



# THE CURRENT

*A report to update TCWN friends and donors*

Issue 1, Summer 2004

## We appreciate your patience and commitment...

TCWN has completed a 12-month strategic planning process to map our organizational course for the next five years. During this process we have taken a hiatus from distributing our printed newsletter, but we have continued our work to bring healthier waters to Tennessee.

### 5-Year Strategic Plan Summary

#### Our Goals:

- 1) To advocate for strong policies and programs that result in more effective protection and restoration of Tennessee waters; and
- 2) To build the capacity of citizen watershed groups to become more effective advocates.

To achieve these goals and ensure meaningful and engaged participation in the protection of our state's waters, TCWN works statewide to:

- Educate organizations, decision-makers, and the public about important water resource issues.
- Build support among organizations, decision-makers, and the public for creating and upholding strong clean water policies.
- Provide technical support, education, and assistance to newly forming and existing citizen groups working to protect and restore local watersheds.
- Provide vehicles for networking between organizations and individuals, in order to answer tough questions, get advice, and gather needed information to ensure the protection and restoration of TN waters.

#### Our Programs:

Since its inception, TCWN has developed programs in relation to these goals, addressing an increasing number of complex issues and concerns facing our state's valuable water resources. **Three program areas** have been designed to protect, restore, and enhance Tennessee's water through a combination of policy-reform, site-based conservation, and capacity-building efforts:

#### 1 Clean Water Policy

TCWN plays an important leadership role in advocating for strong clean water laws, regulations, and policies in Tennessee. While our efforts are most intensively focused on Clean Water Act implementation and enforcement on the state level, we also engage in national and local efforts. We work closely with partners at the local, state, and national levels, including NGOs, government agencies, elected officials, universities, businesses, and other allies to advance policy positions and further water protection strategies.

#### 2 Protecting Watersheds/Fostering Communities (The Human-Land-Water Connection)

Healthy rivers play an important role in the future of Tennessee

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### TCWN Collaborates to Make History...

On May 10, 2004, TCWN participated in a historic event that will protect over 10,000 acres of pristine habitat that will connect the Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A signing ceremony cemented an agreement reached regarding the federal relicensing of four hydroelectric dams on the Little Tennessee River

*"This is a textbook example of how a major American company can work with communities and conservation organizations to help Americans keep a high standard of living, as well as to conserve the environment."*

*-TN Senator Lamar Alexander*

operated by Tapoco, Inc. (a subsidiary of ALCOA). The Nature Conservancy will hold the land in a conservation easement until the ultimate transfer of property to the National Park Service and United States Forest Service.

This agreement will protect habitat for 21 rare and endangered species - including four

listed fish - and replenish flow in two previously dry stretches of river. The agreement will also provide more than \$12 million for conservation projects and enhanced recreational facilities.

A group of several Tennessee environmental organizations formed TIGRA (TN Interest Groups Association), a broad-based consensus organization designed to negotiate with Tapoco and government agencies to protect this Southern Appalachian land. TIGRA, an innovative collaboration strategy working to protect Tennessee's valuable natural resources, was initially conceived by TCWN in our **Little Tennessee River Watershed Protection Campaign**. Other TIGRA members include National Parks Conservation Association, American Rivers, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, TN Department of Environment and Conservation, US Forst Service, National Park Service, TN Wildlife Resources Agency, National Forest Foundation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Little Tennessee River and adjacent lands protected through a relicensing agreement

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Tennessee Clean Water Network would like to thank our sponsors, donors and volunteers for their generous contributions of time and money. Through your support we are able to work with great strength as advocates for Tennessee's precious water resources.

Thank you for keeping TCWN and our watershed communities in your thoughts, and know you are always in ours.

For the Rivers.

Renee V. Hoyos  
Executive Director

**Thank You!**

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*Support TCWN and help protect watersheds and communities!*

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**Dr. David A. Etnier receives 1st Bill Russell River Hero Award!**



On April 7, 2004, Dr. David A. Etnier received the first Bill Russell River Hero Award at a reception to honor his outstanding contributions to the conservation of our state's waters. Dr. Etnier, Emeritus Professor with the University of Tennessee, taught Ichthyology and Aquatic Insects and has inspired thousands of future aquatic resource professionals since joining the University in 1965.

*Dr. David Etnier - friends fondly refer to him as Ets - is an Emeritus Professor with the University of Tennessee and above all else would like to be known as an educator.*

For nearly 40 years, he has worked to better understand Tennessee's rivers and streams

through his unparalleled research. In 1973, while surveying the lower Little Tennessee River, Etnier discovered the Snail Darter, an accomplishment that delayed the construction of the Tellico Dam. There are few watersheds in the Southeast that have not been sampled by Etnier-guided field surveys.

In 1993, from research conducted over 25 years, Dr. Etnier published a sentinel work encompassing 681 pages, *The Fishes of Tennessee*, with co-author Dr. Wayne C. Starnes, a former student. The text filled the huge void in fisheries literature in the state, providing both a taxonomic source and a natural history reference for one of the most biologically rich regions in the country.

