How Many Pipeline Spills? A Note From Canada

Alberta, Canada is basically a petro state. Oil and gas production rule everything and it's happening everywhere in the north of the province. Pipelines criss-cross most of Alberta. As a result, leaks of wells, facilities and pipelines are a constant thing all over the province.

But we Canadians almost never hear about them. Our main media, CBC, does not provide any coverage of the many, many spills and gas releases that happen every month, nor the efforts to clean up the messes. They're simply not considered news—at least not on the scale of disasters like some attention-grabbing up at the War Memorial on Remembrance Day in uniform and bedecked with medals—none of which (uniform included) belonged to him. The guy is under arrest for impersonating an officer.

But back to the non-news. It seems someone is taking notice. West Coast Native News (WCNN) has been quietly keeping tabs on all the spills and leaks. What they have found is shocking!!

More past the toxic orange spill...careful you don't get any on your shoes!!

The WCNN is reporting on all the spills and natural gas releases and have kindly provided the incidence reports to back up their claims.

Over the past year WCNN has reported on many Crude oil and Toxic produced water spills all over Alberta, in fact we have reported over 600,000 Litres of toxic crap that has been spilled just last month and yet not one mainstream media outlet has picked up on your shoes!!

What is produced that is mentioned in the incident reports? OilfieldWiki states that it is either water mixed with the oil as it comes up from the ground and from two sources: with the oil, or separate from it — OR it’s injected fluid.

Sources of this water may include flow from above or below the hydrocarbon zone, flow from within the hydrocarbon zone, or flow from injected fluids and additives resulting from production activities. This water is frequently referred to as “connate water” or “formation water” and becomes produced water when the reservoir is produced and these fluids are brought to the surface. Produced water is any water that is present in a reservoir with the hydrocarbon resource and is produced to the surface with the crude oil or natural gas.

I regret to say that due to my non-existent math skills, I can't calculate the volume of the spills into liters for you all. Perhaps someone else can do the math for me.

I noticed that in the report of an incident document, every single report mentions that no effects to wildlife or waterways occurred... WHAT?? How can spilling even a small amount of oil not affect the soil and water, and in turn affect the wildlife. Even the removal of the contaminated soil will have an effect. This is the kind of glossing over important facts that happen when there is only self-reporting done. No one follows up or studies the results. And no one calls them on their shoddy reporting.

It shouldn't need to be said, but those who think that putting a pipeline that carries oil, dilbit, or natural gas over any agricultural, environmentally sensitive or heavily populated areas should have their little heads examined. Pipelines are neither safe nor infallible. I see the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill to allow the Keystone XL to be built and used....folly...sheer idiocy!

Originally posted to GwenNedd on Mon Nov 17, 2014 AT 02:52 P.M. PST
**Tennes-Sierran**

The bi-monthly newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club.

**SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:**
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**SEND ARTICLES TO:**
E-mail: gvannhorn26@gmail.com
USPS: Gene Van Horn, Editor
895 Red Cloud Trail
Spring City, TN 37381
365-6092

**ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**
Submission Target Date is January 25 for the March-April issue.
1. E-mail and e-mail attached files are preferred. Send to gvannhorn26@gmail.com either with embedded text message, or attached files. Attached files are preferred. Word is preferred but Apple users may send articles in Pages.
2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or a .tif file format then either attached to e-mail or mailed via U.S. Postal Service on a 3 1/2” diskette or CD RM. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your diskette or photo prints returned.
3. Hard-copy handwritten or typewritten articles may be accepted; however, pre-approval from the Editor is required.
4. Any materials submitted via USPS mail will not be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.
5. Concerns or complaints should be addressed to: Barbara Kelly, Communications Committee, bk1rivers@comcast.net.

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.

**Related Campaigns:**
- Portland Press Herald in its coverage called the decision to close the statehouse chambers and took effect May 1. The community solar gardens program, and support for incentives for solar photo-voltaics made in Minnesota, including a 1.5% solar portfolio standard by 2020, new Clean Energy Solutions.
- The Sierra Club's Maine Chapter worked in collaboration with staff working on this legislation from the very beginning of the session, including the Chapter lobbyist and others. The most creative thing about this work were elected with active support from the North Star Chapter's state PAC.
- Since 2010, the Sierra Club’s Minnesota legislature passed a comprehensive Energy Efficiency Rule which had expected the PSC to kill it. More than 3-0 by Mississippi's Public Service Commission (PSC).
- When: From 2010, a new Energy Efficiency Rule has been approved in Mississippi. The rural electric cooperatives, which had expected the PSC to kill it. More than 3-0 by Mississippi's Public Service Commission (PSC). When: From 2010, a new Energy Efficiency Rule has been approved in Mississippi. The rural electric cooperatives, which had expected the PSC to kill it.

