Solar Energy Use Continues to Grow in Tennessee

By Gil Melear-Hough

Tennessee Director of Renewable Programs

Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE)

865.637.6055 or gil@cleanenergy.org for more info

Solar energy has seen slow but steady growth in the Tennessee Valley over the last decade. Principle highlights have been the 15 solar sites built by TVA as part of the Green Power Switch Program and the Sharp Solar Modular Planet in Memphis that put us on the map for good manufacturing jobs in solar.

More recently the state has shown leadership in solar technology by hosting the first Southeast Solar Summit in October 2007 at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and the just announced Solar Cities grant to Knoxville by the Dept of Energy.

The last few years have seen the creation of modest incentives for solar energy. First was the creation of the TVA Generation Partners program that pays homeowners a credit on their power bill for electricity they generate—sort of a net metering program on steroids. This incentive was to be reduced except for an outcry by citizens with the signing on March 19 of an executive order by Governor Bredesen to create a task force on energy policy to develop recommendations on ways to best promote energy efficiency and renewable energy. Also this present state legislative session has been one of the most active on energy in Tennessee history.

Tennessee has also started to recognize the need for more professionally trained solar installers. The first training program began at Cleveland State Community College, just north of Chattanooga. There has also been nationally recognized research at ORNL on the development of Zero Energy Houses, supported by both TVA and the State of Tennessee Energy Division.

While the State of Tennessee is clearly far behind many other states in the nation on promoting solar energy, there is a clear sense of momentum building to become a regional leader in solar energy.

Encourage greater emphasis on Renewables.

Review/Comment on TVA’s Renewable Energy

* Deadline May 12

www.tva.gov/abouttva/board/draft_plans.htm

---

Solar Energy Use Continues to Grow in Tennessee

By Gil Melear-Hough

Tennessee Director of Renewable Programs

Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE)

865.637.6055 or gil@cleanenergy.org for more info

Solar energy has seen slow but steady growth in the Tennessee Valley over the last decade. Principle highlights have been the 15 solar sites built by TVA as part of the Green Power Switch Program and the Sharp Solar Modular Planet in Memphis that put us on the map for good manufacturing jobs in solar.

More recently the state has shown leadership in solar technology by hosting the first Southeast Solar Summit in October 2007 at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and the just announced Solar Cities grant to Knoxville by the Dept of Energy.

The last few years have seen the creation of modest incentives for solar energy. First was the creation of the TVA Generation Partners program that pays homeowners a credit on their power bill for electricity they generate—sort of a net metering program on steroids. This incentive was to be reduced except for an outcry by citizens with the signing on March 19 of an executive order by Governor Bredesen to create a task force on energy policy to develop recommendations on ways to best promote energy efficiency and renewable energy. Also this present state legislative session has been one of the most active on energy in Tennessee history.

Tennessee has also started to recognize the need for more professionally trained solar installers. The first training program began at Cleveland State Community College, just north of Chattanooga. There has also been nationally recognized research at ORNL on the development of Zero Energy Houses, supported by both TVA and the State of Tennessee Energy Division.

While the State of Tennessee is clearly far behind many other states in the nation on promoting solar energy, there is a clear sense of momentum building to become a regional leader in solar energy.

Encourage greater emphasis on Renewables.

Review/Comment on TVA’s Renewable Energy

* Deadline May 12

www.tva.gov/abouttva/board/draft_plans.htm

---

Student Inspired by “The Dream Reborn” Conference to Commemorate Dr. King

Tennesseans:

On Saturday, April 5 I attended Green For All’s conference on environmental action and economy. For the past few months I’ve had an introduction to environmental advocacy through Sierra Club in Memphis where my university is, and when the organizer there recommended “The Dream Reborn” to me I was very excited. When I signed up, I was most curious about one of the conference’s focal points, the idea of green jobs and careers in a changing economy of environmental justice.

When I got to the conference, my expectations were not disappointed. I attended four rounds of workshops, each connected to some aspect of the initiative for green economic growth. Following an energizing introduction by Green For All leader Van Jones, I went to the first round of workshops. I learned about the prospect of millions of jobs on the rise called “green collar”: middle level training professional careers in environmental industry. These jobs will staff large outfits involved in things like producing clean energy, manufacturing green transportation and harvesting crops for bio-fuel. Green Worker Coop speaker Jason Walsh elaborated on the transition of traditional industries in cities toward the green economy.

I also gained insight into the implications of green jobs for Memphis. At “Launching a Local Green Collar Jobs Initiative,” organizer Jeremy Hayes elaborated on how to prime the city for the arrival of jobs in the green sector. This workshop was the most inspiring about applying industrial growth to cities like Memphis and coupling the need for energy solutions with local urban economic needs. Another workshop detailed the successes of Los Angeles urban greening in relation to water scarcity and purity as well as public health. This goal tied in with the general conference theme of a dual movement toward both environmental and economic justice.

