



The Nature Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.



2012
year in review


KENTUCKY

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MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands
and waters on which all life depends.*

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nature.org/kentucky

ON THE COVER

- TOP LEFT** Kayakers enjoy the Green River © TNC staff
- TOP RIGHT** Deer visiting the Davis Bend Nature Preserve © TNC Nature Cam
- CENTER LEFT** Fire training participants © TNC staff
- CENTER RIGHT** Kentucky bayou in western Kentucky © TNC staff
- BOTTOM LEFT** Kentucky native prairie © TNC staff
- BOTTOM RIGHT** Volunteers plant trees at Lexmark International, Inc. tree planting event © Cristina Rutter Photography & Multimedia

Dear Conservancy Friend,

It is with a great sense of gratitude and accomplishment that we send you this 2012 Year in Review for The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky. Within these pages, you will find a snapshot of our work over the past year. Our conservation initiatives spanned across the state, from protecting habitat along the Mississippi River Basin and assisting with the Big Rivers Corridor project in western Kentucky to our work along the Green River and in Kentucky's Central Appalachians in the eastern part of the state.

Specifically, here are some details from our projects in the past year.

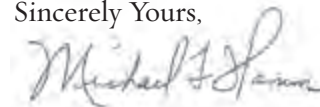
- 1) Our efforts to protect the forest along the Ohio River, near Sturgis, KY, ranks first in priority by the federal Forest Legacy Program. We've already protected about 2,500 acres and are working to protect another 4,200 acres.
- 2) We are protecting over 480 acres on Pine Mountain, through a generous land donation.
- 3) We are continuing to restore land at Davis Bend on the Green River and will convert an old farm house into much-needed office and equipment space.
- 4) In the past year and a half, we've protected about 2,900 acres in western Kentucky through our Mississippi River Basin Initiative. This program is designed to restore and protect wetlands and will continue for a couple more years. Every dollar contributed is matched 21:1 by the federal government!

Since The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky opened its doors 37 year ago, we've adapted our conservation work to changing needs. Today's world demands that

we implement and accelerate our conservation projects, broadening support for conservation whenever possible. More than ever before, it's imperative for us to engage all citizens of the Commonwealth in managing and protecting natural areas.

The work we do safeguards nature for future generations, affording them the opportunity to enjoy green space in an increasingly fast-paced industrial world. We must spread the essential message that protecting Kentucky's lands and waters benefits people by enhancing local economic prosperity and ensuring a wealth of resources for future generations. Our work to make nature more relevant to Kentuckians continues, and I appreciate your willingness to join us as we continue to protect the Commonwealth's greatest natural areas for future generations.

Sincerely Yours,



Michael F. Hamm
Chair, Board of Trustees



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TOP Mike Hamm & Terry Cook celebrate the TNC Board's Legacy Club participation © TNC staff



LAND PROTECTION

Partnering for Protection

Maximizing Conservation Success Through Partnerships

Our mission to protect Kentucky's lands and waters for people and nature has guided our work for more than 37 years. Our successes are maximized through our partnerships with like-minded federal, state and local organizations who also work to protect the Commonwealth's natural areas for everyone. We annually review our landholding portfolios to ensure that our holdings are being protected to the best of our ability. Often, we discover that a piece of land would be better managed by one of our partners. Once this determination has been made, we negotiate with the partner to ensure that future protection of the land is honored. Such transactions refill our coffers with financial resources needed to pursue new conservation projects.

In 2012, we set our sights on ecologically important lands lining Kentucky's rivers – a significant undertaking since Kentucky is bordered by rivers on three sides – the Mississippi River to the west, the Ohio River to the north, and the Big Sandy River and Tug Fork to the east. Within these watery borders course the Kentucky, Tennessee, Cumberland, Licking and Green rivers, and 90,000 miles of streams. Unfortunately, channelization, deforestation, wetland drainage and increased

pollution have led to a loss of forest and wetland habitat necessary for filtering water, buffering from storms and flooding, and supporting wildlife.

One significant transaction in 2012 included teaming up with Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Division of Forestry, the Crouse Corporation and others to successfully acquire key acreage along the Ohio and Tradewater Rivers, which serves as an important link between the Shawnee National Forest to the west and Land-Between-the-Lakes National Forest to the south. The parcel also lies in the heart of the Conservancy's Big Rivers Corridor Priority Project.

