



Tennessee
Citizens for
Wilderness
Planning

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1. OAK RIDGE NEWS

1A. Update of Proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack

The Horizon Center, site of the proposed racetrack in Oak Ridge, must be rezoned to accommodate such a business. Oak Ridge Planning Commission and staff are addressing such zoning. The City Council must approve the new Special Recreation Zone. There will two votes on this issue. If the new zone is approved, the City Council will have to vote to approve the zoning for the Horizon Center, again with two votes on the designation.

There is strong sentiment on both sides of this issue. An informal count of Oak Ridge City Council members' likely votes indicates that a majority favors the racetrack. The Oak Ridge League of Women Voters has issued a letter of concern about the racetrack. Among the League's concerns are degradation to heretofore protected natural areas, noise levels and traffic congestion for residents, and the harm to west Oak Ridge neighborhoods.

To voice opinions on this issue, one can write the Oak Ridge City Council (CityCouncil@oakridgetn.gov).

1B. Odd Timing on EMDF, RFP, and no ROD

Last month the Department of Energy issued the final Request For Proposal for the next 5- to 10-year environmental cleanup contract worth an estimated \$8.3 billion. The scope of work includes design, construction, and operation of the controversial Environmental Management Disposal Facility, even though no Record of Decision has been issued for it. The long-anticipated ROD has been deferred to July. For more info, <https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/seb/orrc/rfp/rfp.htm>.

1C. Manhattan Project NHP Seeks Volunteers

We're seeking volunteers to assist our operation. Opportunities include staffing the visitor contact station at Children's Museum of Oak Ridge and meeting and greeting visitors while providing information about the park. Opportunities to provide informational programs may also exist. Volunteers usually work in four-hour blocks but can vary depending on the availability of the volunteer. Prospective volunteers should be interested in providing information to visitors from all over the country in an indoor setting. No money handling will be required, and volunteers will receive training about the Manhattan Project and World War II history, as well as National Park Service operations.

For more information about becoming a National Park Service volunteer at Manhattan Project Oak Ridge site, please call Effie Houston at (423) 569-9778, or at effie_houston@nps.gov.

2. TENNESSEE NEWS

2A. Update on Primacy

On a recent conference meeting, several Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation staffers and several representatives of environmental/ conservation groups met to discuss the status of Tennessee taking primacy on coal mine permits and enforcement.

For many years, the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) has been the permitting and enforcement agency for Tennessee coal mines. In April, 2018, the Primacy and Reclamation act became Tennessee law. The law dictated that TDEC develop a program to administer coal mining regulations and enforcement.

Program development was contingent on money from OSMRE. That money became available December 2019 and TDEC sought an informal review of the program from OSMRE. That informal review garnered feedback from OSM that highlighted some insufficiencies and statutory inadequacies.

After many meetings between TDEC and OSM, as well as meetings among TDEC, OSM and the Governor's office, it was determined that a regulatory fix is necessary. A bill will likely be introduced this upcoming legislative session to remedy the insufficiencies. It was noted that the new Primacy program must have stringent SMCRA regs much like the current federal program and also meet funding requirements.

TDEC has done a cost estimate of \$2.14 million dollars a year to run the program. Through September '22, congressional startup money will fund program design.. After that, the state will be responsible for the costs. It is estimated that \$870,000 will need to be appropriated from the general fund to make up this gap, starting in 2023.

2A. New Section of the Cumberland Trail nears Official Opening

The Cumberland Trails Conference (CTC) trail building crew has just completed a six-mile section of the Cumberland Trail (CT). It connects two favorite outdoor destinations, Black Mountain and Ozone Falls. Building trail for the Cumberland Trail State Park is a primary activity of the CTC.

The State Park will soon officially open this section of trail for hikers. The CT is a long-distance trail about 300 miles running from Chattanooga to Cumberland Gap at the KY and VA. More than 200 miles are already completed. For more information on this new section and the entire CT go to the CTC website, Cumberlandtrail.org. In particular check out the November Newsletter there. *Larry Pounds*

2B. Frozen Head State Park Champion William ("Foye") Armes Has Passed

William E. ("Foye") Armes, 93, passed on Sunday, November 1, 2020 at his home near Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area. He is survived by his wife of 74 years, Juanita Shannon Armes, and family.