As a student personally interested in the green economy, I also sought answers to practical questions about the green work force. I wondered, as I went into Tree People’s talk called “Show me the money,” how green industry appears in cities that have their own economic problems. This talk provided answers on financing both the installation of green employers, from plants to cooperatives, which were very exciting. It also gave samples of wages for workers of all types of training and trade within the growing green work force. These and other approaches interested me, as an advocate and future worker, in the real promise of common prosperity via the green jobs movement.

The last workshops I attended also addressed important concerns. I listened to a native Sioux activist whose example inspired all present about the need for socially just transitions from traditional to green industries. Another useful talk stimulated dialogue within the college campus about recruiting students for green jobs and majors that translate well into the green economy. I also was able to meet several motivated activists from Memphis and around the country whose journeys “The Dream Reborn” enabled me to see the potential for changes in national and global economic life for the betterment of environmental standards and prosperity in suffering communities.

Brennan Lowery
Sierra Club Intern

(Brennan Lowery is a Rhodes College student interning this spring semester with Rita Harris at the Environmental Justice office in Memphis.)

---

The monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

Tennessee: on Saturday, April 5 I attended Green For All’s conference on environmental action and economy. For the past few months I’ve had an introduction to environmental advocacy through Sierra Club in Memphis where my university is, and when the organizer there recommended “The Dream Reborn” to me I was very excited. When I signed up, I was most curious about one of the conference’s focal points, the idea of green jobs and careers in a changing economy of environmental justice.

When I got to the conference, my expectations were not disappointed. I attended four rounds of workshops, each connected to some aspect of the initiative for green economic growth. Following an energizing introduction by Green For All leader Van Jones, I went to the first round of workshops. I learned about the prospect of millions of jobs on the rise called “green collar”: middle level training professional careers in environmental industry. These jobs will staff large outfits involved in things like producing clean energy, manufacturing green transportation and harvesting crops for bio-fuel. Green Worker Coop speaker Jason Walsh elaborated on the transition of traditional industries in cities toward the green economy.

I also gained insight into the implications of green jobs for Memphis. At “Launching a Local Green Collar Jobs Initiative,” organizer Jeremy Hayes elaborated on how to prime the city for the arrival of jobs in the green sector. This workshop was the most inspiring about applying industrial growth to cities like Memphis and coupling the need for energy solutions with local urban economic needs. Another workshop detailed the successes of Los Angeles urban greening in relation to water scarcity and purity as well as public health. This goal tied in with the general conference theme of a dual movement toward both environmental and economic justice.

As a student personally interested in the green economy, I also sought answers to practical questions about the green work force. I wondered, as I went into Tree People’s talk called “Show me the money,” how green industry appears in cities that have their own economic problems. This talk provided answers on financing both the installation of green employers, from plants to cooperatives, which were very exciting. It also gave samples of wages for workers of all types of training and trade within the growing green work force. These and other approaches interested me, as an advocate and future worker, in the real promise of common prosperity via the green jobs movement.

The last workshops I attended also addressed important concerns. I listened to a native Sioux activist whose example inspired all present about the need for socially just transitions from tradition-
Sierra Club Officers

TENNESSEE CHAPTER:
Chair: Katherine Pendleton (615) 943-6877
Katibug1959@aol.com
Vice Chair: Gloria Griffith (423) 727-4797
gla4797@earthlink.net
Secretary: Carl Leathers (615) 662-4178
rfloyd557@bellsouth.net
Treasurer: Rachel Floyd (615) 406-9204
rfloyd557@bellsouth.net
Conservation: Gary Bowers (615) 714-3185
GBlNature@aol.com
Outings: Judith Hammond (901) 276-2819
judithhammond@bellsouth.net
CCL Delegate: Don Richardson (901) 276-1387
donrich@juno.com
CCL Alternate: Katherine Pendleton (615) 943-6877
Katibug1959@aol.com

TN LOCAL GROUPS:
Cherokee Group - Chattanooga (in reorganization)
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/cherokee
Chair: Herschel Pollard (941) 639-5126
Chickasaw Group - Memphis
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/chickasaw
Contact: Nancy J. Ream (901) 759-9416
njream@aol.com
Vice Chair: Amy Stewart-Banbury (901) 292-5354
bnab2@comcast.net
Conservation: Nancy J. Ream (901) 759-9416
njream@aol.com
Secretary: Teri Sullivan (901) 320-7191
tjsullivan24@comcast.net
Outings: Judith Hammond (901) 276-2819
judithhammond@bellsouth.net
Membership: Juliet Jones (901) 374-0582
juliet101@comcast.net
TV Program: Judith Rutschman (901) 767-5916
rutschman@rhodes.edu

Volunteer Needed

Volunteer Needed for Tennessee Chapter Clerical Work
This work suited for college student or retiree
For complete information contact
Katherine Pendleton, Chapter Chair, 615-943-6877 or email Katibug1959@aol.com

Please notify the Editor when changes are needed
Laurel Fork Lodge and the October 24-26 meeting is at Pickett State Park. The July 25-27 meeting is in East Tennessee at active videos, and carried on the conservation and administrative work of the chapter. If you've never been to a and waterfall viewing. Our local chef Eston Evans prepared outstanding meals. We watched some fun, informative videos, and carried on the conservation and administrative work of the chapter. If you've never been to a chapter quarterly meeting, you should really try to make one. The July 25-27 meeting is in East Tennessee at Laurel Fork Lodge and the October 24-26 meeting is at Pickett State Park.

