

WATCH for these ICONS:

In early issues of the TCWP newsletter, Liane Russell would add an asterisk in the left margin next to articles that included a Call to Action. In other words, when she wanted you to take some action, she wanted an easy way to draw your attention to the action needed. These old newsletters were copied on a copy machine. Since the newsletter is now emailed to a printer, we would like to re-introduce Liane’s idea so please watch for these icons within or at the end of articles that need you to take some action or ask for your help:



Take Action



Volunteers Needed

TCWP Newsletter

1. INSIDE TCWP

In April of 2023, the TCWP Board of Directors developed a strategic plan clearly defining four program areas: Protection, Advocacy, Stewardship and Education. Section 1 of this issue highlights our work in Protection, Education and Advocacy. Section 2 highlights an issue we are exploring. Sections 3 and 4 are news capsules as Liane Russell once called them and Section 4 is the TCWP events covering our work in stewardship and adult education. Don’t miss our Featured Writer section at page 11 and let us know if we can Count you In – on the back page.

1A. Efforts to Create a Local 42-mile Rail-to-Trail Experience are Back on Track!

If you have ever biked the Virginia Creeper Trail, then you know that biking on a reclaimed railroad bed can be a great wilderness experience for all ages. Four years ago, TCWP partnered with the Cumberland Trail Conference to file paperwork with the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) to obtain the rights on a soon-to-be abandoned rail line to develop a 42-mile rail-trail extending from eastern Anderson County (7 miles) through southwestern Campbell County (7 miles) and then through the heart of Scott County to Oneida (28 miles). The line follows the scenic New River valley for 32 miles from Anderson County and then up Paint Rock Creek into Oneida. For four years, the process has been tied up in legal procedures of various kinds – none that involved TCWP other than to derail (pardon the pun) our efforts to get the process started.

Inside this issue

- 1. Inside TCWP1
 - A. Efforts to Create a Local 42-mile Rail-to-Trail Experience are Back on Track!
 - B. TCWP launches Explore and Restore program
 - C. UPDATE: TCWP joins lawsuit challenging the approval of the EMDF
 - D. Are Public Hearings Still Public?
- 2. TCWP Explores Methane Gas Build Out4
 - A. Kingston Gas Plant: TVA ignores warnings from EPA and moves forward with fossil fuel plant
 - B. TVA executives have made \$90 million since 2020 while pushing fossil fuels. Your electricity bill paid them.
 - C. The Pipeline
 - D. Pollution from pipelines puts people at risk
- 3. State7
 - A. An Earth-friendly Waste Disposal Model -East Tennessee Leads the Way
 - B. Rare Tennessee salamander at center of new Endangered Species Act lawsuit
 - C. WATER WARS on the Duck River
- 4. National Parks8
 - A. Cleaner Air in the Smokies
 - B. National Park Service Events
- 5. TCWP News9
 - A. Upcoming Events
 - B. Recent Events
- 6. Featured Writer11
 - A. OBED RESERVOIR by TCWP board member, Kirk Eddleman



TCWP Board Meetings

The Officers and Directors of Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning meet the third Thursday of each month. Members are welcome to call, email, or attend a Board meeting to raise issues that TCWP needs to address. We welcome your input. See inside front page for contact information.



Keep TCWP in Mind for Charitable Payroll Deductions through Community Shares.

The STB officially proclaimed the rail abandoned in April of this year, salvaging of the rails and ties has begun, and now it's time for TCWP to do its magic. The TCWP Board does not envision that TCWP will be the owners or stewards of the trail in the long term, but we do see ourselves as initiators and facilitators in the near-term with a goal of finding the right combination of state, county, local municipalities, and private entities and individuals that can work with us to acquire funding and form an organization that will make this trail a reality.

Recently, we have had very encouraging meetings and calls with leaders in Scott County and the City of Oneida, and with the railroad and salvage companies. In the very near future we will be seeking new partners, including other non-profit organizations and Campbell and Anderson County officials. We have a lot of work to do and will soon be forming sub-committees to help with

- partners
- legal process
- funding sources
- communications and marketing
- community relations
- trail building and mapping

If you would like to help out in any of these areas, please send a note to Mark

Bevelhimer (mbevelhimer@gmail.com) or Nancy Manning (nancymanning@tcwp.org). We would especially like to hear from you if you are friends or acquaintances with anyone on the three county commissions or if you are a resident of Campbell or Scott County. -



Mark Bevelhimer

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?: We understand from other Rails to Trails projects that doctors love to support / volunteer for these projects. If you are a doctor or work within the health profession, we want to hear from you.

1B. TCWP launches Explore and Restore program

Explore and Restore is an environmental education program combining hands-on science with habitat restoration projects. It aims to empower students in science and foster a sense of stewardship for natural habitats.