**Sierra Club Officers**

**TENNESSEE CHAPTER:**
- Chair: Keven Rounton (901) 485-3960
- Vice Chair: Cheryl White (731) 307-8140
- Secretary: Barbara Kelly (423) 718-5009
- Treasurer: Alice Demetreon (660) 247-2288
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- Watauga Group - Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington Counties
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  - www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/middle
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  - www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/watauga

**VICTORIES**

St. Croix River Dam Passages Removed So Alevines Can Swim Free

The Sierra Club’s Maine Chapter worked in collaboration with state’s Environmental Priorities Coalition to pass a bill requiring the state to ensure that the fishways on the Woodland Dam and the Grand Falls Dam be reconfigured or operated in such a way that “allows the unconstrained passage of river herring.” The bill, L.D. 72, was passed by overwhelming majorities in both statehouse chambers and took effect May 1. The Portland Press Herald in its coverage called the decision “America’s victory.”

Tactical Highlights:
- To aid in this win, the Maine Chapter used online grassroots action alerts, public testimony, and grassroots outreach. Where: 2013.04.23.
- Related Campaigns: Protecting Waters.

Minnesota Passes First Solar Standard and Innovative Solar Policy

The Minnesota legislature passed a comprehensive clean energy package with particular emphasis on solar, including a 1.5% solar portfolio standard by 2020, new incentives for solar photo-voltaics made in Minnesota, a community solar gardens program, and support for a number of forward-looking studies.

Tactical Highlights:
- The Sierra Club’s North Star Chapter (Minnesota) Chapter held a 700-person rally at the state capitol on Earth Day, and the Club was a primary driver behind making that event a success. The Sierra Club was one of the few organizations that had dedicated staff working on this legislation from the very beginning of the session, including the Chapter lobbyist and significant Beyond Coal Campaign organizing staff support. In addition, several key legislators involved in this work were elected with active support from the North Star Chapter’s state PAC. When: 2013.05.18.
- Related Campaign: Clean Energy Solutions. Mississippi Public Service Commission Passes Energy Efficiency Rule

Energy Efficiency Rule

The new Energy Efficiency Rule was approved 3-0 by Mississippi’s Public Service Commission (PSC). In the end, public comments tipped the balance in favor of the rule, much to the surprise of the rural electric cooperatives, which had expected the PSC to kill it.

Tactical Highlights: Since 2010, the Sierra Club and many other groups mounted a persistent campaign to get this rule passed. The most creative thing about this effort was the networking and helpful positive communication from all kinds of national organizations that promote energy efficiency. While these organizations did a lot of the technical work, the Club and other organizations focused on the in-state advocacy. The Club remains vigilant as the rural electric cooperatives are calling for a re-hearing of the rule. When: 2013.07.03.
- Related Campaign: Clean Energy Solutions.
Beyond Coal: Research-Based Messaging

Overall, the Sierra Club’s polls and focus groups find that:

- Most Americans do not have a full understanding of where their electricity comes from.
- Few American adults claim that they are knowledgeable about electricity issues.
- Most Americans are unfamiliar with their own state’s electricity profile.
- Americans generally have ambivalent relationships with their electric utilities, but they do not necessarily see local utilities (or local coal companies) as bad actors.
- Few Americans feel they control over their energy choices.
- We don’t need to spend time convincing people that coal is undesirable – public opinion of coal is already negative.

What, you may ask, are the Defenders? This is a group of people who have contributed to our legislative efforts, enabling our lobbyist Mike Murphy and our dedicated volunteers and staff to make an impact on our state legislatures. As a result of their hard work, our legislators know who we are and what we want, and they listen. They may not vote our way the first time around, but continuing insistence on what is right for our environment and for the citizens of Tennessee brings the changes of which we are rightly proud. As a result of natural attrition, we must now increase our donor list. Generally, only people who have been part of this effort in the past are sent a letter each year, and those people do not receive other solicitations from the Tennessee Chapter. We ask you to become a Defender by supporting this invaluable program.

We don’t know what bills will be brought up next legislative session, but some issues that we may address include:

- Further renewable energy legislation and/or support for community solar projects.
- Continued opposition to reversion of mining regulation oversight to state government.
- Support of any bill opposing mountain top removal mining.
- Defense against any regulations that would adversely affect Tennessee’s air, water, and land.
- Container deposition legislation, if brought up again.

Please support the Sierra Club Defenders, and contact your legislators about important bills. We can send you e-mail alerts (only as needed) during the session, and Tennessee Conservation Voters (TCV) sends out a weekly legislative update. Check the box(es) below if you wish to receive these alerts.

