Decision to Allow Sandhill Crane Hunting Delayed for Two Years

By Melinda Welton

In late January, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission (TWRC) voted on whether or not Tennessee should initiate a hunting season on sandhill cranes in the winter of 2011-2012. Citing insufficient data for establishing such a season, the TWRC decided to delay its decision for two years while more studies are conducted.

Sandhill cranes had almost disappeared in the southeastern U.S., going back at least to the 1930s, but they have been building up well over the last two decades. Still, there are disagreements over the exact number of cranes which migrate in the East, and the species’ slow reproduction rate—breeding happens after 5-7 years, and only one in three nests produces a chick that survives to fall migration—raised concerns over a replacement rate in the context of a possible hunting season.

High levels of response to the proposal (72 percent opposed and 28 percent in favor) and commission meetings packed with citizens marked the controversy. But so did courteous and reasoned discussion.

Most birders, such as those represented by the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS), did not support making the sandhill crane a game species and initiating a hunting season in the state. TOS took the position that “the fall arrival and overwintering of tens of thousands of sandhill cranes in Tennessee should be celebrated as a wildlife spectacle and a watchable wildlife viewing opportunity.”

Indeed, the state’s largest bird-viewing event is the 20-year-old annual Crane Viewing Days festival, which draws thousands of people to watch the migrating birds in mid-January. (A total of 11,000 cranes were counted during the first week of January.) Curiously, sandhill cranes have been attracted to key crane sites in the state because of the corn planted by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) to accommodate waterfowl.

Hunters were not of one mind on the issue. In a TWRA survey, about 55 percent of Tennessee hunters favored a season on the cranes, while 45 percent did not or had no opinion. Some pro-hunting elements also called for limiting hours for the hunt and not permitting it during the festival.

In any case, the decision has been delayed for two years. The real question isn’t whether sandhill cranes in the eastern U.S. can sustain a hunt at this time, but rather, how do we want to manage this new-found resource?

Here are two reports on the decision to delay from two newspapers:
http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110121/NEWS01/101210355/Sandhill-cranes-hunting-proposal-may-deferred

Additional information can be found on the Tennessee Ornithological Society website:
www.tnbirds.org

(Melinda Welton is the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) conservation policy chair.)

Tennessee Chapter Opposes Sandhill Crane Hunting

While the Sierra Club does not oppose hunting and fishing when based on scientifically valid biological information and when it does not prevent a population from returning to optimum size, the Tennessee Chapter voted at its fall conservation meeting to oppose the hunting of sandhill cranes in our state. Chapter Vice Conservation Chair Axel Ringe wrote the following letter on behalf of the Tennessee Chapter to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) outlining our rationale:

• The eastern population (EP) of sandhill cranes has come back from the brink of extinction to a more sustainable level, but there is a lack of verifiable information on the numbers of the current population;
• There is danger to the whooping cranes that use the same migration routes, often mingle with the sandhill cranes, and could be mistaken for sandhill cranes;
• Sandhill cranes reproduce slowly, and a juvenile losing a parent is less likely to survive;
• The staging and wintering-over of cranes provides a wildlife viewing opportunity that has attracted thousands of viewers to the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge over the past 20 years;
• During a 10-year period, wildlife viewing by Tennessee residents increased by 81%, while hunting was down 25%. Spending by wildlife watchers was up 112%, while spending by resident hunters was down 10%. Thus, a hunt would serve a small group of special interests while taking time and money from other wildlife management projects.
• The sandhill crane has become an iconic wildlife species to Tennesseans because of its majestic appearance, inherent grace and beauty, and has become a symbol of the wild America that once was.

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ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
Submission DEADLINE is the 1st of the month preceding the new month’s issue.
1. Email and email attached files are preferred. Send to baker@usw.org or 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 .jpg or .tif file format and either attached to email or mailed via US Postal Service (USPS) on a 3 ½ diskette or CD Rom. Please include a self-addressed stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your materials submitted via USPS mail cannot be accepted; however, pre-approval from the Editor is required.
3. Hard-copy handwritten or typewritten articles may be accepted; however, pre-approval from the Editor is required. Any materials submitted via USPS mail cannot be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.
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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.
Scholarships Available for Quarterly Tennessee Chapter Meetings

In order to make our statewide Chapter meetings accessible for all, especially families, the Chapter has made several changes during the last year to our Chapter meeting fees.

