



**Tennessee Citizens for
Wilderness Planning**
Taking Care of Wild Places Since 1966

TCWP MAY 2026 NEWSLETTER

**JOIN US AUGUST 1ST
CELEBRATING
60 YEARS!**

Inside TCWP

1. Celebrating 60 Years of Taking Care of Wild Places—Join Us August 1!

This year marks a milestone for Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning—60 years of protecting the places we love. If you’ve been following along with our recent eblasts highlighting TCWP’s history decade by decade, you already know this is more than just an anniversary—it’s a story of determined people coming together to defend the Obed, the Smokies, and so many wild places across East Tennessee.

Now, it’s time to celebrate that legacy—and the community that made it possible. We invite you to join us on **August 1 at 9:00 AM at Ijams Nature Center** for a special morning gathering filled with reflection, connection, and inspiration. Enjoy light breakfast fare while hearing “pop-up” stories from those who witnessed TCWP’s earliest days and the pivotal moments that shaped our mission. With a little luck, we’ll also hear from the children of our founders, Ace and Evelyn Russell, sharing personal memories from the very beginning. We’ll wrap up the morning the best way we know how—with a hike through the beautiful trails at Ijams.

And if you haven’t yet been receiving our “60 Years of TCWP” eblast series, it’s not too late to join in. These short stories bring our history to life and set the stage for where we’re headed next. Sign up here to follow along and stay connected:

Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning or <https://tinyurl.com/3wfmct8>

We hope you’ll be part of this special day as we celebrate the past, honor the people who built this organization, and look ahead to the future of protecting Tennessee’s wild places—together.



May 2026 Newsletter No. 387
Inside this Issue

Inside TCWP.....1

1. Celebrating 60 Years of Taking Care of Wild Places—Join Us Aug. 1
2. Rails to Trails Update: A Major Milestone – and What Comes Next
3. Ridgeline Pipeline Water Monitoring: April Update
4. A Message from Chuck Estes: Help Shape the Future of Pellissippi Blueway
 - 4.a. What is Blueways TN? A Statewide Effort to Expand Access And Stewardship
5. Crossroads on the Plateau: Could Daddy’s Creek or Clear Creek Be Dammed?
6. Coal, Gas, and a Changed Plan: What’s Happening at TVA?

News Capsules.....4

Oak Ridge.....4

1. 701 Acres and Counting: What New Land Transfers Mean for Oak Ridge
2. Breaking Down Plastic: ORNL Team Advances Recycling Research

State of Tennessee.....4

1. Decisions Loom as Tennessee Advances Nuclear Waste Proposal
2. Tennessee Moves to Shield Fossil Fuel Companies from Climate Liability
3. AI Expansion Sparks Debate Over Power, Pollution, and Oversight in TN
4. New “Sound Science” Law Raises Bar for Environmental Safeguards in TN
5. Data Center Innovation in Memphis Raises Broader Resource Questions
6. Major Win for TN Rivers: Duck and Buffalo Gain New Protections
7. TN Recognizes the Value of Native Plants with New Statewide Designation

National.....5

1. Toxic Coal Waste Rules Face Rollback Amid Industry Pressure

TCWP Events.....6

1. Upcoming Events
2. Recent Events



2. Rails to Trails Update: A Major Milestone—and What Comes Next

We're excited to share that as of April 27, 2026, the 41-mile rail corridor has officially been railbanked—a critical step that preserves the corridor intact for future trail development while allowing it to remain available for potential rail use. Through a Trail Use Agreement with RJ Corman, the Trust for Public Land now holds an Option to Purchase the corridor, which must be exercised by December 2026. This sets the stage for the next phase: identifying a long-term “take-out partner” to ultimately acquire and manage the corridor. TCWP is actively working with the City of Oneida and the Echoes of the Rail Foundation to help ensure this transition is successful and that the vision for a community-supported trail becomes a reality.