Send the following form with a check made out to the Sierra Club with “Defenders” on the memo line to Sierra Club Defenders, c/o Adelle Wood, 4641 Villa Green Drive, Nashville, TN 37215.

Thank you!

Amount □ $75 □ $150 □ $250 □ $1,000 □ Other

Name: ________________________________

E-mail address: __________________________ We will not divulge your information.

- Check here to receive e-mail alerts when the Sierra Club contacts state legislators on critical votes. Include your e-mail address above. Don’t check this box if you already receive these alerts.
- Check here to receive weekly e-mail updates from TCV (include your e-mail address above) during the legislative session. Don’t check this box if you already receive these updates.
- Yes □ No May we thank you in the TennesseeSierra?

No acknowledgement letter needed. Please save Defender funds for program purposes.

Donations to this fund are not tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Thank you so very much to our November Defender contributors, including:

- Charles Akers
- Nancy Anderson
- William and Kathryn Bendall
- Jim Blackstock
- Gary Bowers
- Sharon Boyce
- Bob and Anne Brandt
- Gary and Terri Brunvoll
- Carol and Frank Burger
- Charles and Marion Burger
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- Joy Mayfield
- Elizabeth and Robert Peele
- John Pigg
- Meg Robertson
- Cynthia and Steven Rohrbach
- Don Scharf and Teri Davis
- Diane Shifrin
- Marty Simmons
- Gene and Ruth Van Horn
- Anonymous donors and those who did not complete the form.

Your name here next issue?

The Tennes-Sierran
Meetings

The public is very welcome at ALL Sierra Club Meetings and Activities! All members traveling across the state should feel free to drop in and attend another Group’s meetings. You will find yourself among friends and learning something interesting.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

Welcome the New Year Mixer/Pot Luck, Jan. 4, 5 P.M. to 8 P.M., Audubon Acres: You’re invited to a Party! Bring friends and a covered dish to share, we’ll supply drinks, utensils, plates, etc. Come start the new year with people who share the same interests and dreams for our environment as you. Location: Audubon Acres Visitor Center, 900 Sanctuary Road, Chattanooga. 37424 -- the new building just inside their gate, in East Brainerd, off Gunbarrel Road. Fun and fellowship!

Strategy/Business Meetings: Jan. 12 and Feb. 9 (2nd Monday) 6:30 P.M. -- Held at Second Presbyterian Church, at the corner of E. 7th Street and Pine, 700 Pine Street (parking is free in their Pine Street lot, across the street from the church, next to the old Blue Cross (orange) building.) If you want to be connected to the Environmental Buzz in/around Chattanooga -- this is where to be. Come add your ideas and share your concerns. We’ll be planning our actions: we’re active on several fronts: clean energy, forest watch/protection, mining/fracking issues, and energizing our Outings program. All are welcome!

NOTE: We’re moving! 2015 Program meetings will be at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main St., Chattanooga. 37408. Parking available along the street and around the corner of the building. Mark your calendars now!!!

January Program: 4th Monday, Jan. 26, 7:00 P.M. at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main St., Chattanooga. 37408. Sustainability at YOUR House: Get the Most Bang for Your Buck! Carylon Smith and Jeffrey Maxwell, from Home Depot, will be showing us how to make our homes more energy-efficient while saving $$$. They have great presentation materials, some hands on demonstrations, and will bring goody bags for everybody. Learn how to make your house over energy-wise, at the same time you lower your electric bills!

The public is very welcome and healthy snacks are served. Invite your friends!!

Look for our banner.

February Program: 4th Monday, Feb. 23, 7:00 P.M. at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main St., Chattanooga. 37408. Looking at Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs): Our State Forests. Shannon Gann, Area Forester for Bradley, Hamilton and Sequatchie, and Jim Lane, Forester for Prentiss Cooper State Forest, will be teaching us about forestry "Best Management Practices" for our state forests. Come learn about how our forests should be handled! We’d like to start a Forest Watch for Prentice Cooper; we’ll be having a hike there in March.

The public is very welcome, healthy snacks are served. Invite your friends!! Look for our banner.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Check http://www.facebook.com/ChickasawGroup/ for meeting information.

HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

January 13, 7:00 P.M. Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. Expanding Knoxville’s Urban Wilderness. Carol Evans, Executive Director, Legacy Parks Foundation


March 10, 7:00 P.M. Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. A Preview of Harvey Broom Group 2014 Outings Program.

