



Tennessee  
Citizens for  
Wilderness  
Planning

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Taking Care of Wild Places

The BIG stories

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The deadly Congressional Review Act (CRA)... ¶4

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Shaded box or star means "Action Needed." Don't be overwhelmed -- check the ACTION SUMMARY on p. 2

### 13. ACTION SUMMARY

No.	Issue	Contact	"Message!" or Action
1A	Oil & gas activity in BSF	Your US rep. and senators	"Oppose HJR 46! Save our beautiful Park!"
2A	Tennessee legislation	TCV's Action Alerts	Get timely info and act on it
5B	EPA survival	You US Representative	"Oppose cutting EPA funding! Protect our health!"
7B	BLM land-use planning	You US rep. and senators	"Oppose HJR 44, which repeals a sensible process!"
8A	Natural gas on public lands	Both your US senators	"Oppose HJR 36, and stop wasting <i>lots</i> of natural gas!"
9	How legislators performed	Your US rep. and senators	"I am disappointed in/I commend your LCV score!"
11D	TCWP activity	Sandra Goss	Volunteer for Earth Day festivals

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Dear Senator Doe  
Sincerely yours,

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Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. President  
Respectfully yours,

Dear Gov. Haslam  
Respectfully yours,

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To call any Repr. or Senator, dial Congressional switchboard, 202-224-3121. To find out about the status of bills, call 202-225-1772.  
URLs: <http://www.house.gov/lastname/> and <http://lastname.senate.gov/> General contact info: <http://www.lcv.org>  
With mail to Congress still slow following the anthrax scare, consider faxing, phoning, and other modes of communication.

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

#### WHAT IS TCWP?

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

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**1. BIG SOUTH FORK  
and OBED NEWS**

**1A. BSFNRRRA facing repeal**

**of recently improved oil & gas regulations**

Because essential updates in oil & gas regulations for national park units (known as 9B regulations) were finalized only recently (NL330 ¶2A) they have become vulnerable to the deadly Congressional Review Act, by which the current Congress is trying to tear up as many environmental regulations as it can get away with (¶4, this NL). The 9B regulations apply to the entire National Park System (¶7A, this NL), but of the hundreds of units in the system, the BSFNRRRA would be the most heavily affected.

Of 534 non-federal oil & gas (o&g) operations in the entire Park System, more than 300 (including 152 active ones) are located in the BSFNRRRA (and 5 in the Obed WSR) (NL324 ¶1A). The 9B revisions, first proposed in December 2010 (that’s how long it takes!) improve existing regulations so as to eliminate some bad loopholes and to revise ineffective or inadequate provisions. This was the first substantive update in the almost 40 years that the 9B regulations have been in effect.

Probably the most important of the updates is the elimination of two regulatory provisions that have in the past exempted 60% of all o&g operations in the National Park System. Henceforth, all operations will be required to obtain a permit and comply with the 9B regulations. The updates also ensure that adequate funding for reclamation exists, and they improve enforcement authority.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Without delay, contact your Congressman and Senators Alexander and Corker (contact info on p.2) and urge them strongly to oppose House Joint Resolution 46 (Gosar, AZ-R). Identify yourself as a Tennessean and a lover of the BSFNRRRA. Our beautiful park must be protected. Our citizens, and the park staff, have worked for years to develop the fair and protective revisions of 9B regulations.

**1B. Infrastructure improvements**

- Repair work on the O&W Bridge started March 6 and will take three weeks to complete. The road area near the bridge is closed to all vehicular and recreational activity during the construction period.
- This summer, the current restroom facility at the Lilly Bluff Overlook will be improved by installation of a vault toilet.

**1C. Activities**

- Clear Creek Gorge hike on March 18 (near Spring Equinox). Join Ranger Rick Ryan as he leads a moderate out-and-back hike of 2.5 miles. Along the way, the trail provides opportunities to follow several short side trails to scenic overlooks to see the spectacular walls of

- the Clear Creek gorge. Meet at the Lilly Bridge parking area and expect to spend 2 hours for the hike.
- March 25, Obed river trip with trash pickup (¶11A, this NL).
- April 19, the third annual Scientific Research meeting, that showcases various research projects on the Obed/BSF (see NL331 ¶2C, or contact Etta Spradlin, [etta\\_spradlin@nps.gov](mailto:etta_spradlin@nps.gov)).
- April 22, Obed Volunteer Appreciation and Cleanup.

**2. THE TENNESSEE LEGISLATURE  
and other STATE NEWS**

**2A. Legislation of Interest in Nashville**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss,  
with help from Phillip Clifton  
and Tennessee Conservation Voters]

Here are just three of the ~1,500 bills that were filed by the Feb 9 deadline.

SB1221/HB534, the Governor’s Gas Tax bill, IMPROVE.

It is widely believed that some form of transportation funding will be passed this year. This bill is currently winding through the committee process in both Houses. It has undergone serious amending along the way, and is likely to experience more.

The gas tax has remained unchanged for almost three decades. Because it is not tied to inflation or to costs, it has lost about half of its purchasing power, while the growing population needs it to do more. Alternative plans of raiding the Rainy Day Fund, or hoping for a surplus, are not responsible strategies to deal with a recurring cost.

The governor’s plan allows for local governments to hold referenda on issues of mass transportation. This option must be retained in the ultimate bill.

SB776/HB816, a bill to create the Memphis Sands Aquifer Regional Management Board. This aquifer is constantly threatened, and such a board is needed.

SB794/HB464, the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act.

