

Canyon Watcher



Oil painting on linen panel
of Louisiana Waterthrush
by Cindy Procius



Our mission is to preserve the Tennessee River Gorge as a healthy and productive resource through land protection, education, community engagement, and the promotion of good land stewardship.



Rick Huffines

Dear Friends and Supporters,

To weave a fabric, you must start with individual threads; stacking and weaving each one with the others until slowly a matrix of strength, color, and beauty evolve into something that is shared and supported by the whole - every thread unique in its own right, but weak on its own. Conservation is a fabric, knitted together through community support and action - a long bolt of cloth that is continually growing through the long-standing commitment of each individual member.

The Tennessee River Gorge Trust has benefited from the many threads that have connected us together towards a common cause over the past 36 years. Through those threads, we have protected our "Outdoor Mother", the Tennessee River Gorge, through the strength of this community – both past and present.

Through this fabric of our community, we have protected almost 17,000 acres of iconic lands; we have been responsible stewards of this open space by building trails, conducting research, educating our public about the importance of the Gorge, providing quality camping and paddling opportunities, and listening to you, our community members about what you desire for this place.

This newsletter is dedicated to the many threads that make this organization the fabric that it is in our community. We hope you will enjoy the stories about how we are *listening* and *connecting* to you. We always want you to feel like you are a part of our Outdoor Mother and never take her for granted. She is there because of the many threads that give her the strength, color, and beauty that she is today. We are truly grateful for the wisdom of those who have supported us throughout our history, and for all that you do to make local conservation a reality today and for our future.

We appreciate your continued support—
Rick Huffines,
Executive Director



Summer Fun! A big shout out to our Summer Interns!

Grace Whitaker is attending the University of Montana studying Wildlife Conservation. **Peter Ceren** is enrolled at Sewanee University and studying Environmental Science. They assisted us this season with marking boundary lines, construction projects at our Bird Observatory, and trail maintenance. We truly appreciate their efforts.

TRGT Welcomes New Member of the family!

Forrest Francis Prescott was born May 26 at 7lbs and 9oz to Business & Community Access Director **Mariah Prescott**, and her husband Greg. Welcome to the TRGT team, Forrest!



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Project LOWA by Eliot Berz

Each spring, a population of Louisiana Waterthrush (LOWA) leave their wintering grounds in Central America and migrate north to breed and raise young in the Tennessee River Gorge. The Gorge is one of many areas used as summer breeding grounds across the eastern United States by these small songbirds. At the end of every summer, these birds leave the Gorge and head south only to return again the following spring, often to the exact same section of stream. The LOWA's habitat consists of clean gravel-bottom streams flowing through deciduous forest, which are abundant in the Gorge. This species also serves as an excellent indicator of stream health since it feeds on aquatic macroinvertebrates which are only present in relatively healthy waters.

In 2016, the Trust received approval from the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory for a pilot project to attach light-level geolocator devices on male Louisiana Waterthrush's backs to observe the physical effects of carrying the device and to discover a functional way to track the species. These devices map the birds' migration routes and wintering grounds by measuring ambient light levels in reference to time, which can later be used to calculate the subject's latitude and longitude each day through a series of algorithms. Identifying migratory stopover locations and wintering ground locations is essential for establishing conservation priorities and understanding all factors that could play a role in fluctuating population trends. The physical effects of carrying the devices were focused on because previous attempts by other ornithologists to attach geolocators to this particular species yielded very few results due to a plethora of problems associated with the harnesses and attachment techniques.

To begin this project, our avian technicians captured 33 LOWA's within the Gorge in 2016. We attached geolocators to 16 of the birds and used the other 17 birds as a control group – wearing no geolocators or harnesses, only a color leg band. Unlike radio collars or GPS-based locators that can generate real-time data on larger animals, the geolocators' data can only be obtained if the devices are manually taken off the birds upon their return after spring migration. So, our avian technicians set out to recapture the very same LOWA's when they returned to the Gorge the following year. To do so, our technicians combed the Gorge with binoculars in hand and set very fine nets across the stream once a marked LOWA was sighted. To entice the territorial males to fly into the net, we used a robotic decoy and speaker system to mimic the song of a competing male. After an exhaustive search, our avian technicians successfully recaptured 5 of the 16 (31.25%) geolocator-marked birds and 7 of the 17 (41.18%) control birds, which was consistent with previous observed site fidelity studies of the LOWA and much higher than previous geolocator studies by others. It is amazing

to think that the very same 20-gram birds that we equipped with geolocators in 2016 flew thousands of miles to Central America then returned to the Gorge where it was recaptured and studied by our technicians. Most importantly, the birds returned in good health and showed no harm from carrying the geolocators, suggesting the Trust may have discovered a way to safely track LOWA migration!