Foye began caring for the area now known as Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area long before it became his job to do so. This was "family land" to him, as his ancestor Bletcher Armes settled a land grant encompassing property that is now the Park and Natural Area in 1822; the family name is associated with several Park sites, such as Armes Gap. Foye vividly described early history of this land and people in his 2018 memoir *Tid Bits and True Tales of the Frozen Head Mountains* (available at the Park gift shop).

When Foye's father Kirlie Armes became (the first) Forester of the Morgan State Forest in 1942, his family moved to the cabin that had been the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp Superintendent's residence. Foye grew up there and later succeeded his father as (the second) Forester of the Morgan State Forest. When Morgan State Forest became Frozen Head State Park in 1971, Foye continued safeguarding the Park as Caretaker until a State Park Manager was named.

One of Foye's many courageous acts protecting the Park was to help preserve, intact, both the Flat Fork Watershed and the Frozen Head State Park Viewshed. The slopes and ridge across Flat Fork Creek as viewed from the Park Visitor Center front porch were once owned by a single land company that planned to perform mountaintop removal and contour mining of coal on Bird Mountain. The end result would have resembled a moonscape. Initial mine permits had been approved when Foye, Don Todd, Flat Fork Valley resident Mary Ann McPeters, and organizational allies Bob Lantz (Frozen Head State Park Association), Bill Russell (TCWP) and Will Skelton (Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club) signed a Petition to the Department of Interior Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) requesting designation of the Flat Fork Creek Watershed and portions of the Mud Creek Watershed as "Lands Unsuitable for Mining." The date was September 25, 1985.

At that time, to stand up for the land in East Tennessee was dangerous. Foye became a target when he signed that

Petition, and was soon paid a personal visit by the owner of the company contracted to stripmine Bird Mountain. The company owner attempted to intimidate Foye into withdrawing his name from the Petition; Foye refused, and continued to stand fast through the following years of proceedings. In March 1990, OSMRE agreed with the Petitioners and declared the area "Lands Unsuitable for Mining."

Thus, when the Bredesen Administration found funds in 2007 to acquire property as part of the "Connecting the Cumberlands" initiative, there was an intact and well-forested watershed to purchase and add to the Park.

So, thank you, Foye, for speaking truth to power and keeping the long view. We are all the richer for it. *Annetta Watson, Vice-President, Friends of Frozen Head State Park. Excerpted from a longer article and photo published on the TCWP website at <https://tcwp.org/frozen-head-state-park-champion-william-foye-armed-has-passed/>*

2C. Another Darter Facing Extinction

We all remember the snail darter (*Percina tanasi*), still considered threatened, that for a time halted construction of Tellico Dam on the Tellico River. Now another, the sickle darter (*Percina williamsi*) that inhabits the Tennessee River system, has been proposed for threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The small slender fish is already considered vulnerable and decreasing under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, the most comprehensive inventory of the world's threatened species. In addition, the darter is listed as threatened by the states of Tennessee and Virginia, making it unlawful to take the species or damage its habitat without a state permit. The sickle darter is also identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Tennessee and Virginia Wildlife Action Plans, which outline actions to promote species conservation.

Prior to 2005, the sickle darter could be found in the Emory, Clinch, Powell, Little, French Broad, North Fork Holston, Middle Fork Holston, South Fork Holston, and Watauga rivers. In addition, the darters were discovered in the Sequatchie River in 2014. However, because of habitat changes, sickle darter populations in the French Broad, South Fork Holston, Powell, and Watauga rivers have vanished, leaving just six streams where the sickle darter still lives.

Conservation Fisheries, Inc, a nonprofit conserving aquatic species in the Southeast, has tried to propagate the fish under contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While they have released about 25 juvenile darters into the Tellico River, they've found that breeding the fish in captivity can be difficult.