This bill would provide local governments a means of financing energy-efficiency upgrades or renewable-energy installations for buildings. This would enable end users to finance energy-saving improvements more easily.

Other bills. There are several other bills with interesting captions. At press time, the true nature of these bills has not been revealed. Such bills have no deadline on amendment and are likely to be changed over the next several weeks.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** To receive a timely report on State legislation that addresses environment or conservation issues, frequently check pertinent links on TCV’s website ([www.tnconservationvoters.org](http://www.tnconservationvoters.org)). On that website, sign up to receive TCV’s weekly Action Alert list (or call 615-269-9090). Our Political Guide ([www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org)) and the General Assembly website (<http://capitol.tn.gov/>) may help with information needed to take action.

## **2B. Conservation-Education Day on the Hill 2017**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Last month, several dozen environment- and conservation-minded Tennesseans converged on Nashville's Legislative Plaza, calling on their state legislators, discussing the need for legislation that protects the quality of Tennessee's water and encourages energy efficiency and energy alternatives.

Key committee members and leaders had appointments with many of the attendees, including House Speaker Beth Harwell; Chairman of the Senate Energy, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Steve Southerland; Chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Curtis Halford; Senator Steve Dickerson; and Representative Rick Staples.

This annual event was organized by Tennessee Environmental Council. With meetings across the state and a widely administered survey, the Council develops annually the Sustainability Agenda. For more information, or to provide your input to the Agenda, visit [www.tectn.org](http://www.tectn.org).

## **2C. The League of Women Voters hosts Breakfasts with Legislators**

The League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge Breakfast with the Legislators is convened on the fourth Monday of every month while the Legislature is in session. The next one will be held on Monday, March 27, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. in the Social Room of the Oak Ridge Civic Center located at 1403 Oak Ridge Turnpike. A light continental breakfast is provided at no charge. The public is encouraged to attend.

Senators and Representatives representing the area are invited to discuss what's happening in the Tennessee Legislature. Members of the audience may ask questions and give opinions. In addition to information and dialogue, the breakfast provides a networking opportunity for members of the community.

## **2D. Cumberland Trail recognizes volunteers; seeks more**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Last month, the organizations and people who have worked on the Cumberland Trail State Park and State Scenic Trail were invited to an appreciation event at River Sports. Emceed by Cumberland Trail State Park Manager Bob Fulcher, dozens of volunteers from all over the state were recognized with thank-you mementos.

TCWP President Jimmy Groton accepted the recognition of TCWP's work on our long-adopted segment, Alley Ford. The Park depends on volunteers and on organizations that adopt segments to maintain the current 190 miles of trail. Completion of the 300-mile trail, from Cumberland Gap to Signal Point, is expected for late 2018.

The Cumberland Trail Adopter program is seeking adopters for 31 trailheads and 60 trail sections. For more information, call or visit Cumberland Trail State Scenic

Trail at 423-566-2229 or [tnstate-parks.com/parks/about/cumberland-trail](http://tnstate-parks.com/parks/about/cumberland-trail).

## **2E. To conserve our state's native plants and their habitats**

[Contributed by David Lincicome]

On January 19, native-plant enthusiasts from across the state formed the Tennessee Plant Conservation Alliance. The alliance is a network of private and public entities that agree to work together to leverage expertise and resources for a common goal to conserve the state's native plants and their habitats. In close coordination with the TDEC's Division of Natural Areas, which has lead responsibility for plant conservation in the state, the alliance will prioritize native plant species and plant communities for conservation projects, focusing on preventing plant extinctions in the state. The Tennessee Plant Conservation Alliance will be a statewide network of conservation professionals and specially trained volunteers, actively working to conserve and restore Tennessee's imperiled plant species and their habitats. For more information, contact [david.lincicome@tn.gov](mailto:david.lincicome@tn.gov).

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## **3. TVA CAPSULES**

### **3A. TVA plans EIS for tree-clearing policies in rights of way**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

In 2012, West Knox County residents sued the Tennessee Valley Authority over its tree-clearing policies for power-line rights of way, about which no Environmental Impact study had been conducted. TVA has now asked the federal court to enter a judgment in favor of the litigators, indicating that the agency will generate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

### **3B. Will TVA be allowed to continue cutting carbon emissions?**

TVA is currently on track to cutting its carbon emissions 60% by 2020, compared to 2005 levels. By the end of next year, the agency will have retired five of its original 11 coal-fired power plants. Will TVA be allowed to continue stopping to burn what Pres. Trump has called "clean, beautiful coal?"

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## **4. The AWFUL POWER of the CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT**

The Congressional Review Act (CRA), passed in 1996 as part of Gingrich's "Contract with America," provides an expedited legislative process for Congress to overrule any regulation issued by a federal agency within the previous 60 legislative days. Under the CRA, the current (115<sup>th</sup>) Congress, by joint resolution, can target over 180 rules passed

by the Obama administration as far back as May 2016. In the Senate, such a resolution cannot be filibustered – it requires only 51 votes to pass.

A special horror of the CRA is that, once the joint resolution is passed, the federal agencies may NEVER pass another regulation that is “substantially similar.” Obviously, that allows a great latitude in interpretation.

Our current Congress is applying the CRA with great abandon to a multitude of regulations enacted during the Obama Administration. You’ll find examples in articles in this NL.

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## 5. OUR POOR EPA

### 5A. *It is being led to slaughter*

The Congress has moved heaven and hell -- changing rules and evading evidence -- to confirm Pres. Trump’s egregious choice for EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt (NL 331 ¶8A). As Oklahoma’s Attorney General since 2010, Pruitt had his state file 14 lawsuits against EPA. He is a climate-change denier who has received over \$300,000 from the fossil-fuel industry. In challenging environmental rules on behalf of the state, he used letters that had been written by the oil & gas industry.