Background: Initially developed for fourth and fifth graders at a Title One school in Austin, Texas, the program was first launched in Oak Ridge at Jefferson Middle School in May 2024. At Jefferson Middle School, sixth-grade science teacher, Julie McCullough, adapted the program to align with Tennessee Educational Standards, the Cedar Barrens natural area and the school's schedule. This pilot program involved over 20 students.

Description of Program: Students are divided into four groups representing a branch of science relevant to the natural area where the restoration work of the project will occur. The program includes:

1. **Introduction Day:** Students are divided into 3 or 4 groups by a science topic such as botany, hydrology or zoology. They are assigned their team leaders and learn what it means to be a botanist, zoologist or hydrologist – learning how to observe, what to observe and how to record observations. They also learn how to use tools relevant to their individual groups.

2. **Field Day:** Students apply their learning in a natural area.
3. **Restoration Day:** Students undertake projects like planting native seeds, removing invasive species or woody plants and maintaining trails.
4. **Presentation Day:** Students create displays to teach the other groups what they've learned.

We are now working with Stephanie Sluss, seventh grade science teacher, to expand *Explore and Restore* to her 80 students at Robertsville Middle School. Stephanie has chosen zoology, botany, hydrology and soil science as her four groups. There will be a focus on the wetlands on the school's property. TCWP is in the process of applying for grant funding to support the expansion of this program with appropriate test kits, tools and supplies.



As with each *Explore and Restore* program, there is a **need for volunteers**. If you are willing to share your knowledge and passion in botany, zoology, hydrology or soil science with 7th graders this coming school year, please sign-up with Nancy Manning (nancymanning@gmail.com). We anticipate we will need you for a day in the fall and a couple of days in the spring. This may change a bit as the program develops.

There is nothing more rewarding than watching these students connect to nature in a real-world manner, transform into budding scientists and find joy in an immersive outdoor experience. – *Nancy Manning*

1C. UPDATE: TCWP joins lawsuit challenging the approval of the EMDF

In our May newsletter we advised you that TCWP and Sierra Club have been meeting twice monthly with a group of “super smart scientists and lawyers” to move forward with steps requesting EPA Administrator Regan to review the Record of Decision approving the EMDF. This group sent that request on February 28, 2024, which was followed by a letter signed by TCWP and 39 organizations.

We now have two lawyers who have agreed to represent us and our TCWP Board of Directors has agreed to join that suit as a Plaintiff. The lawyers are Terry Lodge (with Tennessee roots) from Ohio and Wally Taylor from Iowa (long time Sierra Clubber) who have long been taking on the Dept of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission representing public interest, peace and environmental groups...as well as doing other social justice, civil and human rights cases. The Sierra Club is the primary Plaintiff in this lawsuit.

The 60-day Letter of Intent to Sue is in the works as we speak. The first paragraph of this Letter states:

“This letter provides notice that [] intends to file suit against the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for violations of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) associated with the cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) in Tennessee. The actions taken by DOE and EPA violate federal law and threaten those who live, fish, paddle, and otherwise enjoy Bear Creek and other waters of the United States which have been designated for recreational use under the Clean Water Act.”



We need 1 or 2 of our members to step up to submit “Standing Declarations.” **If you fish, boat, hunt or recreate downstream of the Oak Ridge Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF) currently being constructed on the Oak Ridge Reservation? (The creeks/rivers immediately impacted are Bear Creek, Poplar Creek, East Fork Poplar Creek, Clinch River below those creeks, Tennessee River below the Clinch)**

Do you fish or recreate in other places but avoid the areas downwind and downstream of the Oak Ridge EMDF because of concerns about the hazardous, toxic, radioactive releases into the water and air, fish and wildlife?

If so, we will provide a template for you to use. Please email nancymanning@tcwp.org if you are willing to do this.

1D. Are Public Hearings Still Public?

When Sandra Goss took me to my first "public hearing" last August for the proposed Oak Ridge Airport, I was struck by how different it was from what I had experienced elsewhere. I wondered if this was a Tennessee-specific approach or just an initial phase before a more traditional public hearing. Recently, when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) announced public hearings for a proposed gas pipeline, some of our TCWP members attended the first hearing in Kingston. Two of our members, Keith and Susan Havens, described the same type of "public hearing" I experienced last August.

Public hearings now look like this: Display boards are strategically placed around an open room to demonstrate the project's appeal. There is no one representing the project speaking to the public. If you want to express your opinion, you are ushered into a private room to state your comments to a court reporter who has nothing to do with the project. She takes down your comments, which are supposedly entered into the "record."

