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Communication remains our greatest challenge! At every turn and at all levels, I am reminded how true that is.

The issue surfaced recently in two quite different ways. One was at a recent meeting of Spring Hill's Board of Mayor and Aldermen in which members discussed the merits of



Gene Burr, AIA, AICP  
*Scenic Tennessee president*

establishing an "historical commission." The other was at a public meeting in Knoxville regarding riverfront development on the south side of the Tennessee River across from downtown. Both events have long-term consequences for their respective communities, and both illustrated the importance of good communication in making good decisions.

The communication issue in Spring Hill, viewed from a distance, was that the aldermen were evaluating the role of an historic zoning commission without a clear understanding of what such a commission can or cannot do with respect to private properties. The officials seemed to suffer the common misperception that such a commission "tells people what to do with their homes." They also appeared not to understand that historic zoning is just one of many useful tools commu-

nities can employ to guide development and protect the character of their city or town. The result was that the board decided not to create an historic zoning commission for Spring Hill, a town whose unique properties include the antebellum mansions Ripavilla, Oaklawn and Whitehall; the 1825 Gorham Wing House; the Tennessee Children's Home; and the 1845 William McKissack house, thought to be the first brick house in the town.

Observers report that there was also some confusion of local historic zoning with designation under the National Register of Historic Places (which recognizes historic significance but does not dictate ownership decisions). It's unfortunate that the aldermen were not given the benefit of hearing

## Message from the President

from similar communities in which historic zoning has been used effectively. Had they had that opportunity, they might have realized that creating an historic district is good government in action, because it protects historic residential and business properties from changes that might lower their value.

In short, while there may have been communication that night in Spring Hill, it appeared to have been based more on supposition than solid information. Hopefully the decision will be reconsidered.

*continued on back page*



Why is this girl smiling?  
To find out, turn the page.

# The 56-Percent Solution to Our Litter Problem

The numbers range from a high of 78 percent to a low of 30 percent, but most of them are right where we expected them to be: smack in the middle.

Last month's statewide litter pickup confirms what we've long observed anecdotally: that roughly half of Tennessee's litter (56 percent is the average thus far) consists of beer cans, soda bottles, sports drinks and assorted other recyclable beverage containers.

Granted, this was not a highly scientific survey. The only "rule" was that volunteers had to use 13-gallon drawstring garbage bags and fill them as full as possible. We had no control over what kind of roads they tackled, or whether they were urban or rural. (As it turned out, roughly three-fourths of the roads were rural.)

We also had no control over who took part. Volunteers ranged from senior citizens to garden clubs to high school science classes and even to an official county jail cleanup crew.

But the fact that similar results were reported again and again—whether from Giles County or Lake, Carter or Rutherford, Shelby or Wilson, Davidson or Clay, Grundy or Anderson—suggests that this survey does indeed paint a fair picture of Tennessee's litter.

It also confirms another point we've been making as organizers of the Tennessee Bottle Bill Project. It shows that a refundable 5¢ deposit on all those glass, plastic and aluminum containers would do more to clean up Tennessee's roads (not to mention triple our existing recycling rates) than anything this state has yet attempted.



photo courtesy of Gary Barrigar

**X Marks the Spot.** Beverage bottles and cans accounted for more than 60 percent of the litter picked up last month by Ron Harrington, Gary Barrigar and Richard Brosmore of the Overmountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited. TWRA's boat ramp on the Watauga River proved to be an excellent spot to "get the message across" to local fishermen.

That's been the experience in every state that has passed a bottle bill, and we can have the same results here in Tennessee.

For more information about how bottle bills work wonders on litter—or to see how you can add your own cleanup numbers to the survey results—please visit [www.tnbottlebill.org](http://www.tnbottlebill.org). ■

## X Marks the Spot Container Litter Survey November 2005

number of cleanups conducted:	16
number of counties represented:	11
miles of road picked up:	20.4
number of volunteers:	157
total bags of litter collected:	354.0
bags with bottles & cans only:	198.5
highest count of containers:	78.5%
lowest count of containers:	30.7%
<b>average for all counts:</b>	<b>56.07%</b>

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Subscriptions are free with membership. To join, please send this form with your check to:

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Scenic Tennessee is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your gift is tax-deductible.



**Gracie Young is smiling** because she won second place, and \$50, in the middle-school division of Scenic Tennessee's 12th annual photo contest.

