

Tennessee Sierran

SIERRA
CLUB
TENNESSEE CHAPTER

The Bimonthly Newspaper of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club

Volume 56, Number 2 - March / April 2023

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Cover Photo Courtesy Cris Corley: From Left, Gabe Hernandez, Cris Corley, Ben Jealous, Al Gore, and Ramón Cruz, Carthage, TN
Masthead Photo by Todd Waterman: New Leaves, Japanese Maple

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect!

From Tennessee Chair Dr. Cris Corley

Early Morning Thoughts: A Successful and Satisfying Retreat!

Finally, I am returning to my normal sleep routine, early-to-bed and early-to-rise. Our Cedar Forest (actually named Cedars of Lebanon State Park) retreat was officially deemed a success — a lot of members showed up, we broke even, and no one got sick. A three-year in-person hiatus due to Covid 19 concerns had been affecting our interpersonal Sierra relationships. But, the advent of oral antiviral medication made Coronavirus a more manageable monster. Vaccination rates in Wilson County were up and viral positivity rates were down, so we took a deep breath (masked) and decided to get back to fellowshiping with our nature-loving buddies.

The Cherokee group was the official sponsor, and of course Bill Moll ended up being the main plow horse. Charlie High (Middle Tennessee Group) took on the challenge of finding the best price for 15 dozen eggs, and recruited his brother as chief cook. I was tasked with finding the finest chef in Lebanon to prepare a Saturday night dinner that suited everyone's taste for less than 20 bucks. As of this writing, the Cedars retreat holds the distinction of being the only retreat in history not fielding one single complaint regarding the cuisine.

Traditionally, Cedars has always held the distinction of being the first retreat of the year. Lebanon always makes the ideal choice for winter, being only 10 miles from the geographic center of our lengthy state, conveniently close to the Interstate, and having relatively flat topography in case of ice and snow.

The preregistration numbers were looking good in early January, partly due perhaps to a little hype regarding the possibility of our esteemed Sierra Club President Ramón Cruz being in attendance. We got a rain check — a conflict in his travel schedule arose due to the appointment of our new national Executive Director, Ben Jealous. I feared the specter of being tarred and feathered by the fireplace, but was spared from prosecution. New member registrations reached record levels, and old, faithful members would always return for their annual pilgrimage to the Cedar Glades, to saunter with the esteemed State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath.

Charlie and I showed up a day early, packing the fridges with massive amounts of food and beverages. Having been designated the campfire tender several years ago, I delivered a load of my cherished, well-seasoned sugar maple, certified to burn. My sleep was a little troubled the night before the retreat — would our members return to Enjoy, Explore, and Protect? Arriving early Friday afternoon, I was relieved to find Jerry Thornton and Bill Moll already settling in for a long weekend of activities. The old group lodge began to reawaken from the years of silence, friends reuniting with handshakes, laughter and love.

Friday evening is traditionally spent eating Mexican food at the nearest locale, providing an excuse to go back to town to buy the toothpaste that you forgot to throw in your backpack. Los Compadres provided the perfect setting for reuniting with lost friends. Saturday started off early with Charlie and his brother David firing up the stove and brewing the Joe. Over sixty members were ready for a couple of trails and a day of interesting lectures, including by Nashville's own weatherman legend Davis Nolan. Saturday evening was greeted with a feast fit for royalty, prepared by the fine folks who own the Lebanon Crab Shack. The chef, Tracy Murphy, said he had never seen a group of people pile their plates three inches high and devour it all. I blamed it on all the calories expended on the Hedgepath hikes. Antoinette and company finished the evening with beautiful music by the fireside.

I am already thinking about our April retreat at Fall Creek Falls State Park. I cherish the memories of a past group hike down to the base of the tallest freefall waterfall east of the Mississippi River. While feasting on our packed lunches, dogwoods in bloom, I still remember some of the great stories and jokes told by friends as we shared my favorite boulder overlooking Cane Creek. Registration will be starting soon for the April retreat at Fall Creek Falls. Nothing's more beautiful than springtime on the Cumberland Plateau while sauntering on happy trails.

Contact Cris at chapter.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org

Progress on Chattanooga's Climate Policy!

by David Hoot, Cherokee Group Chair

The effort to officially establish progressive climate goals for the City of Chattanooga took an important step at the beginning of 2023. A community feedback meeting was hosted jointly by City officials and Climate Chattanooga, a joint organization of several key area environmental groups, including the Sierra Club's Cherokee Group. The January 12th meeting was well attended, with around 100 citizens to hear Eric Asboe, Deputy Administrator of City Planning, and Erik Schmidt, Director of Sustainability, present the City's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP). Key elements include zero-carbon and zero-waste goals for city operations and the community, growing a green economy, protecting natural resources, and closing the disparity gap for the most socially and economically vulnerable communities.

A spirited public comment period followed with a wide range of concerns and questions voiced. Attendees were encouraged to remain active during the renewed CAP process. More outreach is upcoming, including information and engagement efforts in Chattanooga's more vulnerable communities. Everyone is encouraged to get involved during this critical phase of the establishment process. Keep up-to-date on Climate Chattanooga's Facebook page, which will be updated frequently: <https://www.facebook.com/ClimateChattanooga>. The goal is to develop Climate Chattanooga from what is now, more or less, a steering committee to more of a wide-ranging public engagement/advisory committee for area policy on climate issues.

A critical juncture is approaching as the mayor's office is scheduled to present the new CAP to the Chattanooga City Council. Public opinion is crucial during this period.