Sue Havens described the gas pipeline hearings in Kingston this way:

"I won't call it a public meeting because we did not all speak in the same room. You were given a number and then escorted to a separate room with just a FERC employee and a court reporter, and they recorded your comment and sent you home. What a fabulous way to silence a community. And if that wasn't enough, they brought in a policeman, in case we got rowdy? Or just to intimidate? The separate room was intimidating enough. Several individuals did not get to say anything because they would not go into that room. The press heard that that was how the meeting was planned, and they did not show."

The law requires public hearings for projects such as gas pipelines. Have these project promoters found a way to comply with the letter of the law while failing to comply with its spirit?

One of our TCWP board members pointed out that if the public is disappointed in the process, they will stop showing up, allowing project promoters to claim that no one cares or opposes the project. Therefore, we must continue to show up, submit our comments, and work together to ensure our voices are heard. - *Nancy Manning*

2. TCWP EXPLORES METHANE GAS BUILD OUT

Understanding the TVA Methane Gas Expansion and How you may be Impacted

This section will include a series of articles designed to help you navigate the issues. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is expanding its fossil fuel infrastructure with plans to construct eight methane gas plants by the decade's end. TCWP has been reporting on two of those sites: Cumberland and Kingston. Methane gas begins with fracking at some point upstream, is transported through pipelines with compression stations and ends at the methane gas plant.

We will focus on the Kingston Gas Plant and its companion pipeline known as the Ridgeline Expansion Pipeline. We will end this series of articles with the potential impacts on the environment and health of humans and animals.

2A. Kingston Gas Plant: TVA ignores warnings from EPA and moves forward with fossil fuel plant

When TVA completed its environmental review process, the EPA strongly criticized TVA's conclusions citing issues of transparency, the need to consider lower-cost and safer alternatives like solar energy, underestimating climate and air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions' social costs, emphasizing the disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities and the urgency of addressing methane leaks in the gas supply chain.

TVA ignored this rebuke and is proceeding with its plans for the plant. What happens when a giant agency ignores the agency tasked with ensuring that environmental standards established in various well-founded laws are met? Nothing!

Here's the rest of the story:

TVA's Unyielding Stance

Despite the EPA's requests and detailed critiques, TVA's CEO signed off on the project. EPA's follow-up efforts to schedule additional meetings were unsuccessful. Although TVA expressed willingness to continue coordination, they proceeded with their plan. The EPA completed its responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act but did not escalate the matter to the Council on Environmental Quality, highlighting a limitation in the Biden administration's efforts to decarbonize the power sector.



If you are interested in helping with some research and can possibly make a few phone calls, we could use some help to track down why EPA didn't report the TVA failure to the Council on Environmental Quality and what can be done to get that back on track. If you can help, contact nancymanning@tcwp.org.

2B. TVA executives have made \$90 million since 2020 while pushing fossil fuels. Your electricity bill paid them.

WE recommend reading this article by Caroline Eggers. [TVA executives made \\$90 million since 2020 while pushing fossil fuels. Your electricity bill paid them. | WPLN News \(https://wpln.org/post/tva-executives-made-90-million-since-2020-while-pushing-fossil-fuels-your-electricity-bill-paid-them/\)](https://wpln.org/post/tva-executives-made-90-million-since-2020-while-pushing-fossil-fuels-your-electricity-bill-paid-them/)


2C. The Pipeline

You can't have a methane gas plant without a pipeline. The Ridgeline Expansion Pipeline will be constructed and installed by Enbridge, a Canadian company with a dismal record of safety. Enbridge is currently embroiled in lawsuits across the country as we speak. There is a non-profit organization called The Pipeline Safety Trust that devotes an entire section of its website to Enbridge. The Pipeline Safety Trust came into being when three young men were killed by a gas pipeline explosion in Bellingham, Washington and a judge ordered 4 million dollars of the criminal fines be awarded as an endowment to fund the Pipeline Safety Trust.

When you open the link below you are taken to the Enbridge page where you can click on the link to Enbridge's spill/incident history. [Enbridge Expansion backgrounder - Pipeline Safety Trust \(pstrust.org\) \(https://pstrust.org/enbridge-expansion-background/#incidents\)](https://pstrust.org/enbridge-expansion-background/#incidents)

Enbridge has a spiderweb of pipelines across our country and the incident / spill page likely doesn't include those closer to our neck of the woods. You can find pending lawsuits against Enbridge in Michigan and Kentucky on the google machine. TCWP members, Sue and Keith Havens, lived 15 minutes from a different Enbridge leak in Michigan. Enbridge had received 15,000 complaints of leaks and ignored them all resulting in a major leak of 1 million gallons of oil. The gasses released in any type of gas pipeline can kill as described further in the article below.