Program: January 8, Thursday, 7:00 P.M. Radnor Lake Visitors Center “Climate Change, Mountain Top Removal & Music” -- Nell Levin and Dan Joranko, Co-Executive Directors of Tennessee Alliance for Progress (TAP), will present a program (with musical interludes) on the facts behind climate change, how to respond to common arguments and resistance to change, and the practice of mountain top removal to mine coal.

Program: February 12, Thursday, 7:00 P.M. Radnor Lake Visitors Center – “Nashville’s Recycling – Where Does it Go?” – We put our recyclables in the bin, but what happens then? Marge Davis, coordinator of the Nashville Bottle Bill Project (Recycling Refunds), will look at some of the ins and outs of Nashville’s recycling program, including how Nashville is doing on recycling, how the recycled materials are processed, and where they end up.

Program: March 12, Thursday, 7:00 P.M., at Radnor Lake Visitor Center. “Owls” -- Robert English (photographer, naturalist, and very entertaining speaker) has sighted all nineteen species of North American owls and eighteen species of owls from other countries around the world. A birder for 31 years, Robert’s photographs have been published in the National Audubon Society books, The Bird Garden and The Audubon Backyard Birdwatcher. Robert is the founder of LEAPS, an environmental consulting service that conducts research to provide natural area interpretation and management techniques to parks and natural areas. He is also a member and instructor for the Tennessee Naturalist Program.

STRATEGY MEETINGS: January 20, February 17, and March 17 - Tuesdays at 6:30 P.M. Everyone is welcome at this local issues and business meeting. Meetings are usually held at the Mad Platter Restaurant, 1239 Sixth Ave. North, Nashville 37208 (near the Nashville Farmer’s Market), but there may be times we meet elsewhere. If you are not a regular attendee, please contact Betsy at 668-1977 or garberb@hotmail.com in case the meeting location has changed. Come a bit early because we start the meeting at 6:30. The Mad Platter is not open on Tuesday evenings, so be sure to eat before you come or bring something with you. We look forward to seeing you.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: (contact Betsy at 668-1977 or garberb@hotmail.com)

1. We need someone to assist Joel making changes each month to our web page.

2. Joy would welcome folks to assist her in presentations to elementary school students.

3. We need more hike leaders and assistants.

4. We need more ICO (disadvantaged youth) hike leaders and assistants.

5. We need folks to distribute brochures to libraries, etc.

WATAUGA GROUP (Northeastern TN)

PROGRAM MEETINGS: Every second Tuesday at 7 P.M. Please contact Gloria Griffith at gla4797@earthlink.net or 423-727-4797 for more information.

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So Join the Crowd... and Go Paperless Today!

The Tennes-Sierran
**Virgin Falls**

is formed by an underground

wind along and down into a gorge for about 4

miles before reaching Virgin Falls. There is a

loss of 800 feet in elevation along the way.

Virgin Falls is formed by an underwater

stream that emerges from a sinkhole, runs over

a large flat rock, drops over a 110 foot cliff,

and disappears into a cave at the bottom.

Before reaching Virgin Falls we will pass some

outstanding geologic features – Big Branch

Falls, the Caney Fork Overlook, Big Laurel

Falls, and Sheep Cave. This trail has steep

sections, and is rated moderate to difficult, requir-

ing about 6-7 hours to complete. Virgin Falls

was the first Pocket Wilderness Area estab-

lished by Bowerator Southern Paper Corporation

in 1970. It was purchased by the State

of Tennessee in 1996. Rated moderate. The

driving distance from West Knoxville is about 85-

90 miles. Pre-register with BJ and Bob Perlak:

perlak@aol.com; 229-5027.

**January 17 (Sat) Basic First Aid & Outings**

Leader Training: 8:30 to 4 P.M. You will start

the day earning your basic first aid certification,

enjoy lunch, and then complete Outings training

for Sierra Club leaders. You will leave at the end

of the day ready to plan your first outing – be it

an afternoon walk, a day hike, canoe trip, water

sampling trip, camp out, wild flower hunting,

whatever! Cost is $30 members, $45 non-mem-

bers. We’ll reimburse you after you have led 2

outings! Open to the public! To Register

Contact Barbara Kelly at

bktrivers@gmail.com or call 423-718-5009 for
details.

**January 18 (Sun) TN Sandhill Crane Festival,**

Birchwood. We’ll meet at 8:30 A.M. in

Chattanooga, then carpool out to the Birchwood

Community Center to catch the shuttle buses to

the Hiwassee Refuge to view the thousands of

cranes that migrate through or spend the winter

on and around the Hiwassee Refuge. Bring

binoculars, a sack lunch and water. Dress for

the weather! In addition to the sandhill cranes, we’ll

see endangered whooping cranes, bald and
golden eagles and other native wildlife at the

refuge, and check out the special programs for

the Festival at the community center. For more

information, and to register, contact Contact

Barbara Kelly at bktrivers@gmail.com or 423-

718-5009 for details.