The basic fee for two nights lodging in a group lodge, breakfast and dinner Saturday, and Sunday breakfast is $40; however, children 15 years and younger are free. Also, first time attendees are half off — only $20! And we now offer partial scholarships of $20.

To apply for a scholarship, make your need known by contacting our Chapter treasurer, Scott Kramer, at 423-598-9516 or e-mail him at tncaptsctreas@gmail.com. Up to five scholarships are available for each Chapter meeting.

Our quarterly meetings are a great way to get to know folks across the state with the same perspective, to learn the latest on conservation issues in Tennessee, and to explore and enjoy different sections of our state’s parks and forests.

Hosted in turn by our local Groups, and generally held in or near great parks, forests or natural areas, our meetings include hikes and informative speakers. For example, we were treated to an up-close-and-personal visit with the Smokies superintendent last spring and star gazing on top of a bald at the summer meeting!

Put these dates on your calendar, and resolve to add new adventures, fun and new friends to 2011:

Winter: January 28-30, 2011 Cedars of Lebanon State Park
Spring: April 15-17, 2011 Natchez Trace State Park
Summer: July 8-10, 2011 Sterchi Lodge, Max Patch (Cherokee Nat. Forest)
Fall: October 21-23, 2011 Pickett State Park

Additional Information for SPRING 2011 Chapter Meeting:

The meeting address for the Natchez Trace State Park Group Lodge is not the park office address but is the address closest to the Group Lodge within the park and is found correctly in two cities! Try both on your GPS to see which will lead you properly: 22421 Natchez Trace Road, Wildersville, TN 38388 OR 22421 Natchez Trace Road, Lexington, TN 38351.

Follow signage to the Group Lodge just a short distance from the park grocery store. We are very excited about the beautiful foliage spring will bring to our visit at Natchez Trace. To enhance our full Chapter agenda we are planning hikes and a “Birds of Prey” program on Saturday night.

For more information on the spring meeting and to register contact Chickasaw Group Lodge within the park and is found correctly in two cities! Try both on your GPS to see which will lead you properly: 22421 Natchez Trace Road, Wildersville, TN 38388 OR 22421 Natchez Trace Road, Lexington, TN 38351.

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Help Save Cummins Falls

To make a tax-deductible donation to the Cummins Falls campaign—which will be matched by the Tennessee Chapter—send a check made out to the Sierra Club Foundation, 85 Second Street, Ste. 750, San Francisco, CA 94105.

The Tennes-Sierran

Tennessee Chapter Meetings

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Scott Kramer
Sierra Club TN Chapter Treasurer
Attn: Save Cummins Falls Campaign
5612 Alabama Ave.
Chattanooga, TN 37409

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HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

All programs will be held at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN and will start at 7:00 PM.

March 8, 7:00 PM, Preview of Harvey Broome Group's Annual Outings Program.

Ron Shrieves, Harvey Broome Group (HBG) outings coordinator, is the presenter. The annual outings program provides a preview of the group's schedule for the year and a slideshow from past outings. Included in this year's program are 10 backpack trips, 2 day hikes, and two canoe/kayak day trips. This year we'll offer the HBG "Take-a-Hike" program, a series of day hikes that will increase the skills and confidence of first time hikers. A special feature of these beginner day hikes is that they will provide a guided tour of all the major ecosystem types in the biologically diverse Great Smoky Mountains. Invite anyone who is interested in exploring the outdoors to come and find out more about HBG outings.

April 12, 7:00 PM, Nursing Orphaned and Injured Wildlife Back to Health

Lynne McCoy, state and federally permitted wildlife rehabilitator, will present an educational program about rehabilitation of orphaned and injured wildlife and returning them to the wild. She will bring some non-releasable wild friends as ambassadors. Come and get up close with some of our wild neighbors that add so much meaning to our lives. Lynne will explain the unusual and valuable roles that orphaned and injured wildlife, large and small. The meeting is open to the public and all are welcome. A slide show and a hands-on presentation will be included.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Saturday, March 13, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm, Brown Bag Lunch at Tractor Supply, 5000 Airways Blvd.