Gracie, shown here with her family at the awards reception in November, is a nature lover from Brentwood who learned about the contest in a flyer at the Warner Parks Nature Center. To see more photos turn to page 5, or visit [www.scenictennessee.org](http://www.scenictennessee.org).

**Scenic Tennessee's 2006 Scenic Resources Conference**  
***Creating Effective Advocacy and Awareness***

**March 2-3, 2006**  
**Cheekwood Botanical Garden**  
**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Thursday, March 2**

6:30 - 7:00 p.m.      **Registration begins**

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.      **Reception & evening lecture**  
**Kevin Fry** President, Scenic America  
**Mack Prichard** State Naturalist, Tennessee  
Department of Environment and Conservation

**Friday, March 3**

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.      **Registration continues**  
Coffee & pastries

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.      **Concurrent sessions I**  
*Advocating for Land Protection*  
**Jean Nelson** Executive Director,  
The Land Trust for Tennessee  
**Larry Smith, Former** Executive Director,  
Wolf River Conservancy  
**Rick Wood** Project Manager,  
Trust for Public Land  
*Implications of Emerging Energy Issues*  
**Kevin Fry** President, Scenic America  
Representative from Sharp Manufacturing

11:30 - 11:45 a.m.      **Break**

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.      **Keynote Luncheon:**  
*The Importance of Citizen Involvement*  
**Representative Russell Johnson**  
Tennessee State Legislature

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.      **Concurrent Sessions II**  
*Preserving Cultural Resources*  
**Patrick McIntyre** Executive Director,  
Tennessee Preservation Trust  
**Tobie Bledsoe** Mayor of Jonesborough  
**Jennifer Smith** Executive Director,  
Tennessee Urban Forestry Council  
*Public Awareness Campaigns  
and Legislative Action*  
**Stewart Clifton** Lobbyist,  
Tennessee Conservation Voters  
**Kay Lee** President,  
Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs

3:00 - 3:15 p.m.      **Break**

3:15 - 4:45 p.m.      **Concurrent Sessions III**  
*Using Communications and the Media  
to Create Awareness*  
**Kevin Fry** President, Scenic America  
**Pam Glaser** Senior Planner  
Planning & Design Studio, Chattanooga  
**Marge Davis** Coordinator,  
Tennessee Bottle Bill Project  
*Tourism and a Scenic Tennessee*  
**Susan Whitaker** Commissioner,  
Tennessee Department of Tourism  
**Ed Cole** Chief of Environment and Planning,  
Tennessee Department of Transportation  
**Shawn Bible** Manager, Beautification Office,  
Tennessee Department of Transportation

4:50 - 5:30 p.m.      **Conference Summary**  
**Kevin Fry** President, Scenic America

—see over for registration information—

**Registration Form**  
**Scenic Tennessee's 2006 Scenic Resources Conference**  
*Creating Effective Advocacy and Awareness*  
**March 2-3, 2006**  
**Cheekwood Botanical Garden**  
**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Registration Information**

**Registration Fees**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Non-member fees include 1-year membership)

Scenic Tennessee member? yes  no  not sure

*If received by February 25:*

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

- Scenic Tennessee member: \$95
- Non-Scenic Tennessee member: \$115

Title or position \_\_\_\_\_

*If received after February 25:*

Address \_\_\_\_\_

- Scenic Tennessee member: \$110
- Non-Scenic Tennessee member: \$130
- Friday luncheon only: \$35

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make a check payable to **Scenic Tennessee** and mail it with the completed registration form to:

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Marie Zwolinski, Conference Coordinator  
 1975 Manila Ave.  
 Memphis, TN 38114  
 E-mail: notmaria@bellsouth.net

