

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/2023

**BOONE COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

**6028 CAMP ERNST RD.
BURLINGTON, KY 41005**



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LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR:

Every year the Boone County Conservation District (BCCDKY) sets out to reevaluate our conservation Plan of Work and our most pressing conservation issues and adapt our plan to advance our efforts and achieve our goals. Land use trends in Boone County and how that affects our natural resources are always a huge factor when we develop our plans. Development in the eastern side of the county continues at a blistering pace making resource protection and conservation even more relevant and urgent throughout the county, but particularly on the much less developed western side of the county that harbors the best natural areas.

We have been making a concerted effort to meticulously review and update our plan of work to make sure our initiatives are coordinated and efficient. It is also crucial to make sure our proposed budget is specific and aligns with our annual plan of work and long-range plan of work. We are beginning to make important headway engaging with other community leaders and improving the budget that supports our plans.

Strong collaboration and partnerships are necessary for successful conservation projects. Our Boone County Ohio River Initiative (BCORI) brings local partners together to initiate conservation projects as well as identify river recreation opportunities and access areas that can positively impact and support our local river towns and rural way of life. BCCDKY is also a member of The Ohio River Way which is a more regional effort to create partnerships and combine resources to conserve and utilize the natural beauty of the Ohio River and its tributaries from Portsmouth, OH to West Point, KY. The Boone County Ohio River shoreline is a relatively untapped resource and an integral portion of the Ohio River Way project.

Public education and outreach will always be an important component of our conservation efforts. Students from K-12, high school, and University, have the opportunity to participate in and learn about local conservation. Family programs, Kids Camp, LEAF Academy, Junior Board and college internships are designed to coincide and contribute to our local projects and initiatives. All these initiatives are long-term endeavors, and it is our hope that students today will be educated about local conservation and hopefully continue to advance these projects for decades to come.

This 2022-2023 Annual Report will hopefully provide insight into our efforts for the past year and encourage interest and participation in local conservation.



Mark Jacobs
Director of Conservation Programs





TABLE OF CONTENT

02	MISSION STATEMENT, KRS	12	WILDLIFE HABITAT STUDIES
03- 07	ABOUT US	13 - 14	EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
08	FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	15	OUR PARTNERS
09 - 12	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LANDOWNER SERVICES		





OUR MISSION:

The Mission of the Boone County Conservation District (BCCDKY) is to promote the protection and wise use of natural resources through education and service to the citizens of Boone County, KY.

KRS 262.020

PURPOSE OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The purpose of a soil and water conservation district is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. In doing so, the district is authorized to undertake, sponsor, or participate in projects and activities which promote the conservation, development, maintenance and use of the land, water, trees and other renewable natural resources of the district. Such projects and activities shall include but not be limited to conservation practices on agricultural lands, the control of soil erosion, retardation of water runoff, the construction of flood prevention and control reservoirs, the maintenance of flood plains, the promotion of projects to assure an adequate municipal, industrial and agricultural supply of water, watershed stabilization, the avoidance and abatement of sedimentation and pollution in streams and other bodies of water, forestation and reforestation, the establishment of parks and outdoor recreation areas, the protection of open space, greenbelt areas and scenery, the preservation of wilderness areas, the protection of fish and wildlife, working for the location of highways, industries, housing developments, airports and other structures as are consistent with the district's objectives and will offer the least possible interference with the conservation and best multiple use of the renewable natural resources, and all other activities consistent with the total natural resources development of the district.