Spring Chapter Meeting
The Upper Cumberland Group hosted the spring Chapter meeting at Fall Creek Falls last weekend. Despite starting out with tornadoes literally in our path Friday afternoon, our weather Saturday was great. Folks enjoyed hikes and waterfall viewing. Our local chef Eston Evans prepared outstanding meals. We watched some fun, informative videos, and carried on the conservation and administrative work of the chapter. If you've never been to a chapter quarterly meeting, you should really try to make one. The July 25-27 meeting is in East Tennessee at Laurel Fork Lodge and the October 24-26 meeting is at Pickett State Park.

Letter to the Editor
To the Editor:
I liked Josie McQuail’s article on “Into the Wild” in the February Sierran. One correction: The fellow who disappeared into the Utah wilds was Everett Ruess, not Everett Ness. I read his journals a few years ago just before taking an Elderhostel trip on Lake Powell and the boat captain ran us by the canyon where he was last seen.

Eric Wilson
Post script: Everett Ruess was a character and it was interesting to see the area where he disappeared. But I did not find him very appealing as a person. Not much depth.

Cherokee Group Re-Organizational Meeting
May 28, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. (Lake Walk at 5 p.m.)
1001 Mont Lake Road
Soddy-Daisy, TN 37379
Hosted by Herschel Pollard

Please R.S.V.P. to Katherine Pendleton
615-943-6877 or Katibug1959@aol.com by May 25
Light Supper Will Be Served

Top Ten Tips for the Occasional Lobbyist
1. Develop relationships before you need the vote or action.
2. Do your homework on the legislator and the legislation, the official and the issue. (Homework is best done before the test.)
3. Respect the official and the office.
4. Provide short, clear information, without jargon.
5. Provide accurate information.
7. Know that there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies.
8. Know the formal and informal rules.
9. One issue at a time.
10. Give this task/opportunity the time and effort you give other important tasks.

It’s Not Too Late to Register for the Wilderness First Aid Course!
WHEN: June 7&8, 2008
WHERE: Fall Creek Falls State Park
PROVIDER: NOLS Wilderness Medicine Institute
COST: $165 (Non-Refundable) Includes Training, Lunch & Snacks on Both Days of Training
CONTACT: Katherine Pendleton at Katibug1959@aol.com or 615-943-6877

Dear Tennessee Chapter Members,
It is that time of year when the national club is accepting nominations for the annual awards. There are 24 national awards given each year. This year’s awards will be presented at a banquet to be held Saturday, Sept. 20 in conjunction with the club’s annual meeting in San Francisco.

To nominate someone for an award, please go to www.sierraclub.org/awards. There you will find online nomination forms as well as valuable documents such as a listing of all previous award recipients. For more information on the Sierra Club’s national awards program, please feel free to contact Ellen Davis at ellen.davis@sierraclub.org.

Many thanks to Upper Cumberland Group for hosting the spring Chapter meeting at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Eston Evans was our chef and made some wickedly good chicken enchiladas. Our silent auction brought in $86.

Please mark your calendars for our summer Chapter meeting to be held July 25-27 at Laurel Fork Lodge in Dennis Cove hosted by Watauga Group. Webb Griffith is going to cook up some great meals that you won’t want to miss!

My travels will be bringing me to Memphis May 21-23 for a presentation of The Future of Food at the Chickasaw Group’s movie night and as a guest at their program meeting. I look forward to meeting Chickasaw Group members during my stay in Memphis. I will be making my rounds to the other groups over the summer and sharing the film UnCounted: The New Math of American Elections.

On May 28, Cherokee Group will be holding a re-organizational meeting at Herschel Pollard’s cabin on Mont Lake near Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee at 6:30 p.m. We will meet at 5:00 p.m. for a walk around part of Mont Lake. A light supper will be served. Please show your support if you live in the Chattanooga area and plan to attend this very important meeting. We need your help in getting your group re-vitalized and moving forward!

As of April 16, we have received $13,000 for the March Window appeal. We aren’t yet “out of the woods!” Our chapter treasurer has informed me that we have entered into deficit spending! If you have not yet sent in your envelope with your donation, please consider doing so. Our chapter desperately needs your help. If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation, your check can be made out to “Tennessee Chapter Foundation.” For those of you who have sent in your donation we appreciate your generosity.

I am always eager to hear from members and non-members. Recently, I was contacted by Grady Osborne from Marshall County who informed me of a landfill issue impacting Marshall and Giles Counties. I informed MTG and they acted quickly, sending out a postcard alerting members in those two counties of a public landfill meeting. As a result of our interacting with Grady he decided to become a member of the Sierra Club. Being available to help our neighbors fosters good work and is also a great way to gain new members.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.
Katherine Pendleton, Chair
June Preview:

Dave Cooper will present an amazing program on mountain top removal.

