

Boone County Conservation District Annual Report



July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

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Mission Statement:

The mission of the Boone County Conservation District is to promote the protection and wise use of natural resources through education and service to the citizens of Boone County. (rev 2015)

Monthly meetings:

The Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) board conducted their monthly meetings on the third Monday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., Burlington Cooperative Extension building at 6028 Camp Ernst Road, Burlington, KY 41005.

The Board of Supervisors for July, 2016 – January, 2017 consisted of:

Monty Taylor - Chairman

Debra Messer- Vice Chair

Mark Donnermeyer- Secretary/Treasurer

Supervisors - Loren Hand, Rebecca Ortwein, Kristin Scott, Tony Coulter

In January 2017, an open officer election took place:

Debra Messer – Chairman

Kristin Scott – Vice Chairman

Loren Hand – Secretary/Treasurer

Rebecca Ortwein - Supervisor

Due to board members resignations for various reasons: job requirements, moving out of the county, etc. the newest Supervisors for BCCD in early 2017 became: Jason Roberts, Christopher Benton, Victor Vanover.

Boone County Conservation District Staff:

Mark Jacobs - Watershed Projects Manager

Sheryl VonBokern - Office Manager

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff:

Ian Young - Supervisory Natural Resources Manager

Kevin Bryan - Soil Conservationist

Kentucky Division of Conservation:

Linda Hunter - State Field Representative

Projects participated in fiscal year July 1, 2016 June 30, 2017:

- Jul 2016: Chairman Debra Messer and Supervisor Rebecca Ortwein attended the KACD Convention in Bowling Green.
- Aug 2016: Annually the BCCD sets up a booth the Boone County Fair, distributing district brochures explaining our purpose to the residents and also gathering contact info from our booth visitors so the district can reach out to them.
- Sept 2016: Staff Sheryl VonBokern was invited to attend the KACDE Convention in Jabez, KY to give a presentation on the district's 1st ever "Conversation Kids Camp", held in June, 2016 at Potter's Ranch in Union, KY. Complete camp instruction booklets were distributed to the attendees to help guide their counties to offering a similar kids camp.
- Oct 2016: OKI Tour was sponsored by the Kenton County Conservation District. It was attended by Supervisors Kristin Scott, Rebecca Ortwein, and Staff Mark Jacobs, Sheryl VonBokern. The KCCD lead the group on a tour of their property to show off their wetlands and other land improvements.
- Oct 2016: The district participated with a booth at the 'Big Bone Salt Lick Festival'. This is also an annual event that the district attends to share information about the conservation district and how we can help landowners.
- Oct 2016: The BCCD awarded an Education Grant of \$700 to Boone County High School for the 'native plants in the courtyard' project.
- Nov 2016: Staff Sheryl VonBokern was invited to attend the SECDEA Convention in Pigeon Forge, TN to give the "Conservation Kids' Camp" presentation again to this audience. Booklets were distributed and a lot of questions were asked. A definite interest was there.
- Dec 2016: The Boone County Public Library hosted a "Children's Environmental Health Summit" explaining how kids can easily be taught about natural resources in the classroom. This was attended by

Vice Chairman Kristin Scott and Staff Sheryl VonBokern.

- Jan 2017: Supervisor Rebecca Ortwein and Staff Mark Jacobs attended a 'Wetland Workshop' hosted at NKU.
- Apr 2017: Staff Sheryl VonBokern attended the NRCS Rainfall Simulator Class, held in Harrison County.
- May 2017: Vice Chairman Kristin Scott and Staff Mark Jacobs started making plans with the Boone County YMCA to host an Equine Workshop. This workshop will take place in the fall of 2017.
- May 2017: "Annual Communities Fair". This event is held at the Cooperative Extension lot, hosting various vendors and organizations. Very 'kid friendly'. Supervisor Rebecca Ortwein demonstrated water flow using an Environscape.
- May 2017: Staff Mark Jacobs attend a 'Watershed Coordinators Workshop' in Benton, KY.
- May 2017: The BCCD awarded their first high school student college scholarship to a senior at Conner High School.
- Jun 2017: The district hosted their '2nd' "Conservation Kids Camp" at Potters Ranch. We had 52 kids participate in a three day camp – teaching kids about water testing; demonstrating the NRCS Rainfall Simulator that shows the effect that rain has on different soil types; demo on wildlife; fishing; forestry 'walk and learn'; and related crafts.
- Jun 2017: Staff Sheryl VonBokern worked with a few fiscal court employees and the Boone County Cooperative Extension Manager to host their 6th Annual 'Farm Tour'. This event attracts over 3,000 visitors from various counties/states to showcase the wonders of the county farms.

