

# NATURE

**TENNESSEE**

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## Director's Note

The year 2020 has reminded many about the importance of relying on each other during challenging times. We, at The Nature Conservancy, are familiar with this because working with partners to achieve mutual goals represents one of our core tenets. On these pages, we showcase a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service that is leveraging conservation at one of the most ecologically diverse landscapes in the country. We also feature how we work with colleagues in other states since nature doesn't recognize such boundaries. Now, more than ever, we are grateful for these partnerships that grow stronger every day. Learn more about them at [nature.org/tnpartnership](http://nature.org/tnpartnership).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Cook".

Terry Cook  
State Director



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## Partnership In Action

### Restoring Appalachian forests with the U.S. Forest Service

The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) are reaping the rewards of a multi-faceted partnership, spanning 12 years and six states, that is successfully delivering careful and targeted fire to national forests in the Appalachian Mountains. Suppressing this natural disturbance can compromise forests that depend on regular burning to maintain forest health and diversity, and support a variety of species.

Katherine Medlock, TNC's East Tennessee program director, reports that from 2014 through 2019, the partners tripled the amount of acres burned annually on national forests in the Central and Southern Appalachian region, compared with the previous five-year period. She says, "These results demonstrate the catalyzing effect of a shared stewardship approach in the region."

To further leverage this important work, TNC and USFS are training professionals, establishing a monitoring network and generating community support around the use of fire as a restoration tool. While restoration remains their focus, the partners are also mobilizing staff and financial resources to support other mutually beneficial goals that include acquiring land, replacing culverts and promoting the Bog Learning Network.

"Collaborating in these ways for more than a decade has helped to establish leadership and credibility that has a positive impact on every national forest in the Appalachian Mountains," adds Medlock. "We're achieving a level of efficiency and flexibility that wouldn't be possible if pursuing this work on our own, in separate organizational silos."

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## NATURE TENNESSEE

### Supporter Spotlight: Dan and Margaret Maddox Fund

The Dan and Margaret Maddox Fund has long supported Tennessee organizations that improve the lives of young people and further wildlife conservation, a mission now carried out by a new generation that includes Dan and Margaret's granddaughter, Tommye.

"I feel that now, more than ever, people long for a connection with nature and the outdoors," says Tommye. "For me, time spent in nature restores peace and harmony and calls me to enjoy her wonders with respect. When I'm outdoors, I see how biodiversity strengthens ecosystems just like diversity enriches our human communities. Going forward, it is fundamental to engage diverse communities in nature conservation."



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# Beyond Borders

## Collaborating with colleagues impact nature beyond Tennessee

The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee regularly joins forces with colleagues in other states to maximize limited resources and conservation results. For example, TNC's Tennessee and Kentucky programs share staff who work on floodplain conservation, sustainable agriculture, prescribed fire, and lock and dam removal. The states also collaborate on projects that span Kentucky and Tennessee.

"The Conservancy is increasingly working across large geographies—watersheds like the Mississippi River and mountain ranges like the Central Appalachians," says Alex Wyss, TNC's director of conservation in Tennessee. "It just makes sense to look beyond state boundaries in order to work at that scale. Forests and rivers don't stop at the state line."

Combining resources also illustrates One Conservancy, an organizational value that encourages collaboration by staff around the world—even beyond neighboring states—to make the greatest impact on achieving TNC's mission. In that vein, Tennessee's director of forest conservation, Trish Johnson, is assisting colleagues in Alabama and Hawaii with launching TNC's successful Working Woodlands program, which engages private landowners in improving the health and financial viability of native forests.

"In these instances, I am passing along knowledge gained from colleagues in other states who mentored me in bringing Working Woodlands to Tennessee," says Johnson. "With each collaboration comes more innovation and new learning that improves upon this program in every state."

Cross-state collaboration represents a model that has proved invaluable, especially during the recent economic downturn experienced by many this year.

"Our state programs may not have the largest staffs, but we boast a deep pool of talent that allows us to leverage resources to achieve shared goals," says Danna Baxley TNC's director of conservation in Kentucky. "Working across geographies delivers a bigger conservation return on investment."

Over the years, the Maddox Fund has supported The Nature Conservancy's projects at the Duck River and Harms Mill Dam, in urban areas like Nashville and, most recently, at the Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain.

She adds, "At the Maddox Fund, we are grounded in the conviction that humanity, nature and all life are interconnected, and that these relationships must be grounded in respect. We are thankful for The Nature Conservancy's mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We share that vision and are thankful for the partnership. My grandparents would be pleased."