To achieve his confirmation, the first thing Republican senators did was to rewrite committee rules to get Pruitt voted out of the Environment and Public Works Committee by only half its membership. The rules would have required the presence of at least two members of the minority party, and Democrats on the committee were withholding their vote to protest the candidate’s refusal to answer key questions about his possible conflict of interest with the fossil-fuel industry.

The second questionable action came in connection with the full-Senate vote on confirmation. On February 16, an Oklahoma judge ruled that, by Feb. 21, the Oklahoma attorney general’s office must release as many as 3,000 communications (e-mails) between Pruitt and oil, gas, and coal groups. Following that order, the Senate leadership rushed the confirmation vote to precede the document release, and Pruitt was confirmed on Feb. 17, thus evading vital evidence. One Republican, Sen. Collins (ME) voted against confirmation, but two Democrats from coal states (Manchin-WV and Heitkamp-ND) voted for it.

Now that he is EPA Administrator, Mr. Pruitt is beginning to clone himself by surrounding himself with former staff of Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK), Congress’s most prominent climate skeptic. Former Inhofe chief of staff, Ryan Jackson, will be Mr. Pruitt’s chief of staff.

### 5B. *It’s being starved*

According to Reuter’s, the White House (OMB) proposes slashing the EPA’s budget by a quarter (to \$6.1 billion) and eliminating 20% of EPA staff (cutting to 12,400). An EPA climate-protection program on cutting emissions of greenhouse gases like methane that contribute to global

warming would be cut 70 % to \$29 million. Funding for climate-change initiatives and the popular Energy Star energy efficiency program would be eliminated. EPA’s enforcement power could be gutted, giving polluters free rein.

According to NRDC, “For all the agency does with its current budget — \$8.14 billion, or about 0.21% of all federal spending, in 2016 — the EPA is one of best bargains going for the American taxpayer.”

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Tell your Congressman (see [www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org)) to vote against cutting EPA funding. A vote for such cuts is a vote for letting our children get exposed to health-threatening chemicals in the air they breathe and the water they drink. It’s a vote to allow our planet to warm to where its habitability has become questionable.

### 5C. *It’s being gagged*

[Information from Reuter’s, Climate Reality Project, and Climate Central]

Only days after Trump’s inauguration, the administration instructed EPA’s communications team to remove their website’s climate-change page, which contains links to global-warming research. Also on the page are links to the EPA’s inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, which contains emissions data from individual industrial facilities, as well as the multiagency Climate Change Indicators report that describes trends related to the causes and effects of climate change. At the same time, the administration was scrutinizing studies and data published by EPA scientists while new work was put under a ‘temporary hold’ before it could be released.

A month later, the first steps have been taken in what is likely to be a major overhaul of the EPA website. Mention of Pres. Obama’s Climate Action Plan has been removed from the partnership page, as has mention of carbon pollution as a cause of climate change. Removing the commitment to the United Nations process has come with removing a statement linking greenhouse-gas emissions to climate change. There is new language framing climate change as an adaptation issue.

### 5D. *Its memory is being destroyed*

[Information from Eric Holthaus, meteorologist, in *The Washington Post*, 12/13/16]

The climate data that EPA (as well as NASA, NOAA, the U.S. Geological Survey, and countless other federal agencies) collect are essentially the bedrock of scientific enterprise. Recent fears that this information may be purged (“a 21st-century book burning”), or made difficult to access due to budget cuts, have led to efforts to archive climate data on publicly available nongovernment servers. Eric Holthaus invites scientists who have a US.gov climate database that they don’t want to see disappear to help with the #DataRefuge efforts by adding the set to:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12-\\_\\_RqTqQxux-HNOln3H5ciVztsDMJcZ2SVs1BrfqYCC/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12-__RqTqQxux-HNOln3H5ciVztsDMJcZ2SVs1BrfqYCC/edit#gid=0)

The Penn Program in the Environmental Humanities has put the data refuge online (<http://www.ppehlab.org/datarrefuge>). These data are products funded by taxpayers who own the intellectual property and should be granted unfettered access.

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## **6. THERE'LL BE LESS GOOD DRINKING WATER**

### **6A. Stream Protection Rule is early victim of CRA**

In mid-February, Pres. Trump signed a CRA resolution (§4, this NL) undoing the Stream Protection Rule, a carefully crafted and hard fought for regulation to protect waterways from the waste of mountaintop-removal mining (NL331 §6C). The Stream Protection rule has been a favorite target of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who claimed it killed mining jobs. Our Sen. Corker, when urged by TCWP to oppose the CRA resolution that would kill Stream Protection, wrote: "I voted in favor of this resolution because I believe that the regulations that would have been put in place under this rule [the Stream Protection Rule] would have put excessive burdens on the coal mining industry while having a minimal effect on the ecosystems surrounding mining operations."

### **6B. WOTUS repeal could affect water of 1/3 of Americans**

The 1972 Clean Water Act gives the federal government broad authority to limit pollution in major water bodies, as well as in streams and wetlands that drain into those larger waters. Supreme Court rulings of 2006, however, caused some confusion over the latter interpretation. In the spring of 2015, after several years of careful, open effort, The EPA and Corps of Engineers finalized the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule that essentially clarifies Clean Water Act protection of smaller bodies of water (NL326 §5A). The WOTUS rule had come under fierce attack from farmers, developers, oil & gas producers, golf-course owners, etc., who scoffed at protecting "ditches." Lawsuits were filed against the rule, (including some by then-Oklahoma AG Pruitt), which are still pending.

