



Tennessee
Citizens for
Wilderness
Planning

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May 19, 2020

Taking Care of Wild Places

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A Member of Community Shares

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:

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- 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.
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- 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 cancelation as we monitor and react to local, state, and federal data and guidelines.

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

HOW TO REACH ELECTED OFFICIALS

Sen. Marsha Blackburn
Ph: 202-224-3344; FAX: 202-228-0566
e-mail: senator@blackburn.senate.gov
Local: 865-637-4180 (FAX 637-9886)
800 Market St., Suite 121, Knoxville 37902

Sen. Lamar Alexander:
Ph: 202-224-4944; FAX: 202-228-3398
e-mail: lamar@alexander.senate.gov
Local: 865-545-4253 (FAX 545-4252)
800 Market St., Suite 112, Knoxville 37902

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann:
Phone: 202-225-3271
FAX: 202-225-3494
Local (O.R.): 865-576-1976
<https://fleischmann.house.gov/contact-me>

To call any rep. or senator, dial Congressional switchboard, 202-224-3121. To find out about the status of bills, call 202-225-1772.
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 more contact information and links to how to find your legislators on our website, <https://www.tcwp.org> under "Tools for Action."

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

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

President: Mark Bevelhimer (mbevelhimer@gmail.com)

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Newsletter editor: Sandra K. Goss

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

1. TENNESSEE NEWS

1A. State Parks Get Bee Hives

[Information from Tennessee State Parks website]

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and Tennessee State Parks (TSP) have launched the Honey Project in several state parks. This effort will promote pollinator health, provide a learning opportunity for visitors and produce honey to be sold in state park gift shops and used in state park restaurants.

This is a partnership project with Tennessee Department of Agriculture's State Apiarist, Mike Studer and TRICOR, a company that provides training for Tennessee's incarcerated population, built the hives for the first 6 parks.

1B. New Connector Trail Opportunity

(Contributed by Larry Pounds)

The currently unused rail line between Oneida and Devonia may be available for a forty mile long trail. Perhaps the proposed trail would be something like the famous Virginia Creeper Trail. This rail line crosses the Cumberland Trail. A committee of members of the Cumberland Trails Conference and TCWP are exploring the possibilities. This is a great tourism opportunity for Scott, Campbell and Anderson Counties where the line runs. It could be a major recreational and economic asset for these areas. We are looking to see if there is support for such a trail in these counties. If you have thoughts on this or know people in these areas who would be good to talk to let me know. Larry Pounds (PoundL471@aol.com).

1C. Sand Mine proposed on Duck River

(Contributed by Ken Mayes)

A sand and gravel mine is being proposed on the floodplain of the Duck River. The Duck River is home to at least 147 species of fish, 22 freshwater snail species, and 54 freshwater mussel species. The stretch of the Duck River adjacent to the proposed mine has been designated as Exceptional Tennessee Water because it is critical habitat for the Purple Bean and Cumberland Combshell, two mussels that are federally listed as endangered. Flooding along the river has increased in recent years, and the proposed mine site creates the potential for causing significant sediment when it floods, which could affect the biodiversity of the river. The Southern Environmental Law Center and its partners are asking the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to revise a draft permit to account for the flood-related discharges that will occur as a result of the project, and to ensure compliance with the state's water quality.

You can read more and check for updates on the situation at SELC's website.

<https://www.southernenvironment.org/news-and-press/news-feed/mine-proposed-on-beloved-tennessee-river-and-floodplain-draws-concern>

1D. Wilson Named New Director for TWRA; Thanks to Retiring Director Carter

Long time Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Director Ed Carter will retire at the end of this month. Some years ago, Director Carter spoke at a TCWP Annual Meeting in Lafollette, and then led us to the Hatfield Knob Elk Viewing Area. In a recent email, he expressed pride in opening Catoosa Wildlife Management Area to year-round boating, establishment of new trails, and the purchase of thousands of acres of new habitat.

Earlier this month, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (in a Zoom meeting) unanimously voted to appoint Bobby Wilson as the new Executive Director, effective June 1. Wilson has been Deputy Director since 2015, following a long tenure in Fisheries.

Welcome, Director Wilson and Happy Retirement, Director Carter. Thanks to both for your service.