The proposed ESA listing resulted from a petition by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and other organizations in April 2010 to list aquatic, riparian, and wetland species, including the sickle darter, as endangered or threatened species under the Act. In response, the FWS issued a finding that the petition contained substantial information indicating that listing may be warranted for numerous species, including the sickle darter. However, nothing happened.

So, in February 2015, the CBD filed a complaint that the FWS failed to complete a 12-month finding for the sickle darter in accordance with statutory deadlines. Subsequently the FWS and the CBD filed a stipulated settlement in the District of Columbia, agreeing that the FWS will submit a finding for the sickle darter no later than September 30, 2020. The finding was completed on time, with the FWS concluding, “Our review of the best available scientific and commercial information indicates that the sickle darter meets the Act’s definition of a ‘threatened’ species.” The goal of both the listing under the ESA and captive propagation is to stabilize the existing populations and prevent extinction.

The FWS has accepted comments on its proposed listing; the comment period ended on January 11, 2021. If the sickle darter is listed, requirements of the ESA will then take effect, which include a recovery planning process that identifies actions necessary to halt or reverse the sickle darter’s decline by addressing the threats to its survival and recovery. The designation of “critical habitat” will be proposed later following the official listing as threatened. The next steps are for the FWS to review the submitted comments and evaluate whether to modify its recommendation.

For more information:

Benton, Ben, “Tiny Fish Found in Sequatchie River and Other Water Bodies Proposed for Protection,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, November 16, 2020.

Proposed darter listing:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FWS-R4-ES-2020-0094-0001> *Russ Manning*

2D. Mack S. Prichard Foundation Established

The late Mack Prichard, State Naturalist for many years, was well known for his thousands of pictures taken all over the state. Thousands of Tennesseans saw his exceptional pictures in presentations by Prichard that built support for conserving waterfalls, trails, special lands and waters. Prichard was instrumental in facilitating the acquisition of over 40 sites that became Tennessee State Parks.

In October, 2019, the Mack S. Prichard Foundation was founded. The mission of the 501c3 organization is “to

engage in activities to protect and conserve the natural environment in Tennessee.” The objective is to provide scholarships to students for environmental science-related degrees or those who wish to become a State of Tennessee Park Ranger, support public television and radio programming that promotes protection of the environment, seek donations for purchasing land for conservation and to provide programming and education opportunities to encourage youth participation at Tennessee State Parks.

Tax deductible contributions to the Mack S. Prichard Foundation may be sent to 226 Cherry Avenue, Cookeville, Tennessee 38501. For more information email macksprichard@gmail.com.

3. NATIONAL NEWS

3A. Biden's Cabinet Picks Bode Well

Many of President-Elect Biden’s Cabinet nominations are welcome news for the conservation community. Some have ties to environmental groups and so provide evidence of Biden’s commitment to tackling climate change. Now that Democrats have won the two senate runoff races in Georgia, Biden has a good chance of getting his selections confirmed by the Senate. Here are a few (not all require confirmation):

- John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate— Former Senator, Secretary of State under Obama, and an architect of the Paris climate accord.
- Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor—EPA Administrator during Obama’s second term and currently head of the National Resources Defense Council.
- Jennifer Granholm, Secretary of Energy—Currently Michigan Governor, has spoken against both the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines and advocated for shifting investment from oil and gas to renewable energy solutions.
- Michael Regan, EPA Administrator—Started his career at the EPA during the Clinton Administration and spent eight years at the Environmental Defense Fund before becoming Secretary of North Carolina’s Department of Environmental Quality.
- Brenda Mallory, Council on Environmental Quality— Worked several years at the EPA, and more recently, as general counsel for the CEQ; currently Director of Regulatory Policy at the Southern Environmental Law Center.

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- Deb Haaland, Secretary of Interior—Perhaps the most exciting nomination; will be first Native American cabinet secretary; member of the [Laguna Pueblo](#) and a 35th-generation New Mexican; will oversee the department that more than any other impacts Native American ancestral lands; currently New Mexico Representative, one of the first two Native American women elected to the U.S. Congress; supports the movements to [abolish ICE](#) and to implement the [Green New Deal](#); perhaps we'll see reinstatement of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments.

