Realizing A 100% Clean Energy Future: Transforming the TVA From A Dirty Energy Provider to A Clean Energy Provider

Chris Ann Lunghino
Tennessee Organizing Representative
Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign (714.369.9280 - please feel free to call with questions or ideas)

I’m back to work with the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign (BCC) in Tennessee and we have an exciting year ahead of us! I am thrilled to be a part of the BCC team because the Sierra Club’s breadth and depth of membership and staff capacities offer the opportunity to have a huge impact on the health of our planet and our children’s future. I am confident that we can transform the Tennessee Valley Authority from a polluting fossil fuel- and nuclear-based power provider to a clean, wind, solar, and energy efficiency power provider. We can create a 100% clean energy reality.

Read on to learn about the key Tennessee BCC goals for this year, how you can help achieve them, and our key tactics for to achieving them.

Key 2014 Tennessee BCC Goals
• More power produced from solar and wind and more coal plant closings in TVA's long-term strategic plan – what they call their Integrated Resource Plan. As you may already know, last November, TVA announced major coal plant retirements - over 3000 megawatts, enough to power about three million average homes.
• A 1% annual energy efficiency target in TVA's long-term strategic plan so that we achieve a 10% energy savings by 2023.
• Widespread public support for strong and just climate pollution rules from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The climate pollution rules will put a cost to carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants and lead to more coal plant closings.
• Increased public belief in the reality of a 100% clean energy future. We want candidates for office in 2016 to be able to speak with confidence about the viability of a 100% clean energy future.
• Increased diversity and inclusiveness in the Sierra Club and the BCC.

How You Can Help Achieve the Goals
email me at chris.brune@sierraclub.org for details and to sign up.
1. Join a team to organize and deliver the Climate Festival in your city (details below)
2. Phone bank to recruit volunteers (from the comfort of your own home)
3. Do data entry
4. Be available to sign a letter to the editor or an op-ed
5. Attend TVA Board Meetings and participate in other relevant community forums (opportunities and dates to be announced)
6. Send an email to TVA Board members telling them you want increased investment in energy efficiency and renewable power sources and why – include your personal story: board@tva.gov
7. Create your two-minute powerful personal story to engage others in the energy transformation effort and build Sierra Club membership. Share your story with three people a month.
8. Your story should tell why you are concerned about climate change (e.g., kids’ future, saw devastation of Hurricane Sandy)
9. Why you take action with the Sierra Club (e.g., participating in Sierra Club has a big impact because we’re well organized, have a huge passionate membership, and are well funded; we can make TVA a clean energy power provider)
10. What one thing the person you are talking to can do to make a difference (e.g., share email addresses so that we can let them know when there’s something happening locally)

Key Tactics for Achieving the Goals
• Building climate coalitions of diverse partner organizations in Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Nashville to promote the EPA carbon pollution rules and an environmental justice policy and to hold large Climate Festivals in each city. A Climate Festival will promote a 100% clean energy vision, strong and just EPA carbon pollution rules, the environmental justice policy, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. We hope to include headline music, headline climate speakers, politicians, faith leaders, business leaders, academic/science speakers, renewable energy displays, energy efficiency displays, and sustainable food trucks, among other wonderful things.
• Keeping up a strong drumbeat in the media, through editorial board meetings, op-eds, and letters to the editor, highlighting TVA opportunities for increased investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy power sources and supporting the EPA carbon pollution regulations.
• Consistent presence at and participation in TVA meetings and other relevant community forums, including local power companies, to highlight TVA opportunities for increased investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy power sources and supporting the EPA carbon pollution regulations.

Protecting Those Who Protected Us

From the blog of executive director Michael Brune: February 5, 2014

It's not hard to understand why the Sierra Club has had a long and proud relationship with the men and women who serve our country in the armed services, as our history shows, a passion for exploring and enjoying the outdoors is a natural complement of both the skills and the spirit of the military.

After all, it was our first executive director, David Brower, who used his mountaineering and outdoors skills to help found the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division during World War II, a unit that has since distinguished itself from the Dolomites of Italy to the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan. Brower isn’t an isolated example -- thousands of veterans are Sierra Club members and supporters. That’s because their commitment to protecting our country doesn’t stop when they take off their uniforms. And their sense of duty extends from protecting our freedoms overseas to protecting our air, water, and natural legacy here at home.