1E. State Legislature Reconvenes Next Month; Free Webinar "It Isn't Over: Key Environmental Bills Still to be Decided by Legislators" Available

Tennessee Conservation Voters is presenting a webinar training, "It Isn't Over: Key Environmental Bills Still to be Decided by Legislators," that will provide an overview of the environmental bills seen this year and the key issues we are likely to see next session. Presented by TCV's longtime environmental lobbyist Stewart Clifton, the webinar will provide insight into the ins and outs of the legislation impacting Tennessee's environment today. From plastic bag bans to billboard regulations, now is the time to catch up. After the presentation, there will be an open Q&A session.

There will be two chances to join this webinar: Wednesday, May 20th at 5:30 p.m. CDT or Friday, May 22nd at 12:30 p.m. CDT. Free registration is available at: https://secure.everyaction.com/bUxVM6m_GUKrcO3jhpzSg2

1F. Thank You Mack Prichard (1939-2020)

Long-time (and the first!) State Naturalist Mack Prichard died in Cookeville last month. He retired from his position in 2008. Mack played a key role in conservation efforts across the state for many years. From the Mississippi to the North Carolina border, Mack was familiar with Tennessee's special places. His enthusiastic and vivid sharing of wild lands and waters through guided outings and his voluminous store of slides and anecdotes made Mack a persuasive advocate. For some of Mack's pictures, visit www.mackprichard.com, a legacy website curated by Friends of South Cumberland State Park.

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/TCWPOR>

2. OBED/BIG SOUTH FORK NEWS

2A. *Big South Fork Virtual Tours and Programs Available*

[Information from Big South Fork E-Newsletter]

Join Us Virtually on our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/BigSouthForkNPS> for:

#SoundsofthePark - Relax and enjoy as you listen to the many different sounds of the park virtually Every Monday.

#TriviaTuesdays - Earn points toward your GO Big Challenge Every Tuesday as you learn more about Big South Fork and other parks on the Cumberland Plateau.

#WildflowerWednesdays - Earn points toward your GO Big Challenge Every Wednesday when you take a virtual wildflower walk with us and identify what is in bloom at Big South Fork during that week!

#HistoryofBigSouthFork - Connect with Big South Fork virtually Every Sunday and learn more about the early settlers and peoples that first called this area home. You'll get a true "sense of place" when hear stories passed down from generation to generation.

#VirtualVisitorCenter or "Ask a Ranger" - Whether you have never been here before and are planning a future trip, or you've visited the park 30 times and have questions about something previously experienced, we will try our best to find the answers for you! Days and times for the Virtual Visitor Center vary.

2B. *New Species Found in Obed WSR*

[Information from the Obed E-Newsletter]

Devil's Urn is a Fungus Species Newly Documented in Obed. *Urnula craterium* is a species of cup fungus that is parasitic on oaks and other hardwood species. Appearing in early spring, Devil's Urn has distinctive goblet-shaped and dark colored fruitbodies.

3. OTHER NEWS

3A. *Supreme Court rules in favor of Clean Water Act*

(Contributed by Russ Manning)

In perhaps an unexpected ruling, the conservative-leaning U.S. Supreme Court trumped the Trump Administration's efforts to weaken the Clean Water Act. The case brought before the Court was "County of Maui, Hawaii, Petitioner V. Hawaii Wildlife Fund, et al." in which the county and the Administration hoped to overturn a decision by the District Court that was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court.

Earthjustice represented the Hawaii Wildlife Fund and other conservation organizations in challenging Maui County's practice of injecting sewage into groundwater, arguing that the county needed a permit from the EPA for such discharge, as required by the Clean Water Act. The challenge was won at the two lower courts, so the county

took the case to the Supreme Court where they and the Administration argued that a permit was not required because the discharge was not directly into a body of water, but rather traveled through groundwater before reaching the ocean.

In a 6 to 3 vote, the Supreme Court ruled that the Clean Water Act regulates pollutant discharge to groundwater because ultimately the pollution will reach a body of water. In the written opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer said, "We do not see how Congress could have intended to create such a large and obvious loophole in one of the key regulatory innovations of the Clean Water Act." Justices Thomas, Gorsuch, and Alito dissented.

Tellingly, one of the supporters of the Maui County petition to the court, among other industries that tend to produce pollution, was Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind the Dakota Access Pipeline. One can only speculate the company supported the government's case because a leak in a pipeline would travel through groundwater before entering a body of water and so would not be regulated by the Clean Water Act if the Supreme Court had not ruled that the Act does regulate pollutant discharges to groundwater.