Dr. Etnier was selected as the 2004 River Hero after a nomination and vote held by TCWN's staff and Board of Directors. We received many nominations from citizens across the state that wanted to honor outstanding environmentalists - it proved to be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about amazing individuals working for healthier waters in Tennessee. As the inaugural River Hero, Dr. Etnier has set the bar high for future candidates. We look forward to meeting those candidates and honoring those striving to fulfill the TCWN mission - to protect, restore, and enhance our waters and the communities that depend on them.



*"Some environmental damages may be reparable," Bill used to say, "but once a river is dammed it's dead forever."*

*The Obed, a river Bill Russell loved above all others.*

**NOMINATE YOUR RIVER HERO**

Do you know an individual that has demonstrated outstanding commitment to preserving or restoring the waters in your community? Do you know a citizen that advocates, collaborates, educates, or otherwise supports efforts to protect our state's waters?

From November 1, 2004 through January 31, 2005 TCWN will be accepting your nominations for the 2005 Bill Russell River Hero Award.

Nomination forms will be posted on [www.tcwn.org](http://www.tcwn.org) Nov. 1, 2004. To receive a form by mail or fax contact

**The Hero Behind the Award...**

William (Bill) Russell was a world-renowned geneticist and long-time advocate for Tennessee waters. Together with wife Liane, he founded Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning in 1966, an organization dedicated to the protection of lands and waters through public ownership. Bill co-authored and facilitated the passage of the TN Scenic Rivers Act in 1968, the first comprehensive act in the nation, preceding the National Act.

Bill worked tirelessly to prevent the construction of a dam on the Obed River, a river he had come to love above all others. He and his comrades embarked on an intensive and lengthy effort to explore all avenues that would prevent the impoundment on the Obed. He eventually succeeded in not only saving the Obed from the dam, but in having it designated a National Wild and Scenic River in 1976.

Bill was also instrumental in preventing the construction of a dam on the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. His efforts to protect the river resulted in the establishment of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. Bill also fought dams on the Little T and the Duck River, and was crushed when the Tellico and Normandy Dams were erected.

Bill Russell died on July 23, 2003, just short of his 93rd birthday. We are honored to have known him and grateful for the opportunity to add this award to his amazing legacy.

*Thank you to Liane Russell and TCWP for all of your help.*

*Bill Russell, world-renowned scientist and long-time advocate for TN rivers, was the inspiration for the TCWN River Hero Award.*



**Tennessee River #4 on the 'Most Endangered Rivers' List**

On April 14, 2004, American Rivers, a leading environmental organization dedicated to protecting and restoring our nation's rivers, announced that the Tennessee River would be listed fourth in the 'Most Endangered Rivers' report for sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) and sewage blending. The report is designed to highlight rivers with uncertain futures.

Sewage system infrastructure has not been maintained as the population along the Tennessee River grows, resulting in the discharge of millions of gallons of raw or partially treated sewage into the river each year. Most sewage spills occur when it rains - stormwater rushing into the sewer pushes the excrement out before treatment is complete. SSO's are most pronounced in the Knoxville area, where the Knoxville Utility Board (KUB) has violated Clean Water Act regulations some 1,000 times, dumping more than 1 billion gallons of raw or partially treated sewage into Knoxville's rivers and streams.

The EPA estimates that exposure to sewage-laced water makes as many as 3.5 million Americans sick every year. Pathogens found in sewage cause minor gastrointestinal sickness and respiratory infections, as well as life threatening illnesses like hepatitis and dysentery.

TCWN is working to engage utilities to ensure proper maintenance of sewage treatment facilities and systems. After failed attempts to encourage KUB to clean up its act, TCWN filed suit against the utility for violating their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits. In January 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice, the EPA, and the state of Tennessee joined the lawsuit. Our goal is a resolution that protects human health and the integrity of our water resources.

*"We haven't put the Tennessee River on our list to tell the world about the chronic sewage overflows and discharges that have been going on for years," said Rebecca R. Wodder, president of American Rivers. "We have put the river on our list to warn that these problems are poised to get worse."*



*Sanitary sewer overflow in a residential neighborhood in North Knoxville (2003). The caution sign warns to avoid physical contact due to potential health risks.*

*(Strategic Plan-continued from page 1)*

communities. Our waters define much of our history and cultural landscape and are critical to our state's environment and economy.

To address concerns surrounding a growing population and increasing development pressures, TCWN is working with local communities and watershed groups to advance a watershed approach when engaging natural resource issues. Such an approach integrates concerns about water quality, land use, biological populations, and cultural resources. It also enlists the support, participation, and leadership of local stakeholders and land users. By highlighting the importance of water quality to sustainable communities, TCWN is seeking to demonstrate that protecting and restoring our rivers is a smart investment.

**3 Building the River Movement in Tennessee**

TCWN believes that an active, engaged citizenry is critical to on-the-ground protection and restoration of our water resources across the state. For this reason, we are working to provide a forum for greater communication, networking, and coordination around the protection of our watersheds.

**Yes! I want to help protect and restore Tennessee's waters.**

I would like to make a donation of:

- \$25 Friend
- \$50 Advocate
- \$100 Protector
- \$250 Champion
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- Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Return with your donation to TCWN, PO Box 1521, Knoxville, TN 37901

Gifts to TCWN are fully tax-deductible.