For more information see:

<https://buildbackbetter.gov/nominees-and-appointees/> RM

3B. "Habitat" Defined for Endangered Species Act

In December 2020, the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a rule that provides a regulatory definition of "habitat" for the Endangered Species Act. The ESA requires critical habitat to be determined for a species once it has been listed as threatened or endangered. While "habitat" did not have a specific definition, "critical habitat" is defined as

(i) the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species, at the time it is listed ..., on which are found those physical or biological features (I) essential to the conservation of the species and (II) which may require special management considerations or protection; and (ii) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species at the time it is listed ..., upon a determination by the Secretary that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species.

The new rule resulted from the U.S. Supreme Court's 2018 decision in *Weyerhaeuser Co. v. U.S. FWS*. In that case, the Fish and Wildlife Service's designation of 1,500 acres of land as critical habitat for the dusky gopher frog was challenged because the land was not occupied by the frog, and improvements to the land would be needed in order for it to become occupied. The Supreme Court remanded the case to the Fifth Circuit (where it was later dismissed), but noted that it must first be shown that the land is "habitat" before it can be designated as "critical habitat."

Common usage of the two terms implies that critical habitat is a subset of a species' habitat. For example, the habitat of the grizzly bear might be considered much of the western U.S. where the bear was historically found. However, the much smaller critical habitat is "specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species, ... essential to the conservation of the species."

Rather than relying on common usage, the Trump Administration took this opportunity to provide a regulatory definition of "habitat":

For the purposes of designating critical habitat only, habitat is the abiotic and biotic setting that currently or periodically contains the resources and conditions necessary to support one or more life processes of a species.

The new rule goes on to say:

... the definition excludes areas that do not currently or periodically contain the requisite resources and conditions, even if such areas could meet this requirement in the future after restoration activities or other changes occur.

Under this new definition and with the above clarification, grizzly bear habitat is only where current conditions exist to support this species, and therefore critical habitat, as a subset of habitat, cannot include areas that must be restored. Nor can critical habitat include areas that will become suitable in the future after "other changes occur"—here read "climate change." The definition essentially ties the hands of the Interior Secretary in determining other "such areas are essential for the conservation of the species."

The Center for Biological Diversity captures the problem: "Under the rule, protections are limited to areas that could *currently* support the species — but not areas that were previously occupied and could be restored, or to areas that will provide additional habitat for future recovery as climate change shifts where species can live. ... Most endangered species, however, have lost extensive areas of their historic range to habitat loss and fragmentation, and thus need habitat restoration to recover."

In September 2020 when the rule was proposed, 100 members of Congress issued a letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service: "We are alarmed by this proposed rule ... This onslaught of environmental rollbacks that threaten the survival of our nation's wildlife must stop. The proposed definition, if finalized, would limit the ability of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conserve and restore important habitat based on the best available science for the recovery of ESA-listed species."

The new rule took effect January 15, 2021. Perhaps this is another attack on the environment that can be rolled back under the leadership of Biden's nominee for Secretary of Interior, Deb Haaland.

For more information:

Final Rule:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/16/2020-27693/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-regulations-for-listing-endangered-and-threatened>

Supreme Court 2018 decision:

<https://www.environmentallawandpolicy.com/2020/08/definition-of-habitat-proposed-for-the-esa/>

Center for Biological Diversity:

<https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/trump-administration-finalizes-rule-limiting-habitat-protections-endangered-species-2020-12-15/>

Congressional letter:

<https://debbiedingell.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2684> RM

3C. Solar Farms in Tennessee Valley

In the latest move away from carbon-based fuels to renewables in Tennessee, Google is partnering with solar developer Origis Energy to build a 705-acre, 100-megawatt solar farm in Obion County to supply Google data centers in Alabama and Tennessee. The partnership is part of Tennessee Valley Authority's Green Invest program, which recently earned the 2020 Green Power Leadership Award for Green Power Market Development from the Center for Resource Solutions.

Green Invest creates public-private partnerships that pair large customers with solar developers through a competitive bid process. According to TVA, "this ensures that when businesses choose to partner with TVA they receive low-cost pricing and TVA's brand assurance to deliver renewable energy through long-term agreements." Green Invest is available to local power companies and business and industrial customers across TVA's service territory.

