enforce existing environmental law and regulations, and may pursue legal action against polluters. For more information on the Waterkeeper Alliance, visit www.waterkeeper.org.

Welcome to Tennessee, Donna.

Please enclose the following with your contribution

Amount of donation: $75 $150 $250 $500 Other ______
Name: __________________________ Address: __________________________

May we publish your name in the Sierra Club newsletter as a donor? Yes ☐ No ☐ (OPTIONAL) Your e-mail address. Sending our letter of appreciation to you electronically will allow us to conserve paper and save money. We will not divulge the address.

Please save Defender funds for legislative activities. Send no acknowledgement letter. ☑

Thanks to this month’s contributors to the Defenders of Tennessee (January 10 through February 9):

Anonymous
Bob Brandt
Mary Buckner and Jack Lyle
Peggy and Eiston Evans
Randy Humble
Joe McCaleb
Margaret Olson
Cynthia and Steven Rohrbach
Candy Wansley
Robert A. Weeks
Dennis White
Chapter Executive Committee members

This is our last update this year for the Tennessee Chapter’s annual Defenders of Tennessee campaign, which funds our advocacy and lobbying activities. WE ARE UNDER OUR GOAL and hope that all of you who have not yet renewed or have not contributed will consider a gift, small or large, to the Defenders.

During the past 12 years, this program has been very effective in representing the Sierra Club’s environmental agenda on Capitol Hill, and we are proud of the accomplishments of our Legislative Committee and our lobbyist, Mike Murphy. Your contribution is not tax-deductible but is critical in enabling us to continue to have an advocate on “the hill.” Contributions of any size are appreciated. This campaign is a volunteer activity, so all donations go to support the Defenders.

Please fill out the form below and send your check made out to Sierra Club Defenders of Tennessee to:

Address:
City/State/Zip

Member ID# ________
My new address is: ________
Name ________
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Vol. 39, No. 2 - February, 2008
The Tennessee-Sierran
Page 8 - March, 2008