Looking ahead, we will present a Resolution of Support to the Anderson County Commission in May—an important step in building the local and regional backing needed to advance fundraising for acquisition, construction, and long-term management of the trail. This resolution has been thoughtfully revised based on input from New River community members and their district commissioners, who attended our most recent meeting and provided valuable feedback. We are deeply grateful to the 189 TCWP members in Anderson County who made calls and sent emails in support of this effort—your voices are making a difference. To further build understanding and momentum, we are also planning a field trip for Scott and Anderson County commissioners and local landowners to visit the Eureka Trail in Athens, offering a firsthand look at the benefits a project like this can bring to a community.

3. Ridgeline Pipeline Water Monitoring: April Update by Mark Bevelhimer

Water monitoring continues in Morgan County where the Ridgeline pipeline crosses tributary streams to the Obed Wild and Scenic River (i.e., tributaries to Clear Creek, Obed River, or Emory River). Through mid-April, the construction had included tree clearing, ground vegetation removal, trenching through dirt and bedrock, welding and laying new pipe, and burying the new pipe (but no revegetation yet) across miles and miles of upland areas including up to the streambanks but not technically in the streambeds. This work has included the installation of erosion control devices near the streams, which seem to be mostly working as intended, though heavy rains still manage to deliver silt and dirt to the streams. When we have been able to time our monitoring immediately following rain events, we have documented high stream turbidity. If our monitoring data suggest that the high turbidity is associated with the construction, we report these observations to regulators who often follow-up with the contractors. The contractors typically respond with modifications to their erosion control devices. Unfortunately, we are not always able to capture these rain events... fortunately, it has been a very dry spring.

In mid-April, instream construction began at one of our sampling locations, Little Clear Creek. We believe it was completed in a day or two, and we have since observed instream construction underway at another site, Gordan Branch. This involves installing a temporary coffer dam upstream of where a new trench will be dug. Once dammed, water is piped and pumped around the construction site and released back into the stream downstream. After the trenching is complete, new pipe installed, the trench re-filled, and the streambed restored, the coffer dam is removed and streamflow is restored. Once the diversion system is in place, it appears that the stream remains relatively clean, however, removal of the coffer dam can cause a pulse of high turbidity as was reported by state construction workers who were working on nearby highway bridge over Little Clear Creek. Being able to monitor this has been challenging for our monitoring team without a detailed schedule from the contractors. Going forward, the monitoring team is trying to keep track of instream construction the best we can, and in the meantime, we continue to focus monitoring on rain events that will likely result in silt-laden runoff from streambanks and nearby hillsides.

4. A Message from Chuck Estes: Help Shape the Future of the Pellissippi Blueway

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) is developing a Master Plan for Governor Lee's initiative to develop and enhance Blueways in Tennessee. There is the potential for \$15 million dollars to be used in Blueway development across the State. One of the 15 waterways that has been chosen for the Blueway initiative is the Clinch River. In our area the Pellissippi Blueway along the Clinch River in Anderson, Knox, Roane, and Loudon Counties could benefit from Gov. Lee's Blueway program. We would greatly appreciate your taking the time to complete the survey included in the attached article from TDEC. Your thoughts and supportive comments will assist us in gaining financial support from the State that can aid in increasing public access and awareness for our Blueways, providing educational information, and ensuring safety during Blueway usage. – *Chuck Estes*

4. a. What Is BluewaysTN? A Statewide Effort to Expand Access and Stewardship

TDEC has launched the BluewaysTN initiative to better plan for recreation, conservation, and economic development along key rivers across the state, recognizing both the growing demand for outdoor water access and the importance of protecting these natural resources. By identifying priority waterways and gathering data on existing conditions, access points, and community needs, the state aims to create tailored plans that help local communities enhance river access, improve safety, support tourism, and strengthen stewardship. A key part of this effort is public input, and residents are encouraged to share their perspectives by completing the survey at <https://www.bluewaystn.com/>, helping ensure that future investments reflect local values and priorities.