At the end of February, Pres. Trump signed an executive order to roll back the WOTUS rule – despite the following facts:

- Without the rule, one in three Americans gets drinking water from streams that lack clear protection from pollution.
- The WOTUS rule only protects waters historically covered under the Clean Water Act. It doesn't interfere with private property rights, and it only covers water – not land use.
- The final WOTUS rule doesn't create any new permitting requirements for agriculture, maintains all previous

exemptions and exclusions, and even adds exclusions for features like artificial lakes and ponds. The good news is that WOTUS, having been completed as far back as spring 2015, is not subject to the Congressional Review Act, CRA (§4 this NL). Mr. Pruitt will have to begin the lengthy and complicated legal process required to re-write the rule — a process that could take a few years.

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## **7. PUBLIC LANDS**

### **7A. Park resources threatened by oil & gas drilling**

House Joint Res. 46, introduced under the CRA by Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) at the end of January would repeal the recent update to the 9B rule that addresses safety and enforcement standards for oil and gas drilling in more than 40 national parks. The 9B rules were first created in 1978 for cases of "split estate," where the federal government owns the surface lands and private companies own some of the mineral rights below the surface. The aim was to find the appropriate balance between park protection and private rights. The rules subsequently became inadequate, and NPS began updating them in 2009, finishing after seven years' hard work in 2016. Because, of all the hundreds of units in the National Park System, the BSFNRRRA is the most heavily affected, TCWP had for some time been involved in the update of the 9B regulations, and now has extra reasons for opposing HJR 46, which would repeal it (see §1A this NL).

### **7B. Resolution would overturn BLM's land-planning rule**

[Based on information from Pew Charitable Trust]

Another CRA-spawned resolution, HJR 44, would tear up a recent BLM rule (Planning 2.0) designed to increase public participation in the land-use planning process. Planning 2.0 provides new opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the early stages of developing plans. This means that all users of public lands can know more about what a plan would do and express their hopes and concerns about it.

Planning 2.0 also includes steps to ensure that important fish and wildlife habitats, such as migration corridors and intact ecosystems, are identified early in the planning process so they can be managed and conserved as the agency makes decisions about development, recreation, and other public land uses.

The force behind HJR 44 is Liz Cheney (R-WY), daughter of Bush's Vice Pres. Dick Cheney, who has called Planning 2.0 "a federal power grab."

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Tell your U.S. representative and both senators (see [www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org)) to oppose HJR 44, which would repeal Planning 2.0, a sensible process under which all users of public lands can know more about what a plan

would do, and can express their hopes and concerns about it.

### **7C. Don't let rangers become an endangered species**

In his effort to shrink the federal government, Pres. Trump has ordered a hiring freeze on federal workers, and given managers less than 90 days to figure out how to reduce the size of their workforce. National parks are already operating with limited staff due to past budget reductions. The Parks have welcomed record-setting numbers of visitors over the past several years and need more staff, not less. In addition, staff of other agencies, such as the EPA, play a major role in protecting park resources. Their staff, too, should not be reduced.

### **7D. Outdoor industry recognizes profitability of public lands**

[Information from Wilderness Watch]

In late January, 20 outdoor industry groups — including the influential Outdoor Industry Alliance, the National Wildlife Federation, and Backcountry Hunters & Anglers — sent a letter to the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress blasting the recent rule change that made it easier to transfer public lands by designating federal land sales as “budget neutral” and eliminating rules that prevented the undervaluing of public lands. [The rule change would let Congress give away every single piece of property we own, for free, and pretend we have lost nothing of any value.] The letter said that public lands “shape our national identity” and “are critical to the future of hunting, fishing and wildlife and the sustained economic health of communities bordering these lands.”

About a week after he had introduced it, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) withdrew his HR 621, which called for the disposal of 3.3 million acres of federal land in 10 Western states. He wrote: “Groups I support and care about fear it sends the wrong message.” Among these groups was the Outdoor Industry Association, which has shown that the outdoor recreation economy, which leans heavily on accessing public lands, delivers a \$646 billion economic impact to the U.S. and employs 6.1 million Americans.

Chaffetz did not withdraw his H.R. 622, which would transfer law enforcement (but not ownership) on Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land to local sheriff's deputies.

## **8. ENERGY; CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **8A. Congress would allow wasting of lots of natural gas (methane)**

[Based on information from EDF]

Near the end of the Obama Administration, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) finalized strong limits on the oil & gas industry's practices of venting and flaring on public lands (NL 331 ¶7E). Venting is the intentional release of

gas (methane) into the atmosphere; flaring is the burning off of gas. The limits applied to existing as well as future wells, and to tribal as well as public lands.

The current Congress wasted no time in attacking these sensible safeguards by means of HJR 36 (spawned by the CRA, ¶4, this NL), which has passed the House but is still pending in the Senate. Nationwide, an estimated \$330 million worth of natural gas from taxpayer and tribal lands is being wasted every year through leaks and the inefficient practice of venting and flaring. That's enough natural gas to supply all of the homes in a city the size of Chicago for a year. This pollution also contains methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, thus adding significantly to global warming. There is a growing industry in the U.S. providing cost-effective services to oil and gas companies to find and fix methane gas leaks across their operations.

An excellent OpEd on the subject, by TCWP president Jimmy Groton, cites additional arguments why it would be folly to do away with the Methane and Waste Prevention Rule. Check it out at

<http://www.knoxnews.com/story/opinion/columnists/2017/03/11/jimmy-groton-keep-rule-cuts-natural-gas-waste/99009154/>.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Urge your senators (address on p.2) to oppose. HJR 36. See talking points above.