**You can find more information at www.bccdky.org or
visit us at 6028 Camp Ernst Road, Burlington, KY
859-586-7903 Ext.3 / info@bccdky.org**

Our Team



Mark Jacobs

Director of Conservation
Programs



Susan Brown

Conservation
Education Specialist



Pavla Link

District Operations
Manager



Jasper Stevenson

Soil Conservation
Technician

Board of Supervisors



Matt Wooten
Chairman



Debra Waller
Vice Chair



Mike Wilson
Treasurer



Kevin Bond
Supervisor



Kathy King
Supervisor



**Shannon Galbraith-
Kent, Ph.D.**
Supervisor



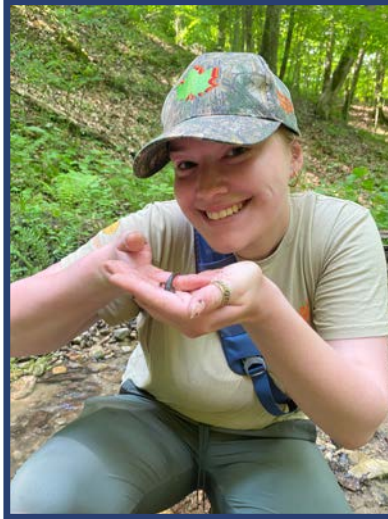
Jeff Thomas
Supervisor

Conservation district supervisors are elected by the people of Boone County to represent their interest in natural resources conservation.

Our Student Interns and Researchers



Lillie Daniel
Thomas More
University



Kamryn Lee
Eastern Kentucky
University



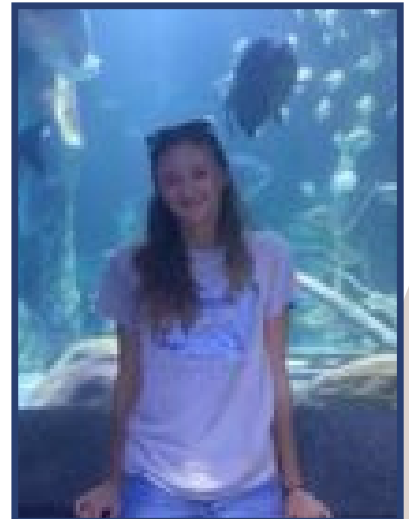
Derek Drago
Thomas More
University



Kenz Clere
Eastern Kentucky
University



Jaron Cooper
Eastern Kentucky
University



Sarah Gibson
Thomas More
University

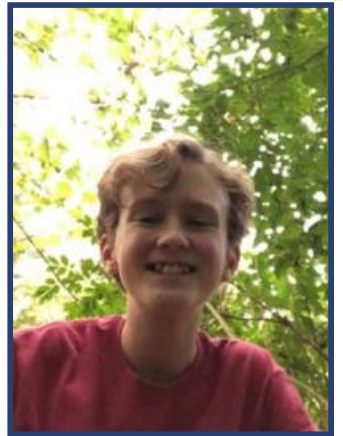
BCCDKY Junior Board



Ava Reed
Chair

This year was our second year of Junior Board. The 2022-2023 cohort had nine students aged 15-18 representing 7 different high schools across Boone County. The students met once a month for meetings and guest speakers and were successful in planning and planting a native orchard at England Idlewild Park, where the community will be able to enjoy fruits and nuts from native trees for years to come.

You can learn more about their year with BCCDKY in the Junior Board Annual Report



Emma Linkugel
Vice Chair



Sophi Muse



Eddie Noll



Durga Gaddam



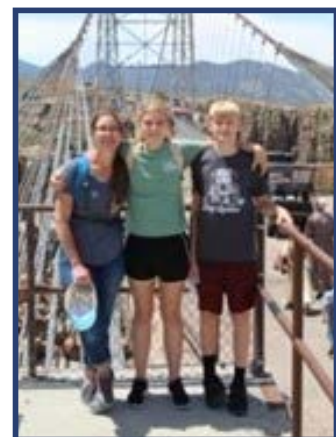
Andrew Worrall



Maddie Thompson



Jason Ford



Maddie Texter

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

BCCDKY's Board of Supervisors conducted their monthly Board Meetings on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:00pm. These meetings were held in the Rouse Room at the Boone County Cooperative Extension building at 6028 Camp Ernst Road, Burlington, KY 41005 with a Zoom Meeting option.