5. Crossroads on the Plateau: Could Daddy’s Creek or Clear Creek Be Dammed? By guest author Jenna Walls

The phrase “Water is the new oil,” captures the dichotomy of the finite nature of natural resources pitted against the infinite demands of humans. Folks on the Cumberland Plateau are experiencing a struggle for control of what most of us take for granted every day when we turn on a spigot – the flow of clean water. The Tennessee Board of Utility Regulation (TBOUR) is pushing water utility mergers throughout the state to address standard utilities, and to achieve efficiency. Thus, the state established the Cumberland Plateau Water Authority (CPWA) to pursue the merger of several water utilities in and around Cumberland County.

The utility merger issue is nuanced - and political. Its relevance has to do with various projections of future water demand with continued development and population growth on the Plateau. The City of Crossville Water Department, overseen by the City Manager and a Director of Water Resources, manages Crossville’s water production from Meadow Park Lake and Holiday Hills Lake. The City also has an agreement to harvest excess water from Lake Tansi. The utility sells water to surrounding communities in addition to serving Crossville. The Crossville City Council sets rates and fees, establishes regulations for, and is responsible for major projects including the proposed expansion of Meadow Park Lake Dam, a project that has been in the planning stage for decades.

In March, the City of Crossville passed a resolution which allows non-binding negotiations with CPWA to consider a merger. Politically, the merger would transition control of the Plateau’s main source of water and sewage treatment assets from the City to the CPWA. The CPWA board members are appointed by the County mayor and approved by the County Commission. The seven board members represent the various water districts: one member each from Crab Orchard District (Fairfield Glade), Catoosa District (Homestead), West Cumberland (Pleasant Hill), and South Cumberland (Tansi Village); and three from the City of Crossville. To date, Crab Orchard, West and South Cumberland have or are in the process of merging with CPWA.

This brings the City to a critical decision point: move the Meadow Park Lake dam project forward with the City assuming costs, and/or negotiate a merger with CPWA. City Attorney, Randy York has advised that any plan involving the sale of Meadow Lake assets would require public notice and an opportunity for voters to object through a referendum.

The issue of the flow of clean water through pipes leads (inevitably?) to the issue of the flow of clean water through rivers. Jeff Dyer, general manager of the CPWA, has noted on numerous occasions that existing water resources are inadequate to meet the future demand for water on the Plateau. He notes that raising the dam on city-owned Meadow Park Lake provides a quick short-term solution to water issues on the Plateau. Mr. Dyer has also noted that raising the dam is not sufficient for future demand, and other sources are being considered, including a new reservoir – potentially on Daddy’s Creek or Clear Creek; possible pipelines from Watts Bar Lake; an impoundment on Daddy’s Creek; and collaboration with other districts. While the City of Crossville grapples with who should control its water system assets, the question of who controls our free-flowing creeks and rivers lurks in the background.

Note from TCWP: We are forming a working group to partner with Crossville organizations and citizens to identify solutions that meet future water needs while safeguarding the health and integrity of our rivers.

6. Coal, Gas, and a Changed Plan: What’s Happening at TVA?

As you may recall from our last newsletter, Advisory Board member William Chandler wrote that Tennessee Valley Authority had chosen a “worst-case scenario” by deciding—despite earlier representations to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—to “build the gas system and keep the coal.” TCWP recently co-hosted a webinar with Appalachian Voices, Southern Environmental Law Center, and the Sierra Club exploring how TVA moved forward with this decision, including a unanimous vote to scrap plans to retire its Kingston and Cumberland coal plants while bringing new methane gas plants online at the same sites. Experts discussed the potential environmental and economic impacts for our region, as well as concerns about reduced public input in the decision-making process. You can watch the webinar here: Coal Plant Extensions in Tennessee: What’s Going on at TVA? or visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHzszObU32o>