STRATEGY MEETING: Tuesday, May 27 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. For more information regarding the meetings, send a message to Rachel Floyd at rfloyd557@bellsouth.net or call 792-2590.

STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP (Tri-Cities)

PROGRAM/PROGRAM MONTHLY MEETING: Wednesday, May 7, 6:00 p.m., at the “The Acoustic Coffee House - Next Door” at 450 West Walnut in Ole Town Johnson City. Horticulturist Dan Reese, a spokesman for the Rails to Trails initiative and chair of the Southern Appalachian Greenways, a non-profit group advocating for interconnected greenways and trails throughout Northeast Tennessee and Southern Virginia, will speak on “Plants - The Life-Blood of our Biosphere.” Dan promotes new techniques in “permaculture” and sustainable development of our natural resources. Contact Tom Mozen at mozenetc@yahoo.com or 423-232-0827 for more information.

SOFG GROUP NEWS

SOFG participated in Earth Day on April 17 at East Tennessee State University by representing the Sierra Club. The attendance was great! The SOFG participated in Eastman Hiking Club’s efforts to reroute a portion of the Appalachian Trail on Saturday, April 19. Tom Mozen, SOFG chair, participated in the Sierra Club’s training in San Francisco in April. Great tips from across the nation and Sierra Central. He will be attending the National Home Builders Association Green Building Conference in New Orleans in May.

UPPER CUMBERLAND GROUP ( Cookeville)

MEETING: Every 4th Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the old St. Bernard’s Academy Building, 2021 21st Avenue South, 4th floor.

Page 4 - May, 2008
The Sierra Club and Shelby Farms Park

The Chickasaw Group met informally at Otherlands Coffee Shop in Memphis on April 3. The idea was to discuss the three master plans for Shelby Farms Park which were submitted by the Tom Leader Studio, Hargreaves Associates and field operations (lower case intentional). These three teams made their plans available for public comment at the Benjamin Hooks Central Library, Shelby Farms visitor center and the Cossitt Library in mid-March. All three-dimensional models of the plans also made the rounds. Cutoff date for individual public comments was the end of March.

People from throughout the Memphis community submitted their suggestions for Shelby Farms Park, but also the Chickasaw Group as a whole wanted to make some comments and turn them in as a letter.

It was agreed that the new park needs to not just implement, but model energy conservation and natural water use, so that any visitor to the park could see “green” principles in action. Current disturbed natural areas should be restored and not just built over.

The traditional “farm” character of the landscape should be respected by keeping the impact of the construction designs minimal. All designs should be EIS-driven, and the timing of construction phases should be “double” and financially prudent. Adequate park user facilities (water fountains, rest rooms) should be provided. Use of carbon-emitting private vehicles within the park should be discouraged because (in addition to human health concerns) they eat air and plants.

Non-nature-related fitness activities (for example, provisions for individual/group sports and school-oriented athletics) should be discouraged. Such facilities were deemed inappropriate for a pastoral setting; they should be built closer to the neighborhoods of those who need them most.

“Disneyfication” of the park should be avoided. It should remain a nature park and not become an amusement park.

Of the three master plans submitted, the Chickasaw Group preferred the ecological sensitivity of the Tom Leader Studio proposal and also appreciated the minimalist construction format suggested by the proposal of field operations.

With proper planning, Shelby Farms can be a globally significant urban park. It’s already irreplaceable and important to its users!

Memphis Zoo Cuts Trees in Overton Park

A group of Memphians vociferously opposed recent tree cutting in Overton Park by the Memphis Zoo. Citizens to Preserve Overton Park is a revival of a historic preservationist movement from the ‘60s that rerouted I-40 around the park. It was agreed that the new park needs to not just implement, but model energy conservation and natural water use, so that any visitor to the park could see “green” principles in action. Current disturbed natural areas should be restored and not just built over.

The traditional “farm” character of the landscape should be respected by keeping the impact of the construction designs minimal. All designs should be EIS-driven, and the timing of construction phases should be “double” and financially prudent. Adequate park user facilities (water fountains, rest rooms) should be provided. Use of carbon-emitting private vehicles within the park should be discouraged because (in addition to human health concerns) they eat air and plants.

Non-nature-related fitness activities (for example, provisions for individual/group sports and school-oriented athletics) should be discouraged. Such facilities were deemed inappropriate for a pastoral setting; they should be built closer to the neighborhoods of those who need them most.

“Disneyfication” of the park should be avoided. It should remain a nature park and not become an amusement park.

Of the three master plans submitted, the Chickasaw Group preferred the ecological sensitivity of the Tom Leader Studio proposal and also appreciated the minimalist construction format suggested by the proposal of field operations.

With proper planning, Shelby Farms can be a globally significant urban park. It’s already irreplaceable and important to its users!

Memphis Zoo Cuts Trees in Overton Park

March Program Meeting

Contributed by various members

Memphis has its own curbside recycling for some time now. Joyce Williams, City of Memphis recycling coordinator, was on hand at the March Chickasaw Group program meeting to answer questions about how to recycle properly. The group met at the Central Library on March 27.