With the help of Dr. Henry Streby and Gunnar Kramer at the University of Toledo, we extracted the data from the geolocators and uncovered fascinating results. The birds spent their winter in a range spanning from southern Mexico through eastern Honduras with migration routes varying from trans-gulf crossings to routes along the coast. To our surprise, the birds migrated at incredible speeds; they made the roughly 1,500-mile trek in an average of 7 days, with two completing the flight in 4 days! This project was one of the first successful attempts to track the migration of LOWA and the Trust plans to continue this research in the future. We hope our techniques will open the door to gathering more complete life cycle data on the LOWA. This information will also allow us, along with many others in conservation, to better understand this important indicator species and how we can better use it to make management decisions.

The funds for the project were provided by a generous grant from the Benwood Foundation, along with contributions from Tennessee Ornithological Society and private donors. Another exciting component the grant offers is the opportunity to connect members of Chattanooga's Latino community to the Gorge, by telling the story of the birds' migration and demonstrating a fascinating connection between the Gorge and Central America.

Visit Us! Do you like hiking? Camping? Paddling? Rock climbing? Then come visit us! Paddle to one of our Blueway campsites on Williams Island or Pot Point. Hike the Pot Point Nature Trail or visit Stringer's Ridge. Sign up for a bird banding session at our beautiful Bird Observatory on Cash Canyon Road. Climb at Castle Rock or the Tennessee Wall. To learn more, visit: www.trgt.org



Honorary & Memorial Gifts

A gift to the Trust is the perfect way to honor a friend, the birth of a child, a marriage or to memorialize a special person's legacy. All gifts support future land protection, education, and stewardship efforts of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust.

In Memory Of:

Mr. John B. Crimmins

Michael & Stormy McGauley

Louise Pemberton Guerry

Michael & Stormy McGauley

Adele Hampton

Mr. Bill Hampton

Ryan Jack Keller

to support the Trust's

Bridge Chattanooga Program

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2

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Register your credit
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What's GOING ON TRGT?

Chattajack SUP Race 10/28

www.chattajack.com

Tennessee Aquarium Fall Color Cruise 10/29

Cruise through the ENTIRE 27 miles of the Tennessee River Gorge with the staff of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust and the crew of the Tennessee River Gorge Explorer – owned and operated by our good friends at the Tennessee

Aquarium. Learn about the history, current programs, and research being conducted in the Gorge. See miles of the Tennessee River's best views including Mullens Cove, the Tennessee Wall, Pot Point, and Williams Island.

Sign up at: www.trgt.org/events where you can learn more about how to get the member rate.

\$50/Member Adult; \$40/ Member Child (0-12)

Bird Banding at the Trust's Bird Observatory 11/3, 12/8

www.trgt.org/events

Pangorge Race 11/18

www.pangorge.com

Lookout Wild Film Festival

1/18 - 1/21 www.facebook.com/lookoutwildfilmfestival

A Tribute to Ryan Jack Keller by Sarah Quattrochi

On Tuesday, August 15, 2017, we lost our friend and colleague, Ryan Keller.

On August 16, Ryan's mom, Grace McLaren, asked me what my favorite "Ryan Story" was. There are a number of stories, but there is one phrase that is top-of-mind when I think of Ryan. I met him just under a year ago when he brought children from the Glass Street Neighborhood to an end-of-summer swim party that First Cumberland Presbyterian was hosting for the Chattanooga community. That evening, we talked about his desire to start an after-school program that would connect students from Dalewood Middle School to the outdoors and to broader experiences in their city. Little did we know that six months later, Ryan and Clark Brewer would be working with us to launch that program through the help of many people and organizations, including the Tennessee River Gorge Trust and First Cumberland.