NEWS CAPSULES

OAK RIDGE

1. 701 Acres and Counting: What New Land Transfers Mean for Oak Ridge

Recent action by the U.S. Department of Energy highlights how quickly plans for the Oak Ridge Reservation are moving forward. In its largest transfer to date, DOE conveyed 701 acres to the City of Oak Ridge for economic development, including sites tied to major proposed nuclear projects. Two companies—Orano and Oklo—have announced plans that together could bring billions in investment and over a thousand jobs, reinforcing Oak Ridge’s growing role as a center for nuclear energy innovation. Local leaders have emphasized that access to newly available land is essential as existing industrial space fills and demand from the energy sector continues to rise. At the same time, this transfer underscores the broader shift TCWP noted earlier this year: federal determinations that large portions of the Reservation are suitable for reuse are accelerating decisions about how these lands will be used. While these transfers build on decades of environmental cleanup and redevelopment, they also raise important questions about long-term land use, public input, and the balance between economic growth and conservation. With additional acreage expected to be transferred in the coming years, the pace and scale of these decisions make continued community engagement and careful consideration of environmental impacts more important than ever.

2. Breaking Down Plastic: ORNL Team Advances Recycling Research

Researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory are exploring new ways to address plastic waste by breaking materials down at the chemical level and converting them into reusable building blocks for new products. The early-stage work focuses on difficult-to-recycle materials like tires, with the goal of creating durable or flexible plastics through a process known as “upcycling.” While the technology shows promise, researchers note it is still in development and will require further scaling before its broader environmental and market impacts can be fully understood.

STATE of TENNESSEE

1. Decisions Loom as Tennessee Advances Nuclear Waste Proposal

Tennessee is positioning itself to play a major role in the nation’s nuclear future, with state leaders expressing support for hosting a centralized facility for storing and managing used nuclear fuel. The proposal stems from a request by the U.S. Department of Energy for sites to anchor a “Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus,” which could include everything from fuel fabrication to waste disposal. Lawmakers have encouraged Governor Bill Lee to pursue the opportunity, citing potential economic benefits such as job creation and private investment. This effort builds on Tennessee’s long history in nuclear development—from the Manhattan Project to current initiatives involving the Tennessee Valley Authority and emerging reactor technologies in and around Oak Ridge, which positioning the state as a central hub across the full nuclear lifecycle.

At the same time, the proposal raises complex questions about long-term waste management, community impact, and national policy. The United States has accumulated tens of thousands of tons of spent nuclear fuel, currently stored at sites across the country, and has yet to establish a permanent disposal solution after decades of debate, including the stalled Yucca Mountain project. While some experts support consolidated storage and even recycling of nuclear fuel, others point to technical, environmental, and social challenges—particularly the difficulty of siting a long-term repository and ensuring safety over generations. As federal interest in expanding nuclear energy grows, decisions about where and how to manage its waste are becoming increasingly urgent, with significant implications for communities asked to host these facilities.

2. Tennessee Moves to Shield Fossil Fuel Companies from Climate Liability

Tennessee lawmakers have passed legislation that would shield fossil fuel companies from being held liable for climate-related damages, effectively blocking future lawsuits by state and local governments or residents seeking accountability for climate impacts. The bill, which now awaits action by Governor Bill Lee, aligns with similar efforts backed by industry groups nationwide and comes as climate litigation gains momentum in other states. This measure removes a key legal pathway for holding major polluters accountable, reinforcing a broader pattern of state policies that favor fossil fuel interests over environmental protections and limiting recourse for communities affected by climate change.

3. AI Expansion Sparks Debate Over Power, Pollution, and Oversight in Tennessee

A proposed Tennessee bill tied to the expansion of xAI data centers is raising concerns about the growing energy demands and environmental impacts of AI infrastructure. The legislation would allow large data centers to generate or purchase their own electricity rather than rely solely on utilities like the Tennessee Valley Authority, a move supporters say could shield residents from rising power costs. However, environmental groups warn it could accelerate the use of fossil fuel-based generation, particularly methane gas turbines, increasing air pollution and weakening oversight. With data centers already consuming a significant share of TVA's power—and demand expected to rise sharply—critics argue the proposal highlights the broader challenge of balancing rapid AI-driven development with public health, environmental protection, and long-term energy sustainability.