Save the date! We will participate in the Tractor Supply Brown Bag event. Bring a brown bag lunch and visit the Chickasaw Group table. Share your ideas and concerns about our local watershed. Bring your own chili and/or beans and "plug-ins" (snacks you like to eat) and share them with others.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

PROGRAM MEETING: Thursday, March 10, 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center. Bring any questions you have about our program. BEEES! Do you like honey? Flowers? Do you like to eat? The honeybee is crucial for crop pollination, and Jim Garrison, president of the Beekeeper's Association, will share his knowledge about one of the most "buzzed about" trends in environmentalism, beekeeping. Bees play a critical and irreplaceable role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. In addition, their population is severely threatened by Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Come learn what you can do to protect and preserve the viability of our honeybees. Beehives are on display in our backyard, and we'll discuss how to support the declining bee population. BEEES! Do you like honey? Do you like flowers? Do you like to eat? Beehives are on display in our backyard, and we'll discuss how to support the declining bee population.

PROGRAM MEETING: Third Mondays, March 21 and April 18, 6:30 p.m. at the United Steelworkers Union Building, 3340 Perimeter Hill Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37211.

Follow the signs to the conference area. If you arrive late, please ring the bell at the side door on the left, and someone will come down to let you in. Conservation issues are first on the agenda, and all members are invited to attend this conservation and administrative meeting. Join us to discuss and plan our actions! To place an item on the agenda, contact Elizabeth Tallman-Gazaway at 423-619-0379. NOTE: Our strategy meetings are now held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

MARCH STRATEGY: (Board Meeting) 3rd Wed., March 16, 6:00 pm, at our new location for our business meetings -- the Brairned Bethlehem ReSource Center, 4413 Brainerd Road, by the Balloon Factory next to the Brairned United Methodist Church. All members and interested people are welcome. We discuss issues and plan our actions! To place an item on the agenda, contact Elizabeth Tallman-Gazaway at 423-619-0379. NOTE: Our strategy meetings are now held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

(Note for Tuesday, March 15, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm).

APRIL STRATEGY: (Board Meeting) 3rd Wed., April 20, 6:00 pm, at our new location for our business meetings -- the Brairned Bethlehem ReSource Center, 4413 Brainerd Road, by the Balloon Factory next to the Brairned United Methodist Church. All members and interested people are welcome. We discuss issues and plan our actions! To place an item on the agenda, contact Elizabeth Tallman-Gazaway at 423-619-0379. NOTE: Our strategy meetings are now held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

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CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

(Sign up for our monthly email events list on the calendar page http://tennessee.sierra-club.org/chickasaw/)

Thursday, March 3, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm
Monthly First Thursday Gatherings
Otherlands, 641 S. Cooper, Memphis, TN
Sierra Club members, activists and friends meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and plan our actions! To place an item on the agenda, contact Emily Schiwimmer at eschwimm@gmail.com or Deborah Mays at (901) 722-4111.

Monday, March 14, 6:30 pm
Strategy Meeting Fuel Cafe, 1761 Madison Street. Meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and plan our actions! To place an item on the agenda, contact Emily Schiwimmer at eschwimm@gmail.com or Deborah Mays at (901) 722-4111.
Meetings (continued from page 4)

March 5-6 (Sat-Sun), Backpack, Rock and Possum Creek Sections, Cumberland Trail (CT).

On this backpack on the southern Cumberland Plateau we’ll visit three river gorges via a portion of the CT completed around 2005. We first descend into Rock Creek Gorge, cross the river on a new 80-foot bridge, ascend, then descend again, look at the gorge of Little Possum and make camp. The second day we’ll enjoy following the creek downstream past impressive rapids to spectacular Iomodum Falls, and learn a bit about the history of the trail. After crossing two more recently constructed bridges we’ll climb out of the gorge of Big Possum Creek to our cars. Distance is 14.9 miles total, rated moderate. One-way drive: 100 miles. Pre-register with Warren or Carol Devine, 483-7894 or wdevine@bellsouth.net.