Joyce talked about the different kinds of recyclable plastic containers. She described the fascinating products that recycled items get turned into. Aluminum cans take less energy to melt down than it takes to mine new aluminum. Recycled cans can become snowboards, pans or even wastebaskets! Recycled glass can become decorative tiles. Thousands of products can be made from recycled materials!

Joyce also talked about recent changes in the recycling of paper products. Memphians can now recycle cardboard, too! Just make sure the cardboard is clean, flat and no more than 2 feet by 4 feet. It can go in the bin, or if there’s not room, under it. She explained how to go about getting extra recycling bins, including the new bins with wheels to make carrying big loads easier.

Recycling is a responsible way to handle solid waste. More cost effective than landfilling, it reduces the need for higher subsidies and fees. But most importantly, it conserves natural resources for the benefit of everyone in the community. Memphis needs more people to recycle! For more information about recycling, call the City of Memphis Solid Waste Management at (901) 576-6851.

Shelby County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

6305 Haley Road, Memphis, TN 38134 (off Farm Road between Walnut Grove and Mullins 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, lighter fluid and flammable aerosols, flammable liquids, drain-cleaners and openers, light bulbs, herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, paint and paint thinners, pool chemicals, moth balls, insect repellant, mercury and thermostats.

Unacceptable items: Ammunition, commercial and institutional waste, explosives, medical waste, fire extinguishers, oxygen bottles, welding tanks, radioactive waste (including smoke detectors), refrigerants, cooking oil or grease, televisions, microwave ovens, cooks, tires and unidentifiable materials.

For more information, please contact Lisa Williams with Shelby County Environmental Programs at (901) 379-4430.

Environment Justice Coordinator at Awards Banquet

Rita Harris, Sierra Club environmental justice coordinator based in Memphis, attended the Arkansas Chapter’s awards banquet.

Rita was invited to deliver the keynote address by former Tennessee Chapter member David Orr. David is now serving as the Ozark Headwaters Group chair in the Arkansas Chapter. The banquet was well attended with approximately 100 participants from across Arkansas. Over 20 conservation awards were presented.

Shelby County Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

6305 Haley Road, Memphis, TN 38134 (off Farm Road between Walnut Grove and Mullins Station)

Memphis Zoo Cuts Trees in Overton Park

March Program Meeting

Contributed by various members

Memphis has its own curbside recycling for some time now. Joyce Williams, City of Memphis recycling coordinator, was on hand at the March Chickasaw Group program meeting to answer questions about how to recycle properly. The group met at the Central Library on March 27.

Joyce talked about the different kinds of recyclable plastic containers. She described the fascinating products that recycled items get turned into. Aluminum cans take less energy to melt down than it takes to mine new aluminum. Recycled cans can become snowboards, pans or even wastebaskets! Recycled glass can become decorative tiles. Thousands of products can be made from recycled materials!

Joyce also talked about recent changes in the recycling of paper products. Memphians can now recycle cardboard, too! Just make sure the cardboard is clean, flat and no more than 2 feet by 4 feet. It can go in the bin, or if there’s not room, under it. She explained how to go about getting extra recycling bins, including the new bins with wheels to make carrying big loads easier.

Recycling is a responsible way to handle solid waste. More cost effective than landfilling, it reduces the need for higher subsidies and fees. But most importantly, it conserves natural resources for the benefit of everyone in the community. Memphis needs more people to recycle! For more information about recycling, call the City of Memphis Solid Waste Management at (901) 576-6851.

Shelby County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

6305 Haley Road, Memphis, TN 38134 (off Farm Road between Walnut Grove and Mullins 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, lighter fluid and flammable aerosols, flammable liquids, drain-cleaners and openers, light bulbs, herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, paint and paint thinners, pool chemicals, moth balls, insect repellant, mercury and thermostats.

Unacceptable items: Ammunition, commercial and institutional waste, explosives, medical waste, fire extinguishers, oxygen bottles, welding tanks, radioactive waste (including smoke detectors), refrigerants, cooking oil or grease, televisions, microwave ovens, cooks, tires and unidentifiable materials.

For more information, please contact Lisa Williams with Shelby County Environmental Programs at (901) 379-4430.

Environment Justice Coordinator at Awards Banquet

Rita Harris, Sierra Club environmental justice coordinator based in Memphis, attended the Arkansas Chapter’s awards banquet.