4. New “Sound Science” Law Raises Bar for Environmental Safeguards in Tennessee

Tennessee has joined other states in passing a so-called “Sound Science” law that significantly limits the ability of state agencies to adopt environmental protections beyond federal standards. The legislation requires regulators to prove a direct causal link between a contaminant and actual bodily harm—rather than increased risk—before issuing stricter rules, a standard scientists warn is nearly impossible to meet. Critics argue the law could weaken safeguards for public health and the environment by preventing proactive regulation of emerging or uncertain threats.

5. Data Center Innovation in Memphis Raises Broader Resource Questions

A new data center in Memphis operated by xAI is drawing attention for plans to use treated wastewater—rather than drinking water—to cool its systems, a move that could help reduce strain on the region's declining aquifer. The approach, already used at some facilities by other major tech companies, was supported by local advocates concerned about long-term water supply impacts. However, the project also highlights the broader environmental challenges posed by large-scale data centers, including significant water and energy demands. While this particular facility may lessen pressure on potable water resources, additional planned sites in the area are not able to use the same method and are expected to consume enormous amounts of energy, underscoring ongoing concerns about the sustainability of rapidly expanding AI infrastructure.

6. Major Win for Tennessee Rivers: Duck and Buffalo Gain New Protections

A bill protecting much of Middle Tennessee's Duck River and Buffalo River has cleared the state legislature and now heads to Governor Bill Lee for signature. The legislation designates these waterways and their tributaries as Class II scenic rivers, prohibiting activities such as mining, commercial timber harvesting, and new landfill development within a two-mile buffer, while still allowing traditional agricultural uses. Widely supported by lawmakers and local advocates, the measure aims to protect critical drinking water sources and one of the most biodiverse freshwater systems in North America, though it includes an amendment allowing previously permitted landfills to proceed. Some opposition remains over property rights concerns, and related legal challenges tied to earlier landfill proposals are still ongoing.

7. Tennessee Recognizes the Value of Native Plants with New Statewide Designation

Tennessee has officially designated April as “Tennessee Native Plant Month” following unanimous passage of legislation sponsored by Greg Vital and signed into law by Governor Bill Lee. The measure aims to raise awareness about the environmental and economic benefits of native plants, encouraging their use in landscaping and public spaces to support pollinators, conserve water, and promote sustainable practices. It also highlights the significance of the state's horticulture industry, which contributes substantially to Tennessee's economy and supports thousands of jobs.

NATIONAL

1. Toxic Coal Waste Rules Face Rollbacks Amid Industry Pressure

The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed rolling back key federal safeguards governing how coal ash—the toxic byproduct of burning coal—is stored and monitored, reopening a long-running national debate over environmental and public health protections. The changes would ease requirements on some older or inactive disposal sites, shift more oversight authority to states, and allow companies to test for contamination farther from waste sites, while also encouraging reuse of coal ash in industrial products. Industry advocates frame the revisions as a way to support energy production and reduce regulatory burdens, but TCWP—alongside conservation and environmental groups—warns the rollbacks will increase risks to groundwater and nearby communities, pointing to past disasters such as the 2008 spill at the Kingston Fossil Plant as evidence of what is at stake. With millions of tons of coal ash generated annually and many disposal sites already linked to contamination, the proposal highlights ongoing tensions between energy policy, regulatory oversight, and long-term environmental protection.