March 12 (Sat), Day hike (exploratory), Polly Poinsettia Trail, Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness.

This area adjacent to the Virgin Falls State Natural Area contains numerous streams and waterfalls. The 8-mile loop will pass several small waterfalls leading to the Caney Fork stream. We’ll learn a bit about the "karst" formations that characterize the area. Though an established trail, it is rated moderate, but beware, as the trip leader has not hiked this trail before (hence, it is "exploratory"). One-way drive: 108 miles. Pre-register with Ron Shrieves at 922-3518 or ronaldshrieves@comcast.net (email preferred).

March 19 (Sat), Day hike, Tellico Lake East Lakeshore Trail.

This is a relatively easy hike along Tellico Lake’s eastern shore. We will do the Covey Hole (1.6 miles) and then connect to the Glendale Branch (5.2 miles). The Glendale Branch will be out and back except for a loop around Power Point. Total hiking distance is 6.8 miles. Construction of the East Lakeshore Trail is a joint venture between the Watershed Association of the Tellico Reservoir (WATeR) and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Currently, about 17 miles of trail out of a planned 35 miles is completed. Hikers will have the option of hiking other portions of the trail – North Branch, Sinking Creek, Lotterdale, and Jackson Bend. These trails are flat or rolling with just a few steeper inclines. The East Lakeshore Trail is located along the east shoreline of Tellico Lake opposite Tellico Village. Rated easy to moderate. The drive from West Knoxville is about 19 miles. Pre-register with BJ and Bob Perlick: perlack@aol.com; 675-7668.

March 19 (Sat), Take-a-Hike, Ijams Nature Center.

This will be a get-acquainted session for those interested in the Harvey Broome Group Take-a-Hike program, and includes a short, easy hike for those who do not have any wilderness hiking experience, but would like to try it. This will be the first in a series of increasingly challenging hikes for those who have always wanted to find out what it’s like. No special equipment, not even hiking boots, is required for this outing. In fact, we’ll talk about what you should have in order to hike safely in the Smokies or other nearby wilderness areas. Handouts will be provided with details on information sources and equipment. So if “you always wanted to know, but were afraid to ask,” this is your chance! There is no charge. Participants are expected to be in reasonable shape for a 3-mile walk on a paved path, and to have aspirations for advancing to a level where they are comfortable with taking a five mile hike in the Smoky Mountains. Pre-register with Ron Shrieves at 922-3518 or ronaldshrieves@comcast.net (email preferred).

March 26 (Sat), Take-a-Hike, Knoxville River Walk.

This is a forum for public discussion, so please feel free to post comments, raise issues, and express environmental concerns.

For More Information about Sierra Club – Chickasaw Group Educational Programs:

Meetings are held at the Benjamin L. Hooks Library, 3030 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, TN. For suggestions and further information please feel free to contact our Programs Chair, susan.routon@gmail.com.

WATAUGA GROUP (Northeastern TN)

PROGRAM MEETINGS: Every second Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Benjamin L. Hooks Library, 3030 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, TN. For suggestions and further information please feel free to contact our Programs Chair, susan.routon@gmail.com.

Ten Essentials for Hiking

Sierra Club outages offer a variety of wilderness and near-wilderness experiences. It is important to realize that while all trips are guided by a leader, it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual hiker to plan and travel in a safe manner. To this end, the following is a list of essential items that should be included on each outing, according to the particular type of outing described:

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

This will be a get-acquainted session for those interested in the Harvey Broome Group Take-a-Hike program. This is an alternate date for those who can’t make the March 19 session. We’ll describe the program and do a two-mile walk on the Tellico Lakeshore Trail and downtown Knoxville. For those who do not have any wilderness hiking experience but would like to try it, this is the place to start. It’s the first in a series of increasingly challenging hikes for those who have always wanted to find out what it’s like. No special equipment, not even hiking boots, is required for this outing. In fact, we’ll talk about what you should have in order to hike safely in the Smokies or other nearby wilderness areas. Handouts will be provided with details on information sources and equipment. So if “you always wanted to know, but were afraid to ask,” this is your chance! There is no charge. Participants are expected to be in reasonable shape for a 3-mile walk on a paved path, and to have aspirations for advancing to a level where they are comfortable with taking a five mile hike in the Smoky Mountains. Pre-register with Ron Shrieves at 922-3518 or ronaldshrieves@comcast.net (email preferred).