So it’s more important than ever that those who have sacrificed for our nation be given every opportunity to succeed here at home and receive every benefit they have earned. Incredibly, though, not everyone in Congress or in Washington, D.C., seems to agree. In fact, the recent omnibus budget bill would deliver harsh cuts to veteran’s benefits.

That would be a slap in the face to all of the men and women who have put their lives on the line on our behalf. No veteran should receive anything less than every benefit to which he or she is entitled. That is the least we can do for those who fought to preserve our democracy.

That’s why the Sierra Club is standing shoulder to shoulder with our partners, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and Blue Star Families, as well as with veterans, active duty service members, and their families nationwide, in opposing any cuts to veterans’ pensions or benefits.

Our nation’s budget should not be balanced on the backs of those who have fought to protect it. If we care about raising our voices to protect our nation’s clean air, clean water, and wild places, we must stand with those who have sacrificed to ensure we have a strong nation. This is not an ideological issue or a partisan issue. It’s common sense.

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Subscribing simply by going to

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What one thing the person you are talking to can do to make a difference (e.g., share email addresses so that we can let them know when there’s something happening locally)
ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
Submission Target Date is March 25 for the May-June issue.
1. E-mail and e-mail attached files are preferred. Send to gvanhorn26@gmail.com or either embedded text messages or attached files. Attached files are preferred. Word is preferred but Apple users may send articles in Pages.
2. Photographs should be scanned in as JPEG or TIFF file format then either attached to e-mail or mailed via U.S. Postal Service on a 3 1/2” diskette or CD-ROM. Please format then either attached to e-mail or mailed via U.S. Postal Service.
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.

Winter Retreat Recipes
At the Winter Retreat there was fun, there was training, there was even music and dancing! And there was great food, thank YOU Alice Demetreon.

Alice has contributed 2 of her recipes, downsized for families:

**Pumpkin Apple Muffins**
Ingredients:
- 2 1/2 Cups All-Purpose Flour
- 2 Cups Sugar
- 1 Tbsp Pumpkin Pie Spice
- 1 tsp Baking Soda
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 2 Eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 Canned Pumpkin
- 1 Cup Vegetable Oil
- 1 Cup Chopped Apples

Combine all dry ingredients and mix wet ingredients. Bake at 400 degrees, approx. 20-35 minutes or until done.

Ingredients:
- 1 lb. brown sugar
- 1 lb. bacon (cut up)

Place in crock pot with:
- 1-2 cups brown sugar (start with 1 cup, add more according to taste)
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1-2 cups brown sugar
- 1 lb. hamburger
- 1 lb. bacon
- 1 jar salsa (approx. 16 oz.)
- 1 can butter beans (drained)
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1-2 cups brown sugar

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- 1-2 cups brown sugar

**Western Beans**
Ingredients:
- 1 can butter beans (drained)
- 1 lb. bacon
- 1 jar salsa (approx. 16 oz.)

Simmer on either low or high – tastes best minimum of 2 hours, like chili, it’s better the longer it simmers.
TVA should keep investing funds in renewable energy, skip natural gas

Mary Anne (Peine) Hitt
November 2013

At its November 14 board meeting in Oxford, Mississippi, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Board of Directors voted to retire units at three of its coal-burning power plants: the Colbert and Widows Creek plants in Alabama and the Paradise plant in Kentucky. As a life-long environmental advocate who grew up in the Smoky Mountains and graduated from the University of Tennessee, I want to take a moment to celebrate this big announcement and talk about what it means for the people of the Tennessee Valley who have been working for years for cleaner air and a healthier environment.

First and foremost, this announcement confirms that TVA is coming to the same conclusion as utilities around the nation – coal is a dirty and increasingly expensive way to produce electricity. That’s especially hard to justify as we all pay the price for coal pollution, from climate change to the Kingston coal ash spill, while clean energy like wind and solar power can now compete head-to-head with coal in the marketplace.

Across the country, the coal industry is facing unprecedented setbacks. The cost of coal continues to rise as its share of electricity generation plummets, and TVA’s announcement signals that the utility sees the handwriting on the wall. The Board’s decision will protect public health by creating a cleaner environment.

The better solution for TVA is to invest in energy efficiency and renewable technologies, which are rapidly scaling up. Electricity generation from wind power has more than doubled in the U.S. over the past four years, and solar power has increased by a factor of five. Both technologies are meeting the electricity demands of communities across the country, and they can do the same in the Tennessee Valley.