Learn more: <https://www.facebook.com/ClimateChattanooga>

Dave Hoot
Sierra Club Cherokee Group
hoot.david@gmail.com
or 423-503-9482

Erik Schmidt
Director of Sustainability, City of Chattanooga
sustainability@chattanooga.gov
or 423-643-7822

Tennes-Sierran

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Submissions

April Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by March 24

May Issue of the Chapter E-Newsletter by April 21

May / June Issue of The Tennes-Sierran by March 31

Chapter News Team

Communications Coordinator: Gary Bowers sierra@totheforest.net

Tennes-Sierran Editor: Emily Ellis tnsierran.editor@gmail.com

E-Newsletter Editor: Allie Stafford enews.sierratn@gmail.com

Assistant Editor: Todd Waterman jtoddw@gmail.com

Poetry Editor: Alan May <http://alan-may.com>

TENNESSEE CHAPTER

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee>

Officers

Chair: Cris Corley
chapter.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org

Vice Chair: Nancy Bell 423-272-6342
nancywithbell@gmail.com

Secretary: open

Treasurer: Craig Brandt 865-924-0597
brandtcctn@gmail.com

Conservation Chair: Bill Moll 404-401-7899
whmoll@aol.com

Outings Chair: Ron Shrieves 865-924-8973
ronshrieves@gmail.com

Political Co-Chairs: Jerry Thornton 865-719-9742
gatwildcat@aol.com
Bill Kornich 423-300-8764
bkornrich@gmail.com

Conservation Program Coordinator

Scott Banbury 901-619-8567 scott.banbury@sierraclub.org

Beyond Coal Campaign Staff

Bonnie Swinford, Senior Organizing Representative

bonnie.swinford@sierraclub.org

Amy Kelly, Campaign Representative

amy.kelly@sierraclub.org

Emily Sherwood, Campaign Organizer

emily.sherwood@sierraclub.org

GROUPS

Cherokee Group—Chattanooga

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/cherokee>

Chair: David Hoot 423-503-9482

hoot.david@gmail.com

Harvey Broome Group—Knoxville

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome>

Chair: Jerry Thornton 865-719-9742

gatwildcat@aol.com

Chickasaw Group—Memphis

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/chickasaw>

Chair: Carl Richards 218-409-5150

crich555@gmail.com

Middle Tennessee Group—Nashville

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/middle-tennessee>

Chair: Antoinette Olesen 615-498-2778

middle.tn.group.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org

REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEES

Clarksville-Montgomery County Regional Conservation Committee

Chair: JoAnn McIntosh 931-338-2530 mcjoann@gmail.com

Care NET Regional Conservation Committee (Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, and Hawkins Counties)

Chair: Bill Kornrich 423-300-8764 bkornrich@gmail.com

Holston Valley Regional Conservation Committee

Chair: Dan Firth 423-390-0882 dan.firth.sierraclub@gmail.com

Watauga Regional Conservation Committee (Johnson and Carter Counties)

Chair: Gloria Griffith 423-727-4798 gl4797@embarqmail.com

Sierra Club Board of Directors Endorsements

The Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter recommends a vote for **Marquita Bradshaw** and **Rita Harris** in the upcoming election for the National Sierra Club's Board of Directors. This election is held each spring. Sierra Club members may vote either online or by mail. You will be receiving details on how to vote later from the Sierra Club or at:



<https://bit.ly/TNSC-Vote-National-Board-2023>

The final date to vote has not yet been set, but will be no later than June 1. At least five percent of the membership must vote to have a valid election. The Chapter encourages you to vote.

Support the Tennessee Waste Recycling and Reduction Act for a Cleaner Tennessee

by Dan Firth, Chair, Tennessee Chapter Solid Waste and Mining Committee

With the introduction of the Tennessee Waste Recycling and Reduction Act (TWRRRA) (<https://bit.ly/TN-SB07573-HB0550>), filed by State Senator Heidi Campbell and State Representative Torrey Harris, Tennessee joins a growing number of states focused on laws related to packaging, known as "extended producer responsibility (EPR)."

Four states — California, Colorado, Maine and Oregon — have enacted laws in the past few years and are currently moving forward with implementation. More than a dozen other states introduced EPR bills in 2022. Among those, New York, Washington, Illinois and New Jersey are likely to advance their EPR policies this year. Tennessee, with the TWRRRA, wants to join that group.

As outlined in the *Tennes-Sierran* January-February 2023 article, members of the Tennessee Chapter wrote the legislation based on extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from local governments to affected industries. Tennessee towns and taxpayers across the state are struggling with waste disposal, materials recovery, and industrial development. Although Nashville, for example, recently started a twice-monthly recycling program, elsewhere in the state, recycling programs are closing down or scaling back. Tennesseans bear the costs of overburdened landfills; litter in parks, beside roadways, in storm drains, and in rivers; recycling education; necessary infrastructure; and material recovery and use. TWRRRA helps address these issues by engaging producers to work together for a sustainable future; Specifically, SB0573/HB0550 will:

(Continued on page 7)

Conservation Education Day is March 1st

Join Chapter Conservation Programs Coordinator Scott Banbury and others who want their voices to be heard in Nashville.

We will meet with our legislative representatives in their offices in Nashville. Likely topics include the EPR bill (see article above), private sewer systems, coal primacy and more. Training session on Tuesday night, February 28, covering issues and how to lobby your representatives. Keep up-to-date with activities on our new Facebook Group *Tennessee Conservation Education Day*

Questions? Contact Bill Moll at 404-401-7899 or whmoll@aol.com

Sponsored by the Sierra Club, Tennessee Conservation Voters, Tennessee Environmental Council, Harpeth River Conservancy, and Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light.

Please Plan to Participate, If You Can.