April 2 (Sat), Take-a-Hike, Portrait Creek Trail.

This trail often has spectacular wildflowers from late March through April, so bring your photo camera. The trailhead is located in the Greenbrier area (follow highway US-321 about six miles east of Gatlinburg). The first 1.5 miles of trail offer good wildflower viewing. The lower section of the trail is relatively flat and is completed. Hikers will have the option of hiking other portions of the trail – North Branch, Sinking Creek, Lotterdale, and Jackson Bend. These trails are flat or rolling with just a few steeper inclines. The East Lakeshore Trail is located along the east shoreline of Tellico Lake opposite Tellico Village. Rated easy to moderate. The drive from West Knoxville is about 19 miles. Pre-register with BJ and Bob Perlick: perlack@aol.com; 675-7668.

April 2-3 (Sat-Sun), Cumberland Trail Backpack, LaFollette to Cove Lake State Park.

The Cumberland Trail extends from Kentucky to Georgia, and one of the best sections is a short drive from Knoxville. The Eagle Rock section is perhaps the most geologically varied trail in east Tennessee, which we’ll learn about as the trail follows the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. After a steep climb near LaFollette there’s a wonderful of rock along the edge of the Cumberland Plateau escarpment from LaFollette to I-75 and Cove Lake State Park, ranging from a “Great Wall of China” to a stone arch and lookout, with vistas of the Powell River valley and the Cumberland Mountains; at the south end is the Deadb’s Raceview visible from I-75. We’ll also be measuring this section for a to-be-published hiking guide for the Cumberland Trail. Hiking distance is about 11 miles total. Rated moderate. One-way drive: 35 miles. Pre-register with Will Skelton: H 523-2272; Cell 742-7327; wshome@bellsouth.net.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

No outings are scheduled.

The Tennes-Scieran
Way Down Upon the Suwannee River

By Gloria Griffith

In search of Florida wilderness several Sierra Club Watauga Group and Johnson County residents packed into a van for a Sunday morning get-away. Canoeing 131 miles on the Suwannee River and sleeping under starry December skies held more adventures than the paddlers anticipated.

Expecting Florida temperatures to be pleasantly cool, the paddlers encountered night time temperatures into the teens. Sunshine helped bring daytime temperatures back into the low forties.

“Reaching river camps, hot meals and cozy campfires were welcomed each day with anticipation,” said Dean Whitworth. “No day more so than our arrival at Branford. Cold wind and choppy waters had us all but done in.”

Webb Griffith said, “Not long after landing our canoes an alert deputy sheriff advised us the Branford park, camp and facilities were closed for the season. The deputy, made aware of our predicament, arranged a call to the town mayor, Don Owens.” The mayor granted permission for the canoists to camp.

“The next camping area was 21 miles down river,” said Carl Osborn. “Yes, we were very grateful!” Later, Mayor Owens arrived at the riverside park to make sure the tired visitors were comfortable and safe.

Due to low water conditions in the upper Suwannee, Griffith, Tennessee Chapter outings chair, chose to paddle from Holton Creek River Camp to Fanning Springs, an eight-day scouting trip for future outings. This section widens and includes numerous “boiling” springs and small shoals, adding to the river’s ever-changing character as it heads toward the Gulf of Mexico.

Outings (continued from page 5)

CHEROKEE GROUP

The Cherokee Group sponsors outings and hikes at least one or two weekends a month. Jeremy Tallman-Gazaway serves as our outings chair and as point-man for outings information for our Group. Our activities are always open to the public and to members of the Club from across the state! We explore interesting and unique parts of Tennessee and gain an appreciation of how wonderful (and sometimes threatened) our area is, while having fun. Outings are planned to take in the interests and skill levels of the participants. For more information, contact Jeremy at 423-619-6548 or gazawaypainting@gmail.com.

