



BOONE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK **2023-2024**



6028 Camp Ernst Rd.,
Burlington, KY 41005



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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, Kentucky. As a Conservation District, we identify and address natural resource issues and provide technical assistance, conservation planning, and access to cost share programs to the community.



BCCDKY has determined that the most pressing natural resource concerns in Boone County include the protection of water resources (e.g. stream health), soil health and stabilization, and the health and ecological integrity of our forest and wildlife resources. These priorities have been determined through day-to-day interactions and interfaces with the community, as well as productive collaboration and partnerships with local, state, and federal resource agencies. Education and awareness of these identified resource concerns is perhaps BCCDKY's most pressing priority. The district's mandate to address these issues is solely in the interest of public health, safety, and the welfare of every Boone County citizen and has driven the development of our Annual Plan of Work.

Enormous changes in Boone County's land use, population growth, and development in the last 30 years has led to the degradation of some of our most valuable natural resources, and this continues to be a focus of BCCDKY. Some of these changes have been documented by the EPA-approved Woolper Creek and Gunpowder Creek Watershed Plans. The immense developments (e.g. Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport) occurring in the headwaters of Boone County's watersheds pose a continued threat to our natural and built infrastructure downstream. Other direct impacts of this development include forest fragmentation and wildlife displacement.

The Board of Supervisors and the staff of BCCDKY have developed an ambitious long-range plan of work and budget to address the identified issues. Therefore, one of our priorities over the next year is to continue to work toward the development of a realistic and efficient budget that supports robust conservation programs to address these issues.

Despite urbanization on the Eastern side of Boone County, 44% of the county remains forested, particularly along the Ohio River and its tributaries. Western Boone County harbors a rich diversity of native wildlife, including several species of endangered plants and animals. Among other threats, invasive species, such as the emerald ash borer and Amur bush honeysuckle, have already completely changed the composition of our forests, as many other threats remain on the horizon. BCCDKY recognizes these threats to our natural resources and local economy and are committed to addressing these serious issues.

The BCCDKY Board of Supervisors and Staff is determined to meet these challenges and has developed the following Annual Plan of Work.



KRS 262.020 Purpose of soil and water conservation district -- Methods of achieving purpose. The purpose of a soil and water conservation district is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. In so doing, 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. History: Amended 1968 Ky. Acts Ch. 64, sec. 1. -- Recodified 1942 Ky. Acts Ch. 208, sec. 1, effective November 1, 1942, from Ky. Stat. sec. 42i-2.

Our Team

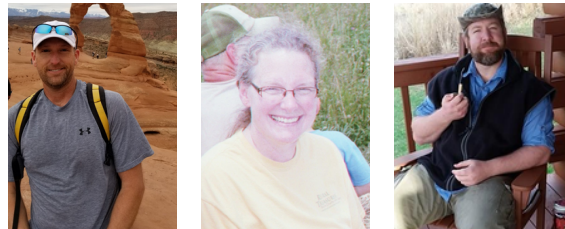
Staff

- Mark Jacobs, Director of Conservation Programs
- Pavla Link, District Operations Manager
- Susan Brown, Conservation Education Specialist
- Jasper Olsen, Soil Conservation Technician



Board of Supervisors

- Matt Wooten (Chair)
- Debra Waller (Vice-Chair)
- Mike Wilson (Treasurer)
- Kathleen C. King
- Jeff Thomas
- Dr. Shannon Galbraith-Kent, Ph.D.
- Kevin Bond





Provide conservation education programs to community groups

- Facilitate hands-on programs for youth groups and families.
- Integrate current research and citizen science into programming.
- Maintain safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for learners.
- Support partner organizations through collaborative programs.

Provide support for K-12 and homeschool students and teachers

- Provide lesson plans and curriculum resources for in-class or field trip experiences.
- Coordinate Conservation Education Grant program.

Increase awareness of the Ohio River's natural and cultural resources

- Collaborate with Boone County Ohio River Initiative.
- Develop educational resources and programs for the general public.

Engage and effectively communicate with local legislators

- Maintain communication with Boone County Fiscal Court, Boone County Parks, and other city, county, state and federal agencies, non-profit and non-government conservation groups.
- Promote conservation practices and BMPs among local agencies



Expand Conservation Leadership Programs

- Create pathways for careers in conservation for local youth.
- Further develop college internship program.
- Provide scholarships for college students studying conservation.
- Provide opportunities for students of all ages to engage in outdoor recreation, citizen science, and conservation practices.
- Improve summer youth programs.
- Create opportunities for students to grow leadership skills.

Promote the mission of BCCDKY through community outreach

- Maintain up to date information and public resources on bccdky.org.
- Engage with the general public through print, online, and social media.
- Participate in local fairs and festivals and other community events.
- Provide presentations to civic groups, clubs, meetings, etc.



AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

- Provide technical assistance and planning services to Boone County landowners and producers.
- Facilitate assistance from other resource agencies when necessary.
- Facilitate landowner compliance with the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (KAWQA).
- Continue to promote and facilitate landowner participation in Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program and Federal Cost Share Programs, when available, to decrease soil loss and improve water quality.
- Continue recertifying Agriculture District program participants.