TVA’s CEO and Board have a track record of taking economic development seriously, and the utility should continue to work to find ways to provide a just and responsible transition for workers and communities affected by the coal plant retirements. There are numerous examples from around the country where coal plants have retired with adequate provisions made for transition of the workforce, and the same can and should happen here.

I applaud TVA’s decision to move away from coal, and I’m thankful to President and CEO Bill Johnson for his leadership. A commitment to deepen TVA’s investment in renewable energy and improve the energy efficiency of homes, business, and industries in the Tennessee Valley is the quickest way to achieve long-term energy savings, protect public health, and do the right thing for the planet and the people of the Valley.

Mary Anne (Peine) Hitt is director of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign, which is working to eliminate coal’s contribution to climate disruption and repower the nation with clean energy. She received the 2008 Notable UT Woman Award from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, where she was a Whittle Scholar and founder of Students Promoting Environmental Action in Knoxville (SPEAK).

Spring Chapter Meeting

May 2 - 4, 2014
Fall Creek Falls State Park

Arrival Time will be after 2:00 P.M. May 2 and departure time will be 12:00 Noon on Sunday May 4. We have reserved Group Lodge No. 2.

The following prices will prevail:

- All three Days $40
- Saturday only Breakfast and Dinner $25
- Sunday Breakfast only $10
- Children 15 yrs. and younger free
- First-Timers get 1/2 off

- Please also send an e-mail confirming registration to Robin Hill (robin.hill18@gmail.com), so that we can count heads for meals. Be sure to specify vegetarian or omnivore (meat eater) preferences.
- Payment will be accepted when you check in at the Group Lodge.
- Scholarships are available; contact Barbara Kelly, 423-718-5009 or bk11rives@gmail.com
- We will serve a continental Breakfast on Saturday morning and a full evening meal on Saturday May 3 and a hot breakfast on Sunday morning May 4. Lunch will not be served on Saturday May 3 or Sunday May 4.
- There will be a hikes available with a leader on Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning. Wildflowers should be present in abundance on both days.
- The Program after the evening meal on Saturday will feature the work of the Southern Environmental Law Center(SELC). Our Chapter Conservation Chair Axel Ringe arranged this program. The SELC organization is Southeast-wide with offices in Asheville, Nashville, Atlanta and Birmingham. Our Chapter often partners with SELC for projects in East and Middle Tennessee and for review and comment on proposed legislation and proposed changes in regulations by State of Tennessee regulatory organizations.
The public is very welcome at ALL Sierra Club Meetings and Activities! All members traveling across the state should feel free to drop in at any Group’s meeting. You will find yourself among friends and learning something interesting.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga) – 2014: Learn Globally, Then Act Locally

Act: DIY Solar Panel Workshop, March 1 (Sat) by Davis Moonger. This will be from 10:00-12:30 at Chattanooga School Of Arts & Sciences, 200 River Street. Please come to the cafe across the street from the parking lot, across the street from the church, next to the old Blue Cross (orange) building. All members of the Group and interested people are welcome – this is where and when we plan our actions! Come add your ideas and share your concerns. To place an item on the agenda, contact Barbara Kelly at bk1rivers@gmail.com or 423. 718. 5009.

The public is very welcome at ALL Sierra Club meetings.  You are welcome to come or bring something with you.  We look forward to meeting you!  If you are not a regular attendee or meeting place, contact Barbara Kelly at bk1rivers@gmail.com.

Harvey Broome Group (Knoxville): March 11, 7:00 P.M., Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, Knoxville: Preview of Harvey Broome Group 2014 Outings Program Ron Shrievets, Harvey Broome Group, Sierra Club, Outings Coordinator. The annual outings program provides a preview of the HBG’s outings program for 2014 and a slideshow from past outings. Included in this year’s program are: 40.5 mile hike, 22-day hikes, 4 canoe/kayak day trips, and 1 snorkeling adventure. This year we will again offer the HBG “20-Mile Hike.” We will be discussing the dangers of day hikes and what you can do to 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 40.5 miles of the Smokies. Please bring your own lunch. Checkout time is 6:30 PM, rain or shine. Meet at the front of the church. For more information about this program, contact Davis Moonger at 423. 868. 5009 or dm10055001@gmail.com.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville): PROGRAM: March 13, 7:00 p.m. at Radnor Lake Visitor Center (always enter from Granny White Pike) – America’s National Parks, Forests, and Wildlife Heritage: Mack Prichard narrates a program on the roots of American conservation from the gospel of Thoreau, Muir, both Presidents Roosevelt, and later day saints and sinners. Also highlighted will be the value of volunteer efforts to shape our governmental agencies to respond to increasing “population, technology and greed” Midwest to East Coast. Mack has written and published about 30 Tennessee coalitions, including our Sierra Club Chapter. Through “benefevol manipulation” he helped save over 300 historic sites, including Radnor Lake and Savage Gulf. If you enjoyed Ken Burns’ recent videography of “The National Parks – America’s Best Idea,” you’ll like Mack’s version, peppered with quotations and his stories’ behind the scenery.” For many years Mack’s program was voted the best of university recreation consortiums at Camp Tremont in the Smokies because he used Forbes’s maxim, “The truth doesn’t hurt, unless it ought to. We hope to see you at this special program.