Rita was invited to deliver the keynote address by former Tennessee Chapter member David Orr. David is now serving as the Ozark Headwaters Group chair in the Arkansas Chapter. The banquet was well attended with approximately 100 participants from across Arkansas. Over 20 conservation awards were presented.
STATE OF FRANKLIN GROUP  
May 24 or 31 (Call for update), “Rocky Forks” Nature Reserve Hike  
“Rocky Forks,” the southern Appalachian Crown Jewel, is to be purchased by the southern Appalachian Conservancy, the Appalachian Trails Conservancy and other meaningful groups. Sierra Club member Jerry Greer, co-photographer for the Rocky Forks public relations endeavor, will lead the day hike into this 10,000-acre wonderland. Those interested should meet at the McDonald’s in Erwin at 9:00 a.m. To find out the date of the hike and more information contact Tom Mozen, SOF Group chair, at (423) 252-0827.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP  
May 3, Polly’s Branch Wildflower Day Hike  
Heloise Shilstat will lead a day hike to Polly’s Branch in Centennial Wilderness near Sparta, TN. The hike will consist of 6-8 miles. A map is available on the state Centennial Wilderness website. A half-dozen different varieties of ferns and lady slipers, phlox, pinkster, flowers, etc., should be seen on this hike. Take WATER, lunch boots and your own first aid kit. No dogs please! Pre-register with Heloise Shilstat at 615-896-6278 or email heloise@bellsouth.net.

May 3, Percy Priest Island Cleanup  
Please contact Diane Perschbacher at Dipe@Propson.com or 615-895-1236 or visit our website at http://www.cleancPercyPriest.org for information regarding this non-Sierra Club sponsored event which focuses on clean-up of Percy Priest Lake.

May 10, Virgin Falls State Natural Area Day Hike  
This strenuous eight-mile trail descends from the Cumberland Plateau near Sparta and meanders along a creek, offering spectacular views of coves, sinks and waterfalls. Participants will stop for lunch at the falls, where they also can feast their eyes on a truly remarkable sight. Water cascades from a cave mouth at the top of a bluff and falls more than 100 feet to form Virgin Falls. Participants should bring WATER, SNACKS, BOOTS, and dress in layers. For more details and to register, contact Donna Bordenkircher at dabor-denkircher@mindspring.com or 615-333-3777 (Education).
By Gloria Griffith

So, what do you get when you cross a Hunter/Angler Sportsman with Sierra Water Sentinels? Answer: A ‘reel’ good time!

That’s just what happened in Nauvoo, Ala., on March 17-20 at Camp McDowell on the Southern Cumberland Plateau at this year’s Water Sentinel Retreat. The fun highlights of the week were a fish fry, bluegrass music and dancing plus teaching new anglers to fish.

Dean Whitworth said: “It was especially entertaining to watch New York newbie anglers catch/release big stripers in the camp creek. A hunter/angler Sierra representative taught fly fishing skills. Scott Dye, Water Sentinel regional director, hosted the annual retreat.”

Attendees, representing 17 states, descended on Camp McDowell. www.campmcdowell.com. Webb Griffith, representing the Watauga Watershed Alliance www.watauguawatershed.org/Welcom.html said, “It was one of the most interesting, helpful, fun and informative gatherings in recent memory.”

Rick Foster and Dean Whitworth, members of the Watauga Group Sierra Club from Johnson County, Tenn., also attended. Many diverse side conversations were held on topics including community gardening, local farmers markets, advocacy for Tier II Quality waters and restoration of impaired streams. Chickasaw Group Sierra Club members James Baker and Don Richardson drove in from Memphis, Tenn. James Baker gave a Tennessee “Hot Spots” presentation on the implementation of GIS mapping applications.

The workshop emphasis was on grant writing in Sierra and outside foundations. Olivia Frazier from the National Sierra Club Foundation were the featured speakers and on day fundraising workshop. Water Sentinel volunteers and activist/fundraisers, Tim Guiffole, Dr. Bryan Burgess, and Rich Hurley, shared their successful events and ideas on “creating the culture of fundrais- ing” within environmental organizations on such topics as: Grant Writing with Partners, Pursuing Small Grants to Meet the Need and Hunter/Angler Joint Grant Opportunities. Ed Hopkins, director of the Environmental Quality Program, informed the audience about the impending federal Clean Water Restoration Act.

Rick Foster and Dean Whitworth both contributed their water advocacy expertise on video. Rick Foster, on camera, spoke about Shady Valley, Tenn., bogs and wetlands projects. Dean Whitworth did an enthralling “rodeo” filming on the Kids to Grandfolds Doe Creek Fly Fishing Day scheduled for June in Johnson County, Tenn.

Bart Semcer, Sierra Club Environmental Partnerships Program director, fielded questions and answers about forming alliances. Jon Schwedler, Sierra Sportsmen organizer and sportsmen magazine author, videotaped attendees to use in his outreach to hunters/anglers. The nine-minute video highlights of the Water Sentinel Retreat are currently posted on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/SierraSportsmen for your viewing enjoyment.

Jon Schwedler emphasized: “I’m sure you all are aware of the perception that the Sierra Club is hos- tile to hunting/angling. This is bogus, and doesn’t reflect the huge common ground shared by conserva- tionists and sportsmen (healthy wildlife, lands and water). Sierra Sportsmen is an effort to shatter mis- conceptions and achieve better relationships with sportsmen.”

Watauga Group Meeting Features Tennessee Clean Water Network Executive Director

By Dennis Shekinah

Secretary, Watauga Group

Renee Hoyos, executive director of the Tennessee Clean Water Network (TCWN), drove over from Knoxville to address our group during our April meal and meeting. Arriving early, we drove down to Doe Creek to view and photograph the asphalt plant that Radford Quarries hopes to get permitted this spring. After an amazing meal of free-range turkey and chicken, stews, salads and endless desserts, we got down to some business.