TVA has also completed other major Green Invest deals in 2020 with General Motors, Vanderbilt University, Knoxville Utilities Board, and Facebook. Two KUB agreements in 2020 commit the Knoxville utility for a total of 502 megawatts of new-to-the-grid solar power, an amount equal to 20% of KUB's annual electric load. To date, this is the largest commitment of any business in the TVA program.

While the Green Invest program should certainly be lauded, TVA has however been slow to develop solar for its own energy needs. According to the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, TVA has built fewer solar farms for its own generation than neighboring utilities. Less than 2% of its power now comes from solar. For a step in the right direction, though, TVA's long-range power plan calls for 14 gigawatts of additional solar generation by 2040, about 20 times the amount of solar generation now in the Valley.



Sign-up for
e-mail alerts on
our website at
<http://www.tcwp.org>

For additional information, see:

Flessner, Dave, "Tennessee Solar Farm to Power Google Data Centers through TVA Green Invest Program," *Times Free Press*, November 14th, 2020

<https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregion/story/2020/nov/14/solar-farm-power-google-data-centers-through-tva/536005/> RM

3D. GSMNP Receives Bike Trail Grant

Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Cherokee National Forest have received a \$6 million grant to create 50—75 miles of mountain bike trails to the top of Hall Mountain. Some of the trail will be on Foothills Parkway, through Sevier and Blount counties. Awarded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the grant will also fund a shuttle to take bikers to the top of the Hall Mountain.

3E. Trail Keeper Volunteers Sought at Big South Fork and Obed.

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area and Obed Wild and Scenic River are seeking trail keepers for both parks. Trail keepers are expected to traverse their adopted trail at least four times during the year, pick up any trash, and submit a trail report after each visit. Trail keepers do not perform heavy trail maintenance nor use power equipment. To learn more about the Trail Keeper program, email the parks' volunteer coordinator at effie_houston@nps.gov or call (423) 569-9778.

3F. New Official Hiking Trail Offers Access to the Obed River

An important acquisition of land was made at the end of last year. A very thin strip of land was needed to provide access to Norris Ford. The new Norris Ford Trail will be about a mile long. TCWP Program Committee is working to plan an outing on this new addition to the park. Look for details in upcoming newsletters.

4. TCWP NEWS

4A. Upcoming Activities

[TCWP's Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, TCWP will be conducting its activities following CDC guidelines:

- We ask that you not participate if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone who is.
- We will practice social distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between participants. This will limit the amount of interpretation that can be done.
- We will organize activities into groups of 10 or fewer.
- We recommend that you bring a mask and wear it when around others.
- We recommend that you bring hand sanitizer or other ways to wash your hands.
- We recommend that everyone bring their own water, lunch, snacks, and sunscreen.
- We recommend caravanning to activities instead of carpooling.
- Keep in mind that restrooms may be unavailable at activity locations.
- Activities are subject to change or cancellation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

Thank you for your patience while we work through ways to serve our community.

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

Safe Passage: Wildlife Crossings in the Smoky Mountains – Thursday, January 28

Join us for this educational virtual program Thursday, January 28, at 7 p.m. TDOT recently installed new bear crossing signs on I-40 near the North Carolina line on a section often considered a death trap for wildlife. Jeff Hunter, senior program manager with National Parks Conservation Association in Asheville, will speak on the collaborative effort to provide safe passage options for wildlife.

As our world warms, wildlife populations need to expand northward. Highways are formidable barriers to this movement. Hunter facilitates the work of nearly 20 federal, state, tribal, and non-governmental organizations collaborating to make a 28-mile stretch of I-40 near the Smokies permeable for wildlife and safer for people.

Hunter's work includes issues related to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. He also led the Tennessee Wild wilderness campaign focused on permanently protecting nearly 20,000 acres in the Cherokee National Forest, including 4.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The signing of the Tennessee Wilderness Act into law in December 2018 marked the completion of this project.

