



January 17, 2016

Taking Care of Wild Places

<b>1. Obed and Big South Fork: great news! .....</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
A. \$1.2M appropriation received for Obed land acquisition	
B. Obed capsules (documents; programs)	
C. BSFNRRA trail keepers wanted	
<b>2. Ridgeline mining in the Cumberlands .....</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>3. The Tennessee legislature .....</b>	<b>p. 4</b>
A. Legislative Scorecard for 2015	
B. The fate of 2015 bills	
<b>4. Other Tennessee news .....</b>	<b>p. 5</b>
A. Wind farm for Crab Orchard Mountain	
B. Wilderness Act needs 1st-District supporters	
C. TN Wilderness Act is a “clean” bill	
D. POWER+ Plan would aid Abandoned Mine Land reclamation	
E. Land purchases by The Nature Conservancy	
F. National Parks Centennial program in the Smokies	
<b>5. Coal mining on public land is suspended .....</b>	<b>p. 6</b>
<b>6. National news .....</b>	<b>p. 6</b>
A. LWCF has been renewed	
B. Budget deal affects environmental issues	
C. Lifting of the crude-oil-export ban	
D. Extension of wind- and solar-tax credit	
E. New National Monuments and Wilderness	
<b>7. Energy; climate change .....</b>	<b>p. 7</b>
A. Coal mining on public land suspended (see ¶5)	
B. A sweeping deal achieved in Paris	
C. The economic sector (corporations backing the deal; funding clean energy; divestments)	
D. Methane regs should include <u>existing</u> operations	
E. Coal-fired power decreases in SE	
F. Views on wood-derived bioenergy	
<b>8. Oak Ridge: Manhattan Project NHP .....</b>	<b>p. 9</b>
A. Scholars’ Report will provide material for NPS interpretive services	
B. Planning input to be solicited	
C. Contact information	
<b>9. TCWP NEWS (Upcoming &amp; recent activities; Thanks; In the news; Deaths; ED column) .....</b>	<b>p. 9</b>
<b>10. Calendar; Resources ....</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
<b>11. ACTION SUMMARY ...</b>	<b>p. 2</b>

The BIG stories

\$1.2M appropriation for Obed land acquisition ... ¶1A
Ridgeline mining in the Cumberlands may end .... ¶2
LWCF renewed ..... ¶6A
Moratorium on coal mining on public lands ..... ¶5
Sweeping climate deal achieved ..... ¶7B

## 11. ACTION SUMMARY

No.	Issue	Contact	"Message!" or Action
2	Ridgeline mining in Cumberlands	OSMRE, by Jan. 25, 5:00PM	Support Alternative 4, with a modification.
4B	Tennessee Wilderness Act	Sandra Goss	Identify District-1 residents who will support bill.
5	Coal leasing on public lands	Pres. Obama and Sec. Jewell	"Thank you!! I support strong protections for land & climate!"
6E	Designation of Nat'l Monuments	Pres.Obama	"Thank you!! I hope you may designate additional ones also!"
7D	Reigning in methane pollution	EPA Admin. McCarthy	"Please regulate methane from <u>existing</u> sources!"
9	TCWP actions	TCWP	Participate in activities. Volunteer.

Senator John Doe United States Senate Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	The Hon. John Doe U.S. House of Representatives House Office Building Washington, DC 20515	Pres. Barack Obama The White House Washington, DC 20500 202-456-1111 (comments); 456-1414 (switchbd); Fax 456-2461 <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact">www.whitehouse.gov/contact</a>	Governor Bill Haslam State Capitol Nashville, TN 37243-9872 615-741-2001; Fax 615-532-9711 <a href="mailto:bill.haslam@state.tn.us">bill.haslam@state.tn.us</a>
Dear Senator Doe Sincerely yours,	Dear Congressman Doe Sincerely yours,	Dear Mr. President Respectfully yours,	Dear Gov. Haslam Respectfully yours,

Sen. Bob Corker Ph: 202-224-3344; FAX: 202-228-0566 e-mail: <a href="http://corker.senate.gov/public/">http://corker.senate.gov/public/</a> Local: 865-637-4180 (FAX 637-9886) 800 Market St., Suite 121, Knoxville 37902	Sen. Lamar Alexander: Ph: 202-224-4944; FAX: 202-228-3398 e-mail: <a href="http://alexander.senate.gov/public/">http://alexander.senate.gov/public/</a> Local: 865-545-4253 (FAX 545-4252) 800 Market St., Suite 112, Knoxville 37902	Rep. Chuck Fleischmann: Phone: 202-225-3271 FAX: 202-225-3494 Local (O.R.): 865-576-1976 <a href="https://fleischmann.house.gov/contact-me">https://fleischmann.house.gov/contact-me</a>
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To call any Repr. or Senator, dial Congressional switchboard, 202-224-3121. To find out about the status of bills, call 202-225-1772. URLs: <http://www.house.gov/lastname/> and <http://lastname.senate.gov/> General contact info: <http://www.lcv.org> With mail to Congress still slow following the anthrax scare, consider faxing, phoning, and other modes of communication.

**You can find contact information in our Political Guide. It's on TCWP's website (<http://www.tcwp.org>), as are some current action calls.  
You can also choose to receive e-alerts by contacting Sandra Goss (see below).**

### WHAT IS TCWP?

TCWP (Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning) is dedicated to achieving and perpetuating protection of natural lands and waters by means of public ownership, legislation, or cooperation of the private sector. While our first focus is on the Cumberland and Appalachian regions of Tennessee, our efforts may extend to the rest of the state and the nation. TCWP's strength lies in researching information pertinent to an issue, informing and educating our membership and the public, interacting with groups having similar objectives, and working through the legislative, administrative, and judicial branches of government on the federal, state, and local levels.