Memphis Transit Equity Day 2023 Successful

by Dennis Lynch, Chickasaw Group

The Sierra Club Chickasaw Group organized the fourth Transit Equity Day event in Memphis for February 3. Numerous organizations presented at our online event. MICA, the Memphis Coalition for Action and Hope, was a major partner in that regard. It's noteworthy that the Sierra Club is involved at a national level with numerous partner organizations, including the NAACP, transit unions and others.

Transit Equity Day is recognized each year on February 4th, the birthday of Rosa Parks. You undoubtedly know Ms. Parks as the person whose defiance led to the Montgomery (Alabama) Bus Boycott, which began in December of 1955 and lasted 381 days, energizing the Civil Rights movement.

Marquita Bradshaw, the Tennessee Chapter's Environmental Justice Chair, reminded us about Rosa, the boycott and about transit equity. "We commemorate Rosa by declaring that transit is a civil right. so that everyone has fair and just opportunities."

Cherokee Nation Proposes Name Change of Clingman's Dome Back to "Kuwohi"

by Axel Ringe, Harvey Broome Group Conservation Chair

Within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, situated on the border between Tennessee and North Carolina and visited by nearly 15 million people per year, sits a mountain that, at over 6,600 feet in elevation, is the highest point in the Park. The peak is also the home of an iconic observation tower that enables visitors to see the surrounding landscape of undulating forests for miles around. Currently known as Clingman's Dome, the mountain was named by the federal government in 1859 after North Carolina Confederate general and U.S. Senator Thomas Lanier Clingman. However, it has been known for millennia by Cherokee people as "Kuwohi," which translates as "mulberry place." The mountain also has deep religious significance to the Cherokees as a place to seek guidance and advice from their Creator.

In July 2022, the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians passed a resolution in support of petitioning the U.S. Board of Geographic Names to restore the mountain's name to "Kuwohi." The effort has subsequently gained support from government bodies and non-governmental organizations, including the North Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club.

For the Cherokees, the mountain constitutes a place of resource and prayer and has done so for thousands of years. Mary Crowe, a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and a leader in the Restore Kuwohi initiative, believes that restoring the name would help "our younger generation to relearn who and what we are as a people, that Creator placed us here (<https://bit.ly/MaryCroweQuote>)" Crowe and Lavita Hill, both members of the Eastern Band, have led the movement to restore the peak's pre-contact name to Kuwohi.

In recent years, the Department of the Interior, particularly under the leadership of Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), has encouraged the restoration of Indigenous names to geographic landmarks, including such well-known examples as the restoration of the names "Denali" to what new inhabitants had renamed Mount McKinley, and "Tava," called Pikes Peak by mountain settlers.

The restoration of Kuwohi's indigenous name would thus also be an important part of a broader movement, one that officially recognizes the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. Even if name restoration does not address land theft directly, it can serve as public acknowledgement of settler culture's participation in a long history of invasion, expropriation, genocide, and racism. For more information and to sign a petition:

<https://www.kuwohi.org/>

Contact Axel at onyxfarm@bellsouth.net



From the website advocating restoring the name of Clingman's Dome, the highest point in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Kuwohi. The characters on the lower line are the word "Kuwohi" in Cherokee syllabary.



Lavita Hill and Mary "Missy" Crowe, both members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, are leading the effort to restore the name of Kuwohi to what is now called Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

A Meeting of Climate Champions in Tennessee

Al Gore Hosts Sierra Club Leaders

by Cris Corley, Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter Chair

Waking up early is part of my daily routine, but arising at 3:15 am is way too early. This particular Wednesday would require a full throttle with the afterburners engaged. Weeks of strategic planning had been involved in arranging this exciting day visiting with a few dignitaries of the Sierra Club that included our current Sierra Club President Ramón Cruz, our new Executive Director, Ben Jealous, and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Honorable Albert Gore.

In mid-December, the Sierra Club's Board of Directors announced the appointment of Ben Jealous as the Club's new Executive Director. Ben and Al's friendship dates back many years.

While I was attending the Council of Club Leaders meeting last September in Oakland, a significant amount of time was devoted to discussing the large amount of greenhouse gasses that result from improper agricultural practices. Being a local, I was aware of the vast time and effort Mr. Gore had devoted to transforming his dad's farm into an environmentally friendly operation.

Knowing of the early morning traffic congestion in Nashville, I hit the road before sunrise, arriving at the airport on time. Gabe Gonzalez, Ben's new chief of staff, had just arrived on an early morning flight from Chicago. The 30-40 mph crosswind gusts made Nashville the "Windy City" and his landing a little bumpy. Ben and Ramón had flown in late the night before, to avoid a possible flight cancellation due to the forecast of ice and snow. They'd hit the ground running, making a quick stop to admire the late-night sights and sounds of Music City on lower Broadway before checking into their hotel rooms for a much-deserved rest. Gabe and I arrived at the hotel around 9 am to find our friends feasting on the finest of southern vittles (free hotel breakfast buffet!). After stuffing a few large suitcases into the back of my dad's SUV, the four of us headed east on our way to the Caney



Tennessee Chapter Chair Cris Corley, Sierra Club President Ramón Cruz, and Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous, a former President of the NAACP, stop off at the 10x10 school house where NAACP co-founder Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois first taught school in 1886 and 1887.



Ben Jealous, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, visits the one-room schoolhouse where Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, a founder of the NAACP, taught while a student at Fisk University. Jealous is a former Executive Director of the NAACP.

Fork River. Running a few minutes ahead of our scheduled late-morning visit with Al Gore, I took a short side trip to Fiddlers Grove in Lebanon. Knowing of Ben's past years serving as President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) I figured he would want to visit the old one-room, 10x10 school house where NAACP co-founder W. E. B. Du Bois first taught school in 1886, while a student at Fisk University. Ben seemed to gaze in awe as he paid reverential respect to Dr. Du Bois' portrait, sitting atop his small teaching desk.