**Cherokee News**

**Please Like Us**

on Facebook -- our Organization Page:

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Join our MeetUp --Green Events-- Group:

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Keep those e-mail addresses coming so you

will get our E-News: send your e-mail address

to Alice at demetreon1981@gmail.com

**Chickasaw News**

**Please Like Us**

on Facebook -- our Organization Page:

https://www.facebook.com/ChickasawGroup

http://www.facebook.com/ChickasawGroup/

**Harvey Broome Group (Knoxville)**

10 January (Sat). Dayhike, Virgin Falls

State Natural Area. The Virgin Falls trail

winds along and down into a gorge for about 4

miles before reaching Virgin Falls. There is a

loss of 800 feet in elevation along the way.

Virgin Falls is formed by an underwater

Ten Essentials for Hiking

Sierra Club outings offer a variety of

wilderness and near-wilderness expe-

riences. It is important to realize that while all

trails are guided by a leader, it is ulti-

mately the responsibility of the individual to

operate in a safe manner. To this end,

the following is a list of essential items

which should be modified according to

the particular type of outing. These are:

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

bring!

**January 17 – Peeler Park hike** – Join us for this hike to one of the newer Nashville parks.

This will also serve as a training session for our

hike leaders and assistants, but all are welcome. (We would love to have more hike leaders and

assistants by the way.) You will be required to sign a waiver to participate in this outing. Register with Joy at joy.mayfield@comcast.net. (put “sierra club hike” in the subject line).

**January 18 – Tuckers Gap hike** – Join us for this to one of the newer Nashville parks.

This will also serve as a training session for our

hike leaders and assistants, but all are welcome. (We would love to have more hike leaders and

assistants by the way.) You will be required to sign a waiver to participate in this outing. Register with Joy at joy.mayfield@comcast.net. (put “sierra club hike” in the subject line).

**February & March Outings** – We have an active outings schedule and want you to come along! Many times our outings are planned too late to be included in this newsletter. To check out our outings, please click on the outing of choice at http://www.meetup.com/Middle-

Tennessee-Sierra Club-Outings-and-Adventures/events/calendar/

**OUTINGS LEADER NEEDED**

We need YOU as an outings leader! All you need to do is to become a certified out-

nings leader for the Middle Tennessee Sierra Club:

— Complete the on-line OLT 101 course (available on Clubhouse) and take the self-

assessment quiz at the end

— Have a current Red Cross Basic First Aid

certification (we reimburse after you have led 3 outings)

— Assist or co-lead 3 provisional hikes with a certified outings leader before leading an out-

ing solo.

**THAT’S ALL THERE IS TO IT! IF YOU**

**EVER CONSIDERED BECOMING AN OUT-

TINGS LEADER, NOW IS THE TIME TO DO IT**

Outings Chair: Craig Jervis

(cmjervis@comcast.net or 615-400-4309)

Outings leader: Joy Mayfield (joy.mayfield@comcast.net or 615-851-1192)

From The Rev. Stephen Phelps and Stephanie Low, 11/27/2014

While the country contemplates how the midterm results will impact policies, one thing has n't changed: the administration and some members of Congress are still pushing for a new trade deal that makes the North American Free Trade Agreement look puny. This agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, includes the U.S. and other Pacific Rim countries comprising 40 percent of global trade. Negotiating countries include Mexico, Canada, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Chile, Malaysia, Peru and New Zealand. It's provisions could destroy jobs at home, undermine national sovereignty and threaten clean air and water everywhere.

Twenty years ago, NAFTA promised American jobs and economic prosperity by opening trade with Canada and Mexico. We didn't get the jobs, but we sure did get problems. According to Public Citizen's Economic Policy Institute, NAFTA outsourced jobs from all 50 states. Approximately 46,200 were lost in New York alone. Moreover, U.S., Canada and Mexico increased manufacturing that polluted water, land and air in all three countries. To top it off, NAFTA created foreign tribunals where corporations can challenge the environmental and public safety laws of any member nation. Headed by just three private sector lawyers, the tribunals have no obligation to disclose the full terms of their decisions, and their decisions allow no appeal.

In a current suit before a NAFTA tribunal, an American fracking company is suing Canada to challenge Quebec's moratorium on fracking. If Canada loses the case, its taxpayers will be on the hook for a fine of $230 million. Public Citizen reports, "In the first seven years of NAFTA . . . an astonishing $1.7 billion [was] claimed by corporations in their initial filings," and more than 85 percent of the $3 billion already awarded involves laws suit against national resource, energy and environmental policy. This is outrageous. The past 20 years have seen more than enough damage. We cannot and will not stand for more.