This is: my work  my home

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



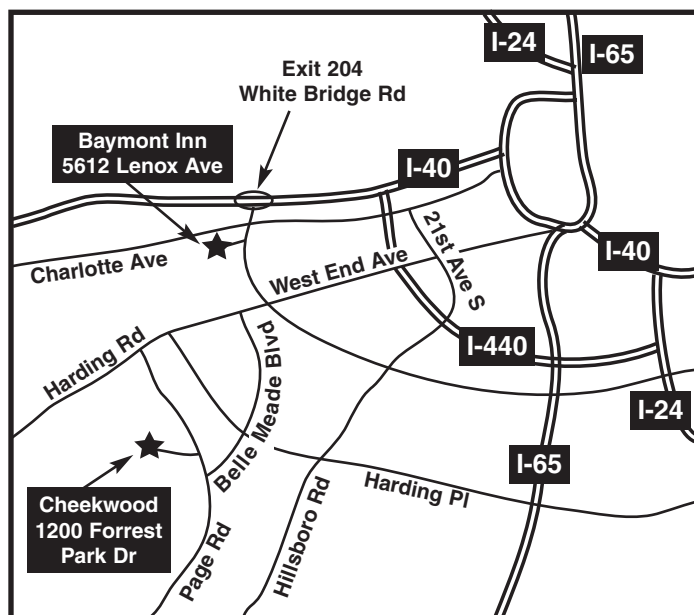
**Conference Lodging**

Baymont Inn & Suites, Nashville West  
 5612 Lenox Avenue (off White Bridge Road)  
 Nashville, TN 37209  
 Phone: (615) 353-0700  
 Fax: (615) 352-0361

Conference rate: **\$64.95** per room (plus taxes)

Note: To receive this rate, you must make your reservation directly with the hotel by February 17. Ask for the Scenic Tennessee group rate. (The regular room rate is \$84.95.)

The Baymont Inn & Suites is three miles from Cheekwood, just off Interstate 40 (Exit 204) and White Bridge Road. It offers a complimentary "deluxe continental" breakfast, fitness room and free high-speed wireless Internet access in all rooms.





*Lake in Soddy Daisy*

Madeline Rose, Battle Academy, Chattanooga.  
First place, middle school division.



*Trash Day Came Early*

Allie Clarke, Chattanooga Christian School.  
First place, high school division.



*Tip of the Iceberg. McKellar Lake, Memphis*

James H. Baker, Memphis.  
Second place, adult division.



*Harrison Bay*

Katelyn Couch, Battle Academy, Chattanooga.  
Second place (tie), middle school division.



*Bottle Blending Into the Grass*

Bresha Bridgeman, Battle Academy, Chattanooga.  
Second place (tie), middle school division.



*Third Creek, Knoxville*  
Mark C. Campen, Knoxville.  
First place, adult division.



*Baby Frog Shares Nursery with Plastic Bottle*  
Gracie Young, Edmondson Elementary, Brentwood.  
Second place (tie), middle school division.



*Unnamed Tributary, Cumberland River*  
Barry Sulkin, Nashville.  
Third place (tie), adult division.



*What a Waste*  
Ronn Duff, Jr., Tazewell.  
Third place (tie), adult division.

**Scenic Tennessee Proudly Presents  
The Winners  
of Its 2005 Photo Contest,  
“Message in the Bottle(s)”**

**T**hank you, Madeline. Thank you, Mark. Thank you, James and Allie and Ronn and Bresha and April and Barry and Gracie and all the others who submitted photos to “Message in the Bottle(s),” Scenic Tennessee’s 2005 photo contest.

By showing that litter continues to be a serious blight on the Tennessee landscape—and by showing that a major portion of that litter consists of bottles and cans—you’ve helped strengthen the case for a bottle bill.

We’re sorry you couldn’t all come to Nashville for the awards reception at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. We think you would have been pleased to see how nice your pictures looked, professionally enlarged and mounted by Chromatics, Nashville’s premier name in photo processing.

But you would have been even more proud to see the reactions of the people who viewed your photographs. They laughed, they gasped, they shook their heads in disbelief. And when they left, they all said, “Thanks.”

Thanks to you.

To see how these and more images look in color, visit [www.scenictennessee.org](http://www.scenictennessee.org). ■

**Thanks again to our generous sponsors:**  
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 Sherlene Spicer/Nature’s Helpers Garden Design Service *Leiper’s Fork*

# Notes From All Over

## Bottle Bill Trip Called Off

*adapted from WPLN-FM online transcript*

State Representative Russell Johnson says he will not be hosting a trip to Maine to see how that state's bottle bill works.

The Republican from Loudon had wanted to use some of his campaign money to fund the trip for some legislators and a member of the governor's staff. He recently received an opinion from the state Attorney General that said using his campaign money would be okay. But now Johnson says he can't get the buy-in he needs from the Bredezen administration.