Carl Wolfe gave an update to his continued efforts in keeping Fall Branch Falls free of trash and his work with the county mayor to further the recycling program in Johnson County. Carl deals with an area of Johnson County where people make an effort to litter in quantity which varies from murdered anim- als to bags of drug paraphernalia. It was a grisly account, but one everyone needed to hear. Meth pro- duction not only destroys the human body and spirit but the environment as well. Randy Fallin echoed this and encouraged everyone to work with our sher- iff department on this issue.

Cherokee Forest Burn

Dean Whitworth presented Cherokee Forest Voices’ call for action on the Forest Service’s plan to burn Cherokee Forest, up to 6,000 acres in Shady Valley alone. He explained the policy of “controlled burns” was written in the 19th century to accommodate homesteaders and developing townships in the western United States. It’s continued under the name “Healthy Forest Initiative” as a major source of funding for the Forest Service to help control the forest fires of the high mountain forest fires.

The forests of the Appalachians, however, are more like wetlands and resist large burns. Thus the use of an accelerated shot from aircraft similar in composition to napalm is used. Why go to such trou- ble to burn a forest that naturally resists fire? Because politicians are making decisions about funding and the scientists advising them are being ignored. Surprised? No, I’m not either.

Radford Asphalt Plant

I quickly gave an update to Watauga Watershed Alliance’s attorney’s work on the Radford asphalt plant situation. Radford has modified its asphalt application to proclaim no degradation to Doe Creek, thus eliminating the need to offer up a social and economical justification for polluting one of the Southwest’s prime trout fisheries. I’ll review and report on the modifications of their permit as soon as possible.

In the meantime, our attorneys have issued a 60- day notice to Radford’s lawyers, meaning we will file federal charges of violations of the Clean Water Act on Radford’s present crushed stone operation on Doe Creek. The decision to do so was based, in part, on Barry Sulfuk’s investigation of Doe Creek a few weeks ago. Barry, as many of you know, worked for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) as an investigator years ago and is accomplished in the science of collecting evi- dence of pollution in public waters. Barry’s fee, by the by, was covered by a grant obtained by the TCWN. Renee’s decision to sign on to the legal challenge of the asphalt plant allowed for this to hap- pen.

Tennessee Clean Water Network

Renee stepped up and delivered a powerful account of herself and the TCWN. She lived in California where she worked on environmental affairs for the previous governor. In 2003 she applied for and won the executive director position of the TCWN. In 2005 she expanded TCWN’s mission to support sharks of watershed groups with grants and pro- fessional support.

Please visit the TCWN website to read over this organization’s many impressive accomplishments. One worth mentioning that hints at TCWN’s strength and reach is the group’s assistance in brokering the land swap Alcoa made recently to gain license of four Tennessee hydroelectric dams. The area granted to the Nature Conservancy’s care is, in fact, the land our own Rick Foster was recently hired to survey for indigenous plant life.

Renee also worked to change Tennessee law in 2005 that had, up to that point, kept Tennessee citi- zens from suing for violations of the Clean Water Act (no wonder companies like Radford flocked to our state to open their dirty industries!). In 2007 TCWN’s Tennessee Clean Water Act won TDEC the authority to issue stop-work orders to polluters who had been, to that point, issued toothless NOVs (notice of violations).

Renee also shared several copies of TCWN’s “The Current.” This to-the-point publication lists current legislation that falls into one of three groups: the Good, the Bad or the Ugly. Renee talked about one bill as particularly ugly, the Limited Resource Waters Bill (HB4183/SB4119). Please read up on this bill and make your voice heard!

For more information on the organizations mentioned visit:
http://www.tcwn.org
www.watauguawatershed.org
www.cherokeeforestvoices.org/
www.tennessee.sierrachub.org/watauga/index.htm
Experience Organic Farming with Barefoot Farmer

By Teresa Campbell

The 75-mile trip from Nashville to Red Boiling Springs is a lovely drive on a rainy April day as I watch the flatlands move into bright green rolling hills. My destination is Long Hungry Creek Farm where the Sierra Club has an outing on June 7. This $10.00 excursion will include a farm tour, lunch prepared from the farm’s bounty and farm enlightenment provided by Jeff Poppen, the Barefoot Farmer.

A farmer is busy even on a rainy day, but I am content in the house looking at tables of pumpkins and buckets of apple scions while Jeff darts around in the rain. Wanting a break, he comes in and sits down to reveal to me the mysteries

“Plants, powered by the sun, can’t help but create food and feed from the air and rain, and each year the animals reproduce. These resources, the farm’s cornucopia, are a result of nature...There is more every year.”

long Hungry Creek Farm where the Sierra Club-Middle TN Group has an outing on June 7. This $10.00 excursion will include a farm tour, lunch prepared from the farm’s bounty and farm enlightenment provided by Jeff Poppen, the Barefoot Farmer.