This is a significant setback for efforts by the Trump Administration and its industry partners to weaken environmental protections. Abigail Dillen, President of Earthjustice, says, "Others will use [this opinion] to enforce clean water protections where pollution through groundwater can be clearly linked back to a source."

The case will now be sent back to the Ninth Circuit, which will in turn send it back to the District Court, which will then decide if the county's discharge to groundwater meets the test defined by the Supreme Court's decision—that the pollutant ultimately discharges to the ocean. This was never denied by Maui County, so there's no doubt the District Court will rule the county must seek a permit for the discharge under the Clean Water Act.

For details, see <https://earthjustice.org/features/supreme-court-maui-clean-water-case>

3B. *Embrace Humanity: the solution to global issues*

(Contributed by Jan Berry)

The coronavirus pandemic is preparing us for our next global battle: climate change. As we stay at home, we have time to take walks, enjoy the spring, listen more deeply, and rethink what makes our lives worth living. Many are embracing our humanity and our natural environment.

The recognition that our choices matter hits us hard -- do I go out? -- do I wear a mask? -- do I wash my hands? These choices affect us and our families, and also the most vulnerable of our society. Embracing our humanity is how we flatten the curve on the infection rate to survive this pandemic. It is also how we flatten the curve on carbon emissions.

"We were designed to live on this perfect, amazing, home that we have. It is the single most important bond we share no matter who we are that live on this planet." Dr.

Katherine Hayhoe's inspirational statement expresses one of the core values of Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL). She spoke to over 3,000 climate advocates during an Earth Day CCL Zoom meeting. When asked, why do you care about climate change, climate advocates responded, "I am human!" "I care about humanity!"

Strong core values drive over 180,000 CCL volunteers to build the political will for action on climate change. We promote the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, the bipartisan climate solution that will be:

- effective – reduce America's emissions by 40% within 12 years;
- good for people – improve health by reducing pollution and putting the money from a fee on carbon directly into people's pockets;
- good for the economy – uses the free market to create over 2.1M jobs.

Our embrace of humanity renews our commitment to act on climate change. Your local CCL chapter will welcome you and help you act on climate change. Join at:

<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>

3C. Groups Urge Congress to Save Monarch Butterfly

(Contributed by Russ Manning)

Warning that the monarch population has fallen below extinction thresholds, the Center for Biological Diversity along with 100 organizations sent a letter to Congress in March asking for an increase in funding to preserve the butterflies and their habitat.



Long a natural world phenomenon, the multigenerational migration of monarchs covers 2,000 miles between Mexico and Canada. Yet, we are witnessing the collapse of the spectacle. The numbers of monarchs wintering in Mexico have been steadily declining, and the winter of 2020 saw a 53% reduction from the previous winter. The smaller western population of monarchs that winter in California is now down to a mere 30,000 butterflies.

The primary threat to monarchs is the loss of habitat, especially the midwestern states through which they pass. Destruction of milkweed on which monarchs depend through conversion of lands to agriculture and development removes an essential food source for the butterflies and the only plant upon which their caterpillars feed. And as with most natural systems, the threat is exacerbated by climate change.

The use of Roundup on genetically modified corn and soybeans crops kills milkweed plants that would at least remain on the fields' margins. In January, the Trump's EPA reapproved glyphosate, the main ingredient in Roundup, claiming there is no threat to human health, despite independent studies linking glyphosate to cancer.

The appeal in March by the nation's conservation organizations asks Congress to increase annual funding to \$100 million, which would cover the cost of restoring 1

million acres of milkweed and pollinator habitat, a mere \$100 per acre.

"If these iconic orange-and-black butterflies were to disappear, the world would be a much lonelier place," says Stephanie Kurose, endangered species policy specialist with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Monarchs have captured the hearts of Americans for generations. Their collapse would be devastating."