Last week, the governor told the Knoxville News-Sentinel that the trip was unnecessary. Representative Johnson says he thought Bredezen would be supportive given his background.

"He collected bottles and being in a single parent household, the family used it for the family coffer, so to speak. So he's aware of how it worked old style. I was hoping someone from the administration or several someones from the administration would go and see especially how the redemption centers work."

Johnson says without administration interest, the trip to Maine does not make sense.

Johnson says he will still push for a bottle bill in the next legislative session. He says a five-cent deposit on drink containers will motivate redemption and cut down on litter across Tennessee. ■

## Bud cloning revives urban forests

*adapted from AP reports*

Michigan's "state champion" white poplar, Mits trunk a whopping 200 feet in circumference, stands just off the main street of Leland, a tourist village in northern Michigan.

For picture-snapping gawkers, the location is ideal. But for the tree, it's a curse.

Cars and pedestrians compact the soil around the 100-foot-high poplar. Asphalt and a wooden boardwalk cover its roots, robbing them of rainwater. With no buffer between it and nearby Lake Michigan, the tree absorbs the brute force of November gales, winter blizzards, summer squalls.

"One of the worst situations you can put a tree in," said David Millarch, co-founder of Champion Tree Project International. Yet the poplar, well over a century old, is thriving. Millarch believes superior genes explain its extraordinary staying power.

The poplar is among two dozen giants in northern Michigan that Millarch's organization has

begun cloning in hopes of inspiring restoring "urban forests" across the nation.

The collection ranges from the black willow to the American beech, plus a variety of maples and oaks. The project has cloned about 125 species, snipping off newly grown buds and using them to make genetically identical copies.

Cloned champions have been planted on university campuses and historic sites such as Washington's Mount Vernon. But the project's ultimate goal is to bring back the native forests that were cleared for America's cities and suburbs. ■

## Zoning administrator suspended for role in razing historic home

*adapted from The Tennessean*

Metro Nashville's zoning administrator was suspended for two weeks without pay for his role in the destruction of historic Evergreen Place on September 22.

Lon F. "Sonny" West, one of the city's longest-serving employees, was punished for giving his staff the go-ahead to issue a demolition permit for the 200-year-old house. The house at 5007 Gallatin Pike was one of the oldest homes in Davidson County. It was razed to make way for a Home Depot store.

The Greek Revival house was built by a prominent Presbyterian minister and in recent years was used as a museum to the late country music singer Jim Reeves, although he never lived there. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Before its destruction, Evergreen Place had been flagged by Metro Historical Commission staff in the Metro computer system that tracks permits. An unwritten department policy required consulting with commission staff before allowing for the demolition.

West had told his staff to issue a demolition permit even though he knew the Historical Commission objected. The permit was revoked a few hours later, but the house was razed anyway. The property's owner, Robert Moore, Jr., said did not know about the revocation until the next morning.

State law says the Metro Council must approve the demolition of any pre-1865 structure that is "reparable at a reasonable cost" and "has a historical significance besides age itself."

However, Stephen Brown, vice chairman of the Tennessee Preservation Trust, said the law is "a lion with no bite" and does not specify penalties for violating it. ■

## Commuter rail back on track

*adapted from Nashville City Paper*

The Music City Star, Nashville's first commuter rail line, is back on track. Service between Lebanon and Nashville is expected to begin week-day commuter operations this spring.

President Bush recently signed a federal transportation bill that includes the final \$6.2 million needed for the Music City Star. The money allows the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to negotiate favorable bank rates on a bridge loan to finish construction. Earlier negotiations had been snagged by high loan rates.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist said he worked hard to ensure that the \$6 million was included in the final transportation bill.

"The project's future could have been in jeopardy without this federal funding, and I'm pleased that we were able to help Nashville area residents score an important victory," Frist said.

Sen. Lamar Alexander said as Nashville continues to grow, investments in different modes of transportation are needed to limit congestion and air pollution.

"This funding is critical to ensure that the Music City Star leaves the station in 2006," Alexander said. ■

## Mountaintop removal under fire

*from Southern Environmental Law Center and Save Our Cumberland Mountains reports*

The Southern Environmental Law Center has officially requested that 284,000 acres of premier Tennessee forestland be designated as "unsuitable" for surface coal mining. Because of the scale of destructive impacts, the SELC petition is one of the largest and most comprehensive of its kind.