But now Congress is considering a "fast track" bill that would allow the TPP to be pushed through to easy passage. Under "fast tracking," Congress abandons its own oversight of trade agreements and renders itself unable to change a single word of the TPP or any other trade agreement. Fast-tracking would undermine the system of checks and balances that the Constitution put in place to prevent one branch of government from grabbing too big a share of power. The voice of the elected congressional representatives of the people would be silenced.

By tracking the TPP would put our jobs up against those in countries such as Vietnam, where workers make a shocking $2.23 a day. It would expand Big Pharma's monopoly protections, trading away low-cost access to medicines. It would mean transnational corporations could sue the U.S. and challenge nearly any law they claim cuts into their "future expected profits." Laws protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food on our dinner tables and our very health would be threatened.

These provisions are so clearly bad for the U.S. that the most recent attempt to pass a fast track bill was dead on arrival when introduced in Congress last January. Nonetheless, it's likely that a new fast-track proposal will be introduced in the next few months. Early this month, TPP trade ministers from all member nations met in Beijing in an effort to move negotiations closer to a conclusion. That will bring pressure on Congress to facilitate the TPP by passing this legislation quickly.

Trade can be of real benefit if it is done responsibly. But leaks from TPP texts show that the TPP will take us in the wrong direction and send the profits to the very corporations that helped write the texts, not to workers or communities.

Rep. Charles Rangel, we hope you, along with the whole New York congressional delegation, will join us in the fight for our jobs, our wages, our environment, our food and our health. We have elected you year after year because you have continually fought to protect us. We call on you now to protect us once more to publicly oppose any fast track bill, just as you did by rejecting the previous measure. We call on you to do it again, congress man. Do it for the sake of your own great legacy and for the sovereignty of our beloved country.

The Rev. Stephen Phelps is a former interim sen- tor minister at Riverside Church and Stephanie Low is chair of both the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter TPP Task Force and the NYC TPP Task Force.

Summit for a Nuclear Free Future

By Steven Sondheim

If someone gave you a bag with $6 billion in it, and you wanted to reduce or avoid carbon emissions from electricity generation, how would you spend it? Here's a radical idea: Transfer the money planned for new nuclear to renewables. TVA says they get so much electricity from nuclear that they don't need renewables or efficiency. We say, "Why don't you look at it the other way? If you ramp up efficiency and renewable sources, you can get three to five times the carbon avoidance for the same money with energy efficient and renewable energy as we can with nuclear.

Spending money on nuclear energy robs us of a clean energy future. Susan Corbett, team leader of the Sierra Club's Nuclear Free Campaign, has been a leader in anti nuclear activism since the 1970's. Growing up in South Carolina, the state with the highest depend- encce on nuclear energy in the U.S., she was drawn into the anti-nuclear movement when a nuclear plant was built ten miles from her childhood home.

This past weekend, Corbett, myself, and Don Safer (Tennessee Sierra's Nuclear Chair) joined almost 100 other leaders in the anti-nuclear move- ment, representing many concerned Sierra Chapters, over 30 U.S. states, Canada and Japan, for The Summit for a Nuclear Free Future in our nation's capital. The Sierra Club's Nuclear Free Campaign was there in force, along with the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Beyond Nuclear, Nuclear Energy Information Service, Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, Uranium Watch, Southwest Research and Information Center, the Information Network for Responsible Mining, Earthworks, San Obispo Mothers for Peace and many others.

These activists discussed transitioning off of nuclear power, dealing properly with radioactive waste, fighting nuclear industry attacks on clean energy, and getting to a nuclear-free and carbon-free future.

Nuclear power is not a viable option to lessen our dependence on coal and natural gas. Corbett notes that "without government subsidies and sup- port for nuclear, it would be too expensive. Nuclear energy "would be priced out of the market without the government propping up the nuclear industry."

Nuclear energy is already "risky as an energy source" — with a poor track record made worse by the recent Fukushima disaster.

Nuclear energy production creates a host of other problems, like radiation and toxic waste, which are harmful to our environment, our wildlife, and our families. "We can barely keep a trash container from leaking for 50 years," said Corbett. "Byproducts can't be safely isolated for 10,000+ years."

The activists at the Summit for a Nuclear Free Future are driven by the belief that nuclear energy's hazardous pollution far outweighs any benefits — and that's the message they took to Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on two lobby days following their conference.