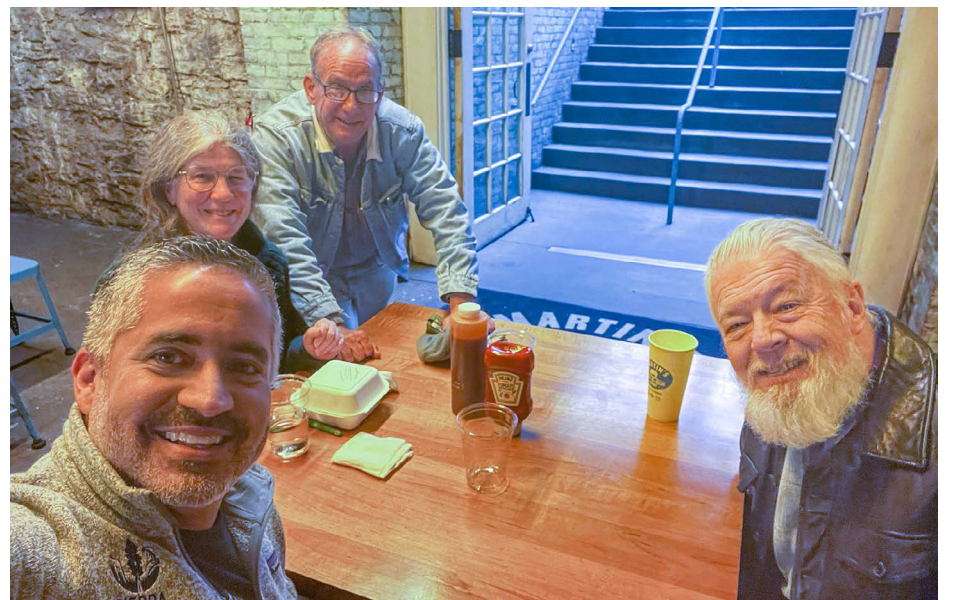
On the road again, heading toward Carthage, my new friends kept commenting on Middle Tennessee's scenic wonders. Between the dozens of telephone calls and texts my three amigos were fielding while we traveled at 75 mph on I-40 East, they seemed to be most fascinated by the large swaths of downed timber from recent tornadoes. We arrived a few minutes early at Caney Fork Farms, affording Ramón more time to capture photographs of the Tennessee highlands. We hurriedly jumped back into our vehicle as the electronic gate opened, and then pulled up in front of the barn.

Ben, Ramón and Al quickly settled into conversation regarding the importance of regenerative agriculture in reducing the carbon footprint of farms and ranches. Al spoke of the early childhood environmental imprinting he received from his father's wise council on topsoil preservation. He has planted over 7,000 trees, every fourth tree being an American chestnut. He emphasized the importance of pasture rotation, thus properly maintaining his livestock in an environmentally sound manner.

After being cooked a great lunch consisting of our choice of either plant-based or grass-fed beef cheeseburgers (beef for me), we were treated with a rare opportunity to view the newest climate change slideshow presentation. The big screen was on the blink, so we got a close-up presentation as he balanced his laptop on his left forearm, while pointing vigorously to elaborate new graphics with his right forefinger. As we sat around the lunch table eating organic chocolate ice cream, it felt as if we were being given a front row seat for his newest Oscar-winning, world premiere movie. We also visited with his farming staff, including a brilliant young fellow from Down Under, who made a great presentation regarding soil sampling on the farm and their advances in carbon sequestration. Gabe kept looking at his watch, and mentioned several times they had to catch a flight at 3 pm. I asked Al if we could make it back in 50 minutes. He laughed and said, "if you don't mosey." All appeared saddened to part ways. We all know of the great amount of work required to prevent the catastrophic overheating of our planet and the short time we have to reach Carbon Zero. We hurriedly jumped back into the Toyota 4Runner, and I hit I-40 with the pedal down. Ben, Ramón, and Gabe again began fielding numerous calls and texts from the New York Times, CNN, national staffers, etc. My high-speed driving was a little unnerving, but we reached the airport with one minute to spare!

I am excited that the Tennessee Chapter has been in the forefront in welcoming our newest National Executive Director, Ben Jealous. He brings a fresh voice and proven leadership skills to the Sierra Club. I also want to thank President Ramón Cruz for extending his stay an extra day to have lengthy discussions with our leaders JoAnn McIntosh, Charlie High, and Scott Banbury. Fellow members, we have much to be proud of regarding the direction of our Chapter.

Contact Cris at chapter.chair@tennessee.sierraclub.org



Sierra Club Chair Ramón Cruz (lower left) meets with Tennessee Chapter leaders (left to right) JoAnn McIntosh, Cris Corley and Charlie High. Photo by Ramón Cruz

What Can We Learn from a Fourth Grader?

Part Three: Curing Nature Deficit Disorder

by Karen McIntyre, Retired Metro Nashville School Librarian

"That must hurt." It was the first time I'd heard Lavelle (not his name) express empathy for anyone. The little box turtle with a broken shell that I had picked up after it had been hit on the road needed to be cleaned up. A photo to a rehabber brought an immediate response.

"Those white specks are maggot eggs. Get those off ASAP." That text message resulted in my stepping into the hallway just as a particularly challenging class was walking by. In one hand I held the injured box turtle and in the other a large bottle of water for turtle cleaning.

The wonderful young teacher who had survived Lavelle's F-bombs and constant interruptions to her teaching looked weary. Summer vacation awaited. Everything was turned in and teachers struggled to keep kids engaged. I thought she might appreciate an impromptu outdoor lesson, and she eagerly accepted.