### **8B. Republican group proposes carbon tax**

[Based on information from NYTimes, 2-7-17]

A group of Republican elder statesmen would substitute the carbon tax for the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan. The group is led by former Sec. of State James A. Baker III, and includes George P. Shultz and Henry M. Paulson Jr., who say that taxing carbon pollution produced by burning fossil fuels is “a conservative climate solution” based on free-market principles. At an initial price of \$40 per ton of carbon dioxide produced, the tax would raise an estimated \$200 billion to \$300 billion a year, with the rate scheduled to rise over time ... the money raised would be returned to consumers in the form of reduced taxes.

The plan may be welcomed because it puts influential members of the Republican establishment on the record as favoring action on climate change, and putting forth a possible solution. It may be opposed because, (a) it would be a substitute for the Clean Power Plan, (b) the money raised by the carbon tax should be used to promote renewable energy and other emissions-reducing technologies, instead of general tax reduction, (c) the proposal would also insulate fossil fuel companies against possible lawsuits over the damage their products have caused to the environment.

### **8C. Increase in solar jobs**

[From Harvey Broome Group, Sierra Club]

Last year saw a 24.5% increase in solar jobs compared to 2015, bringing total solar employment to some 260,000 jobs nationwide. According to a new annual report by the nonprofit Solar Foundation, solar is now the second largest

U.S. energy industry, second only to oil and petroleum, and considerably larger than coal. For the fourth consecutive year, the solar industry has increased its jobs number by 20% or more, and the total number has nearly tripled since 2010.

**9. HOW IS CONGRESS DOING?**

**2016 Environmental Scorecard for Congress**

[Information from League of Conservation Voters]

For 2016 (the second session of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress), LCV has again published one of its annual, carefully researched and clearly presented, environmental scorecards. (You may view past scorecards, as well as the current one, at <http://scorecard.lcv.org/>.) The scorecard represents the consensus of experts from 15 respected environmental and conservation groups who selected the key votes on which members of Congress should be scored. The 2016 results are based on 38 House votes and 17 Senate votes. These are votes that presented legislators with a real choice; consensus actions and issues on which no recorded votes occurred are not included.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Tell your representative and both senators that environmental issues matter to you, and that, based on their LCV score, you either commend them or are disappointed in them.

Table 1. LCV scores of Congressional leaders.

	Repub.	Dem
Senate committee leaders* (5R,5D)	13	95
House committee leaders (6R,6D)	4	84
Senate party leaders** (5R,4D)	11	100
House party leaders (4R,4D)	2	93

\*Committee leaders are chairs (Repub.) or ranking members (Dem.).

\*\*Party leaders are majority/minority leaders, whips, caucus chairs, etc

Table 2. . LCV scores of the Tennessee delegation.

	District	Party	2016	Lifetime
<b>Senate</b>				
Alexander	NA	R	41	22
Corker	NA	R	0	12
<b>House</b>				
Roe	1	R	0	2
Duncan	2	R	0	10
Fleischmann	3	R	3	4
DesJarlais	4	R	0	2
Cooper	5	D	82	80
Black	6	R	0	3
Blackburn	7	R	0	2
Fincher	8	R	0	3
Cohen	9	D	100	97

Our state has the dubious honor of scoring worse than average. While members of the Tennessee delegation constitute about 2% of the House membership, about 5% of all zero scores can be attributed to Tennesseans. Of 16 senators who scored zero, one was a Tennessean.

**10. OAK RIDGE AREA**

**10A. Grant for-Rails-to Trail project**

The abandoned RR track that runs from the east end of Oak Ridge toward Y-12 may become a 4.7-mile walking and bicycling trail. With the help of the Legacy Parks Foundation, the City has obtained a \$100,000 grant for design and engineering, a major part of the total estimated cost.

**10B. Parking for North Ridge Trail – a correction**

In our latest Newsletter, we reported the construction of a small gravel parking area on Key Springs Road where it is crossed by the North Ridge Trail. Our Trail Steward, Ray Garrett, to whom we owe the proposal for this parking area, has informed us that he was unsuccessful in getting the City of Oak Ridge to construct it, but that his friend, the Anderson County Road Superintendent Gary Long graciously volunteered to do so. TCWP thanks Gary Long and Ray!

**11. TCWP NEWS**

**11A. Upcoming activities**

[Compiled by Carol Grametbauer]

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

Obed Rafting Trip with Trash Collection – Sat., March 25

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Boaters are invited to join TCWP, in cooperation with the National Park Service, for a whitewater clean-up trip down the Obed River on Saturday, March 25. The outing, from Devil’s Breakfast Table to Nemo Bridge (water levels permitting), will include trash collection coordinated with the National Park Service using garbage rafts to remove trash along the river.

TCWP has arranged for there to be a limited number of seats on privately-guided rafts. Rafters must be 18 years old or over, and have a moderately high level of physical fitness and stamina. The trip will include a portage over large boul-

ders. The difficulty level of this outing is high, and participants are encouraged to consider carefully their fitness and stamina before undertaking this trip.

Pre-registration by Monday, March 20, is required. Weather and river conditions are unpredictable, and decisions about the nature of the trip will likely be made the evening before. If weather or water levels do not permit collecting trash from the river, mini-cleanups will be held at various put-ins.