Members of the Navajo tribe took up the issue of nuclear energy on Native American lands including the Yucca Mountain Waste Repository and uranium mines. Others told the EPA that a proposed increase in what is deemed "acceptable" doses of radiation should be scrapped. "There is no accept- able level of radiation," notes Corbett. "It is harm- ful to everyone at any level."

The lobbying push is more important than ever. With a new Congress taking power in January, fears are rising that the House and Senate will attempt to kick start the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository and fail to clean up nearly 10,000 uranium mines on Native American lands.

Corbett said that's why the planning that hap- pened at The Summit for a Nuclear Free Future is so important. Anti-nuclear activists like Corbett and many others are engaged and ready to fight -- armed with the hope for a clean energy future free of dangerous, expensive nuclear energy.

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Checkout/Join Sierra Club's effort: facebook.com/NuclearFreeCampaign Other sources: beyondnuclear.org or nirs.org Sierra Magazine's A Cleaner South sierrclub.org/sierra/2014-6-november-december/feature/cleaner-south
Who’s Minding the Store?
Observations from a Fledgling Environmentalist

By April Bryant

Why is it that we can no longer depend on our state and federal agencies to protect our environment? Isn’t that why they exist? Isn’t that why we pay them with our hard-earned taxes? Why would we continue to pay them if we have to protect our own environment, ourselves? Are we going this alone?

A year ago I would have never said I was an environmentalist. Sure, I’ve always been a nature lover and appreciated the natural beauty of the world, but I don’t think I would have classified myself to that degree. All of the sudden, almost overnight, I have become a staunch defender of the environment. Why, you ask? What caused this overnight metamorphosis? The answer is that the environment I need to defend is my back yard and when I say back yard that is not a euphemism. I literally mean my own back yard.

Our family farm sits on the banks of the Nolichucky River. It is where I grew up, under the shadow of Bird’s Hill, a locally famous, huge rock-cliff on the opposite side of the river, playing in the water where 200 years of family generations have done the same. This farm has been handed down since shortly after the Revolutionary War when Joseph Conway, who served with George Washington at Valley Forge, acquired it via a land grant. Am I emotional and sentimental about this land? You bet!

So when I found out that an explosives company wanted to put in pipelines to take water out of and dump wastewater back into the river, my river, I was terrified and angry! I can’t tell you if I was more terrified or angry because those feelings alternated (still do) regularly. Even more disturbing is that we were not notified by anything other than a very small public notice sign, a short 30 days before this was to be approved by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). And just like that, I became an environmentalist!

The reason why this company wants unfettered access to the Nolichucky River? Because it would cost too much for them to get water from the local utility company and to pay for sewer usage. Really? Is this a valid reason? How is this OK?

It wasn’t just me, either. Friends and neighbors became environmentalists, too. There’s nothing like being a newbie at fighting and getting thrown in the ring with Goliath. Learn on the fly? Oh yes! When it’s your children’s drinking water you become very passionate. I received some wonderful advice from a friend, one of the main points being to “get big” and be quick about it. I created a Facebook page and shared it to everyone I knew and on all the environmental group’s pages I could find, asking for help. The Sierra Club was a Godsend in helping us get rolling and giving us advice on what to do next that would be most effective. I became a member. Look at me, an active member of the Sierra Club, who would have thought?

A few of us met and organized a rally, several, in fact. We handed out fliers and information sheets. We wrote letters and went person to person and had them sign a petition and write comment letters against this atrocity and submitted them to TDEC. Our small group was turning into hundreds of supporters.

What happened next? We submitted over 500 letters and over 4,800 signatures and well, TDEC eventually gave them their permits anyway, just a couple of days after they received the letters that they were, by law, required to read and consider. We found out they must be speed-readers and super fast at considering. Does this show what they are claiming they do? Does it illustrate the reason for their existence?

From their webpage:
TDEC exists to enhance the quality of life for citizens of Tennessee and to be stewards of our natural environment.

Pardon me, but I’m not feeling it. Drinking chemicals is not an enhancement to my quality of life, unless, of course, it would transform me into some sort of super-hero Nor does dumping chemicals on the endangered mussels, only found in one other river any-where on the planet, seem to be an example of good stewardship of the natural environment. Does it?

What now? We load our sling shot again and seek legal advice on filing an appeal. An appeal. An appeal paid for by everyday people who don’t have vast resources. An appeal filed against a government agency that -- wait for it -- is going to use our very own tax dol-lars to fight us back. Wait. What? That’s right. We are funding both sides. There’s something inherently wrong about that, isn’t there?

Ansel Adams, the great nature photographer, once said, “It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.” He was on target with that statement. I will attest, first hand, that it is indeed horrifying. They have vast reserves of our money to spend.