Mountaintop-removal mining and cross-ridge mining involve blasting the tops off mountains and dumping the rocks and debris into adjacent valleys. The process sends tons of sediments into streams and rivers, weakens mountain slopes, decimates forests and threatens the way of life in mountain communities.

The petition is a rarely used but high-leverage tool to gain broad protection for regions like the New River watershed and nearby public lands in Tennessee. The New River watershed encompasses parts of the Cumberland Plateau, one of the South's most treasured ecosystems.

Currently there are four active mountaintop removal sites in the area: Zeb Mountain, Leach

Mountain, Bennetts Fork and Horseshoe Mountain. Thirteen more are at risk pending leasing decisions by TVA.

Though the surface rights to the public lands are owned by the state, TVA and other energy companies own the coal underneath, and plans are underway to dramatically increase surface mining as a way of accessing these stores.

“The law clearly recognizes that there are some places where surface mining is simply too hard on the land, says SELC senior attorney Deborah Murray. “We firmly believe this area of the Cumberland Plateau is one of those places.” ■

## Maine town bans chain restaurants

*adapted from AP reports*

**Y**ou won't find McDonald's golden arches or pink-and-orange Dunkin' Donuts signs in the seaside town of Ogunquit, Maine.

In November, voters in this town of 1,200 year-round residents became the latest community to ban so-called “formula” restaurants. Supporters of the ban put the measure on the ballot because they didn't want their town to turn into just another congested strip of Subways, Applebee's and Burger Kings.

The measure, which was approved 506-207, prohibits formula restaurants, defined as establishments with the same name, employee uniforms, color schemes, architectural design, signage or similar standardized features.

The issue is about more than signs or drive-thrus. It's about economics. Studies show that more money stays within a community when it is spent at locally owned businesses.

A 2003 study in Maine, for instance, showed that 45 cents of every dollar spent at local businesses stayed in the communities and another 9 cents stayed in the the state.

By contrast, just 15 cents of every dollar spent at national big-box retailers stayed in the state. ■

## Conservation overlays move forward

*adapted from The Tennessean*

**A**fter a contentious three-hour hearing on Dec. 7, the Metro (Nashville) Historic Zoning Commission approved an application for a controversial zoning change in the Sylvan Park and Whitland Avenue neighborhoods.

Called a neighborhood conservation overlay, the zoning is typically used to control growth in areas with high numbers of homes built before 1945. Design and height restrictions are required of new construction and any demolition of older homes is first reviewed by the commission.

The hearing was laced with strident defenses of property rights from opponents, while those in favor gave testimonies about the importance of historic preservation. ■

## Funding available for scenic byways

*from TDOT Beautification Office release*

The Federal Highway Administration is taking applications for its next round of National Scenic Byways discretionary grants. The grants provide merit-based funding for byway-related projects.

This solicitation is not about filling out an application. It is about telling your story; providing details about the special roadway qualities you have in your area; pointing out the significance of its intrinsic qualities; and explaining what visitors will find as they travel the roadway.

The deadline for submitting applications is January 20, 2006. The application form and other important information can be found at [www.bywaysonline.org](http://www.bywaysonline.org). In addition to submitting an online form, applicants will also need to submit 10 hard copies to the Tennessee Department of Transportation Beautification Office.

TDOT's beautification office will review and rank applications, giving priority to those that demonstrate appropriate, attainable goals, sensible budgets, proof of reasonable matching funds, a history of local input and support, visions for the intrinsic qualities that are being preserved and enhanced possibilities for the future. TDOT will also favor projects that propose to:

- ◆ Move the scenic byways program forward across the entire state

- ◆ Support the long-term efforts of regional and local groups
- ◆ Support byways that make connections with National Scenic Byways in other states
- ◆ Support ongoing regional economic and tourism development
- ◆ Support programs that can be maintained over the long term

The Beautification Office will be glad to answer questions, review drafts and offer recommendations prior to submittal. ■

## Group holds “funeral” for beech trees

*adapted from the Knoxville News-Sentinel*

**T**he local chapter of the Sierra Club staged a “funeral” in Johnson City for four ancient beech trees that were cut down in November to make way for development.

About 50 people showed up for the Sunday ceremony, held beside a pile of branches, sawdust and sections of trunk scattered among four massive stumps.

Property owner Stewart Taylor cleared the trees, which were more than 100 years old, in the early morning of Nov. 19.

