

**Newsletter from Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR)**  
**July 2006**

Representatives from environmental groups across the state participated in AFORR's May 4, 2006, meeting of representatives of major regional conservation groups and government agencies, where we discussed the future of the Three Bend Scenic and Wildlife Conservation Area, with particular focus on how to respond to the requests for a compromise to allow residential development at Solway Bend.

AFORR board members thought the meeting was very productive. Meeting participants affirmed the importance of (1) maintaining the Three Bend area (including Solway Bend) as public land and (2) conducting and making use of comprehensive planning for the ORR, considering all of the regional, national, and global values the area supports.

One highlight of discussion was the identification of a diverse range of valuable attributes of the Three Bend area and the Oak Reservation, including:

- Environmental sciences research based on the Oak Ridge Reservation brings \$15 million in research funding to Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) annually; this figure does not include research conducted by the local National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) lab and the University of Tennessee with their funding, nor the indirect community economic benefits of the research funding.
- ORNL looks forward to substantial growth in Reservation-based environmental research; no reservation site is as suitable as Solway Bend for new large-scale research initiatives.
- Tennessee hunters consider the Oak Ridge Reservation to have exceptional value as a hunting area.
- TDEC included the entire Three Bend area when it identified (in 2001) important landscape areas on the Oak Ridge Reservation that deserve to become state natural areas.
- The value of this area in its current state will only increase over the long-term, as resources elsewhere are lost.

AFORR intends to continue to work to recognize and promote the best use of the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) as a public resource. We hope we can count on you as a continuing player in this continuing effort. Currently we are working to define the AFORR position on the best uses for the Three Bends and to communicate the value of this area and potential for increased public access.