A farmer is busy even on a rainy day, but I am content in the house looking at tables of pumpkins and buckets of apple scions while Jeff darts around in the rain. Wanting a break, he comes in and sits down to reveal to me the mysteries of life.

“All life depends on the soil,” Jeff says.

Traditionally, soil was treated like it is alive, plowed slowly with animals. Care was taken to compost and collect manure. The resulting humus rich soil teemed with being—microbes, bacteria, fungi and protozoa—that have an intimate and life-giving relationship with plant roots. The plant provides food for microorganisms with little bits of sloughed-off root; the microorganisms protect the plant by extending the root’s feeding surface.

Working with the sun, this slow, natural exchange of nutrients produces strong, pest-and disease-resistant plants.

“If a soil lacks humus, it makes more humus by sending bugs and diseases to kill the plant. If a soil has humus, there is no need to send in bugs and diseases,” Jeff says.

Water-soluble chemicals kill microorganisms in the soil, leaving plants unbalanced and dependent on water to absorb nutrients.

How does organic rich, chemical-free agriculture fare in adverse weather? During last summer’s drought, Long Hungry Creek Farm didn’t suffer, although Jeff did water once.

Of the farm’s 300 acres, 200 are preserved as uncut forest, providing wildlife habitat. Fertilizer production (pastureland for cows) takes up another 95 acres.

“Only ruminants can make more fertility than is required for their own use,” Jeff says. No fertility is imported to Long Hungry Creek Farm.

“By juggling around a farm’s organic material and livestock, food pours like manna from heaven on this earthly paradise,” Jeff says. “Plants, powered by the sun, can’t help but create food and feed from the air and rain, and each year the animals reproduce. These resources, the farm’s cornucopia, are a result of nature...There is more every year.”

The remaining five acres produce 50,000 pounds of vegetables a year and CSA (community supported agriculture) members enjoy this bounty.

“…The members also enjoy other farm benefits besides the garden produce,” Jeff says. “They have an open invitation to hike around their farm, or to picnic, swim or camp out. By supporting the whole farm, they know what their food dollars are doing.

Thanks to Defenders Contributors

Thanks to this month’s contributors to the Defenders of Tennessee

(March 10 through April 9).

Anonymous

Kathryn Bendall

Charles and Marion Burger

Allis Dale and John Gillmor

Anne Horgan

Margaret Thompson

The Defenders campaign funds our very important legislative and lobbying activities. For further information see our January newsletter at http://www.tennesseesierraclub.org/0108ts.pdf

Step Into the Sunshine!...June 7, 2008!

The 2008 Sonnenschein Sunshine Festival is a gathering of arts clienteles To share our bountiful resources. Our community is known for its strong ties to the earth, its creator and its farm. We have a strong commitment to preserving our resources and way of life. The festival is in our way of sharing these resources and values with others.

Central to this year’s event will be workshops and exhibits focusing on Greens Living - renewable energy and sustainable habitation. How we can live more harmoniously within our environment.

There will be music, food, entertainment for the children, and vendors offering local products - farm produce, handcrafted goods of wood, metal and glass, art and souvenirs.

Tentative Schedule of Events:

June 7 - Exhibits/booths open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Music at the Courthouse from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm

Arts/crafts/local events all day

Fun for the children at the Children’s Green Playshop - 11:00 am-3:00 pm

PRIZES...GAMES...DEMONSTRATIONS!!!!

June 8 - All events start at 1:00 pm

Local tour of “Green” homes

Nature walks

For more information, go to http://www.sonnenschein-tenn.org/index.html

The Sierra Club-Middle TN Group

2021 21st Avenue South, Suite 436

Nashville, Tennessee 37212

Moving?

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

Member ID#__________________________

My new address is: ____________________________

Name:__________________________

City/State/Zip:__________________________

Mail to: Sierra Club P.O. Box 52968 Boulder, CO 80322-2968

Thanks to this month’s contributors to the Defenders of Tennessee

(March 10 through April 9).

Anonymous

Kathryn Bendall

Charles and Marion Burger

Allis Dale and John Gillmor

Anne Horgan

Margaret Thompson

The Defenders campaign funds our very important legislative and lobbying activities. For further information see our January newsletter at http://www.tennesseesierraclub.org/0108ts.pdf

Thanks to this month’s contributors to the Defenders of Tennessee

(March 10 through April 9).

Anonymous

Kathryn Bendall

Charles and Marion Burger

Allis Dale and John Gillmor

Anne Horgan

Margaret Thompson

The Defenders campaign funds our very important legislative and lobbying activities. For further information see our January newsletter at http://www.tennesseesierraclub.org/0108ts.pdf

Thanks to this month’s contributors to the Defenders of Tennessee

(March 10 through April 9).

Anonymous

Kathryn Bendall

Charles and Marion Burger

Allis Dale and John Gillmor

Anne Horgan

Margaret Thompson

The Defenders campaign funds our very important legislative and lobbying activities. For further information see our January newsletter at http://www.tennesseesierraclub.org/0108ts.pdf