The Green River project area also got a boost this year. The Conservancy was able to purchase 98.53 acres along the Green River in Hart County. An additional 2,700 feet of river frontage is now under permanent protection and adds to the 52 miles the Conservancy has protected in this area over the years. Protecting these areas along the Green River help to ensure that stretches of essential habitat are conserved for the plants, animals and people that call the area home.

“Protecting these areas safeguards habitat for countless animal species and advances the restoration of key wetland habitats,” says Terry Cook, The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky's State Director. “Pursuing these projects were made possible thanks to the strategic sale of parcels within our own portfolio and to strong partnerships in Kentucky's corporate and conservation communities.”

2012 River & Stream Frontage Acquisitions

- 2,700 feet along the Green River
- 4,200 feet along Sinking Creek
- 1,400 feet along Mill Branch
- 33,674 feet along the Tradewater and Ohio Rivers

CONSERVE KENTUCKY

- *Conserve Kentucky* is a unique partnership between conservation, wildlife, agriculture, and recreational organizations whose goal is to establish and properly manage a statewide network of land and water resources for current and future generations to use and enjoy. It promotes partnerships between cities and counties, state and federal agencies, landowners, non-government organizations (NGOs), and other private sector entities to permanently conserve natural, agricultural, and recreational areas. As part of this effort The Nature Conservancy, through the *Conserve Kentucky* partnership, is developing legislation that would provide tax credits to private landowners who voluntarily preserve their land through the donation of land or easement.

- A Conservation Credit program can be a highly effective tool to promote land conservation. Landowners receive a financial reward for protecting their land, the state advances its goals of land conservation through tax policy rather than general fund expenditures, and the public reaps the benefit of lands preserved as open space at a fraction of their cost.



BACKGROUND Habitat protected within the Big Rivers Corridor © TNC staff

LEFT Creekbed with waterfall © Mark Wetherington, Jr

Going Native at The Davis Bend Nature Preserve

There is a lot to appreciate about a drive through rural Hart County, with its picturesque landscape of working farms surrounded by rows of corn and soybeans. Then you take a turn onto Sims Cemetery Road near the town of Canmer and things get really interesting.

Instead of row crops, a field of wildflowers and native grasses greets visitors to The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky's Davis Bend Nature Preserve. Once dedicated to the same agricultural purposes as surrounding properties, Davis Bend has become a place where nature has been given permission to take its course.

The results have been rewarding and sometimes, surprising, especially with regard to native grasses.

"We began restoring 50 acres at Davis Bend and 37 acres at the nearby 100-Acre Pond property just over a year ago," says Mike Hensley, the Conservancy's Green River Project Director.

Hensley began with an herbicide application in order to rid the fields of undesirable fescue and johnsongrass, the first step in the transition to a



grassland evoking the area's natural history. He followed up with prescribed fire, another herbicide treatment and finally, re-seeding. The results have been promising within the span of only one year. Wildflowers such as black-eyed susan, Illinois bundleflower, purple coneflower and others have also begun establishing themselves among the native grasses such as eastern gamma grass, big bluestem and little bluestem.

“Whether you consider it a pasture, prairie or hunting grounds, the resulting native grassland is quite breathtaking,” says Hensley, who looks forward to seeing the array of wildlife expected to discover the habitat in years to come.

It's also prolific. According to Hensley, native grasses produce a lot of hay packed with more nutrition for livestock than run-of-the mill grasses commonly used today. Since the grasses are native, they also stand up to drought and other weather conditions without relying on chemical input – a lesson Hensley learned after last year's dry summer.

So why aren't other Hart County farmers restoring their pastures with native plantings?

Hensley suspects farmers likely think it requires a lot of time, which isn't the case. “To have the result we got in the first season of planting – during a drought – speaks volumes about what's possible,” adds Hensley. “It's a land management tool that can really make a difference on a large or small property – for farmers, wildlife watchers and hunters.”



BEYOND THE BEND

The master planning process for the Davis Bend Nature Preserve is being utilized as inspiration for a new era in conservation for the Kentucky River Palisades Region. Conservancy staff recently began a master planning process which will provide a long- and short-term work plan for the broader landscape as well as for the Conservancy's nature preserves in the area. Slated for completion in the Spring of 2013, the plan seeks to take a look at the interactions between people and nature, preserving this precious landscape for thousands of Kentucky citizens who live, work and play in and around the streams, caves, forests and cliffs characterizing the area. “Our work in the future involves more than simply preserving pockets of nature,” says Terry Cook, The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky's State Director. “Our planning process includes developing a strategy for inviting people to interact with nature in ways that benefit, rather than jeopardize, the health of Kentucky's lands and water.”