IMPACT on the Obed Wild and Scenic River: The Ridgeline Expansion Pipeline is 122 miles in length. 28 miles of the pipeline will cross over Obed Wild and Scenic River segments. 77 pipeline crossings are within the Obed watershed and 19 of those crossings are direct tributaries of the Obed. The slides below were created by Gabi Lichtenstein of Appalachian Voices:

Find us on 
<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>

LOCAL IMPACTS: Threats to waterways & the Obed

Table 4.3-6: Sensitive Waters and Obed Wild and Scenic River Tributaries Crossed by the Project

Milepost	Tennessee County	Waterbody Name	Basis for Sensitivity ^a	Distance from Crossing to Obed WSR (river miles) ^b	Proposed Crossing Method ^c
84.0	Morgan	Bice Creek (SS-MOR-T10-001A) (SS-MOR-T10-001B)	Primary Tributary to the Obed WSR	1.7	DC
86.6	Morgan	UT to Four Mile Creek (SS-MOR-T17-004B)	Tributary to the Obed WSR	2.6	DC
86.6	Morgan	Four Mile Creek (SS-MOR-T17-004A)	Primary Tributary to the Obed WSR	2.6	DC
87.1 88.2	Morgan	Little Creek (SS-MOR-T18-003) (SS-MOR-T18-010)	Tributary to the Obed WSR	7.6	DC DC
90.2	Morgan	White Creek (SS-MOR-T18-017)	NRI Primary Tributary to the Obed WSR	3.8	DC
91.0	Morgan	Douglas Branch (SS-MOR-T30-009)	Exceptional Tennessee Water (Biodiversity) Tributary to the Obed WSR	4.3	DC
91.5	Morgan	Green Branch SS-MOR-T30-008)	Tributary to the Obed WSR	4.7	DC

LOCAL IMPACTS: Threats to waterways & the Obed

93.2	Morgan	Gordon Branch (SS-MOR-T915-001)	Primary Tributary to the Obed WSR	0.9	DC
94.3	Morgan	UT Little Clear Creek (SS-MOR-T829-001)	Primary Tributary to the Obed WSR	2.6	DC
95.4	Morgan	Gut Branch (SS-MOR-T19-030)	Tributary to the Obed WSR	2.4	DC
97.0	Morgan	Susans Branch (SS-MOR-T19-042)	Tributary to the Obed WSR	2.2	DC
100.0	Morgan	Campground Creek (SS-MOR-T20-002)	Tributary to the Obed WSR	4.2	HDD
101.9 121.9R	Morgan, Roane	Emory River (SS-MOR-T21-012) (SS-ROA-T23-024)	Public Water Supply Intake, NRI (SS-MOR-T21-012 only), Exceptional Tennessee Water, Alabama lampmussel, Tennessee bean, and Spotfin Chub and Sickle Darter Designated Critical Habitat (SS-MOR-T21-012 only), Tributary to Obed WSR (SS-MOR-T21-012 only)	4.9	DC HDD
105.4	Morgan	Crooked Fork Creek (SS-MOR-T20-014B)	NRI	N/A	DC



2D. Pollution from pipelines puts people at risk

Not all pipeline dangers come with a massive fireball. Pipelines leak methane which releases dangerous pollutants such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (VOC's) such as benzene and formaldehyde. These pollutants can cause various health issues, including anemia, immune system diseases, cancer and respiratory problems.

The following is summarized from an article penned by Caroline Eggers writing for WKMS: "From nose bleeds to cancer: The public health risks of TVA's gas buildout."

From Upstream to Downstream: Fracking occurs upstream and where that has occurred studies have linked it to increased lymphoma in children and higher mortality rates in the elderly. Health issues range from minor ailments like headaches to severe conditions such as cancer.

Health Risks from Pipelines and Compressor Stations

Gas pipelines and compressor stations release up to 70 air pollutants, with 39 linked to cancer. Higher death rates and alarming VOC levels have been found near these stations, which also pose explosion risks, resulting in fatalities and injuries.

Burning at Gas Plants

Burning methane in gas plants releases nitrogen oxides and VOCs, contributing to particulate matter and smog. This results in local health impacts like premature births and increased medical emergencies. The delay in documenting harm allows the fossil fuel industry to avoid responsibility, even as gas usage for electricity grows.

EPA Faults TVA's Math on Pollution

The EPA identified discrepancies in TVA's pollution estimates and outdated calculations for the social cost of climate pollution, indicating a skewed representation of environmental impacts.

The Next Few Decades of Fossil Fuels

Fossil fuel burning significantly contributes to global mortality rates and climate change, affecting health through various channels. As fossil fuel use expands in the Tennessee Valley, it will continue to impact health, causing heightened anxiety and mental health issues in affected communities like Ashland City.