We started the program with ten middle school boys. And middle school boys ask a lot of questions! "What's for snack today? Where are we going today? What are we doing today? Who is going to win the World Series?" Ryan and Clark always responded with the same smile on their faces and a calm, cool answer - "That's a FUTURE question." By the end of the first week of the program, kids would stop asking "future" questions because they knew they were not going to get a response with any significant detail.

The beauty of this response is that it encourages children to live in the moment. This is one thing that Ryan appreciated in life. He had the ability to slow down and soak up the goodness.



During Ryan's memorial service in Chattanooga and his funeral in his hometown of Memphis, we celebrated his life, but we were all left with one of the biggest future questions of all – WHY? Unfortunately, we will not have the answer to this question in our lifetime, but we can continue working on the questions of TODAY, which Ryan also addressed during his lifetime.

How do we love one another best? How do we show our neighbors love despite differences, miscommunications, or inability to see eye-to-eye? How do we take on social injustice? Poverty? Racism? Environmental degradation? How do we reflect light in a world that is filled with despair so that the beauty can shine strong?

Ryan was a beautiful person who surrounded himself with amazing people. The best thing we can do as we work to heal from the loss of Ryan's light is to keep forging ahead, doing work that is meaningful and that builds community. It's what Ryan knew we were capable of – it's what he was doing – and it's why we will never forget his presence in this world. Shine on, Ryan – you will live in our hearts. We will cherish your memory and your love. And we will share that love with others.



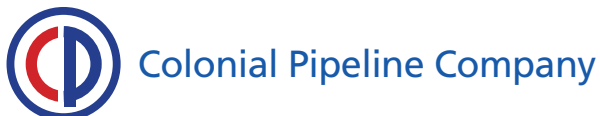
It truly was Another

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Gorgeous Evening!

AGE May 10, 2018!



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SPECIAL THANKS



MEDIA SPONSORS



Thanks to the Feed Co Table and Tavern for their gracious donation from their second anniversary event.



Runners at the start line of the Stump Jump. Thank you Rock/Creek for your continued support of our trails!



Red-eyed Vireo

On public days at our Bird Observatory, citizens get to observe field work up close!



AROUND the gorge



Happy 80th birthday Carl Lawson our caretaker at Pot Point. We appreciate all you do for us!



La Paz families visiting the Bird Observatory



Cash Creative on the way to Williams Island to help us spruce up the Blueway campsites



We were honored to partner with the IRONMAN Foundation for the acquisition of a new boat that will help the Tennessee River Gorge Trust with stewardship, science, and education activities in the Gorge. We named her GORGEOUS!



Thank you Chattanooga Gas for your volunteer service!

Kayakers enjoying paddling through the Gorge



Bridge Chattanooga Forges Ahead

Last Spring, we began a pilot project for Dalewood Middle School students with the goal of connecting students to nature, helping them build communication and conflict resolution skills, and opening the door of possibilities to the world around them.

This pilot program was successful. Clark Brewer, Ryan Keller, Sarah Quattrochi, and Cassidy Craven worked hard to build relationships with the students they served and created many meaningful opportunities through Bridge Chattanooga. In June, Tennessee River Gorge Trust committed \$25,000, raised through Giving Tuesday 2016, to fund the first semester of programming for this 2017-2018 academic year with the intent of leveraging that funding to raise money for the second semester. However, we lost Ryan in mid-August. Ryan was an important member of our team and a visionary for this program, so we took a pause to remember him and forge a pathway forward. After several weeks of contemplation and thoughtful discussions, we are ready to move forward with Bridge Chattanooga for this new school year – which is something Ryan would have wanted and the kids still need.

This semester, we will serve the students who participated in our pilot program. Tennessee River Gorge Trust staff member, Melissa Fitzpatrick, will join Clark Brewer as a co-program director. Melissa brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for the outdoors to this position. Sarah Quattrochi will still help with fundraising, administration, and oversight for the program. Clark expressed, "Melissa and I are excited to begin working with these incredible students again to



build a bridge between their life at school and the larger community who wants to show support."