Registration is required for this free online event, cosponsored by TCWP and the UT Arboretum Society. The format for this program will be Zoom. To register, go

to utarboretumsociety.org. Registrants will be sent a link for program access in their confirmation emails. *Michelle Campanis*

Alley Ford Workday – Saturday, February 13

A day of trail work and hiking will take place on the 2.5-mile section of the Cumberland Trail at the Obed Wild and Scenic River between Nemo Picnic Area and Alley Ford 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. Cumberland Trail State Park personnel will provide some tools that will be available at the event.

Participants can meet for caravanning 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. Eastern, 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 20.)

Participants will need to sign a National Park Service volunteer form (parent's or guardian's signature required for minors). Forms can be requested in advance from TCWP, or NPS representatives will also have forms available at the event.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Spring Cedar Barren Cleanup/Weed Wrangle® – Saturday, March 6

The Oak Ridge Cedar Barren will again be the site of exotic invasive plant removal as we conduct our first cleanup of 2021. Located next to Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, the Barren is a joint project of the City of Oak Ridge, State Natural Areas Division, and TCWP. The area is one of just a few cedar barrens in East Tennessee, and is subject to invasion by bushy lespedeza, leatherleaf viburnum, privet, autumn olive, mimosa, Nepal grass, multiflora rose, and woody plants that threaten the system's prairie grasses. Our efforts help to eliminate invasives and other shade-producing plants that prevent the prairie grasses from getting needed sunlight.

Volunteers should meet in the Jefferson Middle School Parking lot at 9 a.m., with sturdy shoes, loppers, gloves, and water. For more information, contact Tim Bigelow at 865-607-6781 or Bigelowt2@mindspring.com.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from the COVID-19 virus. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. This event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Hike at Head of the Sequatchie – Saturday, March 20

On March 20, Tennessee State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath will lead a hike at Head of Sequatchie, a part of the Cumberland Trail State Park admired for its serenity and beauty.

“The Head of Sequatchie is an extraordinary area,” Randy says. “It is the start of a striking 100-mile valley that is so prominent it can be recognized from space. It includes Devilstep Hollow Cave, a sacred site for Native Americans, and the emergence of a river that collects water from Grassy Cove, a huge sinkhole valley just to the north.

“The area is beautiful and fascinating. In late March, there will be abundant wildflowers along our two-mile, moderate walk.”

Hikers can meet for caravanning 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. Eastern time, or can join the caravan at 9:05 Central time at Homestead Baptist Church (4427 Highway 127 South, Crossville), across from the Cumberland Mountain State Park entrance. We expect to arrive at Head of the Sequatchie by 9:30 a.m. Central. Wear sturdy shoes, and bring a lunch and water.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from COVID-19. Please wear masks to the start of the event and during group mingling, and try to maintain a six-foot distance from others whenever possible. The event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

**Support TCWP by donating,
joining, or renewing
your membership
at <http://www.tcwp.org>**

4B. Recent events

Norris Watershed Hike – Saturday, November 14

On November 14, 10 hikers walked a four-mile loop in the Norris Watershed through various forest types, up and over hills on forest roads and single-track trails. We saw old and new forests in the watershed, which is managed by sustainable yield forestry.

Although the fall colors were not spectacular, it was a beautiful day to be in the woods. Any day in nature is indeed a blessing. *Joe Feeman*

Virtual TCWP Holiday Party – Thursday, December 3

Our 2020 Holiday party was held on Zoom, breaking a years-long tradition of gathering at Jenny Freeman and Bill Allen’s home in Oak Ridge. Although party-goers were fewer than usual and provided their own snacks and beverages, we had an enjoyable evening of conversation and holiday toasts, with TCWP President Mark Bevelhimer greeting the group and making a few comments.

Whites Creek Workday – Saturday, January 9

On January 9, five TCWP volunteers braved the cold and a few snow flurries to spend a winter day doing trail maintenance at TVA’s Whites Creek Small Wild Area on Watts Bar Reservoir in Rhea County. We mostly brushed the trail and removed some smaller trees with handsaws. ATVs continue to access our property at the northwest corner and ride on the old road along the ridge on the west side.