March 12 (Sat.) North Chickamauga Creek Day hike.

We’ll be passing by scenic overlooks of North Chickamauga Creek as well as old mining shafts, giving the opportunity to discuss the effect of past coal mining as well as possible future mining on Waldens Ridge and the watershed. Please be sure to bring plenty of water, appropriate clothes for the weather and something to snack on. The hike is rated easy to moderate, about 4.5 miles. For more information and to register, contact Trip Leader Jeremy Tallman-Gazaway, 423-619-6548 or gazawaypainting@gmail.com.

April 9-10 (Sat.-Sun.) Fiery Gizzard Day hike or Overnighter.

This will be a beautiful hike, passing many cascades, with a trip down to Sycamore Falls. If you wish to camp overnight, please bring food, plenty of water, extra change of clothes, tent, sleeping bag, flashlight and proper attire for warmth. For more information and to register, contact Trip Leader Jeremy Tallman-Gazaway, 423-619-6548 or gazawaypainting@gmail.com.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Saturday, March 26 10:00 am Outing: Wildflower Walk T.O. Fuller State Park, Memphis, TN

Meet at picnic tables just east of C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa (1987 Indian Village Drive) and we will walk about 3 miles looking at wildflowers and discuss the forest/water environment where they are found. Fees for museum if you wish to tour it afterward. Bring drinking water, lunch and a hiking stick. No pets please. Contact Sue Williams at (901) 274-0524 or z4cmv@juno.com.

Sunday, March 20, 5:30 pm to about 7:15 pm Outing: Mississippi River Bluffwalk Sunset Equinox Hike Downtown Memphis, TN

Explore the riverfront parks, with information on air and water quality issues and updates on riverfront development issues. Meet at Butler Park with free parking on Tennessee Street. Park entrance is on Tennessee Street at the intersection with Butler Avenue, next to the old Tennessee Brewery. See http://tinyurl.com/Bullee-Park for map, or park at Tom Lee Park and walk up the stairs at the south end of the parking lot. Optional dinner after outing. Contact Sue A. Williams at (901) 274-0524 for more information.

Further instructions: On Front St going north, go under railroad bridge at Nettleton and take next right which is Butler. Butler dead ends at Tennessee.

If coming from the south on Riverside Dr., turn right on Georgia Ave which bends and becomes Front St. Turn left onto Butler which is directly after W Calhoun.

April 16-17 (Sat., Sun.) Morning outings will be held at the chapter meeting at Natchez Trace State Park, details TBA. Contact Sue Williams at (901) 274-0524 or z4cmv@juno.com

Sunday, April 17, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Tabling Event: Down to Earth Festival Shelby Farms Park.

Join us for the Mid-South’s largest Earth Day celebration at America’s largest urban park. Sierra Club-Chickasaw Group will be hosting a table at this event along with dozens of other eco-vendors and area non-profit organizations. There will be music, food, kids’ activities, and a full assortment of guided hikes and tours led by experts throughout the day.

Contact Matt Farr (mfarr@shelby-farmspark.org) for more information. Admission is free, with a suggested donation for parking.
Chickasaw Group Recognizes Community Leaders

During its annual Christmas party, the Chickasaw Group presented eight different community members and institutions with awards for their work in local environmental stewardship and conservation. Together, the awardees demonstrate Memphis’ burgeoning public movement for a more just, sustainable city.

Citizens to Preserve Overton Park (CPOP) — Park & Public Lands Protector Award

Founded in 2007, CPOP has quickly become a major voice for protecting natural amenities in Midtown Memphis by advocating state protection for Overton Park’s Old Forest through hosting bi-weekly educational hikes and exemplary media outreach. By opposing arbitrary construction of detention ponds in the green spaces of Overton Park, the group helped initiate a broad coalition to correct longstanding flooding problems in Midtown neighborhoods.

Greater Memphis Greenline Inc. (GMG) — Connecting Communities Award

Founded in 2004 as a green-ribbon committee of area environmental and conservation group representatives, GMG met for three years in virtual secrecy to expedite land acquisition for the future Shelby Farms Greenway and acted as intermediaries for anonymous donors. Following the highly successful opening of the Greenline in October, GMG continues to identify opportunities to connect Memphians and green spaces.