During the months of October, November, and December, we will take the students on a number of outdoor excursions around town. They will visit the Gorge, Lookout Mountain, Stringer's Ridge, and favorite community partners like Rondell Crier's Studio Everything in East Chattanooga. In January, we will begin serving students four days per week as originally planned. **To learn more about this program and how you can get involved by volunteering or supporting financially, please visit www.trgt.org/bridge.** Special thanks to First Cumberland Presbyterian for partnering to provide a van for transportation and weekly dinners for our students!

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Thanks to our partners at Rock/Creek and Patagonia! They donated 20% of all sales of Patagonia daypacks in July to support our afterschool program for local kids at Dalewood Middle School!

Thank you for helping to preserve the Gorge.

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All gifts to the Tennessee River Gorge Trust are fully tax-deductible. The Trust does not share information with any other entities.

Remembering March 12, 1921 – April 19, 2017 Ruth Sulzberger Holmberg

Ruth Sulzberger Holmberg and her late husband, Bill Holmberg, were faithful supporters of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust since the 1980s. Each served on the organization's Board of Directors at one time or another. They gave generously during the Trust's early years as it was beginning to protect local land. Ruth continued her support for the Trust after Bill's death in 2005.

As Pam Sohn described in an April 21, 2017 Chattanooga Times Free Press article, "Ruth Holmberg was a force of nature." We, at the Trust, observed her to be gracious, witty, brave, and generous.

Stephen Golden, Ruth's son, shared, "Mother's interest in the natural world and nature - generally - and the Tennessee River Gorge - specifically - is one that has roots in her childhood. Ruth's mother, Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger, was a supporter of open space preservation and parks. So, our mother grew up with those concerns being discussed in the house. Similarly, each of Mother's four children have been donors to, involved with, and on boards of organizations devoted to conservation and the natural world."



During Ruth's memorial service at Girls Preparatory School in April, Stephen also shared that his mother was always more interested in what needed to be done than what had been done. In other words, despite any progress that had been made on a specific problem, she wanted to know what still needed to be accomplished for the betterment of our community. As the publisher of the Chattanooga Times Free press for nearly three decades, Ruth had the opportunity to challenge racial barriers, unscrupulous political behavior, and environmental challenges in Tennessee.

We appreciate Ruth's years of leadership and support in Chattanooga in the areas of art, education, business, and environmental stewardship. We agree with Sohn's statement, "Without her love, concern, and determined leadership, this city could not have become the place of promise that it is today." As an organization, we know that much wonderful work has been done in our community to make our home a better place, but there is still so much to be accomplished. We appreciate Ruth's willingness to challenge the status quo throughout her life and her ability to inspire us to do the same.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CIRCLE OF CONSERVATORS

One way you can help ensure that our work continues is to name the Trust as a beneficiary in your will. To learn more, or to notify us that you have named the Trust in your estate, call 423.266.0314.



Our thanks to these individuals for supporting the lasting legacy of the Trust.

- MS. JEAN BIDDLE *(deceased)*
- MR. ROBERT D. BROWN *(deceased)*
- MS. ELISABETH BRYAN *(deceased)*
- DR. AND MRS. CHARLES EVANS
- MS. BETTY HALL *(deceased)*
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- JAMES AND MARILEE STITES *(deceased)*
- and three anonymous donors

To mail or not to mail? To save money and strengthen the Trust's efforts as a leader in the environmental community, we have reduced the number of newsletters that we mail each year and rely more heavily on electronic communications through e-mail and social media. However, if you prefer to receive updates via mail rather than e-mail, please fill out and send this form to our office at 1214 Dartmouth Street, Chattanooga, TN 37405. You can also e-mail sarahq@trgt.org and type "Please send my updates to my mailbox" in the subject line.

If you are not yet on our e-mail list, but would like to receive our digital communications, register at www.trgt.org. Enter your e-mail address in the box that reads "Sign up for e-updates."

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Connecting with ——— Volunteers

We would like to introduce you to a few of our many volunteers. Our volunteer force is such an integral part of who we are and what we do. We could not accomplish many of our great projects and provide the outdoor experiences that we do without their assistance! You will meet more of our volunteers in future newsletters.