We sat in the shade of two huge old friends, a Fir and a Shingle Oak that accommodated each other despite being planted far too closely. The class waited quietly, eager to engage with the turtle. I reminded them about a little boy, Noah Charney, who lived in Westmeade and put radio transponders on box turtles to see where they went. We used the book he and his mother wrote, *Noah and the ARC*, about creating a corridor for migrating animals from Radnor Lake to the Cumberland. It introduced second graders to local geography, wildlife and trees. He continues to work to build that corridor even now when he has become a professor at the University of Maine. The kids remembered the fun of a scavenger hunt to identify the plants and animals on our campus after reading the book. We returned our focus to the little turtle. "This is the carapace where the crack extends all the way from the mid point to the plastron, it is made of bone," Lavelle made the connection. "Is that like a broken arm?" It was his only other interruption that morning!

I reassured Lavelle that the rehabber would give the little turtle an injection for pain and then one to prevent infection. She would "glue" the shell back together and attach clips to keep it in place until it healed. The children, eager to help, divided into groups. Some headed inside to get paper to tear up for a fresh soft "bed." Some went to pick lettuce leaves from the garden in case she got hungry. Some helped to very gently wash the maggot eggs (another life cycle lesson) off. I promised to update them after I got to the rehabber. They returned to class calmer and happier than they had been



Peaceful pleasures in nature. Sam, a Westmeade Elementary School student, cures his nature deficit disorder beside a waterfall. Photo by Carla Harper

when we came outside. They were feeling good about helping preserve the life of another living creature.

There is great value to outdoor education. Even simply observing a small patch of earth increases calm, focus and thoughtful questioning. As one garden volunteer observed, "Give me an angry anybody, some sunshine and warm earth, and I am unsure how kids of any age will stay mad if the birds are singing while they are getting dirty." I had plenty of anecdotal evidence that this was true, but since the publication of Richard Louv's landmark book *The Last Child in the Woods* in 2005, hundreds of studies have reinforced that simple observation. The book suggested that some children suffer from "nature deficit disorder," a condition we treated on field trips to Percy Warner Park, where naturalists engaged them with nature.

The summer following these activities, I received a message from a parent. Thanks for "ruining my children," she teased me. When they went on a hike, the kids filled their mother's backpack with litter that they picked up along the trail, and her son lay down on a rock in the middle of a stream and stayed there, refusing to budge for well over 20 minutes. "I've never seen him lie still for two minutes, much less 20!"

When children engage with nature it changes them. Learning about the seed cycle by planting seeds, tending them, harvesting fruit and saving new seeds for the next year awakens something. One little girl and her friends gathered seeds over the summer. They organized them and created seed packets. They did research, took pictures of the mature plants to put on the packets, wrote growing directions on the back just like the packets they planted last spring. They printed and cut the paper packets, filled them with seed, and brought them to me so that I could plant them! This is far more sophisticated behavior than they would have exhibited if they had just been exposed to the teaching from the curriculum text. They did this on their own for the joy of it.

Still, this successful sustainability and nature education program was halted in 2020. How could this happen? The Sustainability Stewardship Advisory Committee, a group of concerned citizens, parents and volunteers that formed to move sustainability to the center of Metro Nashville Public Schools, think they have some answers. After a year of work to find the real objection so it could be addressed, we think we stumbled on the answer. and that answer has far reaching implications. Stay tuned!



Look! Seeds for next year!
Photo by Karen McIntyre.

Contact Karen at kjmcinty@comcast.net

E-bike Use on Trails? Sierra Club Establishes a New Policy

by Vicky Hoover, National Sierra Club Recreation Issues Team Member

E-bikes — bicycles powered by electric motors — seem to be prevalent all around us as they have gained rapid popularity. E-bikes can go faster, farther and higher. E-bikes now occupy a world with walkers, cars, buses, bicyclists, horses, and wildlife. Great for urban transportation, but in wild backcountry places, this can lead to serious conflicts and impacts.

This rise of e-bikes challenged the Sierra Club to accommodate this new form of travel, yet still meet our mission to protect the environment and help people get out into nature. In the past year, The Recreation Issues Sub Team of the national Wildlands Team led the revision process for our Off-road Use of Bicycles and our Off-road Use of Motorized Vehicles policies. In May, 2022, the Sierra Club's Board of Directors adopted the new policies recommended by the recreation team.

The new policy recognizes the benefits of electric motorized bicycles and promotes their use in urban and developed areas. This policy makes clear that for use on trails on public lands, all e-bikes must be considered and managed as motorized vehicles.

When e-bikes first appeared, they had to meet the requirements for motorcycles and mopeds. Because these limitations were forecast to hurt sales, distributors and manufacturers formed an organization to change federal and state laws and policies to favor e-bikes. Today this organization, People for Bikes, has 27 full time employees and a budget of \$3.7 million year.

The industry invented a three-tier class system that ranks e-bikes as Class 1, 2, and 3, and claimed that Class 1 e-bikes were similar to traditional bicycles, operated when pedaled, could go no faster than 20 miles per hour,

and therefore should be allowed where traditional bicycles are allowed. A conventional bicyclist typically goes just over 10 miles per hour. Class 2 and 3 e-bikes are faster, heavier, and more powerful.

Unfortunately, it is not physically possible to look at an e-bike and determine its "class." Many e-bike models can be reconfigured and look identical. Also, it is easy for owners to modify a bike to increase power and speed.

This artificial e-bike classification system is an e-bike industry legislative lobbying ploy aimed at expanding use of e-bikes. The distinction is unenforceable by a land manager and thus, if allowed, would open any non-motorized trail to any motorized bike. Even so, PeopleForBikes Coalition has been successful in 43 states passing legislation that adopts their recommendations.

Human recreation results in harm to animals' behavior and health, and causes wildlife to avoid otherwise suitable habitat. Studies have shown that e-bikes impact wildlife more than hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders.