2022

JULY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
AUGUST	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
SEPTEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
OCTOBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
NOVEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
DECEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

2023

JANUARY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
FEBRUARY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
MARCH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
APRIL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
MAY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
JUNE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) STAFF:

IAN YOUNG - SUPERVISORY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGER



DIVISION OF CONSERVATION STAFF:

KIMBERLY BARTON - FIELD REPRESENTATIVE



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

\$347,613.90

REVENUES

\$353,940.41

EXPENDITURES

2022

BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD	\$819,930.72
TOTAL REVENUES	\$347,613.90
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$353,940.41

BALANCE ON HAND	\$813,604.21
RESTRICTED FUNDS	\$654,057.75
UNRESTRICTED BALANCE	\$159,546.46

2023

**UNRESTRICTED
BALANCE**

\$159,546.46

**RESTRICTED
FUNDS**

\$654,057.75

REVENUES

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES	\$326,269.22
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	\$8,801.42
OTHER REVENUES	\$2,500.00
INTEREST EARNED	<u>\$10,043.26</u>
	\$347,613.90

EXPENDITURES

PERSONNEL	\$282,784.11
OPERATIONS	\$49,863.80
ADMINISTRATION	\$17,963.96
CAPITAL OUTLEY	<u>\$3,328.54</u>
	\$353,940.41

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LANDOWNER SERVICES

Part of our mission at BCCDKY is to provide technical assistance to the citizens of Boone County. We do our best to provide assistance and information on a wide variety of natural resource issues such as stormwater runoff, soil erosion, wildlife, pond management and stream and forest health. If we are unable to assist landowners directly, we will make sure that we put you in touch with the proper agency or organization.



LANDOWNER SERVICES

BCCDKY provides assistance with all aspects of private land management such as storm water runoff, stream bank protection, erosion control, wildlife habitat and pond management.

- o **State Cost Share Program (SCS)** - The Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality State Cost Share (SCS) Program and the Kentucky Soil Stewardship Program were created to help agricultural operations protect the soil and water resources of Kentucky and to implement their agriculture water quality plans. The programs help landowners address existing soil erosion, water quality, and other environmental problems associated with their farming or woodland operations, while also benefiting those downstream.

- o **Ag Water Quality Plan** -The Kentucky Agricultural Water Quality Act, passed in 1994 in compliance with Federal regulations, requires landowners with 10 or more acres to develop and implement a plan to protect surface and ground water from pollution due to agriculture or forestry activities. BCCDKY helps land owners enroll in and implement a Water Quality Plan. This year BCCDKY assisted over 150 Boone County residents.

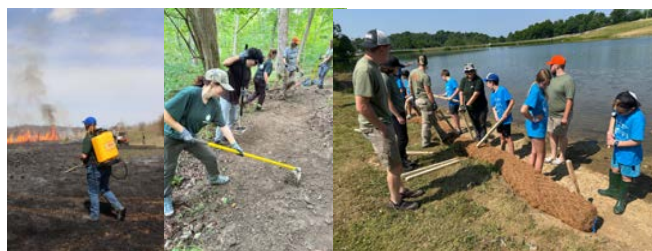


o **75/25 NRCS Soil Conservation Technician** - In 2022-2023, the Soil Conservation Technician – Jasper Stevenson - hired through the 75/25 program, has continued to develop their planning skills and assist landowners in implementing conservation practices on their properties. Jasper has been working fully independently since September of 2022, after a period training under a federal employee, and now has experience using both technological and field planning and assessment tools. As well as attending numerous trainings for planning software and assessment methods, Jasper was also assigned to the Conservation Stewardship Program task force for the Bluegrass work unit, working to plan and rank complex CSP projects. In addition, Jasper has continued to help plan and contract for the Middle Creek Focus Conservation Project, in tandem with Randall Alcorn from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

o **The Agricultural ("Ag") District Program** plays a valuable role in protecting Kentucky's agricultural land base and family farms. The goal of this program includes protecting Kentucky's best agricultural land for food and fiber production and preventing conversion to non-agricultural use. Ag Districts are re-certified every five years by the Soil & Water Conservation Commission. This year, BCCDKY re-certified three Ag Districts. There are currently 17 Ag Districts in Boone County with a total of 8,050.04 acres of land included.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