**TCWP:** 130 Tabor Rd., Oak Ridge, TN 37830

**President:** Jimmy Groton, 865-483-5799 (h)

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**Newsletter editor:** Lee Russell, [lianerussell@comcast.net](mailto:lianerussell@comcast.net)

**TCWP website:** <http://www.tcwp.org>.

## **Our 50th Anniversary year begins**

**There are quite a few items of very good news in this first Newsletter of TCWP's 50th Anniversary year: an appropriation for land acquisition in the Obed WSR, a possible end to ridgeline mining in parts of the Cumberlands, renewal of the Land & Water Conservation Fund, a moratorium on coal mining on federal public lands, and a sweeping climate deal achieved. We hope you'll rejoice with us and take the actions that are needed.**

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### **1. OBED and BIG SOUTH FORK: GREAT NEWS**

#### **1A. \$1.2M appropriation received for Obed land acquisition!**

Our euphoria at the news that Pres. Obama's FY 2016 budget contained land-acquisition funds for the Obed WSR (NL320 ¶1A) was followed a few months later by depression, when the Congress failed to renew the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF, NL324 ¶4A), which would have been the source of such an appropriation. This was particularly galling because, after many dry years, the President's FY 2016 budget had the Obed as No. 2 in priority order of 23 NPS projects.

All is well again, as a result of the budget deal that was forged December 17 to avoid the latest threatened government shutdown (¶6B, this NL). The LWCF was renewed, at least temporarily, and the Obed WSR will receive exactly the amount that was listed in the budget, \$1,204 M (a few projects listed farther down the priority order will receive no funds.)

According to the President's budget, the \$1,204 M should buy 7 tracts, totaling 451 acres. (Future funding needed: \$1,797 M to acquire 583 acres, i.e., the balance of the 1,034 acres still privately owned within the authorized Obed WSR area.)

#### **1B. Obed Capsules**

[From NPS's January e\_Newsletter]

- Park-management documents.

A just completed Obed Foundation Document ([www.nps.gov/obed/learn/management/upload/OBRI\\_OV\\_SP-1-2.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/obed/learn/management/upload/OBRI_OV_SP-1-2.pdf)) gives an overview of the many mandates and guidance documents used to manage the park.

- Upcoming programs (all times are ET)

Preschool Kids Program, Friday mornings, 10:30 AM. Different themes, stories, activities.

Junior Ranger Program, Sat., January 23, 1 PM. Ranger talk on black bears, and working through the Jr. Ranger booklet to get a Ranger badge.

Walk/Talk with a Ranger, Sat., January 30, 1 PM. Meet at the Lilly Bluff Overlook parking lot to head out

for a short walk to the Boulder Field. Well behaved dogs on leash are always welcome.

#### **1C. BSFNRRRA Trail Keepers wanted**

[From NPS's January e\_Newsletter]

There are now 70+ different trails available for adoption. Trail Keepers are expected to hike, bike, or horse-ride their adopted trail at least 4 times during the calendar year, report on overall trail conditions, pick up trash, and submit a trail condition report after each hike. Contact [Effie\\_Houston@nps.gov](mailto:Effie_Houston@nps.gov) to volunteer.

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### **2. RIDGELINE MINING in the CUMBERLANDS – URGENT**

We have only until January 25, 5:00 PM, to comment on this vitally important issue, and it is imperative that we do so.

#### **Background**

In 2010, the State of Tennessee petitioned the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) to designate certain ridgelines and connecting corridors within the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area and Emory River Tract Conservation Easement under the discretionary provisions of Section 522 of SMCRA (the federal stripmine law) as Lands Unsuitable for Mining (LUM). The petition seeks to prevent surface mining within 600 feet on either side of ridgelines (i.e., a 1,200 ft corridor) within the 269 square miles of the two areas (located in Anderson, Morgan, Scott, and Campbell Counties). The state believes that surface coal-mining operations are incompatible with existing state or local land-use plans or programs; and, that they would affect fragile lands, resulting in significant damage to important historic, cultural, scientific, and aesthetic values and natural systems.

On December 10, 2015, OSMRE released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement that puts forth six alternatives (including a no-action alternative). Four hearings, held January 11-14 (before NL 325 went to press), were attended by a number of TCWP members, but the record is still open for written comments until January 25, 5:00 PM. These may be submitted electronically at [http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OSMRE\\_TN\\_LUM/](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OSMRE_TN_LUM/). We urge you to do so (see Action Box).

#### **The alternatives**

Alternative 2 is essentially the State petition. It identifies 67,326 acres along 505 miles of ridgeline as unsuitable for surface mining, and seeks to establish connectivity to riparian stream corridors.

Alternative 3 is OSMRE's preferred one. It designates 67,326 acres (same as in the State petition) as unsuitable for surface mining, but would allow underground mining and auger mining from outside the petition area so long as no surface disturbance within the petition area occurs (provision that are also in state petition). Within the

67,326 acres, however, OSMRE would allow *re-mining* of as much as 183.7 miles of highwall to “reclaim” previously mined areas. Furthermore, the development and use of access and haul roads through the designated area, would be allowed to facilitate *re-mining* efforts.

Alternative 4 is essentially the same as Alternative 3, except that, by applying improved mapping and measurement technology to the State’s criteria for inclusion of “all ridge lines”, the LUM area is considerably expanded. This Alternative would designate the 1,200-foot corridor along 569 (instead of 505) miles of ridgeline for a total of 76,133 (instead of 67,326) acres as unsuitable for surface mining. The length of highwall estimated as suitable for *re-mining* is 219.5 (instead of 183.7) miles.

The *re-mining* issue. The major disturbances caused by *re-mining* are obviously contrary to the intent of designating a *protected* area. The State’s petition envisions this practice as limited to sites that pose a significant risk to safety, or that are causing water pollution. We must be sure that the chosen alternative retains this strict interpretation.