Growing pressure to use more vehicles for recreation conflicts with a critical need to protect biodiversity and preserve wildlands values. In response to climate change and the rapid loss of biodiversity, the Club champions the 30x30 campaign to protect 30% of natural habitat by 2030. Allowing e-bikes in candidate wilderness areas may prevent achieving 30x30 goals. Motorized use may disqualify candidate natural areas for federal wilderness designation.

Contact Vicky at vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org

Tennessee Chapter Spring Retreat

April 28 – 30 ~ Fall Creek Falls State Park

The Harvey Broome Group cordially invites you to the Tennessee Chapter's Spring Retreat at beautiful Fall Creek Falls State Park. Enjoy the company of other environmentalists during the peak of spring wildflower season! Be a part of the fellowship, hikes, fireplace chats, and meetings. Don't miss the Saturday evening program, silent auction, and the informal social gathering that follows. Join others who share your love and respect for the environment. This retreat will focus on fun, connecting, outdoor adventures, and interesting programs. An Outdoor Leaders Training course will be offered if there is sufficient interest. No Chapter executive committee meeting will be held.



Tennessee State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath will lead hikes at the April 2023 Chapter retreat. Photo by Todd Waterman

FAMILY FRIENDLY

We particularly encourage families to bring children of all ages to introduce them to the wonderful natural landscape of Fall Creek Falls State Park! We are planning some special nature activities just for kids and, if the weather cooperates, we will have a bonfire where kids (of all ages) can make s'mores. Yum.

HIKES

Tennessee State Naturalist Randy Hedgepath will lead us on Saturday and Sunday hikes. Come enjoy the Spring wildflowers! Details about hikes are in the retreat schedule to the right. If there is sufficient interest in a different hike, Randy is amenable. A daypack with water, lunch, and rain gear is recommended.

In addition to Randy's hikes, and if the weather cooperates, we will try an experiential hike that will get us out of the meeting room for presentations about environmental subjects in the woods instead of inside a meeting room.

RETREAT MEALS

Full registration includes the cost of two breakfasts (Saturday & Sunday) and Saturday supper. These will be prepared and served in the Group Lodge kitchen. Lunch each day is on your own due to the variety of activities and the probability that many will not be at the Group Lodge at lunchtime. Bring food for your lunches and use the lodge kitchen for any preparation you need, or go to the hotel dining room or park general store. There is ample space in the lodge refrigerators and freezers for your personal foods and drinks. A personal drinking cup is a good idea, but you do not need a mess kit or utensils. Dishes, cutlery, and cups are provided from the lodge kitchen. Adult beverages are allowed for consumption within the Group Lodge.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Newton Ford Bunk Lodge (formerly Group Lodge #1) is centrally located 35 miles southwest of Crossville and 44 miles southeast of Cookeville. Venue information and directions are available at <https://tnstateparks.com/parks/fall-creek-falls>. The Lodge has separate bunkhouse wings for males and females. Bring linens or a sleeping bag, pillow, towels, and toiletries. If bunkhouse living is not for you, rent a park cabin or room at the brand new hotel (Lodge Fall Creek Falls), or camp in a tent or RV.

FALL CREEK FALLS STATE PARK

Fall Creek Falls State Park (FCF) has spectacular water features. In 1937, when the federal government began purchasing land for the park, much of it was badly eroded. The Works Project Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began conservation programs to restore the ecosystem. After the National Park Service determined the land was too small for a National Park, it was transferred to the State in 1944 and became a state park. The park was recently expanded to over 30,000 acres, with many waterfalls and cascades, gorges, caves, and extensive forests including exceptional stands of virgin timber. Average late April weather at the park – highs in the mid-70s, lows in the low 50s. In 2022, the new Lodge at Fall Creek Falls hotel opened to replace an older lodge that was razed in 2019.

RETREAT COSTS

- Early Birds: Register by April 22 (lodging, 2 breakfasts, Saturday dinner): Adult \$60; After April 22 register for \$70
- First Chapter Retreat? Receive a special price (lodging, 2 breakfasts, Saturday dinner): Adult \$40
- Student (lodging, 2 breakfasts, Saturday dinner): \$30
- Sunday Only (registration, breakfast, no lodging) – \$10; (no lodging or breakfast): \$5
- SCHOLARSHIPS!!! If you want to attend, but can't afford it right now, apply to Jerry Thornton (gatwildcat@aol.com or 865-719-9742) for a scholarship.

Mail a check payable to Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club and mail to:
Chapter Treasurer Craig Brandt, 12484 Ivy Lake Drive, Farragut, TN 37934
OR pay at the retreat by cash or check (no credit cards).

RETREAT SCHEDULE

The Retreat will begin 4 pm CST Friday, April 28, and end 11 am CST Sunday April 30.

Friday

5:30 (approximately): Dinner

Dinner on your own or meet at the Newton Ford Bunk Lodge to carpool to dinner with friends at the new hotel or a local restaurant. Bring your own dinner if you prefer – the lodge kitchen is available if you need to prepare food.

7:30 pm: Group Bonfire with S'mores

(or a fire in the lodge, depending on the weather)

Saturday

6:30-7:30 am: Breakfast

9:00 am: Hike with Randy Hedgepath

Climb down to the base of Fall Creek Falls. This hike is less than a mile, but the descent and climb out is steep, and the terrain rough and rocky. We will carpool from camp to the trailhead. Be sure to prepare for muddy trail conditions, which we will certainly have unless it is frozen.

9:30 am to noon: Morning Programs

Noon - 1:00 pm: Lunch on your own

1:00 pm: Hike with Randy Hedgepath

Paw Paw Trail Walk, a moderate 2.6 mile loop to a great overlook of the gorge and maybe some pink lady's slipper orchids. We will carpool from camp to the trailhead at the Park's Nature Center.