A small number of wet suits are available for loan to participants. Otherwise, anyone planning to come should try to get access to a dry suit, or at least wear wicking fabric and cotton clothes, in order to stay as dry and warm as possible. Participants will need to bring lunch and water.

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

Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 8  
The Greenway behind Oak Ridge's Rolling Hills Apartments (formerly known as the Garden Apartments) is one of the best wildflower trails in Anderson County, but it is threatened by garlic mustard, a very invasive exotic that crowds out native plants. TCWP and Greenways Oak Ridge have been making headway in recent years in ridding the trail of this harmful plant. Volunteers are needed to help with the effort again this year.

We will meet at 10 a.m. at the rear parking lot (near the woods) behind 101-135 West Vanderbilt Drive. Wear sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothes, and bring water, food/snacks, and a digging spike or similar tool if you own one. Naturalist Kris Light will lead our wildflower walk again this year.

Rock Creek Wildflower Walk – Saturday, April 22  
[Contributed by Larry Pounds]

On this joint outing with the Tennessee Native Plant Society, we will caravan from the Delta station to the Lower Leggett Road trailhead. We'll hike for about an hour (perhaps about a mile, since we'll be talking plants as we go) before stopping for lunch. Those wanting a short hike might want to turn back after lunch; others will continue on around a loop for a hike totaling 4.5 miles at return to the trailhead. A walk to an overlook is an extra .46 miles roundtrip. We'll see rushing water and many spring wildflowers, with the best flowering shrubby buckeyes on the loop. The trail is steep in places, particularly on the loop. Bring water, lunch, and bug spray.

We'll meet for carpooling 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, or at the Delta gas station on U.S. 27 in Sale Creek at 11 a.m. Eastern. An email to [PoundsL471@aol.com](mailto:PoundsL471@aol.com) saying you are likely to come is appreciated; this helps with planning and facilitates

notification regarding any change in plans. Cell phone is (865) 705-8516.

Piney River Wildflower Walk – Saturday, May 6  
(Contributed by Larry Pounds)

In a second joint outing with TNPS, we will caravan from the Exxon station in Spring City to the Lower Piney River trailhead. We'll walk and talk along Soak Creek, returning to the trailhead for lunch at about noon. After lunch we'll hike along Piney River from the same trailhead. As usual with the Cumberland Trail, there will be wildflowers and roaring water.

Total walking distance will be about five miles, but some may choose to walk less. The morning walk is rather flat, but there may be puddles to get around. The afternoon walk will include some uphill walking. Bring water, lunch, and bug spray.

We'll meet for carpooling 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 Rocky Top/Exxon/McDonald's parking lot on U.S. 27 in Spring City at 10 a.m. Eastern. An email to [PoundsL471@aol.com](mailto:PoundsL471@aol.com) saying you are likely to come is appreciated; this helps with planning and facilitates notification regarding any change in plans. Cell phone is (865) 705-8516.

"Butterfly Gardens and Pollinator Habitats" – Thursday, May 11

Habitat loss has resulted in the decline of many pollinator species, including the monarch butterfly and the honey bee. In a 7 p.m. program to be held in Room 102 of the First Presbyterian Church in Oak Ridge on May 11, Jamie Herold, Oak Ridge National Laboratory plant ecologist and a former TCWP board member, will discuss why native plants are important for pollinator survival, why different insects are attracted to different flowers, some of the most beneficial native plants for pollinators, and garden design/management techniques that help pollinators. She'll also describe what's being done to protect pollinators on the DOE's Oak Ridge Reservation.

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

## **11B. Recent events**

Whites Creek Trail workday – January 14  
[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Seven folks took to the Whites Creek Trail on a cool January Saturday for the annual trail maintenance session sponsored by TCWP. Armed with loppers or clippers, the group eradicated overhanging and protruding limbs. Since there no leaves, we enjoyed lovely views of Watts Bar Lake, both down- and upstream.

TCWP has partnered with TVA since 1984 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.

“Delights and Frights Along the Cumberland Trail” – February 2

A crowd of about 50 people came out on February 2 to hear TCWP board member Larry Pounds and his son Ben, who spent a month together in 2012 hiking all then-existing 200 miles of the Cumberland Trail, describe their experience and share slides of their favorite sights along the trail. The pair discussed trail, rock, and water features, plants, and animals they encountered, and Ben gave several short readings from *Wildly Strolling Along*, the book they wrote documenting their experience. Following their talk and a question-and-answer session, they sold and signed copies of the book.

Alley Ford Cumberland Trail Workday – February 18

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

The Alley Ford Segment of the Cumberland Trail and the Emory River Gorge section that runs toward Wartburg were the focus of a trail maintenance project last month. Thanks to several students from Dr. Mike McKinney’s class and staff from Cumberland Trail State Park and Obed Wild and Scenic River, there were enough volunteers to make two trail crews. Despite near-continuous rain, with about 20 participants, both segments of the trail were cleared of protruding and overhanging branches.

TCWP adopted this 2.5-mile segment of the Cumberland Trail, which runs through the Obed Wild and Scenic River, in 1998 as part of its ongoing stewardship efforts.

**11C. Status of our Political Guide**

Carol Grametbauer has completed work on TCWP’s 2017 Political Guide with the exception of a few cabinet-level nominations that remain to be confirmed. The guide has been posted on our website ([www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org)), where it will be updated as appropriate, but the printed version will be held until all positions have been filled.

**11D. Volunteers needed for Earth Day festivals**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

TCWP will have a presence at both the Knox County EarthFest and Earthday Oak Ridge. These will be held on Saturdays, April 15 and 22, respectively. We need to staff the booth for two-hour shifts at each event, with two volunteers in each shift.