During this discussion of appeal, we (continued on page 8)
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received some excellent news. The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) had denied their permit to use the state right-of-way (ROW) to run their pipeline.

Their decision read in part:
Upon examination of the application documents, it appears that the proposed pipelines would be for the private use of US Nitrogen, LLC only and would not provide any public services to the general community.

We were elated! Finally a state agency had looked at the laws and honestly evaluated the information. The company started negotiations with the local utility company and the local utility went out of their way to accommodate them. Ah, all was well with the world and we could rest easy from our protective stance of guarding our treasured Nolichucky.

Not so fast! Seems the negotiations were only a ruse to buy time, to get those of us fighting the pipelines, off their backs, all the while getting advice from TDOT officials themselves about how to skirt the law. Wait. What? TDOT, those wonderful folks who had done their appointed job and evaluated the situation, granted their second request for a permit to use the ROW. The only change was that the county Industrial Development Board (IDB) would own the pipelines and transfer them to the company and that other companies could use the pipelines. TDOT told them no new plans or specifications were needed. Where do TDOT officials paychecks come from? Are activities like conferring with companies about finding a way around a state law really what their job entails?

This development was even worse! The IDB could now open the door for other companies to take water from and dump into the Nolichucky. Here again, the county officials, paid by tax dollars, being bombarded by their citizens to stop this since the plant first came to the county under seemingly questionable practices from the very beginning, are letting those same citizens down. Even went so far as to have a citizen arrested for asking them to speak loud enough so the audience could hear at the reapplication meeting. Why are we paying these guys? Are we paying their salaries to enable them to above pollution down our throats and have us arrested if we don’t agree? What country are we in? I think I may have accidentally wandered into North Korea. Can someone bring me back to the America I thought I lived in?

We just received word that Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Army Corps of Engineers have now signed off on the final permits for the pipelines. Those pipelines are “essential” because a company refuses to pay for water and sewer. It’s astounding, isn’t it?

Now, here we are at the legal phase, spending hard earned money fighting agencies that are funded by taxpayers. Four lawsuits have been filed in this matter and thousands of citizens are outraged, and as well they should be. Who’s minding the store here?

This company is bad for the environment and has bullied their way into the community. They originally came here saying they would help the community and that they would be using “an estimated $1 million annually in water” and “…buy its water from the Town of Mosheim, which in turn purchases its water from the Greenville Water Department.” This would have reduced water bills for those using the same utility. That was a blatant lie to the community. How can we possibly trust them now?

Our politicians, aside from one faithful State Representative, have been noticeably absent and non-responsive. Don’t we pay them, too? Wow, we sure do pay a lot of people who are supposed to represent us, don’t we? Why am I having to fundraise for legal fees? I’d like a refund of my tax money.

Upon examination of the application documents, it appears that the proposed pipelines would be for the private use of US Nitrogen, LLC only and would not provide any public services to the general community. The company started negotiations with the local utility company and the local utility went out of their way to accommodate them. Ah, all was well with the world and we could rest easy from our protective stance of guarding our treasured Nolichucky.

Our politicians, aside from one faithful State Representative, have been noticeably absent and non-responsive. We need to take a long, hard look at who we are paying and why. For more information, or to help keep the Nolichucky clean, please visit www.SaveTheNolichucky.org or visit the Save the Nolichucky Facebook page.


It’s certainly been an eye opening experience for me and I know for a lot of others, as well. I knew there were issues where bureaucracies were involved, but I had no idea just how bad it really was. Corruption of people seems to be as big of an environmental issue as corruption of our environment itself.

So, maybe the term environmentalist doesn’t mean what I thought it did. Maybe just caring about the water you drink and the air you breathe, where your children play, and the health of your family and friends doesn’t make you an environmentalist with the tree-hugger connotation, maybe it just makes you a responsible citizen of your community.

We pay these agencies to uphold the laws and we should be able to trust them to keep us safe and not be pawns in political games, to be immune to politics completely. I’m sure the mussels in the river are neither Republican or Democrat and that they couldn’t care less who is; only that they not die of exposure to chemicals, and endangered mollusks should be a bi-partisan issue, bivalve bi-partisan?

Nearly every day I see these same things happening to people all over our country and more and more citizens are having to stand their own ground. We need, and we should have the support of these agencies or they should be disbanded or reorganized, as they are only a waste of taxpayer money if they are not doing their jobs. We become the victims twice if we have to pay to keep them running and then have to fight our own battles with our own money.

We need to take a long, hard look at who we are paying and why. For more information, or to help keep the Nolichucky clean, please visit www.SaveTheNolichucky.org or visit the Save the Nolichucky Facebook page.

Jones, Rich. "US Nitrogen Breaks Ground For $220-