TCWP EVENTS

TCWP's Guidelines for Activities

- We ask that you stay home when you are sick.
- We ask that you know what you're capable of, and that you communicate that to the group leader.
- We recommend that you bring plenty of water and snacks.
- We ask that dogs be kept on leash, under your control and that you pick up after them.
- NOTE: Events advertised as cleanups or workdays could involve a brisk pace, steep grades, and/or uneven terrain, and might not be appropriate for inexperienced hikers or those with physical limitations. For more information or if you have specific questions, contact the TCWP event leader.

[NOTE: Times listed for all events are Eastern time unless specified otherwise.]

1. Upcoming Events

Synchronous Fireflies Outing - Sunday, May 31

Free for TCWPmembers. \$25 for non-membersto join.

You can join here: Join TCWP - Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning or <https://tcwp.org/join-tcwp/>

This special evening event has been arranged for TCWP by Becky Charles and her son, Ezekiel, at their home between Oak Ridge and Clinton. Snappy Single Sync fireflies (*Photuris frontalis*) are a medium-sized synchronous species of firefly with a warm yellow flash that live in wooded environments. Their synchronous behavior is quite different from the more famous Smokies Synchronous firefly (*Photinus carolinus*). They produce continuous, quick, rhythmic flashes every half a second to one second. When viewed in small groups they may seem somewhat random, but when viewed in large numbers, it becomes apparent that they are receptive to their neighbors' flashing. Large clusters and occasionally whole hillsides may converge on the same rhythm, as if the forest has a heartbeat.

The viewing trail is relatively smooth and just wide enough to let a vehicle pass. Our walk leaders will use glow sticks at the front and rear of the group to help participants orient; however, it is a forested trail that will be dark. This event may not be suitable for anyone with particularly poor night vision or who is at all unsteady on their feet.

****Please also note that the trail is .78 mile in length down to a creek area and same length back up. The incline, though not steep, is steady. If you need to take a break on the way back up, our hosts will accommodate you.**

We will 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). The fireflies become active toward the end of dusk, so participants should be at the parking lot by 7:45 p.m. Eastern. Parking on the property is limited, so we will carpool. **Participation in this outing will be limited; to register, please sign up on our website at <https://www.tcwp.org/events>.**

"Stories from a Wildlife Veterinarian" - Friday, June 5

On Friday, June 5, Dr. Matt Allender will share "Stories from a Wildlife Veterinarian, from Oak Ridge to Peru and from Box Turtles to Penguins" in a program cosponsored by the Clinch River Environmental Studies Organization (CRESO), TCWP, and the UT Arboretum Society. The program will begin at 7 p.m. in the City Room on the Oak Ridge campus of Roane State Community College.

Dr. Allender, a board-certified zoo and wildlife veterinarian, wears several hats. He is founder and director of the Wildlife Epidemiology Lab at the University of Illinois and the Director of Conservation Medicine and Science at Brookfield Zoo Chicago. His work focuses on identifying gaps in knowledge on the health of imperiled species to aid in management and conservation actions. His longest running project (18 years to date) investigates the health of the Eastern Box Turtle in Oak Ridge and at several sites in Illinois. His work has led to discoveries of new viruses and bacteria and identified the health threats to successful conservation of this species. His work with the Humboldt penguin began in 2010; he now leads a multi-disciplinary team looking at pathogens, toxins, and other causes of decline in the face of increasing El Niño events and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

Preregistration for this program is not required. The City Room is Room A-111 in the Coffey/McNally Building near the front entrance of Roane State Community College, 701 Briarcliff Avenue, Oak Ridge.

National Trails Day Work on North Ridge Trail - Saturday, June 6

TCWP will host their annual National Trails Day work project on the North Ridge Trail on Saturday, May 6. Trail stewards regularly report to TCWP on trail conditions, and any large-scale work projects needing attention are addressed on National Trails Day.

This year's project will be building a small bridge over a water channel crossing the Endicott Lane access trail. We are working with experienced trail builders to prepare a design and material requirement list.

On June 6 we will need volunteer hands to deliver material one-half mile to the construction site, as well as to assist in construction work.