#### Our recommendation: Alternative 4, with a modification.

This most closely accomplishes the State of Tennessee’s intent to designate as unsuitable for surface mining all of the ridgeline corridors in the petition area, extending to and connecting with stream corridors in the North Cumberland WMA and the Emory River Tract Conservation Easement. The modification to Alternative 4 should state that *re-mining* is limited to sites at which, by consensus between the State and OSMRE, safety and/or environmental benefits of *re-mining* outweigh the damages inflicted by the procedure.

#### **Some other points you can make**

- State how *you* use the area; how ridgeline mining would affect *your* values.
- The majority of the ridgelines to be designated is in the headwaters of the BSFNRRA, an area of special concern to TCWP. Their protection would benefit the park’s water resources.
- The petition area should be designated as “fragile lands.” Headwater sources are essential to downstream viability. Coal mining was the primary cause of decline for 33 of the 34 aquatic special-status species known to occur in the evaluation area.
- Re-mining should *only* be allowed where genuine environmental problems exist. It should be the exception rather than the rule.
- Recreation and tourism are a higher and better use of this area for the economic future of the region. According to the DEIS, travel and tourism-related expenditures in the four-county area in a recent year supported 1,420 jobs as well as \$10.4 M and \$6.0 M, respectively, in state and local tax receipts. By contrast, there were 135 people employed in surface mining in the entire State of Tennessee in 2013.

(NOTE: do NOT refer to the petition as banning “mountaintop removal” mining. That is technically inaccurate.)

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** By January 25, 5:00 PM, comment on the DEIS concerning the Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition for ridgelines in parts of the North Cumberlands. Your comments are very important because the coal mining industry will be doing all in its power to demonstrate public support for stripmining anywhere, including the ridgelines. If time is short, submit comments electronically at [http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OSMRE\\_TN\\_LUM/](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OSMRE_TN_LUM/). Or hand deliver by 5:00 PM to OSMRE, 710 Locust Street, Knoxville.

Your comments need not be long or elaborate; you may want to chose one or more items from the “Points You Can Make,” above. But be sure to include our main recommendation.

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### **3. The TENNESSEE LEGISLATURE**

#### **3A. Legislative Scorecard for 2015**

Tennessee Conservation Voters (TCV, of which TCWP is a member) has recently issued its 2015 Scorecard for the 109th General Assembly (which will remain in session through 2016). TCV is a non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting Tennessee’s environment through effective legislative and administrative advocacy. The annual scorecard is one way to hold our elected officials accountable. To find the legislators who represent your district, visit [www.capitol.gov](http://www.capitol.gov).

In our General Assembly, most of the important legislative work occurs within the committee system. Because of this, the Scorecard evaluates “actions,” which include committee votes and bill sponsorship in addition to floor votes. The number of bills that were actually brought to a floor vote in 2015 was small, so no one had the opportunity to amass high scores. Several legislators, however, took more than one positive action. In the Senate, these included Harris (D-29), Kyle (D-30), Overbey (R-2), and Yarbro (D-21). In the House, Beck (D-51), Clemons (D-55), Gilmore (D-54), Jernigan (D-60), Jones (D-59), Powell (D-53), and Towns (D-84).

Unfortunately, legislators that took negative actions are considerably more numerous. There were 15 such in the senate, almost half the total number of 33 senators. The most egregious offenders were Bell (R-9), Bowling (R-16), Green (R-22), Gresham (R-26), Roberts (R-25), Stevens (R-24), and Yager (R-12). In the House, there were 65 negative scorers – about 2/3 of the total membership. Of these, the following 12 had high negative scores: Byrd (R-71), Calfee (R-32), Daniel (R-18), Hawk (R-5), Holt (R-76), Hulsey (R-2), Lundberg (R-1), Marsh (R62), McDaniel (R-72), Moody (R-81), Powers (R-36), and Rogers (R-74).

### **3B. The fate of 2015 bills**

The TCV Scorecard also reflects on the key bills of 2015. Some bad ones did not pass, but remain around for the 2016 session; some bad ones did pass, but a few good ones did too.

- Bad bills that did not pass in 2015:
  1. To return regulation of coal mining from the federal government to the state.
  2. To allow gold mining and dredging in Tennessee streams.
  3. To end conservation districts and other protective land-use measures.
  4. Support for a federal bill requiring that when ¼ of the members of either the US House or Senate oppose a federal regulation (note: not a bill), it would require a majority vote in *both* Houses to adopt it.
  5. Loophole for automobile emissions testing.
- Among bad bills that did pass:  
Allowing guns in local parks. Local laws restricting such carrying are overridden.
- Among good legislation that passed:
  1. A budget that funded land acquisition for wetlands, wilderness areas, state parks, and similar purposes.
  2. A bill expanding scenic highways.

On January 12, 2016, the General Assembly reconvened for the second half of the session.

## **4. OTHER TENNESSEE NEWS**

### **4A. Wind farm planned for Crab Orchard Mountain**

[Information from *Crossville New First*, 1/12/16, and [www.timesfreepress](http://www.timesfreepress.com), 1/13/16]

Apex Clean Energy, an independent renewable energy company based in Charlottesville, VA, is planning to locate a new wind farm on private land on Crab Orchard Mountain in Cumberland County. The 20 to 23 turbines are expected to produce up to 71MW of power, enough for about 20,000 homes every year. The project boundary will encompass around 1,800 acres (private land to be leased), with roughly 50 acres to be taken up by the project itself. The land is located behind the Franklin Limestone quarry, but turbines will be visible from Interstate 40.

Construction is estimated to take roughly nine months and create 50 local jobs. The wind farm should begin operating in 2017 and will then employ approximately five people full-time for operations and maintenance. The energy produced would be tied to the national interconnection electric grid through TVA transmission lines. The project will be the largest wind farm in Tennessee, nearly tripling the energy output of TVA's Buffalo Mountain Windfarm, built in 2000, the only other such facility in the state.