Training will be offered the week of April 3. This is an opportunity to develop or perfect your people-greeting skills, and to meet new people with an interest in conservation and the environment.

On April 15, at Knoxville Botanical Garden, volunteers are needed between 11:00 and 5:00. On April 22, at the Al Bissell Park in Oak Ridge, volunteers are needed between 11:00 and 4:00. To sign up for a two-hour shift and

the training session, call or write Sandra at 865.583-3967 or [sandra@sandrakgoss.com](mailto:sandra@sandrakgoss.com).

**11E. Community Shares to hold Circle of Change Banquet**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

Community Shares, a fund-raising federation of Tennessee-based community groups (including TCWP), will hold its annual fundraiser and awards banquet on Saturday, April 29, from 6-11 pm, at the Bearden Banquet Hall. The evening will feature dinner, live music, awards celebration, cash bar, silent and live auctions, and an ineffable sense of camaraderie.

The cost is \$35 per person, \$65 per couple, or \$275 for table of ten. For more info, call Community Shares at 865.522-1604.

**11F. TCWP Board members involved in Georgia wildflower events**

[Contributed by Sandra Goss]

TCWP President Jimmy Groton, and Board member and well-known botanist Larry Pounds, will be leading hikes at the Georgia Botanical Society’s Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage, April 7—9. This year the Pilgrimage is based in Chattanooga, and will feature several outings in the greater Chattanooga area, including the southern end of the Cumberland Plateau. Jimmy and Larry are each leading two hikes, and Larry is providing the Saturday keynote address at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo. For more info, visit [www.gabotsoc.org](http://www.gabotsoc.org).

**11G. Thanks, and a tip of the hat**



From Sandra Goss to . . .

- Jean Bangham, John Bates, Bob Compton, Jimmy Groton, Katherine Hensley, Joe Horton, Harriett McCurdy, Eileen Neiler, Lise Neiler, Dick Raridon, and Michele Thornton for helping with TCWP Newsletter distribution.
- Larry and Ben Pounds for their informative and enjoyable presentation, “Delights and Frights on the Cumberland Trail.”
- Thanks to Yvonne Rogers for helping set up the a/v and room for the Delights and Frights presentation, and to First Presbyterian Church in Oak Ridge for providing the venue.
- Bob Fulcher and River Sports for their hospitality at the Cumberland Trail State Park Volunteer Appreciation Event. Thanks to Jimmy Groton for representing TCWP at the event.
- Johnny Cosgrove and Michele Thornton for their help with updating the remodeled TCWP website, [www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org).

- Marion Burger for representing TCWP at the recent Conservation Education Day on the Hill.
- Jimmy Groton and Tim Bigelow for their leadership at the annual Alley Ford Segment of Cumberland Trail Maintenance Day.
- Dr. Mike McKinney for several of his students attending the Alley Ford Cleanup; thanks to the students for their help.
- Cedar Barren Steward Tim Bigelow, Larry Pounds, and Jimmy Groton for their leadership of the recent Cedar Barren Weed Wrangle®.

### 11H. Friends and members in the news

[Compiled by Sandra Goss]

- Ellen Smith was featured and pictured in a January 4 Oak Ridger article about her presentation to the Oak Ridge League of Women Voters.
- Louise Gorenflo penned a letter to the editor of the January 31 News Sentinel about new refugee rules.
- Joe Feeman authored articles about his Norway travels in the February 1 and 15 issues of the Norris Bulletin.
- Maureen Dunn was mentioned in an article about the Women's Fund of East Tennessee, of which she is Chairman of the Board, in the February 5 News Sentinel.
- Neil McBride is cited in January 20 and 21 Oak Ridger articles about the Oak Ridge YWCA building.
- Bob Fulcher won the Tennessee Folklife Heritage Award, the state's highest honor in the arts, as reported in the February 14 Oak Ridger.
- David Etnier is mentioned in a Sam Venable column in the February 14 News Sentinel.
- The February 15 Oak Ridger reported that Ellen Smith has been appointed to the National League of Cities 2017 Energy, Environment and Natural Resources federal advocacy committee.
- Lee Russell had a letter to the editor in the February 23 Oak Ridger, pointing out the advantages of choosing Scarboro, instead of Elm Grove Park, for the site of the new Preschool building.
- Smoky Mountains Hiking Club and Wednesday Hike regulars Jean Bangham, Penny Lukin were described in a February 17 News Sentinel article.
- Antone Davis and the Volunteers for Life program are mentioned in the February 22 News Sentinel.
- Pat Bryan, Chris Iverson, and Mary Ann Reeves were pictured in the February 26 News Sentinel.
- Bob Fulcher and Cumberland Trail State Park were part of an article in the February 28 News Sentinel.

- State regional urban forester Tom Simpson was mentioned in an article about a UT tree planting project in the March 4 News Sentinel.
- A review of Fireflies, Flow-worms, and Lightning Bugs: Identification and Natural History of the Fireflies of the Eastern and Central United States and Canada authored by Lynn Frierson Faust was published in the March 5 News Sentinel.

### 11J. Executive Director's Column

Dear TCWP friends,

If you're reading these words, it's likely that you have some affinity for clean air, pure water, adequate habitat for all, or possibly some combination. I like all three, as well as the various positive programs, laws, rules, and policies that affect these things.

Alas! There is very little positive news to report on the environmental front. Please consider committing yourself to two actions every week: (1) call your elected officials and relate your views on one issue, and (2) enjoy our natural world. TCWP offers information about the issues and how to contact officials, and about a outdoor activities that satisfy that hunger for nature.