Please note that because of a family health issue, Mack Prichard MAY not be able to present on March 13. If this happens, we will find someone to fill in, and Mack will be here later in year. If you would like to be notified of the program, please either sign up for the monthly e-newsletter, contact Adelle Wood at adelaintn@juno.com, or go to http://www.facebook.com/Chickasaw.Group/ for meeting information.

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The Energy Watchers will have a practical how-to to cut your energy costs! Act: Build Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop in April 26, 12 noon, at Outdoor Chattanooga. Get ready to catch your own rain water! Co-sponsored by the Master Gardeners, we’ll have details and sign-ups at the meeting and later on-line. Charge for the materials is $35; you will need to transport your barrel home that day. Watch our Facebook Page (Cherokee Sierra) for more details, and catch our E-News.

The public is very welcome and healthy snacks are served. Bring something along to share if you like. Parking is free in the driveway and parking lot behind the building, or paid parking is available across from the theater lot. Invite your friends!

Program: 4th Monday, April 28, 7:00 P.M. at Outdoor Chattanooga, Coolidge Park, 200 River Street, Chattanooga.

Learn: Edible Landscaping. In his presentation on Edible Landscaping, John Evans will offer ideas and practical tips for integrating edible plants into the home landscaping. Learn how to make your own yard nutritious and delicious as well as aesthetically pleasing.

John is a skilled botanist and plant ecologist who has been formally designing and planting native plant communities of eastern Tennessee since 2002. His research includes identifying the pollinators of native orchids in the Smoky Mountains, studying the characteristics of invasive exotic plants in eastern Tennessee, and documenting the plant species composition of the Sequatchie Valley. He also has a keen interest in organic farming and sustainable agriculture. He has a passion for preserving the native plant species of the eastern United States as well as promoting sustainable practices. Also, the Energy Watchers will have a new how-to tip to cut your energy bill! Act: Wildflower Outing to the Shirley Miller Wildflower Trail, May 10, at the base of Pigeon Mountain just down the road in Georgia. John Evans will be our guide to view spring ephemeral wildflowers. They bloom profusely in early May, then fade quickly from the scene. This trail is bril- liant with native flowers that many people never see to register, and for details of time and meeting place, contact Barbara Kelly, bk1rivers@gmail.com or 423. 718. 5009.

The public is very welcome at ALL Sierra Club meetings. You are welcome to come or bring something with you. We look forward to meeting you! If you want to subscribe to Cherokee Sierra’s monthly E-News? Contact Barbara Kelly at bk1rivers@gmail.com.


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CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

Emry Marr Davis is our Outings Chair, and point-person for outings information for our Group. Our activities are open to the public, and we welcome new members of the Club from across our state! Outings are planned to take in the interests and skill levels of the participants. For more information, contact Emry.marr.davis@gmail.com. Please check our Facebook page, Cherokee Sierra, for the latest on our outings.