PUBLIC LANDS



Conservancy Park

Since The Boone Conservancy purchased the abandoned gravel mine in Belleview, they had a vision to transform this eyesore in western Boone County back to a natural area that can be enjoyed by the local community. BCCDKY has been involved in the restoration process from the very beginning. Every year we work with the Boone Conservancy and Boone County Parks to plan and improve our restoration efforts. Over the years we helped develop management plans, coordinated and helped plant hundreds of native trees and shrubs, planted acres of native grassland and pollinator habitat, removed invasive plant species, and improved fish habitat in the lake. In March 2023, we assisted with a prescribed burn at Conservancy Park, which helps promote soil health, native plant growth, and wildlife habitat.



Some of our efforts at Conservancy and other public lands include:

- Assist Parks with plant species list and tree planting.
- Assisted with site selection, site preparation, equipment, and planting of pollinator habitat at Conservancy Park and Cooperative Extension Nature Park.
- Conduct acoustic bat surveys in Boone County Cliffs, Dinsmore Woods and Middle Creek Park.
- Lake shore stabilization project at Camp Ernst Lake.
- Fish Habitat Project at Conservancy Lake.
- Abate concentrated water runoff and soil erosion.

PRIVATE LANDS

The staff at BCCDKY is always available to provide technical assistance to the community. We regularly provide assistance with conservation planning on private land that includes soil protection, the control of water runoff, reforestation, invasive species management, the development and enhancement of wildlife habitat, pond management, and much more. We also have excellent working relationships with local, state and federal resource agencies that can provide assistance to private land owners.

STREAM HEALTH

Stream and wetland mitigation continues to be a high priority for BCCDKY. We have worked diligently in the last three years to make sure mitigation money generated in Boone County remains in Boone County. We have identified many viable projects, and to date, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Resources Stream Mitigation Team has obligated approximately 30 million dollars to a dozen mitigation projects in four major watersheds in Boone County: Gunpowder Creek, Woolper Creek, Middle Creek and Big Bone Creek. All these projects are long term projects and will take several years to complete. Most of the preliminary assessments of the properties are complete and actual engineering design work has begun on several. The permitting process for these projects is an arduous task but we hope actual construction, particularly in the Middle Creek watershed can begin in the fall of 2023. As Boone County continues to grow, stream and wetland mitigation will remain a priority for many years to come, and we will continue to identify projects that restore and provide long term protection for our water resources.



FOREST HEALTH

BCCDKY has identified the protection of forest health as a priority in our long range plan of work. Boone County is home to hundreds of acres of large canopy forest in the western portion of the county, which provides habitat for wildlife including some endangered species, increases air quality, promotes soil health, and protects the banks of the precious Ohio River and its many tributaries. As Boone County's suburban and industrial population continues to grow exponentially on the eastern side of the county, we are working to develop a comprehensive management plan to protect what remains of our forest resources.

MIDDLE CREEK WATERSHED FOREST HEALTH FOCUSED CONSERVATION PROJECT

The partnership between BCCDKY and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) continues, with the Focused Conservation Project (FCP) in the Middle Creek Watershed of Boone County continuing to draw applicants and quality project ideas. Applications for the FCP in 2023 have been ranked, and contracts have been awarded to all landowners who applied. NRCS and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife personnel worked with the landowners to develop plans to address forest health related issues, primarily invasive species removal targeting bush honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and tree-of-heaven. Forest stand improvement, tree plantings, and grassland species diversity, as well as wildlife habitat improvement are other popular focuses.



WILDLIFE HABITAT STUDIES

BCCDKY continues to monitor local wildlife as part of our forest health initiative. Animals can be some of the first indicators of changes in the ecosystem, and our goal is to use our knowledge of local wildlife populations to identify priority habitats and inform land management decisions. This program is driven by our college internship program, where students from local universities can practice scientific methods and develop professional skills through field work, data analysis, and presentations.