Taylor has said he plans to build condominiums on the property. But he originally wanted the land used for commercial development and said the Johnson City Commission's refusal to grant his zoning request led him to cut down the trees.

Larry Proffit, with the Sierra Club, said a compromise could have saved the majestic trees.

“They could have achieved all their goals and left the trees for a park area.” ■

### *Suggestions for On-Premise Sign Control*

- ◆ Limit freestanding signs to one per business, with a maximum height of no more than 15 feet
- ◆ Encourage ground signs by allowing them a size bonus relative to pole signs
- ◆ Prohibit or strictly regulate “problem” signs such as billboards, portable signs, pennants, streamers and flashing or intermittent lights
- ◆ Limit shopping centers, malls, office parks and similar large developments to one group sign, with no freestanding signs for individual businesses
- ◆ Develop special controls for historic areas, downtown commercial districts, neighborhood shopping areas and commercial corridors of special importance. These might include limiting the color and materials of signs, requiring the use of smaller or shorter signs, or encouraging integrated sign designs for new development.
- ◆ Link sign controls to an overall streetscape improvement plan.
- ◆ Wherever possible, set a limit to life of nonconforming signs and use incentives, education and negotiation to encourage their early removal.

*—with thanks to Ed McMahon*

**President's message**  
*continued from page 1*

The recent meeting in Knoxville showed the other side of the communication coin. Even though the south riverfront planning effort has just begun and no decisions have yet been made, already it's clear that the challenge will be addressed with informed citizen input, systematic analysis of all aspects of the project area by competent consultants, and a body of advocates—a representative community liaison group—charged with assuring the community that the plan is responsive to the needs of everyone!

As it stands now, Knoxville's south riverfront is a somewhat haphazard juncture of industrial, institutional and residential uses, complicated by steep topography. Obviously it's critically important that the city plan thoughtfully and creatively for any new development in this area. Fortunately, Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam seems determined that the planning process will be invigorated by effective public participation and the help of experienced design professionals.

In both cases, complex issues need to be understood if good decisions are to be made. It's not always easy to explain these issues. (Sometimes it's hard just getting people to listen!) But if we are to preserve the things we value most about our communities, we must learn how to talk about them.

It's just one more step in becoming an effective advocate. And one more reason to attend Scenic Tennessee's 2006 conference in March. See pages 3 and 4 for more details. ■

## Dates Worth Noting

- Jan 24** **Grant application deadline**  
National Scenic Byways FY 2006 Discretionary Grants.  
[www.bywaysonline.org](http://www.bywaysonline.org) or Shawn Bible, (615) 532-3488.
- Feb 12-17** **First Municipal Forester Institute**  
Society of Municipal Arborists. 1 Los Angeles. Lake Arrowhead Conference Center.  
[www.urban-forestry.com](http://www.urban-forestry.com)
- Feb 15** **Submission deadline**  
Viewpoints Spring 2006 issue  
[margedavis@comcast.net](mailto:margedavis@comcast.net)
- Mar 2-3** **"Creating Effective Advocacy and Awareness"**  
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## Useful Websites

- General scenic resources issues**  
[www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org) (Scenic America)  
[www.scenictennessee.org](http://www.scenictennessee.org)
- Forestry & horticulture**  
[www.tufc.com](http://www.tufc.com) (TN Urban Forestry Council)  
[www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org)
- Urban design & planning**  
[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org) (American Planning Assoc.)  
[www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org) (American Institute of Architects)  
[www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org) (American Society of Landscape Architects)  
[www.tclf.org](http://www.tclf.org) (Cultural Landscape Foundation)
- Bottle bills & litter**  
[www.tnbottlebill.org](http://www.tnbottlebill.org)  
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[www.bottlebill.org](http://www.bottlebill.org)
- Preservation & land trusts**  
[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org) (historic preservation)  
[www.railtrails.org](http://www.railtrails.org) (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)  
[www.landtrusttn.org](http://www.landtrusttn.org) (Land Trust for Tennessee)  
[www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)
- General environmental issues**  
[www.tnconservationvoters.org](http://www.tnconservationvoters.org)  
[www.techtn.org](http://www.techtn.org) (TN Environmental Council)
- Legal guidance**  
[www.southernenvironment.org](http://www.southernenvironment.org)  
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