

# NATURE

**TENNESSEE**

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December marks the 40th anniversary of The Nature Conservancy's Tennessee Chapter. If you've supported our work, you have much to be proud of.

Some of the most iconic places in Tennessee are now protected thanks to our work. Radnor Lake, the Walls of Jericho and Savage Gulf are just three among many. This past spring, we announced yet another: Bridgestone's donation of Chestnut Mountain. Visit [nature.org/tennessee](http://nature.org/tennessee) to see more key achievements.

As we head into fall and winter, I hope you'll watch for our emails with special 40th anniversary stories and events. Follow us on social media for the latest news as well.

Working with us, you have created an enduring legacy for future generations. I hope you'll indulge us as we remind you over the next year what a magnificent job you've done.

See you outside,

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

Terry Cook  
State Director



Norm Miede of the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation at Window Cliffs State Natural Area. Photo courtesy of Norm Miede.

## Caring for All Creatures Great and Small

Since 2012, The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee has received significant support from the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation. Based in Tennessee, the Mapp Foundation supports organizations dedicated to animal welfare.

"The foundation is the legacy of Barbara Mapp," says Norm Miede, the foundation's executive director. "She was a big supporter of animal causes, and when she passed, we created this foundation to carry on her wishes."

The foundation has supported several TNC projects since 2012, such as the artificial bat cave (to help address White Nose Syndrome) and bog turtle protection in Shady Valley. Its most recent grant has supported the development of a TNC

computer program to predict where gray bats travel to locate wind-power turbines away from their flightpaths.

Miede, who recently retired from Nissan, also serves on the board of Owl's Hill Nature Sanctuary and helped facilitate TNC's installation of its "If Trees Could Sing" tree sign and video program at Owl's Hill.

"We love it when organizations we support work together," says Miede. "Our foundation is small, so we seek to maximize the impact of our grants and to fund projects other foundations might not support. It has been terrific to be able use Jack and Carolyn Long's International Matching Fund to leverage our giving to TNC and do even more good."



Tennessee trustee Carolyn Long and her husband, Jack Long, a Texas Chapter trustee, were both honored in June with TNC's Oak Leaf Award, our highest award for volunteer leaders. The Longs' leadership has inspired many to act for nature. Thank you and congratulations, Carolyn and Jack!

From left: TNC CEO Mark Tercek, Jack and Carolyn Long, and TNC COO Wisla Heneghan.



An all-natural casket arranged by Larkspur Conservation. Photo courtesy of Larkspur Conservation.

## A Greener Path Through Larkspur

Very quietly and with little fanfare, Tennessee's first conservation burial ground opened this summer, and The Nature Conservancy is playing a role.

Larkspur Conservation, a tax-exempt nonprofit, owns and operates the burial ground on 112 tranquil acres of woods and meadows in Sumner County. It's situated just across the road from TNC's oldest nature preserve in Tennessee, Taylor Hollow.

Larkspur provides natural burial, without embalming chemicals or elaborate tombs or caskets of concrete, steel or plastic. There are no tombstones or plastic flowers. The burials are 3.5 to 4 feet deep, which is enough to ensure remains will not be disturbed by wildlife and will decompose naturally.

The idea for Larkspur began with Becca Stevens, an Episcopal priest, and Tara Armistead, a landscape architect and board member for TNC in Tennessee, during a walk in Nashville's Percy Warner Park. "When we passed some of the old graves there, I started thinking about how I wished I could be buried like that," says Stevens. "Just laid to rest in the shadow of an old oak tree."

Before long, Stevens, Armistead, former TNC state director Gina Hancock, former Vanderbilt dean Don Welch and others had researched and developed the concept into Larkspur Conservation. John Christian Phifer, a licensed funeral director, is Larkspur's Executive Director. "There's a revival of traditional burial practices across the United States," he says. "It's a growing movement."

The Nature Conservancy will hold a conservation easement on the property (TNC's first for a burial ground), a legally binding agreement ensuring no development can occur on the property in perpetuity. "A conservation easement is the best way to make sure this property will never be destroyed or be developed," says Gabby Lynch, Director of Protection for TNC in Tennessee. "The land will be forever protected. It will always remain forests, meadows and nature trails."

The public can visit the Larkspur property and enjoy low-impact activities such as hiking, photography and meditation.

**To learn more about Larkspur Conservation, visit [larkspurconservation.org](http://larkspurconservation.org).**

## NATURE TENNESSEE

### Gabby Lynch - The First 25 Years



Gabby Lynch.

There is probably no one on our Tennessee team who has held more positions than Gabby Lynch, who is also our longest-tenured staff member. She joined us in June 1993 as protection and stewardship assistant, straight out of Virginia Tech. In the 25 years since then, she has served as our first cave program director, Shady Valley preserves and mitigation bank director, director of government relations and, since 1999, as our director of protection.

The protection position has been closest to her heart. She calls herself "a land junkie"—meaning she loves her work managing purchases of ecologically important lands for conservation. "It's what I love to do," she says. "I've worked for TNC over half my life, but it never grows old." Along the way, she has helped purchase 85,000+ acres for conservation.

Though she says some Millennials are shocked at her long tenure, she couldn't be happier. "For me, the Conservancy is still the best in class. Our science is cutting-edge, and we think big. The work stays fresh for me because our culture allows me to try new things and take reasonable risks to get great conservation done. What could be more rewarding than that?"