May (Sat.) Build Your Own Solar Panel Workshop, presented by Davis Mounger. This will be 10:00-12:30 at Chattanooga School Of Arts & Sciences (CSAS); come to the cafeteria entrance in the back and go to the lobby on the second floor. Our two part solar workshop covers two areas: learning the basics of a grid-tied system and building a stand-alone system. We’ll walk you through the popular Enphase system, where solar panels are tied directly into a breaker box, and a routing system called Envoy logs solar generation and sends it to a website for you to view at any time. We’ll discuss layout, expenses, skills, and the latest in solar tech. The DIY stand-alone workshop will include building a solar panel from the cell up using silicone encapsulation. The discussion then moves to charge controllers, inverters, and battery arrays. For more information, contact Davis at 423. 877. 4616 or wd mounger@yahoo.com

April 26 (Sat) Build Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop, 12 noon, at Outdoor Chattanooga. Charge for materials, $35; you’ll need to transport your barrel home after! Sign-up and further details at our meetings–places go fast. Co-sponsored by the Cherokee Group and the Hamilton Co. Master Gardener Program. Further information contact Alice Demetro, a demetro81981@gmail.com

May 10 (Sat.) May Wildflower Walk on the Shirley Miller Wildflower Trail, at the base of Pigeon Mountain just down the road in Georgia. John Evans will be our guide to view spring ephemeral wildflowers. They bloom profusely in early May and fade quickly from the scene. This trail is brilliant with native flowers that many people never get to see, and has a long section that is fitted with boardwalk for anyone who might have accessibility issues. To register, and for details of time and meeting place, contact Barbara Kelly bk rivers@gmail.com or 423. 718. 5009.

CHICKASAW GROUP (Memphis)

Time and dates of outings are to be determined. Check http://www.facebook.com/Chickasaw.Group/

HARVEY BROOME GROUP (Knoxville)

1 March (Sat). Dayhike, Rich Mtn. Loop Trail, GSNPN. Starting from the Rich Mountain Loop Trailhead on Cades Cove Loop Road (park at Loop entry station, or Cades Campground parking lot if necessary), we will hike up Crooked Arm Ridge Trail, across Indian Gap Trail, then back to the starting point via Rich Mtn. Loop Trail. Good views of the Cove before forest grows, Distance change 8 miles. Rated difficult due to elevation change. One-way drive: 50 miles. Pre-register with Conrad Ottenfeld, col1505@charter.net; 865- 288-6599.

8 March (Sat). Dayhike, Piney Falls and Stinging Fork State Natural Areas, Grandview and Spring City. This dayhike combines a short spectacular waterfall hike – Piney Falls and Stinging Fork. Both hikes are in the Walden Ridge section of the Cumberland Mountains, near Spring City, and are separated by a distance of about 10 miles. Each trail is about 3 miles roundtrip; however, there are some slippery trail sections and some elevation changes. The Piney Falls hike features the 80-foot upper falls with a concave ledge circling behind and around the falls. Below the falls is a large pool that drops over the 40-foot lower Piney Falls. This hike also features gorges, overhangs, and old growth forest. Stinging Fork Falls is a segment of the Cumberland Trail. This hike features the overlook into the Stinging Fork Gorge and the creek cascading over a 35-foot fan-shaped fall into a blue-green pool. This area was one of the original Waterer Pocket Wilderness Area segments. Rated moderate. The drive from west Knoxville is about 50 Miles. Pre-register with BJ and Bob Perlaek: perlaek@aol.com; 229-5027.

15 March (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Knoxville Urban Wilderness, William Hastie Natural Area. 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 folks who do not have any wilderness hiking experience, but would like to try this. 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. Volunteers 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 three-mile walk on a paved path, and have aspirations for advancing to a level where they can hike longer distances with taking up to five-mile hike in the Smoky Mountains. The Urban Wilderness Loop is in South Knoxville. Contact: Mac Post at 865-806-0980 or mpost3116@aol.com

22-23 March (Sat-Sun). Backpack, Virginia Falls Trail, Virgin Falls State Natural Area. We will visit what was formally known as Bowater Corporation's private pocket wilderness on this 9-mile "lollipop" route. Sights include Big Branch Falls, the Caney Fork Overlook, Big Laurel Falls, Sheep Cave and the 110-foot Virgin Falls, who’s stream disappears into a sinkhole at the base of the falls. The trail is rocky and has some steep areas. Rated moderate. The driving distance is about 90 miles each way. For those interested in the Harvey Broome Group, please contact a dayhike, see the Jan-15 outing. Pre-register with Rob Davis at 865-202-6661 or hikinarob@charter.net (email preferred).