The access point is located just past 103 Endicott Lane (just off East Drive at the east end of Oak Ridge). There is room for a half-dozen cars to park safely off the road. Plan to carpool if possible. Participants should plan to arrive by 9 a.m. for a safety briefing and a review of the work. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear, and bring work gloves, water, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

TCWP will provide a pizza lunch after the work is complete. Pizza and drinks will be served at Cedar Hill Park, 609 Michigan Ave., at around noon. There is plenty of parking near the covered gazebo at the park.

Please watch our website for the link to sign up for this event.

We hope to see you on June 6, as we show our appreciation for the great trails we all enjoy in Oak Ridge and East Tennessee! For more information, contact John Jaruzel at jmjaruzel@gmail.com.

TCWP table at Oak Ridge Lavender Festival - Saturday, June 20

TCWP will again be part of the Lavender Festival in Oak Ridge's historic Jackson Square! Stop by our table near the food trucks to meet volunteers, learn about our work, and connect with others who share an interest in conservation and community. Our team will also be assisting with recycling efforts throughout the event.

The Lavender Festival, open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., is free and open to the public, featuring more than 150 artisan vendors, live music, children's activities, and educational presentations. We'd love to see you there—come say hello!

East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup - Saturday, June 27

Join TCWP, the Clinch Valley Trails Alliance, and Greenways Oak Ridge for our sixth annual trash cleanup and peaceful hike along the East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway in west Oak Ridge.

This scenic trail winds alongside the creek through a beautiful riparian woodland. Because the area is prone to occasional flooding, trash gets washed from upstream areas down into the creek bed and onto its banks. Volunteers are needed to help remove this litter and keep the area beautiful and healthy.

Trash bags and some pick-up tools will be provided. Participants are encouraged to bring gloves and wear shoes suitable for mud and water.

Please watch our website for the link to sign up for this event.

We will meet at the Jefferson Avenue intersection with Oak Ridge Turnpike. Parking is available next to the Boys and Girls Club, just a short walk from the Turnpike. For more information, contact Hans Christen at 865-414-7277 or hans_christen@yahoo.com.

2.Recent Events

Wildflower Walk on N. Walker Access to North Ridge Trail – Saturday, March 21

Forty-two people came out to enjoy a spring wildflower hike the third Saturday in March. Highlights of the show were the trout lilies and twinleaf, both of which were at their peak. The wood poppies (or celandine poppies) were starting to bloom in a giant patch, and the star of the hike, Dutchman's breeches, held on long enough to show off its intricate flowers. It was a beautiful day to see this amazing wildflower area! *Margaret Cumberland*

“How Flowers Made Our World,” with David George Haskell – Monday, March 30

Some 225 people registered to hear Pulitzer Prize finalist David George Haskell in a Zoom presentation on March 30, in a program sponsored by TCWP, the University of Tennessee Arboretum Society, and the Oak Ridge Public Library. Using stories from his latest book, *How Flowers Made Our World*, Haskell illustrated the many ways in which we live on a floral planet. Through radical genetic flexibility, flowers turned environmental upheavals into opportunities for renewal, allowing them to build and sustain temperate forests, rainforests, savannas, prairies, and even ocean shores.

Haskell, a writer and biologist, is a two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction, for *The Forest Unseen* and *Sounds Wild and Broken*. His book *The Songs of Trees* won the John Burroughs Medal.

Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 4

The 11 people who came to the Garlic Mustard Pull really earned their pizza! Everyone was so determined to get the flowering garlic mustard pulled up that the wildflower walk had to happen after lunch. Even on the wildflower walk, a stop to admire a patch of mayapples turned our walk back into a workday when a few missed patches of garlic mustard were spotted. There were numerous beautiful wildflowers along the trail, but the dwarf larkspur and celandine poppies were the biggest highlights. We also managed to find one white-blooming Vasey's trillium! *Margaret Cumberland*

Frozen Head Wildflower Pilgrimage Walk – Saturday, April 4

On April 4 we had our usual Frozen Head large turnout, 32 people. Half of them did just the first mile; the rest continued for the remaining three miles. Highlights included spotted mandarin lily (*Prosartes maculata*), large white trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), and southern pinxter bush (*Rhododendron canescens*). We started out counting species of violets, but eventually lost count. I'm guessing eight species in all. As usual, John White took great pictures. *Larry Pounds*

River Cleanup on Big South Fork of the Cumberland – Saturday, April 11

For the last 15 years or so, TCWP along with the National Park Service Obed office and the East Tennessee Whitewater Club have co-hosted a river cleanup on a segment of the Obed Wild and Scenic River or the Big South Fork of the Cumberland. Having recovered almost 100 old tires from the Big South Fork upstream of Leatherwood Ford two years ago, this year we decided to tackle the reach below Leatherwood Ford. Twenty-one volunteers joined five Park Service rangers on the eight-mile reach from Leatherwood down to Station Camp.

By the time we reached the only major rapid at Angel Falls two miles down the river, we had already filled four rafts and three inflatable kayaks with tires and trash. In an abundance of caution, everyone walked around the rapid, and the loaded rafts were safely roped through without their captains. Most of the whitewater kayakers had never paddled this section before, and for good reason; after Angel Falls, there were two hours of very slow flatwater to paddle to the takeout. The gathered trash was enough to fill the dumptruck waiting for us at Station Camp.

All in all it was a great day of hard work and fun, and a cleaner wilderness in one of the Southeast's most underappreciated natural treasures, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. *Mark Bevelhimer*

Norris Grist Mill to Observation Point – Saturday, April 18

It was a beautiful day for the seven of us to hike up Dryer Hollow to the Observation Point of Norris Dam on April 18. Red trilliums were everywhere, and pink lady's slippers were in full bloom. A couple of people were even brave enough to smell a blooming carrion flower. They did not recommend it.

We saw Cumberland spurge and purple cliffbrake fern on the cliff at the end. A good day to see lots of fun plants! *Margaret Cumberland*

We look forward to seeing you there



Let's Celebrate

60 Years Together!

AUGUST | 01 | 2026 @ 9AM ET

IJAMS NATURE CENTER
2915 Island Home Ave - Knoxville, TN 37920

[RSVP to tcwp.contact@gmail.com](mailto:tcwp.contact@gmail.com)

Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning

Don't miss what's coming next.

Follow us on social media for real-time updates, insights, and exclusive content between newsletters.



TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

P.O BOX 6873
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Tennessee Citizens for
Wilderness Planning
Taking Care of Wild Places Since 1966

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 179

Board of Directors

- Mark Bevelhimer.....President
- Michele Thornton.....V Pres.
- Hans Christen.....Secretary
- Joel Freund.....Treasurer
- Margaret Cumberland.....Director
- Kirk Eddlemon.....Director
- Jimmy Groton.....Director
- Eva Robbins.....Director
- Tim Partridge.....Director
- Erin Cunningham.....Director
- Jacob King.....Director

Calendar

- May 31 - Synchronous Fireflies Outing
- June 5 – “ Stories from a Wildlife Veterinarian”
- June 6 – National Trails Day Work on North Ridge Trail
- June 20 – TCWP Table at Oak Ridge Lavender Festival
- June 27 – East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup

**These events are subject to cancellation.
Call ahead to verify the event will occur.**

Tennessee Citizens of Wilderness Planning (TCWP)

The mission of TCWP is to: Preserve wild places and waters through protection, advocacy, stewardship, and education.

TCWP: P.O. Box 6873., Oak Ridge, TN 37831

President: Mark Bevelhimer, mbevelhimer@gmail.com

Executive Director: Nancy Manning, nancymanning@tcwp.org

Development Assistant & Outreach Coordinator: Geri Fox,
tcwp.contact@gmail.com

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