Livable Memphis — Community Builder Award

Beginning with the Annual Neighborhood Summit in 2007, the Pizza with Planners public meeting series in 2008, the Bike-Walk Memphis committee this past year, and most recently the promotion of the Broad Avenue Arts District for connecting the Shelby Farms Greenline to Midtown and beyond, Livable Memphis is making its name a reality!

Marvin Butler — Environmental Education Award

A green businessman and talented singer, songwriter, and author, Marvin is Memphis’s first green troubadour! Marvin educates as he entertains, spreading his message of hope and a call to action in building a sustainable future.

Amy & Scott Banbury — Green Family Award

As parents, green practitioners, exemplary community leaders, and former Chickasaw Executive Committee members Amy & Scott practice what they preach! Both chose to establish service related businesses to meet local community needs. Both are community leaders. Amy is a family event organizer and local parks activist; Scott is a storm water activist, local political activist, and Cub Scout leader.

Outings Leader Training & First Aid Workshop a Success!

The Cherokee Group had a full house recently at its January First Aid and Outing Leader Training 101 Workshop, graduating 17 new outings leaders.

Linda “Sparky” Sparks, of the Red Cross, led a spirited basic first aid class, assisted by RoseAnn Copeland. This was followed by Elizabeth and Jeremy Tallman-Gazaway’s team-taught Outings Leader Training 101 seminar, with full group training and break-out sessions. The seminar culminated in all participants receiving their certificates and a Sierra Club outings leader patch.

You can look forward to their diverse outings in 2011! Congratulations to: Mike Bascom; Zach Bopp; Sheryl Campbell; Emily Marr Davis; Tami Freedman; Tacy Gorton; Cameron Gramarye; Macy Hashop; Leslie Jakobs; Barbara Kelly; Scott Kramer; Melissa Meyer; Colleen Mikelson; Davis Mounger; Elaine Montgomery; Trish Woolbright; and Dylan Williams.

Bianca Phillips — Environmental Journalism Award

Bianca has distinguished herself in the Memphis Flyer for her unique and thorough coverage of environmental and sustainability related issues. An exemplary example of her work was the cover story, “Toxic Shock” (October 14-20), featuring the Shelby County Toxic Ten annual report compiled by the Sierra Club’s environmental justice program. Her works have resulted in heightened environmental awareness across the Mid-South.

Jeanne Richardson — Public Servant of the Year

As the Tennessee State Representative for the 89th District, Rep. Richardson was co-sponsor of 2010’s Overton Park Natural Area bill. She is a tireless champion in Nashville for local and statewide environmental and sustainability concerns.

Susan Routon — Volunteer of the Year Award

Susan has worn a lot of hats: Executive Committee member, Chapter delegate, treasurer, program chair, hospitality chair, event food coordinator, and publicity & PR extraordinaire. She could also be found assisting at most tabling events. Susan has stepped up in her first year with Chickasaw Group to serve in whatever capacity was needed. She is a true role model for how to save the planet one community at a time.

Angeleah is getting her arm bandaged by Barbara Kelly, who is checking the circulation in Angeleah’s fingers. Photo: Elizabeth Tallman-Gazaway.

Dylan William’s arm is skilfully attended to by Leslie Jakobs. Photo: Elizabeth Tallman-Gazaway.

Sheryl Campbell is applying a triangle bandage to keep Davis Mounger’s injured arm, already in a sling, from movement. Photo: Elizabeth Tallman-Gazaway.
Memphis Environmental Justice Conference Raises Awareness

By Rita Harris

The 9th annual Memphis environmental justice conference, “An Interconnected Environmental Web,” was held November 13, 2010.

It was an all-day conference that was co-sponsored by the Tennessee Chapter, the Chickasaw Group and the Memphis environmental justice program office. We are proud that we annually host the ONLY grassroots environmental conference in the Memphis area!

Thirteen workshops were offered to approximately 85 folks from all over the Memphis metropolitan region. Each year we strive to reach the average person next door to share information, raise environmental awareness on a variety of issues, and add folks to our activist ranks.