Apex has six other projects operational, or about to become operational; four of these are in Oklahoma.

### **4B. Tennessee Wilderness Act needs 1st-District supporters**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

The Tennessee Wilderness Act, introduced in the Senate by Senators Alexander and Corker, has been languishing through four sessions of Congress. As yet, there is no companion bill in the House.

The bill formalizes the U. S. Forest Service's most protective management for six special places in the Cherokee National Forest. Two of these are in the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District, represented by Congressman Roe:

- Sampson Mountain addition, 2,922 acres
- Big Laurel Branch addition, 4,446 acres.

The Tennessee Wild Coalition is focusing on identifying actual or potential wilderness-designation supporters in the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District. The goal is to demonstrate voter support for the designation to Congressman Roe.

Among the cities and towns in the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District are: Blountville, Bluff City, Bristol, Bulls Gap, Elizabethton, Erwin, Gatlinburg, Gray, Greeneville, Johnson City, Jonesborough, Kingsport, Morristown, Mountain City, Newport, Parrottsville, Pigeon Forge, Pittman Center, Roan Mountain, Rogersville, and Sevierville.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** If you or someone you know lives in the district, please contact Sandra K. Goss (865-583-3967 or [sandra@sandrakgoss.com](mailto:sandra@sandrakgoss.com)) to get them involved. This would be a fairly easy involvement, with a phone call or letter to Congressman Roe (see Political Guide in [www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org)). Please help us let Congressman Roe know about the value of wilderness designation!

### **4C. Tennessee Wilderness Act Is a “clean” bill**

Not all wilderness-designation bills are causes for celebration. Many of them (as noted in the Fall 2015 *Wilderness Watcher*) come with bad special provisions that in various ways weaken wilderness protection, potentially leading to an erosion of standards for the entire Wilderness Preservation System.

It is therefore good to note that the Tennessee Wilderness Act (S.755), which calls for additional wilderness designations in the Cherokee National Forest, is a good, clean bill, free of damaging special provisions. This is an extra reason for us to support it.

### **4D. POWER+ Plan would aid Abandoned Mine Land reclamation**

[Information from the *SOCM Sentinel*]

A critical component of the POWER+ Plan, part of the President's 2016 Budget to address “important legacy costs in coal country,” is the release of \$1 billion from the \$2.5 billion Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AML)

Fund. If approved, the Plan would provide \$200 M/year for five years to coal-producing states. Among parameters to be considered in setting priorities is the finding that water problems and reclamation can be linked to job creation.

The AML fund has been relatively dormant with regards to Appalachia, and Congress has done nothing to facilitate the fund's intended purpose. Our state does receive AML money every year, but not nearly enough to address all the hazardous abandoned mine sites in East Tennessee. The POWER+ Plan has the potential of doubling this remediation.

#### **4E. Significant land purchases by Nature Conservancy's Tennessee chapter**

Among TNC's 2015 land acquisitions, three -- though not large in size -- may be of special interest to TCWP readers.

- In August, TNC bought 16.7 acres next to the BSFNRA (NL323 ¶1C). This tract, which is close to the Honey Creek Loop, contains a rare sandstone double arch, a deep rockhouse (known as Potter's Cave), and a mountain bald.
- The McCloud Mountain tract, near the Cumberland Trail corridor in Campbell County, is an addition to the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area, the 127,000-acre area acquired, with TNC's major assistance, under the Bredesen Administration in 2007. This WMA contains 20 rare, threatened, or endangered animal species and a rich flora. McCloud Mountain, highly scenic in itself, is also part of a long-term strategy to increase *connected* public lands in this biological stronghold.
- An 11.5-acre addition to the Couchfield Cedar Glade State Natural Area (established in 1994). Thanks to the preservation of cedar glades, the Tennessee Cone Flower could be removed from the Endangered Species List four years ago.

#### **4F. National Parks Centennial program in the Smokies**

As part of the National Park Centennial, which occurs this year, the Great Smoky Mtns. National Park has announced the "Smokies Centennial Challenge-Hike 100" program. Participants must hike *any* 100 miles of maintained trail within the park boundaries between January 1 and December 6, 2016. Repeat hikes may be counted. Those who reach the 100-mile goal will earn a commemorative pin and be invited to a park celebration. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/gsmnp-hike-100.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/gsmnp-hike-100.htm).

### **5. COAL MINING ON PUBLIC LAND IS SUSPENDED**

On January 15, Pres. Obama and Sec. Jewell announced a moratorium of all new coal leasing on federal public land, and a review of the entire federal coal program. For decades, the public lands we all own have been leased to fossil-fuel companies at ridiculously low, subsi-

dized rates. There are coal-bearing regions on BLM lands in easy view of Bryce Canyon, on National Forest lands in Colorado, and in many other areas of significance to human and animal residents and visitors.

As much as 40% of *all* coal burned in the US comes from our public lands, and that makes for a major share of our country's contribution to greenhouse gases. Today's action is a critical step toward ensuring America meets its climate goals and continues to be an international leader on climate and clean energy. The federal coal program's impact on our climate has never before been studied.

Big Coal is sure to put up a well-funded fight against the actions announced today, so we must be ready to defend it. For a start, see the Action Box, below.

<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO:</b>	Express your thanks to Pres. Obama (address on p.2) and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell (Political Guide in <a href="http://www.tcwp.org">www.tcwp.org</a> ). Tell them they have your support, and urge them to finalize strong protections for our public lands and climate.
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### **6. NATIONAL NEWS**

#### **6A. The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been renewed**

As part of the recent budget deal (¶6B, below), the LWCF, which had been allowed to expire after 50 years (NL 324 ¶4A), was renewed. The renewal period is only three years, however. Nevertheless, even the short renewal has been greatly beneficial in allowing funding of long-overdue projects. The one of great interest to TCWP is land acquisition for the Obed WSR (¶1A, this NL). Additionally, the LWCF received \$450 million for FY 2016 — a 50% increase over 2015 spending.