1:00 pm to 5:00 pm: Afternoon Programs

6:00 - 7:00 pm: Dinner at the Group Lodge

7:30-9:00 pm: Evening Programs

Program and Silent Auction – Please bring a good item or two you are willing to part with. Excess outdoors equipment or clothing, nature books, and artwork are good things to auction. Live Music by Maggie Longmire and friends.

Sunday

6:30 - 7:30 am: Breakfast

9:00 am: Hike with Randy Hedgepath

The 2.6-mile Paw Paw Trail (a loop trail) or a two-mile walk on Wheeler Farm Trail. The Paw Paw Trail starts at the Nature Center and should feature Pink Ladies Slipper Orchids. Wheeler Farm is northwest of the main part of the park and west of Highway 30, and features a spectacular Natural Arch, a sink, and a waterfall. We will carpool to the trailhead on Highway 30.

Covid Protocol: Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, each attendee at the Spring Retreat is required to take a rapid Covid test on the day of departure to the Retreat. If you test positive or have symptoms of Covid or flu, do not attend the Retreat. If you do not have a test kit, there will be test kits available at the Retreat. However, to avoid an unnecessary trip, please take your test at home. Free test kits are available at:

<https://www.covid.gov/tests>.

Thanks for caring for the health of your friends!

REGISTRATION HERE:

<https://bit.ly/Spring-2023-Retreat-Reg>

QUESTIONS?

Ask Jerry at gatwildcat@aol.com
or 865-719-9742

Dear Eartha: Advice from An Eco-Guru

Dear Eartha,

I'm wondering what's going on with young people and the national and global environmental movement. I was inspired by young activists at the COP27 in Egypt this year but didn't see as much coverage as I wanted. How are youth involved in the environmental movement?

~Third Act Activist

Dear Third Actor,

Young people have stepped up in a more visible way this last decade with Greta Thunberg getting publicity through her individual and then collective actions when a tween. Here's what I know:

Ayisha Siddiq, 23, from Pakistan, was one of the headline speakers at the Children and Youth Pavilion at COP27, the first time young people have had a dedicated space where activists in November held a formal meeting with United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres.

Heidi Campbell, the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) spokesperson helped develop YOUNGO, the youth constituency for the UN's framework convention for climate change and the co-executive director of the United States-based organization Care About Climate. According to Campbell, youth will now have more say in "the design and implementation of climate policies." ACE is outlined in article 12 of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Extinction Rebellion (XR)'s youth faction staged a demonstration at London's YouTube office to protest "its disproportionate platforming of climate denial, on a site which is the most watched platform for 16-24 year olds." Youth protestors for XR, reports Jessica Murray for *The Guardian*, "number at least 80 XR youth groups internationally, 55 of which are in the UK. All are made up of climate activists born after 1990, with an average member age of 16, although some are as young as 10." XR's US motto is "The climate and ecological crisis is a justice crisis. We fight for a just world and stand in solidarity with Black Lives. Take action for Black Lives and support radical Black leadership. End white supremacy now."

Just to give you a feel for the numbers of youth activists fighting for policy change globally, check out these organizations: Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change; FACE Intergenerational Justice; Federated States of Micronesia; Yurok Tribes; NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice; Black Eco Bloom; Clarkson University's The Wild Center; Ecocycle Limited; Evangelical Environmental Network; and many more. Check out the ACE website at acespace.org.

As an activist for Third Act (Bill McKibben's nonprofit of over-60 Americans fighting for climate action) activist, you know that empowering youth to change climate denial policies is crucial going forward. Here are a few environmental activist programs for elders in the US: Senior Environmental Employment Program, Elders Climate Action, The Elders, Retirees in Service to the Environment, Earth Challenge, and many more that are state-focused or worldwide. In Tennessee, check out these organizations: Greater Knoxville Citizens Climate Lobby; Elders Climate Action; Tennessee Environmental Council; Sustainable Environmental Climate Advocate; and other local branches of organizations such as The Nature Conservancy.

Should be a momentous year for environmental activism, no matter the age!
Together we stand.

Eartha

This column was written by Rita Bullinger.

Submit your question for Eartha to: SierraTNNews@gmail.com

TWRRRA (Continued from page 3)

- reimburse the cost of recycling valuable materials to create a circular economy
- create incentives for companies to design packaging that is more recyclable
- decrease or eliminate product packaging where possible
- significantly increase the domestic supply of recovered materials available for new products.

Under the TWRRRA, producers will form a nonprofit Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) with oversight from an advisory board and the Tennessee Department of Conservation (TDEC). The PRO conducts a statewide assessment to analyze and identify improvements needed for Tennessee's recycling infrastructure and services, both rural and urban. The plan identifies a minimum recyclables list and an associated dues structure producers pay based on the type of packaging their products use in Tennessee. The dues refund cities and private entities for recycling costs. The plan proposes reduction and recycling goals for packaging and creates a timeline to reach those performance goals.

TWRRRA incentivizes producers to reduce and reimagine packaging to avoid paying increased dues to the PRO. Producers can be expected to reduce packaging generally, but also reduce use of non-recyclable materials that are now littering Tennessee or going into landfills. The fund provides for Tennessee towns to be reimbursed for the costs of creating and enhancing their recycling and recovery infrastructure. The valuable materials flowing from these recovery programs will provide the materials needed by many businesses in Tennessee. These businesses face disruptions in supply

First Sugar Moon of the Pandemic

by Anna Laura Reeve

Chickweed and bird's eye speedwell recede,
the tiny white teeth and blue water
of their flowers
giving way to hairy bittercress, purple dead-nettle. White tufts
flanked by dark javelins rise
beside dragon heads.