3. STATE

3A. An Earth-friendly Waste Disposal Model -East Tennessee Leads the Way

The communities in Sevier County, Tennessee, particularly Gatlinburg, face significant waste management challenges due to the influx of over 14 million visitors annually. Sevier Solid Waste, Inc. (SSWI), a nonprofit organization, addresses this by utilizing an innovative composting digester system to process organic waste into high-grade composted soil, significantly reducing landfill contributions. This system, the largest mixed solid waste compost facility in the U.S., has been operational for over 30 years, achieving a 72% recycling rate. SSWI also recycles cardboard, tires, and offers drop-offs for various recyclable materials, making it a leader in sustainable waste management in Tennessee.

The history of SSWI is rooted in necessity and innovation. When Gatlinburg's landfill reached capacity in the late 1980s, a collaborative effort with neighboring cities led to the implementation of a drum digester system inspired by a facility in Pinetop, Arizona. This system processes 400 tons of waste daily, converting it into compost through a meticulous process involving digesters, sifters, and windrows. The facility also serves as an educational hub, fostering future environmental leaders like Olivia Whatley, an AmeriCorps service member who gained valuable experience in sustainability and nonprofit operations. SSWI's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship exemplifies effective community-driven waste management solutions.

3B. Rare Tennessee salamander at center of new Endangered Species Act lawsuit

The Southern Environmental Law Center, representing the Center for Biological Diversity, has sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for denying Endangered Species Act protections to the Berry Cave salamander, a rare species found only in a few East Tennessee caves. The lawsuit argues that the agency's 2019 decision violated federal law and was influenced by a quota system aimed at denying species protections. The Berry Cave salamander, known for its distinctive pink gills and vulnerability to water pollution, has seen significant population declines due to rapid development in the region. The lawsuit seeks to reverse the denial and secure protections to prevent the salamander's extinction and improve water quality in East Tennessee.

3C. WATER WARS on the Duck River

Conservationists and residents are raising alarms about unsustainable water withdrawals from Tennessee's Duck River, renowned for its biodiversity. Governor Bill Lee's economic incentives have attracted industries such as the General Motors lithium battery supplier, which requires 1.4 million gallons of water daily. Recently, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) approved Columbia Power and Water Systems' request to increase water withdrawals from the Duck River by 60%, with similar requests from seven other utilities. If all requests are granted, daily water withdrawals could reach 73 million gallons, a significant increase that threatens the river's health. Local groups, including Hickman for the Duck and the Tennessee Wildlife Federation, argue that such withdrawals are unsustainable, risking ecological collapse and the river's role as a key water source for 250,000 residents.

The Tennessee Wildlife Federation has legally challenged TDEC's permits, citing poor oversight and long-term environmental risks. They argue that allowing utility companies to waste up to 25% of the drawn water exacerbates the problem, especially during droughts. While TDEC claims to balance resource protection with community needs, critics highlight that the river's water levels are already perilously low, endangering its biodiversity and diminishing its appeal for recreation and real estate. The Harpeth Conservancy and other groups are advocating for sustainable water management practices to ensure the Duck River can continue to support both ecological health and economic growth.

4. NATIONAL PARKS

4A. Cleaner Air in the Smokies

Great Smoky Mountains National Park has made significant strides in its battle against air pollution, which has plagued the region for decades. Since the 1960s, the park has faced issues with ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter due to pollution from fossil-fuel industries, motor vehicles, and agriculture. These pollutants have harmed both human health and sensitive plant species, while nitrogen and sulfur pollution have degraded soil and water quality. Efforts to improve air quality began in the 1970s with federal regulations like the Clean Air Act and the Regional Haze Rule, leading to the development of an extensive air monitoring program in the 1980s. These initiatives allowed park staff to identify pollution sources and work towards mitigating their impact.

Jim Renfro, the park's air quality specialist for nearly 40 years, has played a crucial role in these efforts. Through collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as public education, significant progress has been made. Legislation like the North Carolina Clean Smokestacks Act and the Clean Air Interstate Rule have reduced sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions, leading to improved air quality. Although challenges remain, such as meeting the EPA's visibility goals by 2064, the park has seen a notable decrease in acid rain, particulates, and haze. The ongoing commitment to reducing pollutants and enhancing air quality continues to bring hope for the future, aiming to restore the park's natural beauty and ensure a healthier environment for all.

4B. National Park Service Events

Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge

Building America's Secret City: Jackson Square – Thursday, July 18, 6-7pm ET. A tour of Jackson Square as we explore how Oak Ridge came to be. The tour will end at the Tennis Courts right on time for July's Tennis Court Dance.