State Grant Programs:

1. Dead Farm Animal Grant

Boone County Conservation District administered the State Cost Share

program to help landowners properly remove and dispose of fallen animals by providing removal and financial assistance.

2. Farm Dump Grant

Boone County Conservation District continues to assist residents when requested with financial assistance for cleaning up unhealthy dumps on their property.

3. Agricultural Districts

Boone County Conservation District has sixteen active Agricultural Districts, which is protecting 8,271.564 acres.

Technical Assistance:

Boone County is rapidly changing and has a wide variety of land uses creating interesting and unique natural resource issues. Conservation District staff assists the Boone County community with resource issues associated with agriculture, water quality, storm water run-off, soil erosion, wildlife management, pond development and management, forestry issues, landslide issues, plant and animal identification, public education and outreach to name a few.

BCCD works closely with Boone County Parks to improve management of the county's natural resources including developing management plans in Boone County Cliffs and Dinsmore Woods State Nature Preserves, management of native grasslands in Conservancy Park, invasive species identification and removal.

BCCD provides technical assistance to the Boone Conservancy. Staff assists the conservancy with monitoring of property and easement areas. We are also working together with staff from Boone County GIS to develop and improve mapping tools that will help with identifying high quality natural areas in the county and identify other resource concerns.

Big Bone Lick State Historic Site and the BCCD have a long history of collaboration. Recent projects include pasture renovation in the bison area, management of native grasslands, improved bison management facilities and the development of a pollinator habitat.

BCCD works closely with NKU Center for Environmental Restoration to identify possible stream mitigation projects in the county. BCCD is represented on the

NKU Stream Advisory Committee.

In spring 2016 BCCD assisted Quail Forever to establish approximately 40 acres of high quality native upland game habitat on the Adair Wildlife Management Area in Boone County. This project will vastly improve habitat for quail and other upland wildlife species.

Private landowners utilized the services of BCCD in many ways in 2016/2017. We have assisted numerous landowners with pollinator habitat establishment, pond management, landslide management, sinkhole management, native grassland establishment, pasture renovation, stream bank erosion and invasive species management.

Technical Assistance for Farm Bill Programs is provided by Ian Young, Supervisory Natural Resources Manager and Kevin Bryan, Soil Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

District 319 (h) Grants *(Mark Jacobs)*

Gunpowder Creek Watershed Initiative

The Gunpowder Creek Watershed Plan is the culmination of many years of work from many collaborating agencies as well as public meetings to evaluate problems and identify opportunities for improvement in the watershed. The document serves as the guiding document to address problems in Gunpowder Creek, one of our community's most valuable natural resources.

Gunpowder Creek Implementation Grant

BCCD received a 319(h) grant as of August 1, 2015 to implement strategies defined in the Gunpowder Creek Watershed Plan. The Gunpowder Creek Watershed Initiative is in the process of evaluating projects for implementation with a focus in the South Fork sub watershed. The following projects are the result of that work.

Bank-full Wetland Project

The BCCD has partnered with Sustainable Streams LLC. and the YMCA Camp Ernst to develop a bank-full wetland. The YMCA has graciously agreed to provide land along Gunpowder Creek to create the wetland that is designed to reduce the effects of erosive storm water flows on the receiving stream. Construction of the wetland was completed in spring 2017 and will provide 6 to 7 additional acre feet of needed storage area. Boy Scouts from local troop 727 chartered to Immaculate Heart of Mary volunteered time to plant trees on the wetland site that will improve soil stability and wildlife habitat.