5 April (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Biodiversity Tour, Cove Hardware Self-guiding Nature Trail, GSNPN. We will fist stop at the Morton Overlook on the way up US-441 and survey the array of ecosystem types on display on the north-west side of Mount LeConte. We will then proceed to the Chimney Picnic Area 4.4 miles south of Sugarmans Visitor Center on the Newfound Gap Road (US-441) to spend time in an uncovd hardwood forest – the most biodiverse ecosystem in the Smokies. On this 1.5 mile loop that begins at Chimney Picnic Area, we’ll spend time to learn about the structure and dynamics of this forest. Rated easy. One-way drive: 50 miles. Contact Mac Post: 938-3116 mpost3116@aol.com.

6 April (Sun). Dayhike, Eagle Rock Segment of Cumberland Trail (Cove Lake State Park to Lake Talbott). This backpack begins at Lake Talbott. This trail extends from Kentucky to Georgia, and one of the best sections, Eagle Rock, is a short drive from Knoxville. It’s one of the most geologically varied trails in east Tennessee, which we’ll learn about as the trail follows the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. We’ll start hiking at the Bruce Gap Road Trailhead near Cove Lake State Park and finish at the Tank Springs Trailhead near

La Follette. Along the way the wildflowers should be great and there’s a wonderful of rock ranging from a “Great Wall of China” to stone arch and lookouts, with long vistas, and at the south end is the Lifeline Race Track. Total hiking distance is 11.7 miles and rated Moderate. One-way drive: 39 miles. Pre-register with Will Skelton: H 523-2272; Cell 742-7237; skeltonwmounger@yahoo.com

April 12-13 (Sat-Sun). Backpack, Piney River Segment of the Cumberland Trail. This segment of the Cumberland Trail is open to hikers near Spring City. The trail was one of the ten original Bowater Company Pocket Wilderness Areas. It is a linear trail along side Duskin Creek and the Piney River, about 10 or 8.5 miles depending on whether one starts at the Newby Branch or Duskin Creek trailheads. The trail includes a number of interesting features – steel suspension bridge, old homestead, waterfalls, and cascades, and rock houses. The trail is also noted for its wildflowers and at this time of the year they should be incredible. We will begin the backpack at the Duskin Creek parking area, hike downstream, crossing a couple bridges and passing White Pine Cascades and Hemlock Falls, camp near Rockhouse Branch to allow exploration of the old lumper camp and the creek, hike out over a 100-foot suspension bridge, see lots of amazing wildflowers and end the day with a route back to the Piney River trailhead (Shut In Gap Road). Rated moderate. We will do a car shuttle. The driving distance is about 60 miles from west Knoxville. Pre-register with Bob Perlaek: perlaek@aol.com; 229-5027.

19 Apr (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Black Mountain Section, Cumberland Trail. This hike is unique in that it has dramatic overlooks, yet is almost entirely downhill. We begin atop Black Mountain near Crossville, and first follow an easy 1.5- mile loop that provides views of the Appalachian, Cumberland, and Grassy Cove. Then we descend via well graded switchbacks to a junction with a side trail to Windless Cave. The next portion of the trail was just completed in 2013 by Cumberland Trail Conference volunteers, and winds up near our shuttle vehicles on TN-68. Total hiking distance is about 5 miles. Rated easy to moderate. Driving distance: 65 miles. Pre-register with Warren or Carol Devine, 483-7894 or warrendevine@comcast.net.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

March 1, 2014 Hill Spring and Woodlands Shelter: Montgomery Bell State Park. Join State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath for a moderate walk on the MB Trail. He will lead you to the Hall Spring, an impressive water feature, the Woodland Shelter barn country campsite, and perhaps show you the earliest of the spring wildflowers thru nice oak-hickory forest of the Western Highland Rim. Gath at the park office at 10 A.M. where we will organize and carpool to the trail access.
Some Sierra Club Activities, 2004-2013

2004 Club and allies block proposals to allow oil and gas development in Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Club also blocks attempt to lift moratorium on offshore oil leases for California, Florida, and the East Coast.

2005 Club legal victory forces Bush administration to abandon plans for a logging project on the Grand Canyon’s north rim. Club holds first-ever Sierra Summit — a national convention and exposition. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast with major devastation and loss of life. The Sierra Club works with Gulf communities on sustainable restoration. Sierra Club de Puerto Rico works to gain protection for the island’s Northeast Ecological Corridor — nesting ground for the endangered leatherback sea turtle.

2006 Club lawsuit succeeds in protecting Giant Sequoia National Monument from Bush administration plan to allow commercial logging.