LEFT The Green River © TNC staff

RIGHT Wildflowers spring to life at the Davis Bend Nature Preserve © TNC staff

INSET Scenic View of the Kentucky River Palisades © TNC staff

Mississippi River Basin Blitz Pays Off

WREP Sign-ups Exceed Expectations Thanks to New Funding

Shelly Morris, the Conservancy's western Kentucky Project Director, and her Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) colleagues were thrilled about the launch of the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) in 2011 to help the region become more resilient to the type of extreme flooding it had endured earlier that year. Since then, the NRCS has been working with partners to direct funding towards priority watersheds in Kentucky and other Basin states through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) established to assist landowners with restoring and protecting wetland habitats for wildlife while



improving water quality locally and throughout the Mississippi River basin. The extra MRBI funding will be available through 2014.

“We had a head start in the Obion Creek and Bayou du Chien watersheds. Thanks to support from Ingram Barge Company, we were able to help farmers with management and land protection strategies aimed at reducing runoff into the river,” says Morris. “In 2012, these efforts really took off thanks to the MRBI.”

According to Morris, strong partnerships like these – combined with a thorough knowledge of the federal application process – paid off when a goal of enrolling 1,500 acres from eligible landowners in Fulton, Hickman, Carlisle, Graves and Ballard counties resulted in 35 applications covering more than 4,600 acres. Morris also credits getting the word out through a public forum and targeted informational materials.

Adds Morris, “Our ‘basin marketing blitz’ paid off with more interest than we could have imagined. It’s one of our greatest success stories – one I’ll enjoy watching unfold as our local farmers become more engaged in land conservation while this part of the Basin becomes better equipped to absorb the flooding that occurs in landscapes located along the Mississippi River.”

Interested in supporting our work in western Kentucky?
Visit www.nature.org/kentucky today to learn how you can help protect precious Kentucky Bayou habitat along the great Mississippi River.

LEFT Species such as this huge Cypress tree call the Mississippi River Basin Home © Barry Simpson

TOP RIGHT Central Appalachian landscape © TNC staff

BOTTOM RIGHT The Cohen Family © David Cohen

HEALTHY FORESTS

New Acquisition Advances Work In Central Appalachians

The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky closed out the year with the gift of a land donation that advances multi-state conservation efforts in the Central Appalachian Mountains. David William Cohen, who resides in Ann Arbor, Michigan, donated his 5/6 interest in the 480-acre property. The Conservancy acquired the additional 1/6 interest from the co-owner at a fair market value.

“After consulting with my wife and children about donating this family property for conservation purposes, all signs pointed to The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky,” says David Cohen, whose sister-in-law works for the Conservancy’s Maine chapter.

The Jacob and Annie Cohen Forest Tract, named for Cohen’s grandparents who purchased the Letcher County property during the 1920’s, is bounded on the east by the Kentucky-Virginia border and by the Jefferson National Forest to the west. It boasts headwaters of the Poor Fork of the Cumberland River and contains a large, steep sloped, undisturbed forest situated in the Pine Mountain area boasting some of the highest elevations in Kentucky. Together, these features attract an array of globally rare plants and animals.

“The Pine Mountain area is a special place where many of our partners in Kentucky actively manage portions of the landscape,”

says Dian Osbourne, the Conservancy’s Director of Land Protection in Kentucky. “The Conservancy is no exception with our nearby Bad Branch Nature Preserve that we co-own and manage with Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission.”

The Kentucky Natural Land Trust also works in the area to connect and maintain protected areas throughout a 120-mile forested corridor to provide a migratory passageway for plants and animals. The addition of the Jacob and Annie Cohen Forest Tract advances this goal. In fact, its proximity to the national forest, the Conservancy’s nature preserve and other protected areas will potentially create a protected block of nearly 2,000 contiguous forested acres in eastern Kentucky.

It’s just as Cohen envisioned. “I’ve spoken with several organizations over the years about eventually donating the property, but the Conservancy always rose to the top with regard to follow-up and a good reputation,” adds Cohen. “In fact, just last year a scientist studying bird habitat on the property pointed me in the Conservancy’s direction. I finally acted on it and I’m glad. We’ve been supporters for many years and know it is in good hands.”