I don't have to tell you that your calls and involvement are more important than ever. That's been said many times over the years, by me and others. I suggest that your calls and involvement are more important to us callers and hikers. Action must be taken! We must not assume the powerless position, for our own self-respect and mental health!

I hope that some of you will step up and help at TCWP's Earth Day exhibits in either Knoxville on Saturday, April 15, or Oak Ridge on Saturday, April 22. These events are family-friendly, informational, and uplifting. We'll train you to staff a booth, and you won't be alone. The shifts are 2 hours and provide an opportunity to meet new friends and keep the old!

Thanks for all you do!

Sandra

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## 12. CALENDAR; RESOURCES

### •• CALENDAR

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

- March 18, Clear Creek Gorge hike (see ¶1C, this NL).
- March 25, Obed Rafting Trip with Trash Cleanup (see ¶11A, this NL).
- March 25, Manhattan Project NHP activity -- Ride With a Ranger down Melton Lake Greenway. The 4-mile bike ride will begin at 10 am (ET) at Elza Gate Park, and will stop several times to talk about the rich history that is found within the Oak Ridge area.

- March 27, LWV Breakfast with the Legislators (see ¶2C, this NL).
- April 8, Garlic Mustard Pull/Wildflower walk (see ¶11A, this NL).
- April 15, Earthfest, Knoxville (see ¶11D, this NL).
- April 19, Rugby, Scientific Research Meeting for the Cumberland Plateau (see ¶1C, this NL).
- April 22, Earthday, Oak Ridge (see ¶11D, this NL).
- April 22, Rock Creek Wildflower walk (see ¶11A, this NL).
- April 23, 29, May 19, June 4, nature walks on the O.R Reservation. Contact Trent Jett, ORNL, 865-574-9188, or, [jett-trt@ornl.gov](mailto:jett-trt@ornl.gov).
- April 29, Community Shares banquet (see ¶11E, this NL).
- May 6, Piney River Wildflower walk (see ¶11A, this NL).
- May 11, “Butterfly Gardens and Pollinator Habitats” (see ¶11A, this NL).

## •• RESOURCES

- Larry and Ben Pounds’ book about hiking the Cumberland Trail, *Wildly Strolling Along* (see ¶11A, above), is available from Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Wildly-Strolling-Along-Larry-Pounds/dp/1364316129>.
- Rain barrel workshops in Farragut (3/25/17), Oak Ridge (4/29), and Knox County (5/13). You make your own and take it home for \$40 per barrel. For more information, <http://waterqualityforum.org>; or register at [kcaughor@utk.edu](mailto:kcaughor@utk.edu), Phone: 865-974-2151
- Useful websites.
  - Rebuttals to the most common climate-change myths: [skepticalscience.com](http://skepticalscience.com)
  - Miscellaneous environmental expertise: [sc.org/ask-mrgreen](http://sc.org/ask-mrgreen)
- The city of Oak Ridge has an email newsletter that might have news you may have missed in the newspaper. To sign up, go to <http://www.oakridgetn.gov/content/NEWS/Newsletter>

*"You and I, as citizens, have the power to set this country's course. You and I, as citizens, have the obligation to shape the debates of our time — not only with the votes we cast, but with the voices we lift in defense of our most ancient values and enduring ideals. "*

*--Pres. Barack Obama, January 21, 2013*

# 17 Reasons to be a member of TCWP for 2017

## Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning:

- \* Provides quick weekly info on current events thru E-letters
- \* Issues the most informative environmental newsletter in the state
- \* Secures special lands in Obed River Gorge
- \* Maintains Whites Ck. Trail (Rhea Co.)
- \* Provides TCWP E-letters on timely environmental issues
- \* The TCWP Newsletter and E-letters can help you make a difference
- \* Conducts regular invasive plants cleanup at Oak Ridge Cedar Barren
- \* Monitors and comments on Big South Fork NRRRA management
- \* Sponsors informative presentations
- \* Is long-time adopter of Alley Ford segment of Cumberland Trail
- \* Takes active role in oil and gas rules formulation
- \* Sponsors yearly exotic pest plant removal at Worthington Cemetery
- \* Works to stop Mountain Top Removal Coal Mining
- \* Advocates for pure drinking water
- \* Built and maintains the North Ridge Trail (Oak Ridge)
- \* Fights for healthy state and national forests
- \* Comments on timbering and gold mining extraction

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Our "dues" year is the calendar year, Jan 1 to Dec 31. Contributions to TCWP are tax-deductible.

To join after August 1, you may pay half the listed annual rates.

Please visit [www.tcwp.org](http://www.tcwp.org) for secure contribution or send form, and check (**payable to TCWP**), to:

Tim Bigelow, Treasurer, TCWP; 10626 Forest Crest Rd., Knoxville, TN 37922

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- Liane (Lee) Russell.....Director
- Michele Thornton..... Director
- Hannah Tippett .....Director
- Warren Webb.....Director
- Sandra Goss .....Executive Director

**Coming Events**

- March 25 – Obed River Cleanup
- April 8 - Wildflower Hike, Garlic Mustard Pull
- April 15 - EarthFest Knoxville
- April 22 - Obed Wild and Scenic River Clean up and Vol Appreciation Day
- April 22 - Rock Creek Wildflower Walk
- April 22 - Oak Ridge Earth Day
- May 6 - Potters Falls Cleanup
- May 6 - Piney River Wildflower Walk
- May 9-13 - Wilderness Wildlife Week
- May 11 - Butterfly Gardens and Pollinator Habitats Program