2009 Sierra Club successfully advocates for Omnibus Public Land Management Act — protecting more than two million acres of wilderness, three new national parks, and 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers — in largest public-lands conservation effort in 20 years. More than 200,000 kids discover the joy of the natural world through the Sierra Club’s outdoor programs and Water Sentinels program.

2010 The Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign helps retire 80 of the country’s 500 dirty coal-fired power plants and begin replacing them with clean energy. Over the past decade, Sierra Club chapters drive the establishment or expansion of renewable energy mandates in 28 states.

2011 The Sierra Club wins a campaign to preserve one million acres around the Grand Canyon as off-limits to new uranium mining. In addition, the Club achieves the milestone of defeating 150 proposed new coal-fired power plants, and reaches 1.4 million members and supporters.

2013 On February 13, Sierra Club President Allison Chin and Executive Director Michael Brune join dozens of environmental, civil rights, and community leaders across the country for a historic display of civil disobedience at the White House, where they demand that President Obama deny the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline and address the climate crisis. Four days later, the Sierra Club and its allies take to the streets, hosting the largest climate rally in U.S. history at the Washington Monument.
A Note from Keven Routon, Tennessee Chapter Chair

Hello Sierrans,

2013 was an excellent year for our Chapter in many ways. There were many changes as it was the first year for me to serve as Chair. Scott Banbury's first term as Conservation Chair, and first term for Angela Garrone as Vice Chair. Fortunately we had many more experienced folks around to lend advice.

We kicked things off quickly by chartering two buses last February for the Keystone XL Pipeline Rally at the National Mall in DC. The Buses departed Memphis and we filled them up as we traveled across the state.

The Chapter experienced high Treasurer turnover in the early part of last year until Mary Mastin (a former Chapter Treasurer) stepped forward to serve once more as Treasurer for the remainder of the year. While this position may often be overlooked, it is vital to our organization and I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Mary. Perhaps another first for the Chapter was to contract with another former Chapter Treasurer as our bookkeeper. Rachel Floyd provided valuable assistance to Mary and will be of greater assistance to our new Treasurer in 2014, Alice Demetreon. My thanks to Alice for stepping forward this year. I think we have a great team in place and thank you all. We participated in flotillas to attract attention to TVA's use of coal and hosted a well-attended conference to promote awareness of the hazards of Hydraulic Fracturing, better known as "Fracking." We investigated remote gas wells (but didn't visit all 12,000+ sites), and Cross-Ridge coal mining sites (think Mountain Top Removal). We also strengthened our partnership with the Beyond Coal Campaign Staff and participated in the selection of Chris Lunghino, who is the second full-time staff member working for the campaign in our state. Chris, welcome to the team!

While this year is still young, we've already had some firsts. At our January meeting the Executive Committee (ExCom) authorized the first time a staff position. We recently received approval from the National HR Office for a Conservation Program Coordinator. Anticipating the likelihood of this approval, the ExCom voted overwhelmingly to select Scott to serve in this role during the January ExCom meeting. As Scott departs the Conservation Chair position, I cannot think of a better-qualified individual to lead our Conservation Program into the future than Axel Ringe. I was extremely pleased when he accepted this critical position within our Chapter. He and Scott worked very closely last year and I have extremely high expectations for 2014.

Other leadership changes for the year include Charles White serving as Vice Chair and Alternate CCL delegate. Charles recently graduated from MTSU and is among the most likable individuals I've ever met. Charles continues to serve on the Chickasaw Group's ExCom and as I expect great things from Charles, you will undoubtedly be hearing from him often this and coming years. Another first, or at least in recent memory was the extensive training at the January meeting. First we held Red Cross Basic First training at the Chapter Meeting. Phil and Emily Davis, Outings, and Outing Education Chairs provided the training with their son Patrick (our youngest attendee in recent memory). Expect to see additional Outings Leadership training at each of the Chapter meetings in 2014. Please come join us.

Then Christopher Anderson and Lynette King led us out to Middle Point landfill where we trained on the water testing equipment the Chapter recently purchased. Christopher and Lynette are working to revive the Water Sentinels program in our Chapter and acquiring additional test equipment and get members across the state trained to properly use the equipment.

I cannot say enough about our first meeting of the year, the music, the dancing, the diversity of attendees. What a great start to a new year! A big thank you to the Cherokee Group for hosting an incredible event.

There are many more who I did not address by name working hard for us every day, and I thank each of you as well. Please continue to make our world a better place.

In closing, I am sincerely proud of all that we achieved working together this past year and I have expectations of ever more greater accomplishment in this and coming years.