BROADENING SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION

Managing more than 40 nature preserves with thirteen staff spread out across the state would not be possible without help from volunteers, corporate partners and a growing number of preserve monitors and stewards. They did not disappoint in 2012. Take a look at some of their greatest accomplishments!



TOP Now in its second year, the Conservancy's preserve monitor program has 32 volunteers keeping an eye on things and helping to advance stewardship goals by maintaining trails, eradicating invasive species and planning preserve workdays. © TNC staff

LEFT MIDDLE Employees from Amazon's Virtual Call Center and students from the University of Kentucky's FUSION program assisted Conservancy staff with several projects around its Lexington, KY office. © TNC staff



RIGHT MIDDLE Eleven AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) volunteers assisted with priorities at the Jim Beam, Sally Brown and Crutcher nature preserves in the Kentucky River Palisades, and at the Davis Bend Nature Preserve and Mammoth Cave National Park in the Green River watershed. During their six-week term, they removed invasive species, improved and maintained trails, repaired fences, removed garbage, and constructed a two-mile trail with interpretive signage for the new Green River Conservation Center located at the Davis Bend Nature Preserve. © TNC staff



TOP LEFT Employees from Ashland, Inc. removed more than 50 bags of garbage from the bottom land area along the Kentucky River at the Sally Brown Nature Preserve. © TNC staff

TOP RIGHT Last summer's Clean the Green and Green River Fest events brought out the volunteers and also a lot of good times. Over 100 tires and tons of trash were removed from the Green River. © TNC staff

BOTTOM LEFT Earlier in the year, employees from Lexmark International, Inc., planted 6,000 trees to offset paper used by the company to test a new printer. © TNC staff

BOTTOM RIGHT The Conservancy and partners Lexmark International, Inc., the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, the Boys and Girls Club of America, the PGA of America and other volunteers planted trees and shrubs at Busse Woods Nature Preserve in Illinois to offset paper consumption during the five-day Ryder Cup.

© Cristina Rutter Photography & Multimedia

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL GAINS STEAM

Across Kentucky companies and their customers are increasingly interested in sustainability. Leading businesses are taking action on the environment to strengthen their operations, supply chains, customer and supplier relationships, and reputation. Corporate sustainability initiatives have set out to improve the management of natural resources locally and globally—in energy, forest products, agriculture, mining, and fisheries. As The Nature Conservancy pursues ambitious goals to protect land and water for nature and people, we seek out key business alliances that serve to achieve our shared goals.

The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky’s Corporate Council on Sustainability brings together businesses, Conservancy staff, and leading sustainability experts to develop corporate conservation best practices. During the past year The Nature Conservancy, with founding council members Brown-Forman, Lexmark International, Inc. and Semicon Associates, hosted forums in Louisville and Lexington to learn from one another and to network with other businesses and environmental groups to address the environmental challenges to our air, land, and water and to identify areas of focus that reflect common points of interest between business and nature.

For more information about joining our Corporate Sustainability Council, please contact Cadell Walker at cadell_walker@tnc.org or 859-259-9655 ext. 5017.