Low-head Dam Removal at Camp Michaels

BCCD has collaborated with The Ohio River Foundation, Boone County, and Boy Scouts of

America to remove a low-head dam on Gunpowder Creek. After a lengthy permitting process and a wet winter, the dam was finally removed in the spring of 2017. Removal of the dam will help stabilize eroding banks, improve fish passage, improve aquatic habitat, and reduce hazards for campers. Boy Scouts from the Dan Beard Council volunteered time to plant trees and other native vegetation that will help stabilize the banks where the dam was removed. This project is funded in part by a grant from US Fish and Wildlife Service and 319(h) funds.

South Fork Detention Basin Analysis

South Fork of Gunpowder Creek is a target area for improvement in the Gunpowder Creek Watershed Plan. This analysis was performed to identify detention basins in South Fork for potential retrofit. Retrofitting existing storm water detention basins is an inexpensive and practical way to optimize existing storm water facilities to improve the health of the receiving stream. Several basins have been identified and will be targeted for future improvement.

Sediment Transport Monitoring

The BCCD and SD1 has collaborated to set up sediment transport monitoring sites in Gunpowder and Woolper Creek. Data from these sites will help inform about sediment movement in the streams and ultimately solutions to mitigate problems associated with storm water runoff.

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

The BCCD will collaborate with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to utilize information in the Gunpowder Creek Watershed Plan and target the lower Gunpowder Creek watershed for assistance to land owners in conservation planning and potential cost share assistance to implement best management practices. This is a pilot project and is the first NWQI project in Kentucky.

Woolper Creek Watershed Initiative

The Woolper Creek Watershed Plan

The Woolper Creek Watershed Plan is complete and has been approved by the Kentucky Division of Water and the USEPA. The plan will guide and help coordinate efforts to improve the quality and overall health of Woolper Creek. Remaining funds from the grant will be utilized to implement projects to address issues identified in the watershed plan.

Upper Woolper Creek

BCCD has partnered with Boone County, SD1 and Strand Associates to retrofit three large detention basins identified in the previous modeling study. The function of the basins will be improved by releasing water more slowly and reduce erosive flows that damage receiving streams. These projects will address hydro modification due to erosive storm water runoff, water quality and flooding in the local area.

Allen Fork

The Boone County Forestry Council has been planting trees and shrubs around the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) at the junction of Burlington Pike and North Bend Rd. These trees and shrubs not only serve to make the area more attractive but provide many more functions.

They improve the soil, help infiltrate and filter storm water and cools the water before it enters the receiving stream. BCCD is partnering with the Boone Forestry Council to develop a bio swale that will capture and filter water from the SPUI. The bio swale will be planted with a variety of native plants and surrounded by native trees and shrubs. It will restore the area from hard packed poor-quality soil and construction rubble to good quality habitat for aquatic organisms and pollenating insects while providing water quality benefits in Allen Fork.

Thomas More Environmental Academy

Staff from SD1 and students from the Thomas More College Environmental Academy once again assisted BCCD with data collection and management for the Gunpowder and Woolper Creek Watersheds and have been instrumental in moving these plans forward.

Boone County Conservation District: Staff and Supervisors are involved on many community committees:

1. Forestry Committee: Rebecca Ortwein, Jason Roberts, Loren Hand
2. Boone County Farm Tour Committee: Sheryl VonBokern
3. County Agriculture Development Council: Kristin Scott
4. Boone County Urban Forestry Representative: Mark Jacobs
5. NKY Urban Community Forestry Council: Mark Jacobs
6. Reforest NKY Council: Victor Vanover, Jason Roberts
7. NKY Stream Restoration Program Advisory Committee: Mark Jacobs
8. Sanitation District 1 Storm Water Action Committee: Mark Jacobs
9. Ohio River Valley – Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area:
Mark Jacobs
10. KACD Area 5 - Alternate Director: Debra Messer
11. KACD Research Committee: Debra Messer