FOREST & WILDLIFE RESOURCES



- Hire a full-time Forest Health Specialist.
- Identify forest and wildlife management issues of concern in Boone County to develop a long-term strategy to address such issues. Focus should be on ecological function of forest lands. Priority issues include: forest health, invasive species, biodiversity, habitat fragmentation, threatened/endangered wildlife and species of concern, and land management.
- Continue the process of planning and implementation of the shared NRCS/BCCDKY Focused Conservation Project – The Middle Creek Watershed Forest Health Initiative in collaboration with local land owners.
- Work with local universities to encourage student research on local forest and wildlife issues.
- Pursue stream and wetland mitigation and sources of funding to protect forest and wildlife resources.
- Collaborate closely with other local, state, and federal agencies where appropriate in support of mitigation efforts of public forest and land.
- Continue to develop educational opportunities for management of forest and wildlife resources (i.e. field days, lectures, etc.).
- Continue to develop Forest Education Programs for K-12 audience.





Maintain a Budget Committee to pursue equitable and sustainable funding for BCCDKY.

- Ensure that the budget supports the Annual Plan of Work and Long Range Plan activities.
- The Budget Committee will meet at least quarterly for updates, if necessary, and with the Accountant(s).
- The Budget Committee will establish and maintain five-year budget plan, in addition to the required one-year budget.
- The Budget Committee will meet with the County Judge Executive and other members of the Fiscal Court at least once a year.
- The Budget Committee will meet with the County Commissioners at least once a year.

Meet and exceed the statutory requirements that are listed in the BCCDKY Long Range Plan, revised January 2022.

Provide conservation services to the citizens of Boone County

- Provide technical, financial, and educational assistance to landowners and land managers.
- Develop partnerships with local and regional conservation groups.
- Maintain close relationship with The Boone Conservancy in efforts to collaborate on land preservation and other conservation programs.

Manage Earl Jones Conservation Fund

- Identify appropriate land for the establishment of a Conservation Center and pursue acquisition.
- Establish a Conservation Center in Boone County.
- Manage Earl Jones funds as a means for long term support for operation and maintenance.



Water Resources

- Continue to work closely with NKU Center for Environmental Restoration and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Stream Mitigation Group and other organizations and agencies to identify stream and wetland mitigation projects in Boone County and identify potential sources of funding.
- Continue efforts for improved stream health through implementation of Watershed Plans for Gunpowder Creek and Woolper Creek.
- Continue to seek partnerships and other opportunities to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the approved Watershed Plans.
- Continue close working relationship with Sanitation District No. 1 to monitor the water resources in Boone County.
- Expand watershed planning efforts in Boone County.
- Maintain and strengthen partnerships developed through prior watershed initiatives.
- Identify conservation priorities along the Ohio River and major tributaries in Boone County.



Boone County is home to some of the most unique ecological and geologic features in Kentucky, including 43 miles of Ohio River frontage. Despite this, only a small percentage of the county's natural areas are available for public recreation, and there are very few points of access to the Ohio River and its many tributaries. Additionally, Boone County's rich heritage is strongly connected to the Ohio River, yet many historic sites, river towns and locations such as Underground Railroad points are difficult to access. The BCCDKY and the Boone Conservancy have partnered to start the Boone County Ohio River Initiative (BCORI). Our goal is to develop a comprehensive plan to increase awareness of and connectivity between river towns, recreation areas, and cultural resources. In 2021 BCORI received a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service to develop this plan. Specific goals of BCORI include:

1. Highlight & preserve natural and cultural resources along the Ohio River
2. Increase accessibility and access to Ohio River resources
3. Foster proper management of public lands
4. Support river town economies

Boone County Ohio River Initiative

To date, we have established a collaborative group of stakeholders to identify current resources, challenges, and goals for this project. As a result, we have identified a number of resources to support our goals including GIS mapping tools and library archives containing a large database of cultural and historic records. In 2022 we have had community meetings in Petersburg and Rabbit Hash. Information and data from these meetings will be used to develop a conservation and recreation plan for the Ohio River corridor and its tributaries. The following are our objectives for 2023:

- Renew interest in heritage tourism in the Ohio River Corridor as a means of preservation/conservation and economic development in its river towns.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of river and land conservation (including programming to engage youth through BC Parks Department, school districts, library, etc.).
- Identify of at least 3-5 access points along the Ohio River and its tributaries for active and passive recreation activities such as boating, fishing, birdwatching, or community events.
- Identify of the highest quality conservation areas along the Ohio River.
- Begin development of a conservation and recreation plan for the Boone County Ohio River corridor that will be coordinated with local and regional parks, river towns, and natural areas.
- Establish of an annual community event celebrating the Ohio River, such as a clean-up or group paddle.
- Create mapping tools illustrating the connectivity of Ohio River resources such as parks, public areas, river towns, boat ramps, and points of cultural interest which will promote Heritage Tourism.
- Engage the public by developing/promoting of accessible digital products (e.g., website(s), app(s)) that interpret the River's significance to the cultures, economies and transportation of those of primarily European, African and Native descent.





2023 BCCDKY COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Chair: Matt Wooten
Vice Chair: Debra Waller
Treasurer: Mike Wilson

HR Committee

Chair: Matt Wooten
Kathy King
Susan Brown
Debra Waller

Land Use Committee

Chair: Jeff Thomas
Shannon Galbraith-Kent, Ph.D.
Kevin Bond
Mark Jacobs
Pavla Link

Budget Committee

Chair: Mike Wilson
Matt Wooten
Jeff Thomas
Mark Jacobs
Pavla Link

Education Committee

Chair: Shannon Galbraith-Kent, Ph.D.
Susan Brown
Kathy King
Debra Waller