Tennis Court Dance – Thursday, July 18, 7-8pm ET. In the early years of Oak Ridge, the Jackson Square Tennis Courts were swinging. Put on your dancing shoes and join us.

Messages of Peace at Oak Ridge Farmer's Market – Saturdays on July 20, July 27, & August 3
8-11am ET. Come out to the Oak Ridge Farmers Market and record your message of peace on white paper bags. The bags will be used for luminarias for the park's Days of Peace and Remembrance commemoration on August 6.

Days of Peace and Remembrance

Each year, the park marks the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with programs for reflection. Oak Ridge will mark 79 years since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945, that cost the lives of 70,000 to 140,000 people. During the early hours of Tuesday, August 6, rangers will illuminate AK Bissel Park's International Friendship Bell with luminarias bearing the messages of peace from the community. At sunrise (6:49 am ET), visitors are invited to ring the bell, each tone marking a year since the atomic bombings

Big South Fork National Park and Recreation Area

Hike the Oscar Blevins Trail and Stop for a "Time on the Trail" Program on Saturday July 20 anytime between 10 am-1 pm ET. A park ranger will be on the porch of the Oscar Blevins house telling the story of one of the first families to settle in the area.

Birds of a Feather Walk Together on Saturday, July 27 at 9 am ET. A relaxed stroll in Upper Burke Fields with a Ranger to learn grassland bird identification & ecology.

Reading With a Ranger Program on Sunday, July 28 at 2 pm ET at Scott County Visitor Center will feature a children's book & craft activity

5. TCWP NEWS

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 you not bring pets.

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

5A. Upcoming Events

Kayak the Clinch River – Saturday, July 20

Bring your kayak and join us Saturday, July 20, for a scenic paddle trip down the Clinch River. The usual kingfishers and great blue herons are sure to be seen, but otters and bald eagles have also been seen while paddling the river. We will be dependent on TVA to release water from Norris Lake before we take off. The flowing water will make for an easy trip, but there are a couple of places we may drag bottom or have to maneuver small rapids, which could result in getting wet... so be prepared.

We will paddle from Miller Island down the TWRA River Access at the bridge on Charles G Seivers Blvd/TN 61. The trip can take between 3 and 4 hours; a shuttle service will be available at the takeout. The shuttle will cost about \$10/person.

Participants should meet at 10:30am at the Miller Island boat ramp on River Road in Norris. Please bring and wear a life jacket whenever on the boat! Be prepared for the sun and bring a lunch and water. For more information and to RSVP, contact Ken Mayes at ken.mayes@icloud.com.

Summer Cedar Barrens Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, August 24

This will be the second of our three annual workdays at the Oak Ridge Cedar Barrens. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, the barrens is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, the State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. One of just 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 spring, summer, and fall cleanups help to eliminate invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sun. The late-summer workday is optimum for viewing prairie wildflowers that flourish at the barrens.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School parking lot at 9 a.m.; wear sturdy shoes, and bring loppers, gloves, and water. A pizza lunch will be provided. For additional information, contact Jimmy Groton at 865-805-9908 or groton87@comcast.net

Crab Orchard Mountain Power Line Fall Flowers – Saturday, September 21

In this joint outing with the Tennessee Native Plant Society, we will caravan from Crab Orchard to the power line, then walk along the power line right-of-way to see many species of goldenrods, asters, and other fall flowers. The walk will be less than four miles round-trip, with opportunities to return early.

We will meet for caravanning at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot in Oak Ridge (at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's) at 9 a.m. Eastern time, or meet at the Marathon station at I-40 Crab Orchard exit 329 east of Crossville at 10 a.m. Eastern time (9 a.m. Central).

An email or call to hike leader Margaret Cumberland (meshearin@gmail.com, cell 919-339-0072) saying you are likely to come is appreciated. This helps with planning and allows for participants to be contacted with any change of plans.

National Public Lands Day - Saturday, September 28

On September 28, TCWP and TVA will partner again for our annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD) celebration, to be held at TVA's Worthington Cemetery Cedar Barrens Small Wild Area on Melton Hill Reservoir in Oak Ridge. TCWP has for many years partnered with TVA to enhance and protect natural resources at Worthington Cemetery and other TVA lands throughout East Tennessee as part of our mutual stewardship efforts. Our yearly efforts in this area are helping to eradicate wisteria from the cemetery, and privet and other invasive exotics from the ESA.

We'll meet for the cleanup at 9 a.m. at the Elza Gate Park picnic area near the intersection of Oak Ridge Turnpike and Melton Lake Drive. At the completion of our work (around noon), TCWP will provide a pizza lunch. Participants should wear sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothes, and bring water, gloves, and clippers, loppers, or bow or pruning saws, if possible. Other tools and equipment will also be available at the worksite. A pizza lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Jimmy Groton at 865-805-9908 or groton87@comcast.net.