The LWCF has wide bipartisan support, and it may be possible, before too long, to make it permanent.

#### **6B. Budget deal affects several environmental issues**

The budget deal, reached in mid-December to avert a government shutdown, addressed several matters of potential great impact to environment and energy policy. Negative features of the deal included lifting of the crude-oil-export ban, and some spending limits imposed on EPA; prominent among positive ones was renewal of the Land & Water Conservation Fund, and wind and solar tax credits. For more information on some of these provisions, see ¶6A, ¶6C, and ¶6D, this NL. In addition, thanks to the threat of President Obama's veto, Democrats blocked GOP proposals to thwart administration regulations on clean air and water.

#### **6C. Lifting of the crude-oil-export ban**

The ban on exporting crude oil was established in 1975 in a period of chronic oil shortages. Republicans have claimed that lifting the ban will create a million jobs

and add \$170 billion to the annual GDP. Opponents of lifting the ban have pointed out that this action will increase fossil-fuel use around the globe, the emission of greenhouse gases, and US dependence on foreign oil. According to White House sources, however, the US already exports 4.3M barrels/day of refined petroleum; additionally, *existing* legal waivers allow the export of 0.5M barrels/day of crude oil.

In addition to lifting the crude-oil-export ban, the budget deal requires the Energy Department to sell 58 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve from FY2018 through FY2025. This would raise \$5.1 billion over 10 years.

#### **6D. Extension of wind- and solar-tax credits**

The solar investment tax credit is a 30% credit for utility, commercial, and rooftop solar installations. It had been scheduled to fall to 10% in 2017-2019. As part of the budget deal, the credits will now *remain* at 30% through 2019. Analysts estimate that the additional projects stimulated by this measure may result in ~\$40 billion in new investments between 2016 and 2020, creating many thousands of jobs.

The Production Tax Credit (PTC) for wind developers is a 10-year, 2.3¢/kilowatt-hour credit that was going to expire. Under the budget deal, the credit will be extended through 2020. However, after December 2016, it will be cut each year until it fully expires in 2020. The PTC policy has helped more than quadruple U.S. wind power since 2008.

#### **6E. New National Monuments and Wilderness**

[Information from America's Wilderness]

On July 10, President Obama officially designated three new National Monuments under the Antiquities Act (making six for 2015).

- Beryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, 330,780 acres in northern California, nestled in lush oak woodlands, with clear creeks, open meadows, and snow fields, and home to elk, eagles, river otters, dragonflies, and butterflies.
- Basin and Range NM, 704,000 acres in Nevada that represent some of the last undisturbed mountain ranges and valleys in the southern Great Basin ecosystem.
- Waco-Mammoth Site NM, see NL322 ¶4E.

The latest large Wilderness designation, Boulder-White Clouds (NL 323 ¶4A) was signed August 7. This 275,000 acre area, is just east of the existing Sawtooth Wilderness in the High Divide landscape of Idaho.

### **7. ENERGY; CLIMATE CHANGE**

2015 was the hottest year ever recorded (beating out 2014). In 2015, for the first time ever, CO<sub>2</sub> in the Earth's atmosphere topped 400 ppm.

#### **7A. Coal mining on public land is suspended!**

See ¶5 for this big story.

#### **7B. UN Climate Conference in Paris -- a sweeping deal is achieved**

Paris in December was the site of the most recent United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, or COP 21). Almost 200 nations came together in a sweeping global climate deal. As Al Gore said, "for the first time ever, the world is united in confronting the climate crisis."

The Agreement sets the goal of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels." Even 2°C, the previous goal, poses an existential threat to many small island states and other countries (nearly 280 million people live on land that could be submerged by rising waters).

We are presently nowhere near on track to constrain temperature increases to below 2°C, much less to avoid exceeding 1.5°C. The latest UNEP Emissions Gap report makes clear that such an objective probably requires achieving *net zero* emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> by around 2070 for the 2°C goal, and around 2050 for a 1.5°C goal.

The Agreement is based on post-2020-emissions-limitation proposals (referred to as INDCs) put forward in Paris by each participating nation. Much more ambitious action than that represented by the INDCs, however, will be required to achieve the goals. Accordingly, all countries have been requested to formally submit their proposed revisions of the INDCs by 2020, to be recorded in a registry. Preceding these formal submissions will be a facilitative dialogue, based on a 2018 special report requested from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), which will address pertinent science, technology, and economic trends. After 2020, nations must report their progress every five years.

The approach of having each nation pledge a specific limitation of greenhouse gases was chosen over a legally binding agreement, because the latter was deemed politically unfeasible at this time. That is especially the case for the USA, where an international treaty imposing emissions limits isn't likely to be approved by the Republican Congress. The mandatory reporting requirements every five years are deemed to be a serious form of enforcement and compliance.

Secretary of State Kerry called the deal "a break-away agreement which actually changes the paradigm by which countries are making judgments about this." He believes "that the business community of the entire world is receiving a message of countries now moving toward clean, alternative, renewable energy and trying to reduce their carbon footprint." That will spur massive investment on new ways to provide energy to billions around the world.

## **7C. Climate change and the economic sector**

### **Corporations back Pres. Obama on climate**

[From *The Hill*, 12/1/15]

More than 150 companies signed a pledge to support a “strong agreement” in the Paris negotiations, and to undertake efforts in their own companies to help fight climate change. The signatories include big, recognizable names like Amazon.com Inc., DuPont, Microsoft Corp., Unilever, Coca-Cola Co., Staples Inc., MGM Resorts International, JetBlue Airways Corp. and 21st Century Fox, the parent company of the right-leaning Fox News Channel.