For more information, go to

https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/invertebrates/monarch_butterfly/

3D. The Plastic Recycling Boondoggle

(Contributed by Ken Mayes)

NPR and PBS recently did an investigative story on how few plastics are recycled. They discovered that less than 10% of plastics have ever been recycled and the plastic industry knew early on that recycling plastics was not viable. In addition, the plastic industry, led by the gas and oil industry, promoted recycling in an effort to influence consumer perception about plastics so that they could continue to make more plastics. You can watch **Plastic Wars**, a documentary by Frontline and PBS, online at: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/plastic-wars/>

Other links of interest:

- <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data>
- <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/31/822597631/plastic-wars-three-takeaways-from-the-fight-over-the-future-of-plastics>

3E. More Affordable Green Power

Knoxville Utility Board announced that effective next month, the cost of a block of green power will decrease from \$4/block to \$2/block AND the renewable energy each block supports will increase from 150 kWh to 200kWh.

While not reported on the TVA website, the KUB website says that for every \$2 participants add to their electric bills, a block of 200 kilowatt-hours of renewable energy from solar, wind, or biogas resources will be generated and placed on the TVA electric grid. One can sign up for Green Switch through your local power company.

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

4. TCWP NEWS

4A. *Upcoming Activities*

TCWP's Guidelines for Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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- 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.
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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.]

UT Arboretum Weed Wrangling

The UT Arboretum is looking for weed wrangling volunteers to help remove shrubby invasives such as autumn olive and privet from an area near the audi-torium, where they will be restoring to a native meadow type planting. If you are interested in set-ting up an individual time or working in a social distancing setting with a group, please contact Michelle Campanis at mcampani@utk.edu.

Haw Ridge Bend Canoe/Kayak Trip - Saturday, May 23

(Contributed by Tim Bigelow)

This will be the fourth in a series of canoe trips sponsored by TCWP and Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation, with the goal of experiencing the Three Bends and nearby Melton Hill Lake/Clinch River (also known as Pellissippi) Blueway from the water.

We'll meet at 9 a.m. at Solway Park near the Haw Ridge bicycle trailhead and car shuttle to put in near the Old Edgemoor Road inlet. We'll paddle down-stream along the banks of Haw Ridge and into several shady and quiet inlets and coves looking for wildlife and late-spring wildflowers (and possibly a stray mountain biker). Depending on weather and the group's preference, we may briefly cross the lake and examine the banks along TVA's Bull Run Steam Plant, which has been much in the news lately. We

can also get a better view of Haw Ridge from this perspective.

Farther around the Haw Ridge Bend, there are more nice coves, and one will make a perfect place to stop for lunch! We'll then paddle on through the shallows and by the rocky point, then pick up the shuttle vehicles from Solway Park.

Participants can bring their own canoes or kayaks, or we will make arrangements to rent canoes from Blue Ridge Sports for \$25 per person with life jackets and paddles provided. Those bringing their own boats are asked to wear life jackets at all times while in the water. Sunscreen, hats and arm and leg coverings are recommended, and water shoes are nice to have.

This activity will be conducted to protect participants from the COVID-19 virus. This event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

Pre-registration is requested. For more information or to pre-register, contact Sandra Goss at (865) 583-3967 or via email at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com, or Tim Bigelow at (865) 607-6781 or via email at Bigelowt2@mindspring.com.

We are also tentatively planning an overnight canoe/kayak trip to explore most of the Three Bends area again in one trip, at different times of the day.

Gary Grametbauer Memorial Hike on Cumberland Trail – Saturday, May 30

(Contributed by Larry Pounds)

This will be a memorial walk for Gary, a long-time member of TCWP and of the Cumberland Trails Conference board of directors who passed away in late January. We will be walking along a new Cumberland Trail section near Daddy's Creek. Gary was heavily involved in the design of this section.

Walkers can select their own distance. It would be about three miles round trip to a bridge above a small waterfall.

We'll 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, or meet the group at the Marathon station at the I-40 Crab Orchard exit (exit 329) east of Crossville at 9 a.m. Central (10 Eastern). Bring water, a lunch, and bug spray.

The walk will be conducted to protect participants from the COVID-19 virus. Please no carpooling and maintain six-foot spacing between household groups (bubbles). We will hike in groups of 10 or fewer. This event may have to be reconsidered based on conditions at the time.

For additional information, contact Larry Pounds at (865) 705-8516 or at PoundsL471@aol.com. Reservations are not required but are helpful for planning and to send updates or cancellations.

