



impact report

Highlights from The Nature Conservancy's Work in Tennessee

FISCAL YEAR 2021
JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

CHASING BIG GOALS

Making progress towards The Nature Conservancy's global priorities—**limiting global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius (or less) and protecting 30 percent of the planet by 2030**—requires acquiring new skill sets, working at larger scales, and investing more human and financial resources than ever before. Over the past year, we made progress towards these two goals. And we are just getting started.



Limit global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius or less.



Protect 30% of the planet by 2030.

CLIMATE

Promoting natural solutions to climate change focuses the conversation on opportunities rather than threats.



West Tennessee Floodplain Explorer

Fixing a Floodplain

Floodplains like the area surrounding the Mississippi River in West Tennessee can make or break a landscape. When connected and bolstered by nature, a healthy floodplain is critical to:

- Storing carbon in soil and vegetation
- Filtering pollutants
- Reducing the impacts of floods
- Improving wildlife habitat
- Enhancing recreation and tourism opportunities

Towards this end, we tailored a version of The Nature Conservancy's cutting-edge floodplain prioritization tool to reflect West Tennessee's geography, opportunities and challenges. This helps us identify areas where restoring and reconnecting wildlife habitat—wetlands, bottomland forests, and naturally flowing streams and rivers—will improve the health of this diverse and productive landscape in the face of a changing climate.

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FIRE

The relationship between forest health and fire is a tricky balance. Fire represents a natural disturbance that if suppressed, can compromise forests dependent upon regular burning to thrive and support water and air quality, and a variety of species. On the flip side, we are witnessing how even a small rise in temperature can alter weather patterns that impact the frequency and severity of forest fires.

The Nature Conservancy continues to work with colleagues and partners in Tennessee and throughout the Southeast on a proactive approach to promoting forest health and preventing dangerous wildfires from occurring.



210 acres represents the amount of forest TNC managed with fire before replanting with native warm season grasses, shrubs, wildflowers and 75,000 shortleaf pine seedlings at the Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain.



123 controlled burns on 51,969 acres within the Southern Blue Ridge were completed with assistance by TNC fire crews and several state and federal partners.



12 Years is how long TNC has been working with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) across six states to deliver fire to targeted sites at national forests located in the Appalachian Mountains. To leverage this work, TNC and USFS also conduct training and educate local communities to generate support around the use of fire as a conservation tool.

TNC and University of Tennessee AgResearch committed to managing 11,425 acres according to Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)-C008922 standards, which include preserving biological diversity, benefiting the lives of local people and workers, and sustaining economic viability. The partners were also recognized with one of the FSC® 2020 Leadership Awards for their commitment to forest conservation.



WILDLIFE

Securing healthy habitat and pathways for plants and animals is critical to preserving the web of life we all share.

Reconnecting Waterways

In order to sustain aquatic species and provide safer recreation opportunities, The Nature Conservancy is working to reconnect targeted waterways that have been dammed or diverted throughout the state. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Tennessee Valley Authority and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, TNC advanced efforts to remove a high-priority dam at Harms Mill on the Elk River. Currently in the design phase, the Harms Mill Dam removal ranks as one of the top five priority dam removal projects out of 2,000 identified in the state. It also represents the only major barrier on the river's mainstem that separates 804 linear miles of streams below the dam from 780 miles upstream.



TNC has identified 46 species of greatest conservation need that would benefit from the Harms Mill Dam removal, including 19 that are federally listed as endangered or threatened. That is in addition to 139 other fish species that occur in the Elk River.



ABOVE © Terry Cook/TNC; © Rob Bullard/TNC

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WILDLIFE



150,000+ purple martins congregated around Nashville's Schermerhorn Symphony Center and AT&T building during their fall migration to South America.



5 researchers from 4 universities collected data to inform a comprehensive wildlife inventory of TNC's Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain. Research focused on shortleaf pine ecosystem recovery, timber rattlesnake habitat, a faunal bioblitz and historic fire regimes.



300,000+ images and videos captured on more than 32 wildlife cameras over two years provide candid images of wildlife living at or visiting TNC's Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain.

PEOPLE

Spending time in nature is one of strongest ways to connect people with the planet and all living things.

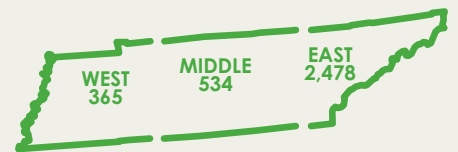


One Person Can Make a Big Difference

"In 1991, I read an article in Science News that reported there were no synchronous fireflies in the western hemisphere. However, I was certain that we had been watching synchronous displays at Elkmont for years! I contacted the scientists named in the article, who visited our little corner of the Great Smoky Mountains the following summer and confirmed the existence of *Photinus carolinus*, now North America's best-known synchronous firefly species."
-Lynn Faust, whose keen observation and passion for fireflies jump-started efforts to protect a firefly species previously unknown to science.

#BYTHENUMBERS

PEOPLE



\$900 million in full and permanent annual funding secured for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) through the Great American Outdoors Act. The LWCF, which is supported by royalties from offshore oil and gas revenues and not taxpayer dollars, is used to build hiking and biking trails in state and local parks around the state, and is responsible for funding the nation's Forest Legacy Program, which helps conserve working forests to maintain viable forest product businesses.

\$9.4 million awarded to TNC by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to enroll up to 2,500 acres of farmland in West Tennessee and western Kentucky in the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) program. Specifically, this involves purchasing conservation easements on enrolled acres and working with farmers to restore these areas to bottomland hardwood forest to improve wildlife habitat and improve water quality in local waterways and the Mississippi River Basin.

3,377 acres represent conservation lands acquired in partnership with The Conservation Fund, the Open Space Institute and the TennGreen Land Conservancy for transfer to federal, state and local agencies to benefit all Tennesseans. To date, TNC has helped to create or expand 31 state parks and natural areas, 20 state Wildlife Management Areas, and nine national parks, forests and wildlife refuges in Tennessee, in addition to establishing our own system of nature preserves.

ABOVE Lynn Faust's Elkmont Cabin © Gavin Thurston ; © Lynn Faust, Courtesy/Lynn Faust

THANK YOU

Thank you to each and every one of our members for your continued support of The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee. Your investment is critical to the impact of our conservation work, communications and operations. With your help, we are protecting Tennessee for people and nature.