



**BOONE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



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

+859-586-7900 Ext. 3

info@bccdky.org

www.bccdky.org





LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR:



The health and sound management of our local streams, forests, agricultural lands, and wildlife resources are among the most important issues we face in Boone County. BCCDKY's interest is to address these issues with the best tools that are available to us and to nurture the partnerships we have made over the years to achieve our goals. Each year we develop a plan of work to help guide our efforts and be as efficient as possible. This past year has been an exciting time for us, and we are making clear headway in addressing those issues laid out in our plan of work.

Our most notable achievement this past year was the acquisition of a 92-acre parcel of land on Gunpowder Creek. This property is centrally located in the county and was historically the location of the Crisler-Gulley Grist Mill, also known as the Grand Water Power, an important hub for agricultural activity in Boone County in the early to mid-1800s. This property was dedicated as the Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation in April 2024 and will be home to our educational programs and allow us to demonstrate conservation planning and implementation to the public.

Despite the rapid growth we have seen in the last few decades and its proximity to Cincinnati, approximately half of Boone County remains forested. The management of this forest resource is of great concern and interest to the conservation district. This past year we were able to hire a part time forest health specialist to begin to address forest health issues like invasive species, investigate local biodiversity, and provide some assistance to private landowners interested in learning about and managing their forested property. Our local forest resources are an extremely valuable asset to our county, and it is our intention to make this a full-time, permanent position.

Watershed health and management remains a high priority for the district, so we are happy to continue our long relationship with the water resources staff at SD1. We will continue to collect valuable data in our watersheds but also to educate our students and citizens about local issues. BCCDKY and SD1 staff have established a sampling site on Gunpowder Creek at the Jones Center to train students, interns, and staff while collecting valuable water quality, biological and stream stability data year after year.

Finally, we are happy to welcome a new NRCS staff member, Chris Rawson and his family to Boone County. Chris is the new Soil Conservationist that will be working in the Burlington office to provide technical assistance to agricultural producers and landowners in Boone and other surrounding counties. We welcome Chris and look forward to working with him and continuing our long working relationship with NRCS.

Mark Jacobs

Director of Conservation Programs





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PARTNERS

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.

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



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.

OUR TEAM



Mark Jacobs
Director of Conservation
Programs



Pavla Link
District Operations
Manager



Susan Brown
Conservation
Education Specialist



Jasper Stevenson
75/25 Soil Conservation
Technician



Tyler Rankin
Forest Health
Specialist

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Mike Wilson
Chairman



Debra Waller
Vice Chair



Jeff Thomas
Treasurer



Kevin Bond
Supervisor



Kathy King
Supervisor



Shannon Galbraith-Kent, Ph.D.
Supervisor



John Stork
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



Ilys Anderson
Hanover College
Graduate



Ava Reed
Randall K. Cooper
High School



Jaron Cooper
Eastern Kentucky
University

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.

2023

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

2024

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	29		
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:

CHRISTOPHER RAWSON - SOIL CONSERVATIONIST

JASPER STEVENSON - 75/25 SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

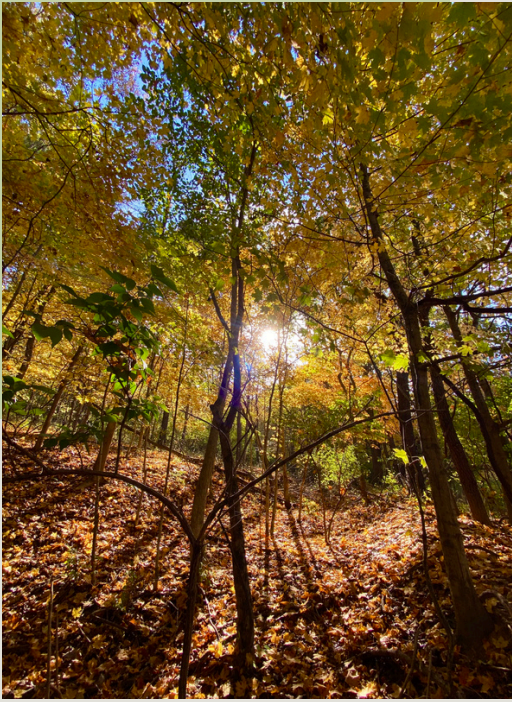
IAN YOUNG - SUPERVISORY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGER



DIVISION OF CONSERVATION STAFF:

KIMBERLY BARTON - FIELD REPRESENTATIVE





FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$813,604.21
TOTAL REVENUES	\$508,219.84
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,077,906.96
ENDING BALANCE	\$243,917.09
RESTRICTED FUNDS	\$1,573.71
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	\$242,343.38