Thank you for making a difference! Keven

Success with Smith Mountain Fire Exclusion

By Davis Mounger

We’re pleased to report that the Forest Service has agreed to exclude some of the proposed multi-burn project that it is proposing in the Ocoee District of the Cherokee National Forest. The project includes Smith Mountain, one of the declining areas in the forest that has been spared the frequent controlled burn regime that the Forest Service began some decades ago. With a third of its budget devoted to fire management, the Forest Service has embraced a theory that Eastern forests have varying degrees of fire dependency in the manner of Western forests. Many in the conservation community are becoming increasingly concerned that this theory is perhaps too broad-based and that its long term application could have deleterious consequences for our forests.

We recently hiked around Smith Mountain with some rangers and discussed the need for some areas to have natural processes occur, both in the interests of biodiversity and so that these areas could act as an ecological baseline against more managed forests. Ocoee District Ranger Michael Wright was receptive to our ideas, so he brought with him Forest Manager Bob Lewis and Fire Manager Stephen Carlson. Because the northeast portion of Smith Mountain is bounded by a road to the east and a permanent stream to the west, the rangers agreed that there would be a greater chance of being able to keep fire out during their controlled burns than in similar areas.

Most of the 250-acre area is either mixed mesophytic, dry mesic oak, or upland dry oak forest. Almost all of it dates from 1912-1925, though their database lists some spots as having possible old growth remnants. We stressed the importance of including some upland/more xeric forest types, since those are the areas the agency focuses on burning, and unburned examples of that habitat are running out in this forest. Fortunately, there are a couple of mixed upland pine/oak stands included, so this parcel has a range of forest communities. There's also plenty of rhododendron thickets that local forest activist Kirk Johnson has pointed out to the agency is one of the reasons that Smith Mountain is prime deer and bear habitat.

Fire issues and fire ecology are not often discussed in forest conservation, but as fire’s effects become more pronounced on the landscape, it is important that we become engaged in this discussion.
Super Typhoon A Wake-Up Call on Clean Energy

By Dan Byrnes, Sierra Club Media Team

Off the charts. Strongest of the season. Super typhoon. These are the descriptors media reports have given to Typhoon Haiyan one of the strongest storms in recorded history, which made landfall in the Philippines on November 8, 2013.

With winds of up to 147 miles per hour, this typhoon might be stronger than any other of its kind to touch land in history. But even worse, the storm brought massive destruction to communities in the Philippines. At least four people were killed, and nearly 720,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes.

Just days after the first anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, which destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes and properties in the northeastern United States, this super typhoon reminds us that increasing erratic weather has indeed become the new norm worldwide.

But we don’t need to keep hearing these wake-up calls. We know what is fueling these superstorms, and there’s something we can do about it. Climate disruption and its associated warmer temperatures are aggravating our weather patterns. Warmer ocean water pumps more energy into tropical storms, making them more intense and potentially more destructive. And warmer temperatures could increase the probability of drought and wildfire.

What can we do to slow these storms and save other communities from threatening blows? The U.S. must lead on global climate action to reduce and ultimately eliminating the number-one cause of climate disruption – carbon pollution.

Progress With Toxic Coal Ash

It’s been over five years since a massive coal ash dump in Tennessee burst through a dam, destroyed dozens of homes, poisoned thousands of fish and other wildlife and flattened 300 acres of riverfront property. Since then, toxic coal ash has continued to contaminate our waters, threaten nearby communities and kill local wildlife.

But just this week, the EPA finally committed to a deadline for protecting citizens from this deadly waste.

This is a huge victory for those of us like you who spent years demanding help from our elected officials. Your voices were heard, and by December of this year, the EPA has promised to act.

When the EPA proposed the first-ever federal safeguards, you told them why it mattered. When some members of Congress tried to block the EPA, you wrote your elected officials and asked them to back off. When communities rallied in Washington, you gave them your support. And when Earthjustice lawyers went to court to force the EPA to set a deadline for these protections, they knew they had your support!

Our fight continues as we push the EPA to set the strongest protections under the law for toxic coal ash. The power industry wants to avoid cleaning up their mess.

This year, let’s continue telling the EPA to set the strongest, federally enforceable safeguards from coal ash. Together, we can protect our waters and our communities from coal ash pollution.

Sincerely,

Jared Saylor, Campaign Director for Earth Justice