Many of the companies on the pledge separately bought an ad in *The Wall Street Journal* expressing their support for a low-carbon economy and for a strong deal in Paris. The ad said: “Failure to tackle climate change could put America’s economic prosperity at risk. But the right action now would create jobs and boost competitiveness.” The companies committed to reduce the impacts of their operations as well as to introduce new products and technologies. Pres. Obama said that new, cheaper technologies would be critical in helping poorer nations “skip the dirty phase of development.”

### **International commitment to fund clean energy**

[From *The Hill*]

It was announced at the Paris conference that 20 world leaders, including Pres. Obama, are committed to double the amount of money they put into clean energy research and development. Funding for low- or zero-carbon technologies would be about \$20 billion in five years, with about half of that amount spent by the United States. The countries involved (including India, Brazil, Denmark, Saudi Arabia and the USA) represent about 80% of the world’s clean energy funding by governments, and 75% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the power sector. The effort, dubbed Mission Innovation, relies on research and development strategies that have proven successful in the United States.

Accompanying the announcement, a group of 28 investors, led by Microsoft Corp. founder Bill Gates, unveiled an effort to help companies widely deploy new clean energy technology, including to developing countries. Gates’s effort includes big names like Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg.

### **Divestment commitments**

[Information from 350.org, 12/3/15]

More than 500 institutions worldwide, representing over \$3.4 trillion in assets, have now made commitments to divest assets from fossil fuels. Capital is shifting away from fossil fuels and towards clean, renewable energy. It is hoped that governments, too, will shift public finance from fossil fuels to climate solutions.

## **7D. Methane regulations should include existing operations**

[With information from EDF, 12/9/15]

According to EPA estimates, in the next few years 90% of methane pollution will be due to oil and gas facilities *in operation today*. Setting limits solely on new and modified sources will only reduce about 7 to 8% of the total emissions from the oil and gas supply chain (based on 2012 estimates). This means the bulk of the pollution problem will remain unaddressed. *Existing* wells, compressors, pipelines, etc. leak or release almost 8 million metric tons of methane each year. Including other sources, methane and other short-lived climate pollutants account for ¼ - 1/3 of the man-made climate change that we are experiencing today.

There can hardly be a more dramatic demonstration that existing operations *must* be regulated than the ongoing methane leak from a natural-gas storage facility near Los Angeles. This leak, which has been going on for over three months and may not be stopped for at least two more, has been spewing *50 tons per hour* of methane. *Every day* adds the climate equivalent of another 7 million cars on the road.

EPA recently proposed regulations for reducing methane emissions from *new and modified* sources. While this is a good beginning, it will accomplish only a minor part of the job. In addition to regulating existing operations, which contribute 90% of methane pollution (see above), non-operational sources should also be considered; Pennsylvania alone has 300,000 to 500,000 abandoned oil and gas wells, some of which are leaking significant amounts of methane.

<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO:</b>	Thank EPA Administrator McCarthy for proposing methane pollution standards for new and modified sources (Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2010-0505), but tell her that the far bigger problem that must now be addressed is methane from <i>existing</i> sources, including current as well as abandoned operations.
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## **7E. Coal-fired power generation decreases in the Southeast**

[From Southern Environmental Law Center]

Ten years ago, there were 246 coal-fired units generating electric power in the six southeastern states that include Tennessee, and nine additional huge units were planned. Today, 126 of these units are slated for retirement around the year 2020, with most already gone. Of the nine proposed units, seven never got off the ground. As a result, CO<sub>2</sub> emission from electric-power generation in our region declined 29% between 2005 and 2013, even as the population increased by an estimated 10%. These changes have come without increasing the average home electricity bill.

Among organizations that have played a role in this change are the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign and SELC.

## **7F. Different views on wood-derived bioenergy**

An article in the latest TCWP Newsletter (“When the biomass is forests, atmospheric carbon pollution can ex-

ceed pollution from coal burning," NL324 ¶5D) generated response from a reader who challenged conclusions by SELC that had been reported in the *Washington Post*, and similar conclusions endorsed by The Ecological Society of America (ESA).

These challenges were discussed in a letter to the ESA by Virginia Dale et al. (doi:10.1890/15.WB.011; Dale and the first of three co-authors are on the staff of ORNL). The letter discusses such issues as demand for wood in relation to net forest area, worldwide; maintenance of other forest values; and what to use as baseline for calculations. It stresses that the issue of timing is a major one for the conclusion reached. The authors recommend that every opportunity should be seized to support continual improvement in forest management.

ESA invited a response to the Dale et al. letter. This was written by William H. Schlesinger (doi:10.1890/15.WB.012). Among the points made are that, (a) CO<sub>2</sub> from combustion is released almost instantly, whereas the growth and regrowth of wood (which brings about the benefit of CO<sub>2</sub> storage) takes decades; (b) burning and replanting of certain grasses and young trees brings back carbon storage much more quickly than the use of mature forests for fuel; (c) replanted forests are more likely to consist of plantations, with lower habitat value and biodiversity, than the original forests.

If you want to learn more, there are plenty of references in the two publications cited.

## **8. OAK RIDGE: MANHATTAN PROJECT NHP**

### **8A. Manhattan Project**

#### **Scholars Report Available**

[From NPS e-Newsletter]

The NPS invited a group of experts, including participants from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to participate in a scholars' forum on the Manhattan Project in Washington, DC, this past November. The intent of the workshop was to identify topics and aspects of the Manhattan Project that should be incorporated into the interpretive planning for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. The report from this workshop has been completed and is being made available at: <http://www.nps.gov/mapr/management.htm>.

