

Contact: Gretchen Hagle
Tennessee Environmental Council
(615) 248-6500
gretchen.tec@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2010

June 17, 2010, Nashville, TN: The Sustainable Tennessee coalition will discuss the recent flooding in Middle Tennessee and develop recommendations for long term actions Tennessee residents can take in response to this crisis at a meeting to be scheduled for August in Nashville.

“From recommendations concerning development in flood plain areas and smart growth, to techniques for reducing storm water runoff and incorporating green and energy savings methods in the rebuilding of homes and buildings, there is a lot that the environmental community can contribute to the ongoing flood response,” said John McFadden, Executive Director for the Tennessee Environmental Council.

Sustainable Tennessee was founded in 2007 and created a statewide Sustainability Agenda including the input of a broad coalition of citizens, conservation groups, environmental policy experts, elected officials, and representatives of private businesses, industry, and educational institutions. “The 2010 Sustainable Tennessee Agenda includes many recommendations that would help improve the outcome of future flooding events, and the coalition is looking to expand the dialogue to respond to the issue of flooding and other environmental disasters,” said Jennifer Smith, Tennessee Urban Forestry Council and Sustainable Tennessee member.

One of the preliminary recommendations of the Sustainable Tennessee coalition is for individuals and businesses to take immediate steps to reduce storm water runoff from their homes and businesses. “After the initial aftermath of the flood, individuals and communities need to re access how we manage our landscapes and where and how we develop the land,” said McFadden. According to a number of national studies compiled

by the Environmental Defense Fund, land preservation for flood storage - especially forested landscapes - has an 8:1 dollar savings over manmade flood control structures.

The Sustainable Tennessee Agenda includes clear goals and objectives that individuals, business and governments can initiate to reduce the damage from flooding like this in the future. Sustainable, low impact development is a priority issue and the Agenda recommends developing and implementing Regional coordinated development plans that address the conservation of natural resources such as the flood plains, streamsidess and headwater streams. The Agenda advises the state to intensify its control of the headwater streams as these systems have the ability to absorb floodwater and pollutants during heavy rains.

One of the top Agenda recommendations for citizens is to plant trees. Trees absorb storm water and clean the air. "A 32-foot tall tree intercepting rainfall reduced storm water runoff by 327 gallons," according to a study published by USDA National Agroforestry Center, *Working Trees for Communities*, Second Edition 2002. Another report published by the Local Government Commission, *Livable Communities and Urban Forest*, claims, "Studies that have simulated urban forest effects on storm water report annual runoff reductions of 2-7%.

McFadden added, "There are many more things consumers can do to decrease storm water runoff associated with heavy rain events. Citizens can disconnect their drain pipes from street drains to rain barrels or drain roof tops into their yards, or a rain garden where the water has a chance to be absorbed into the ground. Rain gardens are gardens designed to absorb the water while providing beauty to the landscape."

The Agenda also discusses the consequences of siltation in our waterways and the importance of maintaining in stream flows. "Siltation is a big source of pollution in our waterways," said McFadden, "This siltation is devastating for the health of the stream and also displaces a lot of water so damaged streams are more likely to overflow in a flooding event. The Council and a number of the Sustainable Tennessee coalition are doing work to improve the health of our streams. We work on stream bank stabilization,

tree planting and other projects on a monthly basis to prevent erosion and repair damaged waterways.”

The flooding crisis in Middle Tennessee brings attention to the prospects that global warming is beginning to have a direct impact on our lives. "Global warming contributes to higher air and sea temperatures," said Dr. Kevin Trenberth, head of the Climate Analysis Division at the National Center on Atmospheric Research, "as a result you get increased moisture in the atmosphere and more intense rainfall events." Trenberth said that governmental data shows a 20 percent increase in heavy precipitation in the past 50 years throughout the Southeastern region of America.”

The Sustainable Tennessee Agenda recognizes that clean, sustainable energy such as solar, wind, geothermal, and energy efficiency offer a solution to global warming as well as solving a number of other environmental, economic and health issues.

“We need energy that does not contribute green house gases and put other cancer and lung disease causing pollutants into the air we breathe,” said Don Safer, Board Chair, Tennessee Environmental Council. “Our state (Knoxville and Memphis) have led the country in asthma as a result of poor air quality.”

“We should not replace one environmental disaster for another, as is the risk with moving toward greater reliance on nuclear power plants. That risk is so great, and the potential damage so huge that the operators of nuclear power plants are relieved of financial responsibility for a major accident by the Price Anderson Act,” said Safer, “The Chernobyl meltdown in 1986 created a medical catastrophe that will continue to plague much of Russia, Belarus, the Ukraine, and Europe for many generations to come.”

Signing up for TVA’s Green Power Switch® and/or Generation Partners Program is another of the top priorities of the Sustainable Tennessee Agenda. These programs allow consumers and businesses to purchase renewable, clean power including solar, wind and methane gas and for those who are generating their own solar or renewable power, there are incentives from TVA.

As homes and businesses are being rebuilt in Tennessee, the flood also presents an opportunity to incorporate energy saving measures in the process. “It is a great opportunity to add more insulation in the walls, replace windows with Energy Star®, purchase more energy efficient appliances, and take other measures that will save energy and money for the homeowner as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

Sustainable Tennessee also offers many opportunities to engage in policy and legislative issues to support clean, renewable energy. “A variety of Sustainable Tennessee coalition members and supporters are doing excellent work on a local and national basis including Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Repower America, Solar Valley Coalition, and more,” said Safer, “These groups offer a variety of letters and petitions that talk about the issues and importance of clean energy and let our leaders in Tennessee and Washington know that we want to invest in a clean energy future. There are a number of ways Tennesseans can engage in the political process to effect change here and nationally.”

The Sustainable Tennessee coalition believes there are actions that we can take here in Tennessee that will make a difference. “We believe the tragic middle Tennessee flooding is also an opportunity for us to reevaluate our systems and choose more sustainable options which have better consequences for our health, safety, and economy,” said Safer, “Sustainable Tennessee offers opportunities to take action, and we invite everyone to attend our meeting in August to share their ideas and learn more. Details can be found at www.sustainabletn.org”

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Sustainable Tennessee www.SustainableTN.org was founded in 2007 and created a statewide Sustainability Agenda including the input of a broad coalition of citizens, conservation groups, environmental policy experts, elected officials, and representatives of private businesses, industry, and educational institutions. The coalition meets throughout the year and will host their fourth annual Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee in November.

The Tennessee Environmental Council www.tectn.org educates and advocates for the conservation and improvement of Tennessee's environment, communities and public health. The Council works on projects including Duck River Opportunities Project, the Tennessee Tree Project, and Sustainable Tennessee.