Maple sap drips from sapsucker holes, and the green troll-hair
of onion grass pocks the lawn

while each answering cardinal call
splatters the air with a thin
iridescent paint, here and gone.

When they decide it's spring, it's spring. Calendar be damned.

Now, year-old sage will sprout leaves
from root crowns. Honeysuckle bushes
will crack their green fireworks.

Yonder,
a robin has been trying for ten minutes
to break a beakful of shredded polypropylene twine
from its tangle
on a tomato cage.

Agricultural twine now appears in the nests
of an increasing number of birds, who love it
for its flexibility and strength,
who often fly in search of it, whose feet
it entangles,
whose hatchlings
it orphans. Even chicks
get tangled, limbs becoming deformed.

This is not a poem about survival.

The robin stops tugging
and perches on the cage wire,
preening.

In a moment, I will go to the tangle
and she will fly away, while I cut the white
threads from the wire, crushing them
in my hand.

Anna Laura Reeve is a poet living and gardening near the Tennessee Overhill region, traditional land of the Eastern Cherokee. Previous work of hers has appeared or is forthcoming in Beloit Poetry Journal, ROOM Magazine, Terrain.org, and others. She is the winner of the 2022 Adrienne Rich Award for Poetry, a finalist for the 2022 Ron Rash Award and the 2022 Heartwood Poetry Prize, and a two-time Pushcart nominee. Her debut poetry collection, Reaching the Shore of the Sea of Fertility, is forthcoming from Belle Point Press.

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature — the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter." — Rachel Carson

chains and struggle to source the materials needed to make new packaging and products. Over 100 global companies, including a number here in Tennessee, have stated their support for producer responsibility policies that will increase recycling, reduce plastic pollution, and help strengthen local economies.

Sign the petition in support for TWRRRA: sc.org/twrra

Contact Dan at dan.firth.sierraclub@gmail.com

Tennessee Chapter Fundraising Corner

by Mac Post, Tennessee Chapter Fundraising Chair

The annual March Appeal fundraising letter either recently arrived in your mailbox or will shortly. It outlines several of the Chapter's priorities for the year. They include:

- Fixing state laws so local communities are protected from the reckless siting of fossil fuel pipelines, landfills, and confined animal feeding operations
- Ensuring the proper cleaning up of TVA's coal ash impoundments across the state
- Advancing legislation that moves Tennessee toward a truly circular economy by keeping packaging waste out of our landfills and environment
- Working with local and state governments to see that Tennessee takes full advantage of the opportunities available through the federal Inflation Reduction Act.

We need for you to pitch in and help fund our activities to achieve our goals.

Didn't get a letter? To save expense, we send this letter only to members who have contributed beyond their membership dues in the past three years. To make a contribution now, please use the handy online Chapter webform. Scan the QR code or use this link:



sc.org/TNForward2023

Many Thanks to these December 2022 – January 2023 Generous Contributors to the Defenders Fund!

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Lorraine Vancamp | JoAnn McIntosh | Renee Hyatt |
| Bob Oravetz | Adelle Wood | Mary Mastin |
| Russ Manning | Robin Peeler | Kay Bradford |
| Don Scharf and Teri Davis | Kathleen Mahoney-Norris | Bill DeVan |

RETREAT SCHEDULE		
	LOCATION	DATES
Spring 2023	Fall Creek Falls State Park	April 28-30
Fall 2023	Pickett State Park	October 13-15
Winter 2024	Cedars of Lebanon State Park	January 19-21
Spring 2024	Fall Creek Falls State Park	May 3 -5
Fall 2024	Fall Creek Falls State Park	October 18-20

UPCOMING MEETINGS

COVID-19 NOTICE

COVID-19 NOTICE: Sierra Club activities may enforce group size limits, PPE, social distancing requirements to comply with COVID-19 restrictions of the meeting venue, city, and county rules where the activity takes place. Please contact the activity organizer for any updates. Check website for Zoom or in-person meeting status or contact your chair (see page 2).

Group Program Meetings		
Group	Date	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 3/27, 4/24, 5/22	7:00 PM
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Thu 3/16, 4/20, 5/18	6:00 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 3/14, 4/11, 5/9	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Thu 3/9, 4/13, 5/11	7:00 PM

Group Business Meetings		
Group	Date	Time
Cherokee (Chattanooga)	Mon 3/6, 4/3, 5/1	7:00 PM
Chickasaw (Memphis)	Wed 3/1, 4/5, 5/3	6:30 PM
Harvey Broome (Knoxville)	Tue 3/28, 4/25, 5/23	7:00 PM
Middle TN (Nashville)	Mon 3/20, 4/17, 5/15	6:30 PM

Regional Conservation Committee Business Meetings		
Committee	Date	Time
CareNET (Rogersville)	Thu 3/23, 4/27, 5/25	6:00 PM
Clarksville	Tue 3/14, 4/11, 5/9	6:00 PM
Holston Valley	Tue 3/21, 4/18, 5/16	6:00 PM
Watauga (Mountain City)	Sun 3/12, 4/9, 5/14	2:00 PM



Be a champion for the environment. Join today for \$15.

From delisting endangered species like the Gray Wolf to drilling for dirty tar sands, the threats to our environment have never been greater. Your support is absolutely essential to preserving our most precious natural resources - join the nation's largest and most effective grassroots movement today.

We'll thank you with this free insulated cooler tote (limited time!) as well as these exciting Members-only benefits:

- One-year subscription to *Sierra* magazine
- Worldwide Members-only outdoor trips
- Automatic membership in your local Chapter and Group
- Discounts on Sierra Club calendars, books, and other merchandise.



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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

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