5B. Recent Events

Devil's Breakfast Table Scour Prairie outing – Saturday, May 25

The day started with heavy thundershowers, but 12 of us gathered at Daddy's Creek to view a strange type of prairie. Most natural prairies depend on dryness, shallow soils, and fire to keep the trees and shrubs out. The small prairie we saw uses shallow soil and the scouring force of occasional flood waters to maintain its openness. Too much scouring would eliminate the prairie plants, while too little would allow trees to survive.

Scoured habitats are unusual enough to have plants that are restricted to them. For example, Cumberland rosemary is found only in scoured habitat along three river systems, all on the Cumberland Plateau. These are the Obed, Big South Fork and Caney Fork. Damming of these could easily have led to the extinction of the Cumberland rosemary. TCWP successfully fought dams on both the Obed and the Big South Fork. Our visit was timed right to see Cumberland rosemary in full flower.
Larry Pounds

National Trails Day Work on North Ridge Trail – Saturday, June 1

On Saturday, June 1, TCWP celebrated National Trails Day by rehabilitating a section of the Orchard Lane access trail to the North Ridge Trail. In recent years stormwater runoff from Orchard Lane has gradually taken over a few hundred feet of the trail and badly eroded that section. More than 20 volunteers helped with the effort.

Volunteers organized themselves into smaller work groups to tackle particular tasks. Some helped construct about 150 feet of new trail up on the hillside above the old trail. Others installed at least three new water bars and broad-based drainage dips to divert stormwater away from the trail. A few people cleared vegetation from the trail. After we were done with our trail work we went over to John and Jim's to celebrate our hard work with pizza. *Jimmy Groton*

East Fork Poplar Creek Greenway Cleanup with Clinch Valley Trails Alliance – Saturday, June 8

On June 8 TCWP, the Clinch Valley Trails Alliance, and Greenways Oak Ridge cosponsored the fifth annual trash cleanup and hike on the East Fork Poplar Greenway. In all we had at least 12 volunteers representing TCWP, CVTA, and GWOR.

The trail begins near the intersection of Oak Ridge Turnpike and Jefferson Avenue and meanders through a nice riparian woodland along the creek, ultimately reaching the Oak Ridge Fire Department station near Wiltshire Road. The creek periodically floods the trail and deposits litter and other trash along the floodplain. There are also a lot of old tires and other automotive debris that have washed into the creek from places upstream.

The City of Oak Ridge again provided two dump trucks to collect the trash, one for tires (since they have special disposal requirements) and one for regular trash. This year it just didn't seem that there was nearly as much trash (tires and other trash) as there has been in past years. Hopefully this is a sign that we are making progress in cleaning up that section of the trail and creek. *Jimmy Groton*

6. FEATURED WRITER

OBED RESERVOIR

by TCWP board member, Kirk Eddlemon

"Entering Obed Reservoir Management Area, administered by Tennessee Valley Authority. Area under surveillance. All rules and regulations posted are enforceable under TCA"

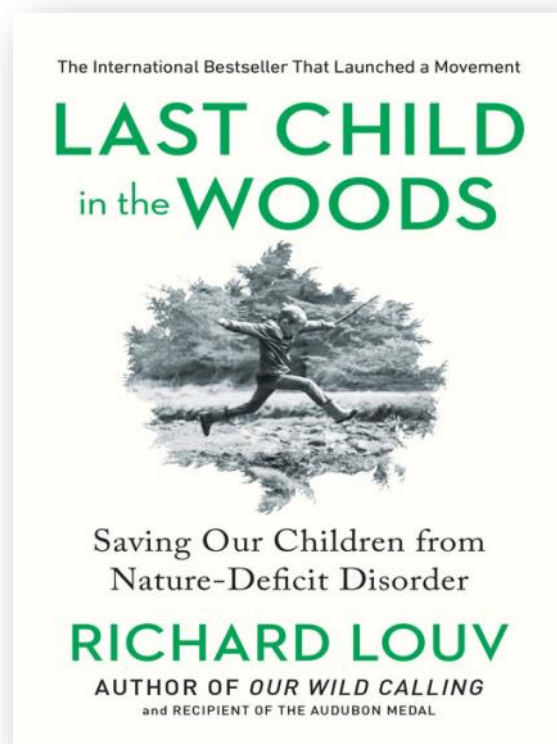
I presume there would be language similar to this as you finished the drive down the overbuilt highway from Wartburg that would serve access to Nemo Marina, and the expanse of concrete, riprap, and civil infrastructure that surrounds it. The senses would quickly pick up on the sound of outboard motors and the expensive perfume of incompletely burned gasoline wafting into the heat of the day that is ubiquitous to the 20,000 square miles of impoundments found lower down in the