Larry Roberts – “For me, volunteering with the Tennessee River Gorge Trust is simple; good people doing good work for the good of the local community and beyond. It is an opportunity to learn from others and to enjoy success in shared goals whether clearing trails, building structures, learning about carbon sequestration, or how “tweeie-birds” are indicators of stream water quality. Working with the Trust staff and the fascinating assortment of volunteers one meets is a privilege and a joy. Volunteering is good exercise for the heart, the soul, the mind, and the environment.” Larry is retired and was formerly a teacher at Baylor School and UTC, co-founder of Baylor’s Walkabout program, an open canoe and C-1 whitewater paddler, Section IV Chattooga trip leader for NOC, practicing lawyer, and Walden Judge.



Rob Richie – “After recently retiring from TVA, I have begun water quality monitoring and assisting with the development of survey plans for Reptiles and Amphibians as a volunteer with the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. My wife of 37 years Mary Jo and I have two daughters Lauren and Taylor, all of which have supported my interest in the outdoors and my alone time in search of creepy crawly things even when they did not share in my enthusiasm upon finding them.



Growing up in Chattanooga and having past relatives reside in the Tennessee River Gorge, I have always had an affinity for the Tennessee River and the flora and fauna in the surrounding mountains and streams. With a professional background in Water Chemistry and a Field Naturalist by hobby, the Trust has given me the opportunity to pursue my passions and my interest, while at the same time giving back to the area that has meant so much to me.

It is exciting for me to be a part of an organization striving to protect the flora, fauna, geological, and cultural significance of the area. For all Trust supporters, there is a lot of work to be done across diverse scientific and citizen community levels in understanding and preserving the species and habitat impacts that the future is bringing to our Tennessee Valley. We can all find a way to contribute and be involved in making the work of the Trust even more successful for the years to come.”

Grace Mynatt – “There is something so magnificent about watching fog in the Tennessee River Gorge on an early fall morning. Its ease of movement within its own thickness, the uncertainty of its weight, and seeing it be defined & refined by invisible forces is fascinating. To me the “Tennessee River Gorge” is more than the amazing land and the river that runs through it. The Gorge is also the air, the sounds, and the people that are affected by it, therefore the experiences that develop because of it. I have been very fortunate for the Tennessee River Gorge to be my extended backyard throughout my entire life and I continue to enjoy its beauty on a regular basis. The conservation of its simple, yet intricate treasures has been largely due to the efforts of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. In appreciation of the Trust’s history and in desiring to share the joy I have experienced within the Gorge, I feel that volunteering for the Tennessee River Gorge Trust allows me to be part of a legacy of wonder and connectivity for which I am truly thankful.”



New Staff ———

Melissa Fitzpatrick, Program Director for Bridge Chattanooga, Research and Field Technician –

Melissa moved to Chattanooga in August 2016 from Bloomington, Indiana after earning a Master’s Degree in Environmental Science from Indiana University’s School of Public and Environmental Affairs. While her formal training is in Limnology, Melissa plays a dynamic role at the Trust. She assists with our Water Quality Program, Avian Research, and is a Program Director for Bridge Chattanooga, an afterschool program connecting Chattanooga’s urban students to nature. Melissa is passionate about conservation, wildlife, and our natural resources. When not working, you can find her trail running with her dog Lucas, rappelling into caves, or climbing sandstone bluffs.



Clark Brewer, Program Director for Bridge Chattanooga –

Clark was born and raised in the East Lake and Brainerd communities in Chattanooga, Tennessee. As a child, Clark attended several private schools that gave him a view of life outside of his neighborhood. As he grew up, he realized that there are two Chattanoogaes and has made it his life’s work to help bridge the gap between them by serving in programs that help youth reach their potential. Clark has one son who is currently in the 5th grade. Being a great father figure while raising his son in a positive manner is one of his top priorities. After partnering with several non-profit organizations, childcare providers, and outdoor programs, Clark became acquainted with the Tennessee River Gorge Trust in the Fall of 2016. By Spring of 2017, he was helping the Trust implement a pilot program to connect students at Dalewood Middle School to outdoor experiences within our city.





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