### **8B. Planning input to be solicited for Manhattan Project NHP**

[From NPS e-Newsletter]

A Foundation Document Public Meeting (to be held Monday, February 1 starting at 5:30 pm, ET, in the Oak Ridge High School Food Court) will solicit planning input for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. NPS and DOE are also holding public meetings at the other two associated sites including Hanford, WA and Los Alamos, NM. The public is encouraged to come share their thoughts about key stories and interpretive ideas related to the park.

### **8C. Contact information for Manhattan Project NHP**

The phone number for the ranger at the NPS desk at the American Museum of Science and Energy is (865) 576-6767. On days when the desk is not staffed (currently, Mondays through Fridays), you can contact the Park at 423-569-9778.

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## **9. TCWP NEWS**

### **9A. Upcoming activities**

[Compiled by Carol Grametbauer]

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern Time]

#### TVA Natural Resources Information Program – Thursday, February 11

Rebecca Tolene, TVA's Vice President of Natural Resources and Real Property Services, will be the featured speaker at a TCWP information program in the City Room, Roane State Community College, Oak Ridge. She will provide an overview of her division's work, including its funding, challenges and opportunities.

#### Alley Ford Cumberland Trail Workday – Saturday, Feb. 20

A day of trail work and hiking will take place on the 2.5-mile section of the Cumberland Trail between Nemo Picnic Area and Alley Ford at the Obed Wild and Scenic River. This section was adopted by TCWP in 1998. Participants should dress appropriately for winter weather, wear sturdy shoes or boots, and bring work gloves, loppers, small bow saws or folding saws, shovels and grubbing tools, as well as a lunch and plenty of water. Some tools will be available at the event.

Participants can meet for carpooling in Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's) in time to leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m. ET, or can join the crew at Nemo Picnic Area or Rock Creek Campground at 10 a.m. We expect to return to the trailhead by around 3 p.m. (NOTE: If the weather is uncooperative--excessive rain or snow and ice—we will reschedule for February 27.)

#### Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup – Saturday, March 5

We will conduct our spring exotic invasive plant removal at the Oak Ridge Cedar Barren on March 5. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, this Barren is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. One of only a few cedar barrens in East Tennessee, the area is subject to invasion by Chinese lespedeza, Japanese privet, autumn olive, mimosa, Nepal grass, multiflora rose, and woody plants that threaten the system's prairie grasses. Our continuing efforts help to eliminate these invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sun.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School Parking lot at 9 a.m., with sturdy shoes, loppers, gloves, and

water. The work session will conclude at noon with a pizza lunch.

For additional information, contact Tim Bigelow at 865-607-6781 or at [bigelowt2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelowt2@mindspring.com).

#### Obed Rafting Trip with Trash Collection – Sat., March 26

Paddlers are invited to join TCWP, in cooperation with the National Park Service, for a whitewater rafting/clean-up trip down the Obed River. The outing, from Devil's Breakfast Table to Nemo Bridge, will include trash collection coordinated with the National Park Service along the river.

Safety boaters are needed for this excursion. Some seats will be available on guided rafts. Rafters must be 18 years old or over, and have a moderately high level of physical fitness and stamina. The trip will include a portage over large boulders. The difficulty level of this outing is high, and participants are encouraged to consider carefully their fitness and stamina before undertaking the trip.

We welcome other kayakers to join this trip. March 26 is the first Saturday that the Catoosa Wildlife Management Area is open to the public following the annual two-month "rest period" during which all traffic on Catoosa is forbidden.

Pre-registration by Monday, March 21, is required. The weather and river conditions are unpredictable, and decisions about the nature of the trip, or its actual occurrence, will be made the morning of the event. A small number of wet suits is available to loan participants, if needed. Participants should wear wicking fabric and should not wear cotton clothes. They will need to bring lunch and water. If regular paddlers have spare equipment and clothes, please consider bringing those along.

For more information or to pre-register, contact Sandra Goss at 865-583-3967 or via email at [Sandra@sandrakgoss.com](mailto:Sandra@sandrakgoss.com). Participants will meet at 9:00 a.m. ET at the Obed Wild and Scenic River Visitors Center in Wartburg. A carpool will leave from Oak Ridge at around 8:15.

*Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at [Sandra@sandrakgoss.com](mailto:Sandra@sandrakgoss.com) or at 865-583-3967.*

#### **9B. Recent events**

[Contributed by Carol Grametbauer]

##### TCWP Holiday Party – Thursday, December 3

Once again this year we had a wonderful turnout for our holiday party, held at the home of Jenny Freeman and Bill Allen in Oak Ridge. This much anticipated get-together annually provides us with the opportunity to relax and catch up with other TCWP members and with special guests in the welcoming setting of Jenny and Bill's beautifully decorated home, while enjoying delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts. As always, our sincere thanks to them for hosting this popular event each year!

#### **9C. Thanks, and a tip of the hat to ...**

[From Sandra Goss]



-- Lee Russell and Jimmy Groton for writing and sending TCWP comments on National Park Service Oil and Gas Extraction plans.

-- Jean Bangham, John Bates, Marion Burger, Katherine Hensley, Donna Kridelbaugh, Harriett McCurdy, Eileen Neiler, Lise Neiler, Dick Raridon, Marty Salk, Carol Helton Smith for preparing the TCWP Newsletter for mailing.

-- Michele Thornton for printing newsletter labels.

-- Jenny Freeman and Bill Allen for hosting the TCWP Holiday Party.

-- Carol Grametbauer (chair), Jean Bangham, Tim Bigelow, Ed Clebsch, Joe Feeman, Jimmy Groton, Jamie Herald, Wes James, Jan Lyons, and Larry Pounds, TCWP Program Committee, for their work in developing and implementing activities and programs.

-- Obed Wild and Scenic River Rangers Matt Hudson and Thomas Hall for their help locating TCWP-owned land.

#### **9D. Friends and Members in the news**

[Compiled by Sandra Goss]

-- Judy Roitman was named Outstanding Person of the Year on World AIDS Day, December 1. This recognition was noted in the November 28 edition of the *News Sentinel* as well as the December 20 edition.

