

NATURE

TENNESSEE

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Director's Note

Here in Tennessee, we value every staff member's unique contribution to conserving nature in Tennessee. However, in light of the International Day of Women in Science (February 21), the United Nations International Women's Day (March 8) and Women's History Month (throughout March), we're spotlighting six women who comprise one-quarter of our Tennessee science staff. As the proud father of a young woman, I am glad to have these exceptional scientists around as role models and am proud to share with you their valuable contributions and accomplishments. Hats off to our female scientists!

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

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Women in Science

Six women deliver science to TNC priorities around Tennessee

The late physicist and astronaut Sally Ride once said, "For whatever reason, I didn't succumb to the stereotype that science wasn't for girls." The rest—including her role as the first woman to travel into space—is history. Here are six women who also ignored such stereotypes. Together, their impressive credentials and wealth of experiences result in permanently conserving lands and waters—from rivers and caves to cities and forests—located around Tennessee.



Trish Johnson doesn't remember a time when she wasn't craving the outdoors and curious about trees, plants, animals, dirt, water and all things nature. A trained biologist, Trish leads TNC's forest conservation efforts in Tennessee, including as a pioneer in an emerging carbon emissions marketplace and key player in establishing the Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain as a platform for cutting-edge research and conservation.



Prior to becoming TNC's forester in Tennessee, **Britt Townsend** consulted and trained foresters from around the country in cutting-edge tools and technologies that advance conservation in the face of climate change. Now she assists Tennessee landowners with inventorying their property and developing management plans that will promote healthy, productive and resilient forests around the state, including at the University of Tennessee's 11,400-acre research forest.

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Women in Science *(continued from front page)*



With a background in wildlife biology, **Gabby Lynch** can interpret and translate scientific data that leads to TNC's priorities around the state, from East Tennessee's Shady Valley and Doe Mountain Recreation Area to the Mississippi River tributaries in the west. Guided by science, Gabby has succeeded in forging partnerships, pursuing grants and acquiring lands that have resulted in the permanent protection of more than 120,000 acres during her 27-year career with TNC in Tennessee.



Middle Tennessee native, **Sally Palmer**, has transformed her background in biology and ecology into mobilizing TNC's trustees and non-profit, academic and corporate partners to advocate for nature-friendly policies at the state and federal levels. Most recently, this played out in the bipartisan passage of the groundbreaking Great American Outdoors Act, which secures permanent funding for public lands in Tennessee and around the country.



Shelly Morris joined TNC's staff in 2003 to put her academic training in freshwater ecology to work on conservation projects in western Kentucky, where she was born and raised. Over the years, Shelly's role has evolved into collaborating with colleagues and partners at a broader scale—across the Tennessee and Illinois borders—to restore and connect floodplain habitat, reduce the flow of nutrients, and protect wildlife habitat at key locations in the Mississippi River watershed.



Katherine Medlock began her career with a focus on freshwater invertebrates. However, like most naturally curious TNC scientists who grow and evolve over time, she has also gained expertise and experience in convening colleagues and partners around delivering fire and other conservation and restoration tools to native woodlands and forests in East Tennessee and the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains.

NATURE TENNESSEE

Welcome Dr. Virginia Dale



© Courtesy/Virginia Dale

The Nature Conservancy welcomes noted landscape ecologist Dr. Virginia Dale to our Tennessee Board of Trustees. Over the years, Virginia has focused on issues that intersect with TNC's mission, including environmental decision-making, sustainable agriculture and energy, and plant succession. She also taps into expertise gained while advising several federal agencies and the National Academies of Science. After 34 years working with Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Environmental Sciences Division, Virginia recently transitioned to the University of Tennessee's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology to focus on researching risk and resilience in an uncertain world, and STEM education and outreach. She looks forward to supporting conservation projects that might benefit from her role as one of our nation's prominent scientists.

"As a Tennessee native, I look forward to this new affiliation with one of my family's favorite organizations. I have a great appreciation for The Nature Conservancy's work in the many places around the state that deserve and require conservation."