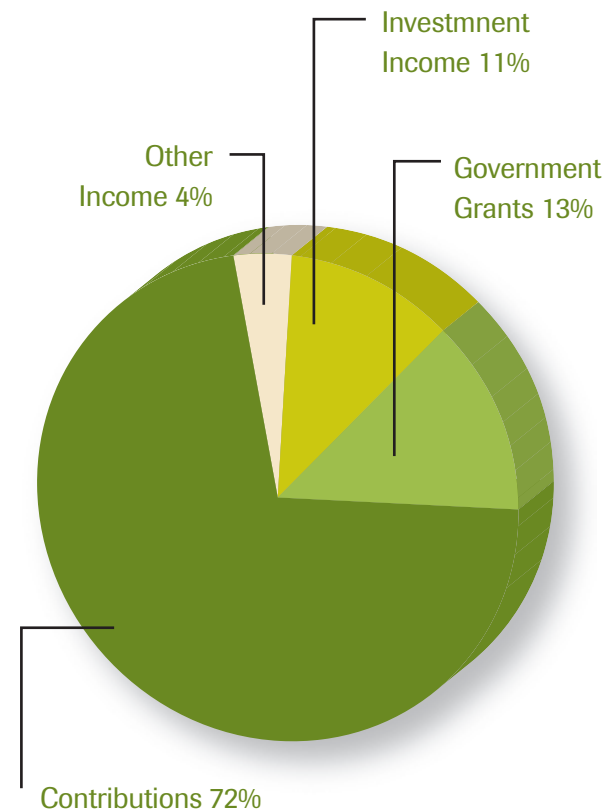


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

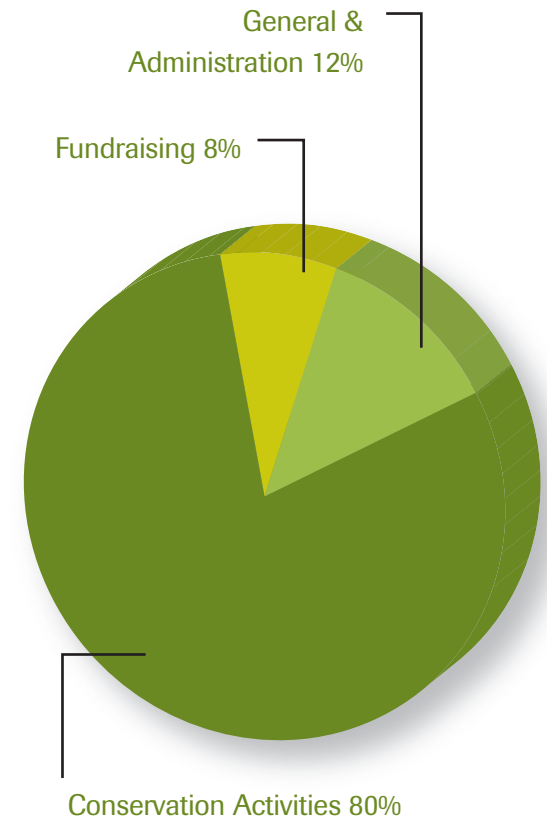
In 2012, we conserved together with partners, approximately 2,803 acres of ecologically important land and 78,841 feet of river frontage along Kentucky’s waterways. Without your gifts and the matching dollars they generate, it would be impossible to put the boots on the ground to accomplish the projects we do. In addition to the acres conserved, your contributions support many other areas of conservation work, such as science, research and policy development.

We hope this FY12 financial summary illustrates the critical importance of supporters, like you, who have helped the Conservancy protect Kentucky’s unique natural legacy for future generations.

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 Ken Wolf & Deanna Wolf
 Morris H. Young, Jr.

* *Deceased*

Every effort was made to assure the accuracy of our Legacy Club and Donor Listings. However, we encourage you to contact us immediately if you think your name has been omitted or misplaced. Contact Cadell Walker at cadell_walker@tnc.org or (859) 259-9655 ext. 5107 to report any inaccuracies.

IN-KIND GIFTS

- American Rivers
- Bridgestone Tire
- Kenneth Brooks & Vicki Brooks
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- Doyle Water Distributors
- Green County Cattleman's Association
- Green County Solid Waste
- Green River Paddle Trail
- Hometown IGA, Greensburg, KY
- Willie Johnson
- Judy Lay
- Jack Morris & Lisa Morris
- Publisher's Printing
- Replica Screen Printing
- Lynn Schwantes
- The Foster Children Band
- Western Kentucky University

Did you know that The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky accepts non-traditional gifts such as outdoor equipment, vehicles, or even nature art prints?

Contact us today to discuss our in-kind donation options. Cadell Walker, Director of Philanthropy cadell_walker@tnc.org or (859) 259-9655 ext. 5017.





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2013 Nature Conservancy of Kentucky Event Dates

March 30th: Spring Wildflower/Bird Identification Hike, Mantle Rock Nature Preserve, Livingston County, KY

April 6th: Baylor Hickman Preserve Hike, Pulaski County, KY

April- Earth Week:

- Film screening of *Mother Nature's Child* and forum, Lexington Central Library - April 21
- Picnic for Earth (more information coming soon)
- American Hiking Society Preserve Clean-up/Earth Day Week, Dupree Nature Preserve, Garrard County, KY - TBD

May 11th: Dupree Nature Preserve Hike, Garrard County, KY (*exclusive tour of New Preserve near Lexington*)

June 15th: Green River Fest, Munfordville, KY

August 10th: Clean the Green, Greensburg, KY

More information on these and other events is available on our website at nature.org/kentucky/events