Tennessee Valley. The Obed Canyon, at least in the eyes of some in favor of the Nemo Dam effort of the 1970's, was "nothing but a dirty crack in the ground, full of rattlesnakes and copperheads." Such an unredeemable, useless place would serve to further TVA's *raison d'être* well. The south had been brought out of poverty after all, and hydro projects had dampened the Tennessee River's ability to ravage civilization, albeit by the ironic mechanism of permanently flooding millions of acres of old Tennessee. Well into the second half of the 20th century, and having built so much steam, TVA understandably did not intend to relinquish its power. Dam builders build dams of course, snail darters and tree huggers notwithstanding.

I've been paddling throughout the Obed watershed for 25 years, and not once have I floated past the intended location of the Nemo Dam at Alley Ford without imagining what it would look like had those with more hubris than sense won the fight. Alley Ford is, other than in the highest flows, a quiet place. Having just finished the work of etching its way through the more resistant layers of the Cumberland Plateau, the Obed is winding down here, much closer in distance to the Tennessee Valley than to its headwaters further west. The canyon's maximum depth lies a mile upstream, where in an act of hard-fought persistence, the Obed finally breaks past the sturdy ramparts of Hatfield Mountain. Nothing but flimsier geology stands between here and the valley beyond, and seemingly as if the river knows this, it calms for a moment of self-reflection. Indeed, on late afternoons in winter, when the combination of a clear sky and a leafless western canyon rim permits, the fleeting light reflects off the shallow river bottom, back up through the water and onto the roof of a low, overhanging rock wall, dancing and shimmering upon the fossilized imprints of ancient driftwood and other intertidal debris revealed in the sandy matrix overhead. This area was once the shoreline of a shallow intercontinental sea, constructed not by man but of deep time.

Bill and Lee Russell did the heavy lifting of fighting and eventually defeating the Nemo Dam at Alley Ford, in coalition with many others, and were successful in seeking Wild and Scenic designation. The river corridor within the boundaries managed by the National Park Service, as well as state lands in the southern part of the watershed, now ensure a wildness and water quality that would have been devastated otherwise. From their efforts TCWP emerged, and we're still here, fighting to preserve and protect the Obed in all its richness, for future generations to enjoy and appreciate. If the Russells hadn't taken the initiative some 50 years ago, the Obed would be just another dead river. It is through organizations like TCWP, that citizens concerned with preserving wilderness are able to bring a strong voice to the table when it counts. We are your voice. Let it be heard!

SUGGESTED READING



COUNT ME IN

Name: _____

Email: _____

My educational background is in: _____

I have special experience in: _____

I am willing to share my knowledge, experience, and energy to support TCWP's mission.

If you have an interest in helping with one of the following, please add a check mark:

General Activities

- Communications (newsletter, website, social media, writing articles, message development)
- History (reading older TCWP documents, organizing and summarizing)
- Stewardship (plant identification, invasive removal, trail maintenance)
- Education (teaching others of all ages about natural resources)
- Research (of potential threats to natural resources or of potential opportunities for protection of natural resources)
- Advocacy (writing or talking to legislators; drafting legislation to support conservation of natural resources, helping to coordinate responses to threats to natural resources)
- Protection (helping with projects that safeguard natural resources)
- Planning, organizing or cat herding.
- Fundraising (event planning, grant research, donor research)
- MUSIC (can you sing or play an instrument?)

Specific Projects

- Obed Wild and Scenic River
- Rails to Trails Project
- Explore and Restore youth education.
- Oak Ridge issues

You can fill this Count-Me-In sheet on google here: <https://forms.gle/DF1nEWiDrvszUBrS9>

Or complete this sheet and mail to:

TCWP
PO Box 6873
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

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

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAK RIDGE, TN
PERMIT NO. 178

Board of Directors

Mark Bevelhimer..... President
Michele ThorntonV. Pres
Carol GrametbauerSecretary
Joel Freund Treasurer
Michelle Campanis.....Director
Hans Christen.....Director
Margaret Cumberland.....Director
Kirk Eddlemon.....Director
Jimmy GrotonDirector
Eva RobbinsDirector
Larry PoundsDirector

UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 20 – Kayak the Clinch River
- August 24 – Summer Cedar Barrens Cleanup/Weed Wrangle®
- September 21 – Crab Orchard Mountain Power Line Fall Flowers
- September 28 – National Public Lands Day Workday

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

Outreach & Membership Coordinator: Ken Mayes, ken.mayes@icloud.com

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