-- Glenn Marshall penned a letter to the editor in the November 26 edition of the *Knoxville Mercury* about radio station formats.

-- Neil McBride was honored with the annual Starfish Award his "outsize contributions to the Anderson County community," as reported in the December 2 *News Sentinel*.

-- Bill Hodge was featured in a November 30 article in *Get Out Chattanooga* about Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS).

-- Cordelia Lyons wrote a letter to the editor of the December 5 *News Sentinel* about TVA accounting methods in earnings and declining rates calculations.

-- Ruth Young and Marty Adler-Jasny were pictured in the November 10 *Oak Ridger* at a League of Women Voters meeting.

-- Cumberland Trail State Park Manager Bob Fulcher is featured and pictured in a December 21 *News Sentinel* article about the park's music label.

## **9E. Friends and Members who are gone**

It seems as if, since only a year ago, TCWP has been losing an extraordinary number of long-time stalwarts. First there was Charlie Klabunde in February (NL320 ¶10C) and Frank Hensley in July (NL323 ¶6B). And then, just since November, we lost Helen Warren, Lily Rose Claiborne, Donald Davis, and Jeanie Cole.

Helen was a complete and active partner of her husband, Ken, who, for many years, served as TCWP'S devoted and effective steward of the North Ridge Trail. Lily Rose was one of the chief architects, original developers, and defenders of that Trail. Don enthusiastically lent a hand with whatever needed doing, worked on our Service Committee, and regularly helped with preparing the TCWP Newsletter for mailing. And Jeannie was a faithful supporter who, for a while endowed a TCWP internship in the name of a beloved son who died early. And each one did a lot more than what's briefly mentioned here. We are very proud to have known these wonderful people who helped shape TCWP into the great organization it is.

## **9F. Executive Director's Column**

[By Sandra Goss]

We're kicking off 2016 with two significant developments: 1) the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement has released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the State's Petition about surface mining the North Cumberland ridgetops (¶2, this NL) and 2) the Federal budget passed late last year has land acquisition funding for the Obed Wild and Scenic River (¶1A).

The Lands Unsuitable DEIS has the potential to permanently protect the mountain tops of the North Cumberlands Wildlife Management Area and the Emory River Tract Conservation Easement from surface coal mining. The public can comment on the DEIS through January 25. All hikers, birders, paddlers, and other users are encouraged to submit comments on the DEIS BEFORE January 25. The Final EIS is expected to be issued late summer.

The land-acquisition appropriation for the Obed is VERY positive. Slowly but surely we make progress on the goal of protecting all 5000 acres in the legislatively-authorized boundaries. Roughly one fifth of that land is vulnerable to development that would spoil the primitive scenic viewshed afforded by the Obed.

One can enjoy that viewshed on March 26 during our annual Obed Clean-up from Rafts (see ¶9A, above). Other events coming this year are hikes at the Big Soddy Creek Gulf, the new section of Cumberland Trail near Daddy's Creek, and "Fall Flowers in a Powerline Prairie" at Hixson Springs Trail Head in North Chickamauga State Natural Area. These are cosponsored with Tennessee Native Plant Society. (See [www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org) for details.)

On the sobering side, in recent meetings about long-range transportation plans and how these can incorporate sustainability, I've learned about the extreme weather events of today becoming our new normal weather in the next 35 years, and that computer models indicate there will be few days below 65° in 2050.

This month, we kick off TCWP's 50th year of taking care of wild places. How wonderful to start with two wonderful administrative developments and great hikes on the calendar!

Don't forget to comment on the Lands Unsuitable DEIS!!

## **10. CALENDAR; RESOURCES**

### **..CALENDAR (events and deadlines)**

(For more information, check the referenced NL item; or contact Sandra Goss, 865-583-3967, or [Sandra@sandrakgoss.com](mailto:Sandra@sandrakgoss.com))

- Jan. 25, 5:00 PM, Comment deadline for DEIS on ridge-line mining petition. Urgent! (see ¶2, this NL).
- Feb. 1, meeting to solicit planning input for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (see ¶8B, this NL).
- February 11, Information Program featuring TVA Vice President of Natural Resources Rebecca Tolene (see ¶9A, this NL).
- February 20, Alley Ford Cumberland Trail workday (see ¶9A, this NL).
- Feb. 20, 1PM, AMSE auditorium. Films from a number of the many NPS sites around the country that commemorate important issues and events from World War II. Free.
- March 5, Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup (see ¶9A, this NL).
- March 26, Obed Rafting Trip with Trash Collection (see ¶9A, this NL).

### **..RESOURCES**

- Fiery Gizzard Trail being rerouted. The owner of one of the several properties through which the trail has historically passed has asked that the trail vacate that property. Therefore, a 1.5-mile section, between Raven Point and Foster Falls, is currently being rerouted. Though more rugged, the rerouted section will be spectacular, passing two previously inaccessible waterfalls and giving access to an additional overlook. For more details, visit [land-trusttn.org/fierygizzardupdate/](http://land-trusttn.org/fierygizzardupdate/).
- For a Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Collection, visit [digital.lib.utk.edu/hikingclub](http://digital.lib.utk.edu/hikingclub). The collection consists of the annual handbooks, plus 88 photographs from the early years of the club, which was founded in 1924.

*"The time is always right to do what is right"* -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

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#### Coming Events

- |                 |                                                                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon., Jan. 25   | Comment Deadline Lands Unsuitable DEIS<br>Important! Please act! See ¶2 |
| Thurs., Feb. 11 | TVA VP Natural Resources Rebecca Tolene Program                         |
| Sat., Feb. 20   | Cumberland Trl. Alley Ford Section Clean-up                             |
| Sat., March 5   | Oak Ridge Cedar Barren Clean-up                                         |