TCWP has partnered with TVA since 1983 to enhance and protect natural resources at the Whites Creek SWA and many other places on public lands throughout East Tennessee as part of our ongoing stewardship efforts. *Jimmy Groton*

Additional information on all TCWP activities may be obtained from TCWP Executive Director Sandra K. Goss at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com or at 865-583-3967.

4C. Friends and Members in the News

The November 20 *Oak Ridger* had a letter to the editor from Mick Wiest about preserving the Oak Ridge outdoor pool.

Anne Child’s letter to the editor of the November 20 *Oak Ridger* opposed the proposed Oak Ridge racetrack.

Frances Figart’s article about wild turkey appears in the November 22 *Asheville Citizen Times*.

Katelyn and Lauren Mayes were mentioned in a November 27 *Oak Ridger* article about Girl Scout Troop 21158.

The November 27 *Oak Ridger* carried an announcement of the December 1 Oak Ridge League of Women Voters meeting with featured speaker Robert Kennedy talking about the proposed Oak Ridge racetrack.

Colleen Iversen, Richard Norby, and Peter Thornton were mentioned as some of the world's most cited researchers as reported in the November 28 *News Sentinel*.

COVID-19 relief legislation was topic of Anne Child's November 30 letter to the editor of the *News Sentinel*.

Ray Garrett penned an op-ed column about the proposed Oak Ridge Racetrack in the December 8 *Oak Ridger*.

Tennessee Environmental Council (a valuable sister organization to TCWP) CEO Jeffrey Barrie penned an article about threats to our state's environment in the December 9 *Tennessean* and December 10 *News Sentinel*.

The January 1 *News Sentinel* carried a letter to the editor by Cindy Kendrick about the proposed Knox County Board of Health Advisory Board dissolution.

Jeff Mellor wrote a letter to the editor of the January 11 *News Sentinel* about President Trump

4D. Fare Thee Well, Betty and Jerry Olson

Long time TCWP members Elizabeth "Betty" Olson and husband Jerry have died within days of each other: December 26 and January 5, respectively. They each had long careers, Betty at Y-12 and Jerry at Oak Ridge National

Lab. In late retirement, they divided their time between their rural land in Roane County and Knoxville.

This writer recalls many chats with Jerry and sometimes with Betty at TCWP Holiday Parties. Jerry was a raconteur, drawing on a wealth of research experiences here and abroad. Betty was a beam of warm acceptance and lighthearted-ness.

Only later did I learn that Jerry's research was well-respected. He was interested in botany, sand dunes, global ecology and a host of other topics. Memorial in Jerry's name may be sent to TCWP, thanks to daughters Karen and Martha.

4E. Funding Strategist/Grants Manager position with Tennessee RiverLine Available

This is a full-time staff position in the University of Tennessee School of Landscape Architecture with 100% appointment to the Tennessee RiverLine initiative. The Funding Strategist and Grants Manager will play a formative role in the early stages of this multi-generational initiative by collaborating with diverse stakeholders to develop and successfully execute a comprehensive funding strategy that supports the Tennessee RiverLine's public outreach and vision delivery initiatives.

Additional information and application requirements can be found on

https://ut.taleo.net/careersection/ut_system/jobdetail.ftl?job=210000000T.

Review of applications will begin February 1 and will continue until the position is filled. The desired hire date is March 1, 2021.

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.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Board of Directors

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Michelle Campanis.....Director
Anne Child.....Director
Johnny Cosgrove.....Director
Christopher DeRolph....Director
Jimmy Groton..... Director
Larry Pounds.....Director
Hannah TippettDirector

- January 28 - Safe Passage: Wildlife Crossings in the Smoky Mountains program by Jeff Hunter, NPCA
February 13 - Alley Ford Workday
March 6 - Spring Cedar Barren cleanup/Weed Wrangle®
March 20 - Hike at Head of the Sequatchie with Randy Hedgepath

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

BREAKING NEWS Zoom Presentation on the Oak Ridge Racetrack by Virginia Dale and Ellen Smith, Thursday, February 4. Sponsored by TCWP, Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation, and Oak Ridgers for Responsible Development. There's an important vote on Feb 8.