The Dick Mochow Environmental Justice Award was presented to two Memphis environmental justice veteran activists: Mondell Williams and Charles Patterson of south Memphis. Both men formed an organization and fought for many years to close down a local hazardous waste recycler, Perma Fix, in their neighborhood. In addition, Mondell Williams served on the restoration advisory board at the Memphis Defense Depot where the military buried munitions, medicines, and other items that contaminated groundwater in the area.

The Memphis environmental justice program is committed to raising awareness to gain better environmental protection and community services, and to secure safer, healthier communities.

Rita Harris is a Sierra Club environmental justice field organizer.

(Left) Memphis conference coordinator Rita Harris and register, Pearlie Estes, register attendees from Rust College in Holly Springs, MS. Photos by Kelvin Butler.

By Steven Sondheim, Chapter Energy Team National Transportation Issues

President Obama has called for a transportation infrastructure bill with more transportation choices and less dependence on oil. Nationally, our transportation sector is almost entirely dependent on oil and contributes 30 percent of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in addition to releasing pollutants that harm public health.

John Mica, House transportation chair, has shown long-term interest in high speed rail, transit, and better use of rail, both passenger and freight, to reduce the need for additional road capacity. There seems to be some willingness to work with the Senate committee, led by Barbara Boxer, on a Fix-It-First strategy that is prioritized for less VMT (vehicle miles traveled) to get needs met, resulting in reduced traffic, increased access, reduced oil use and more transportation choices.

In a Transportation For America www.T4america.com focus group the “Fixing Our Failing Infrastructure” theme ran across all party lines. The idea is to fix infrastructure where people live now rather than building out, which results in sprawl and greenfield development. It means to maintain existing assets in a smart way in the right places before building new. By leveraging local economic resources, infrastructure is re-engineered including smart land use.

In the short term, Amtrak is threatened, along with transit and New Start projects. All this is happening very fast with little time for public opposition or input. Please let your representatives and senators know of your wishes around these issues.

www.SteelInterstate.org is a very informative site on freight rail, energy independence, greenhouse gas emissions, Peak Oil, and the natural gas trucking issue.

RailSolution is looking at freight rail along the I-81/I-40/Crescent Corridor instead of new truck lanes.

National Energy Issues

Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune gave a talk to the National Energy Activists Team on protecting public health and building a clean energy economy.

Michael emphasized the importance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in protecting our health and that we must transition to renewable energy from dirty coal and oil.

The Sierra Club is launching a campaign to defend the EPA and the Clean Air Act. It is also engaged in both the Beyond Oil and Beyond Coal campaigns as well as the Clean Energy campaign.

To learn more and become involved, join the National Energy Activists. There are twice monthly calls regarding federal climate and energy work.

Learn about national and international climate change efforts. Contact christine.yagian@sierrarock.org

Green Building Tours Scheduled for March 14-20

The Tennessee Sierra Club and United States Green Building Council will be presenting tours in Memphis, Nashville, Cookeville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Johnson City. Last year we had five successful tours. Check with your local Sierra Club Group for times and places. See demonstrations of green building technology and participate in advocacy for more of it.

State Energy Team

Collaborate at the state and local level regarding energy issues. Help your Group work on these issues. Conference calls are usually the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm CST. We will familiarize and train you. For more information contact Gloria Griffith, 423-727-4797 gla4797@embarqmail.com

TV A /Beyond Coal Committee

Get involved with bimonthly calls regarding TVA, energy efficiency, renewable, pollution, coal ash, etc. To get involved contact Louise Gorenflo, 931/484-2633 lgorenflo@gmail.com

Transportation Committee

Robin Hill is the new transportation chair, (865) 607-4542 robin.hill5@gmail.com

Brian Paddock, (931) 268-2938 bpaddock@twlakes.net or Steven Sondheim, (901) 761-1793 stevensondheim@yahoo.com

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Rebuild/Repower Committee

This committee works on the Cool Cities project, Generation Partners program, and green building, solar and weatherization issues. For more information contact Mary Mastin, marymastin@twlakes.net