Thank you to our 2022-2023 student researchers:



Jaron Cooper – Eastern Kentucky University class of 2025
Kenz Clere – Eastern Kentucky University class of 2025
Sarah Gibson – Thomas More University class of 2024
Derek Drago – Thomas More University class of 2023
Kamryn Lee – Eastern Kentucky University class of 2023
Lillie Daniel – Thomas More University class of 2025

Highlights from our wildlife research program include acoustic bat monitoring in the Middle Creek Watershed, and mussel surveys in Gunpowder Creek.



BOONE COUNTY OHIO RIVER INITIATIVE (BCORI)

The Boone County Ohio River Initiative is a group of partners from Boone County, led by BCCDKY and The Boone Conservancy, hoping to improve access to the river itself and highlight the county's natural and cultural assets while preserving them for future generations. Our goal is to develop a conservation and recreation plan that recognizes the importance of land conservation while also identifying best strategies for river access sites and potential land and water outdoor recreation opportunities.

For the past year, we have been working with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to identify potential conservation and recreation projects. Opinions from the general public, especially those who live and work close to the river, are an important part of this process. We collected public comments through an online survey and through in person community meetings held at Rabbit Hash, Petersburg, Belleview, and Boone's Landing. As we move forward with concept plans for future projects, we will continue to keep in touch with the local community during all phases of the Initiative.

In addition to this work, BCCDKY Director Mark Jacobs and The Boone Conservancy's Executive Christy Noll serve as co-chairs of the Ohio River Way's conservation committee. This committee is working with regional partners to identify and prioritize opportunities for conservation within the Ohio River Way's focus area from Portsmouth, Ohio to West Point, Kentucky.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Natural resource conservation requires collaboration from residents and community members from all areas of Boone County. To involve the general public in our work, we offer programs for people of all ages that are based on current research and local conservation issues. This year BCCDKY's programs directly reached 2,485 people across the Northern Kentucky region, including:

- 11 professional presentations and workshops
- 6 Education tables at fairs and festivals
- 7 public outdoor family and community programs
- 25 school visits and homeschool field trips
- 2 summer youth programs
- 15 Junior Board meetings and field days



Total number of people reached directly through BCCDKY programs: 2,485

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CONSERVATION KIDS CAMP

The theme of this year's Conservation Kids Camp was "Endangered Species of Kentucky." Thirty students aged 9-12 enjoyed four full days of hiking, exploring, and learning about native wildlife at the Boone County Environmental and Nature Center. Support for this program came from volunteers and agency partners including Boone County Cooperative Extension Service, Boone County Parks, KDFWR, KY Division of Forestry, Archaeology Research Institute, and Sanitation District No. 1, and special presentations were given by The Bug Chicks and the Kentucky Reptile Zoo.



L.E.A.F! ACADEMY

L.E.A.F! Academy provides an opportunity for teens to experience Leadership, Exploration, and Fun in Boone County's great outdoors. Students learn about conservation issues and citizen science projects while having fun fly fishing, hiking, kayaking, learning outdoor survival skills, removing invasive Bush Honeysuckle and exploring local forests and streams.



K-12 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

To support elementary, middle, and high school education, BCCDKY offers technical support for teachers, participation in the state-wide Jim Claypool Art and Writing Contest, financial support for conservation education projects, and hands-on lesson plans and classroom visits. Our team works regularly with the homeschool community to meet their conservation education needs through field trips at local parks and presentations about local natural resources.

This year we led conservation education lesson for various homeschool groups and served as judges in the science fair for the Classical Conversations co-op. We also visited Kelly Elementary School's 5th grade class each month to conduct lessons in their outdoor classroom, and the school year culminated with a tree planting on Arbor Day!

THANK YOU TO OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS:



**BOONE COUNTY
PARKS**



**THOMAS MORE
UNIVERSITY**



**BOONE COUNTY
SOLID WASTE**



**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE**



**Archaeological
Research Institute**



**The Center for Ohio River
Research & Education
at
Thomas More College**



... AND SO MANY MORE.





Boone County
Conservation District
6028 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005-9520