Whites Creek Trail Workday - Saturday, June 6

(Contributed by Jimmy Groton)

Earlier this month we learned that TVA, Rhea County, and TWRA had recently repaired the access road to the Whites Creek trailhead (an extension of Roddy Lane). A large section of that section of road slid into the Whites

Creek embayment nearly two years ago, and the road has been closed since then. TVA has also replaced the footbridge across the gully at the trailhead and stabilized the surrounding area the riprap to prevent further erosion of the shoreline near the trailhead. TVA has cut out several blowdowns along the trail this spring.

Our annual day of trail maintenance at TVA's Whites Creek Small Wild Area usually occurs in January, but was postponed this year because of the road closure. Since the road is now open, TCWP has rescheduled the annual trail work, part of our ongoing stewardship activities for this trail, to Saturday, June 6, to honor National Trails Day. The trail loops onto land TCWP purchased from Bowater several years ago, thanks to the generous support of our members.

Volunteers can meet at the trailhead parking area in Rhea County at 10 a.m. as part of our ongoing stewardship activities for this TVA Small Wild Area trail.

Due to recent COVID 19 concerns we will be practicing safe-distancing measures and other protective measures to protect ourselves and those around us. We encourage all participants to be as careful as possible in this regard. At a minimum, we will limit volunteer teams to groups of 10 or fewer, maintain a minimum of 6-foot distance between us, encourage all volunteers to wear masks or other face covers when social distancing is not possible, and limit the number of passengers in vehicles to and from the site. All volunteers will be asked to sign a TVA volunteer form. Ultimately all participants are responsible for their own safety and for behaving responsibly towards others. Volunteers should not attend if they are not comfortable doing so.

Participants should wear sturdy shoes or boots and bring work gloves, loppers, and small bow saws or folding saws. Some hand tools will be available at the event. Please be sure to bring clothing appropriate for weather conditions, tick or insect repellent, water, snacks, and/or a lunch. The ticks have frequently been pretty bad at Whites Creek this time of year.

Participants can meet to caravan in Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot in Oak Ridge (at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's). We will leave Oak Ridge at 9 a.m., or volunteers can join the crew at the trailhead parking area in Rhea County at 10 a.m. (NOTE: Caravanning is important this year because of COVID-19 concerns, as previously outlined.)

We plan to spend three or four hours at the site, but volunteers may come and go as they wish. If the weather is uncooperative (e.g., excessive rain) we will reschedule for the following Saturday.

For additional information, please contact Jimmy Groton at 865-805-9908 or at groton87@comcast.net.

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.

4B. Friends and Members in the News

Henriette Jager has been elected fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as reported in the December 1 News Sentinel.

Joe Feeman's story about travels in wandering in Scandinavia appeared in the January 8, 22, and 29 and February 5 editions of the Norris Bulletin.

The January 15 Norris Bulletin carried an article titled "County Commissioners get an Earful on Coal Ash" contributed by John Todd Waterman.

David Brill was featured in a January 28 Oak Ridger article that announced his speaking engagement at the UT Arboretum.

Anne Child's February 12 letter to the editor of the Oak Ridger was about the importance of vaccinations.

John Byrd is pictured in the February 13 Oak Ridger article about Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning (ORICL).

The February 17 News Sentinel featured two letters from TCWP folk: Jeff Mellor wrote about Lamar Alexander and Anne Child wrote about tax credit for renters.

The March 3 Senior Living has a picture of Jenny Freeman attending the grand opening of the K-25 History Center.

The March 5 Oak Ridger had a picture of Dan Robbins at a League of Women Voters luncheon.

Tom Burns co-wrote a letter to the editor of the March 9 News Sentinel about social welfare programs.

Chuck Coutant penned a letter to the editor of the March 13 News Sentinel about the U. S. Senate.

Nature is a Tonic for Stress was the topic of an essay in the April 9 Tennessean by Kathleen Williams.

The April 26 Knoxville News Sentinel carried a letter to the editor about establishing a Health Corps program, penned by Jeff Mellor.

Lynn McCoy and her work as a wildlife rehabilitator were featured in the May/June issue of The Tennessee Conservationist. Lynn was also recently honored with the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year award.

Anne Child's letter to the News Sentinel editor about supporting efforts to fight tuberculosis and other diseases appeared in the May 3 edition.

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 20 OR 22 – Webinar: It Isn't Over: Key Environmental Bills Still to be Decided by Legislators
May 23 – Haw Ridge Bend canoe/kayak trip
May 30 – Gary Grametbauer memorial Hike on the Cumberland Trail
June 6 – Whites Creek Work Day

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