REVENUE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE	\$500,880.60
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	\$4,265.45
OTHER REVENUE	\$1,174.82
INTEREST EARNED	\$1,898.97
	<hr/>
	\$508,219.84

EXPENSES

PERSONNEL	\$318,698.05
OPERATIONS	\$56,285.38
ADMINISTRATION	\$85,349.46
CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$617,577.07
	<hr/>
	\$1,077,906.96



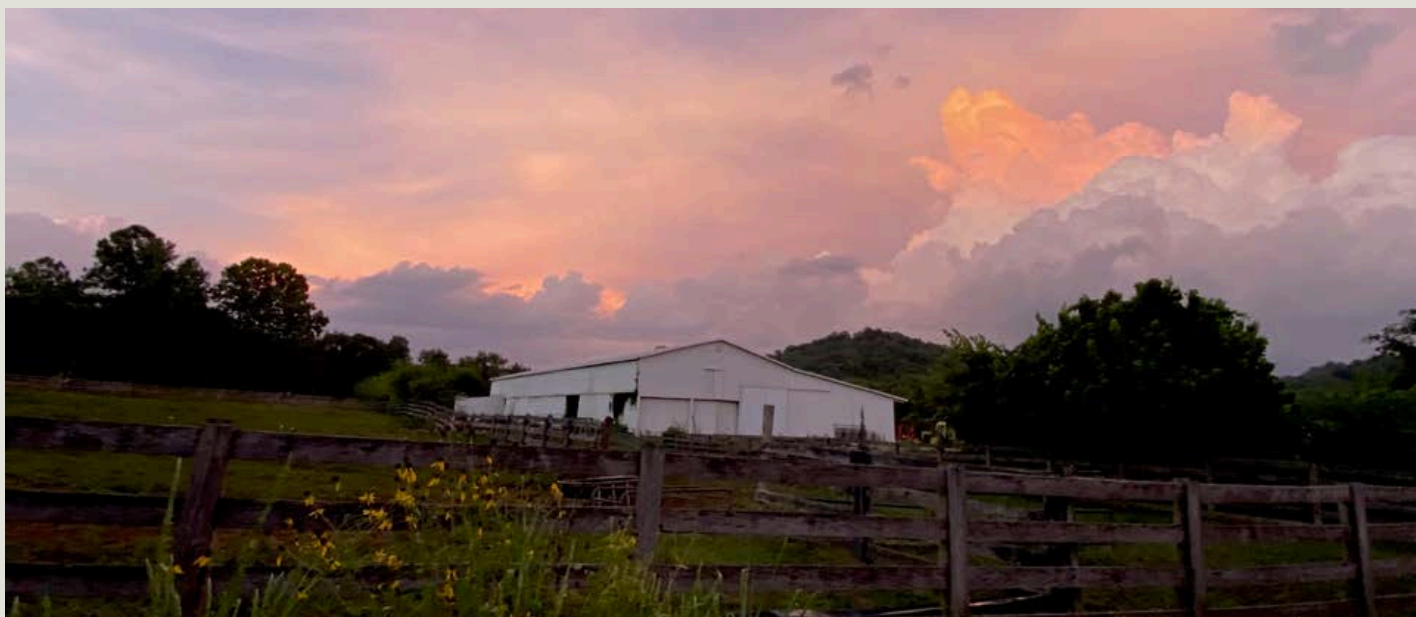
FY 2023-2024 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

FY 2023-2024 BUDGET



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.



STATE COST SHARE PROGRAM

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.

AG WATER QUALITY PLAN

The Kentucky Agricultural Water Quality Act, passed in 1994 in compliance with Federal regulations, and requires landowners with 10 or more acres that are being used for agriculture or silviculture operations 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 100 Boone County residents with their Ag Water Quality Plans.



75/25 NRCS SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

In 2023-2024, the Soil Conservation Technician hired through the 75/25 program in 2022, Jasper Stevenson, has continued to assist with the implementation of soil conservation practices throughout Boone County, as well as the surrounding counties through the partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). While attending trainings to further develop their planning and conservation skills, Jasper has also taken a hand in the preliminary training of new NRCS employees and continues to assist the local work unit with ongoing initiatives. Outside of their work with NRCS, Jasper has provided assistance for BCCD programs, such as Conservation Kids Camp and LEAF academy, and has helped with the year-round intern research projects.

THE AGRICULTURAL (“AG”) DISTRICT PROGRAM

The 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.



bccdky.org / Agricultural Districts



PUBLIC LANDS

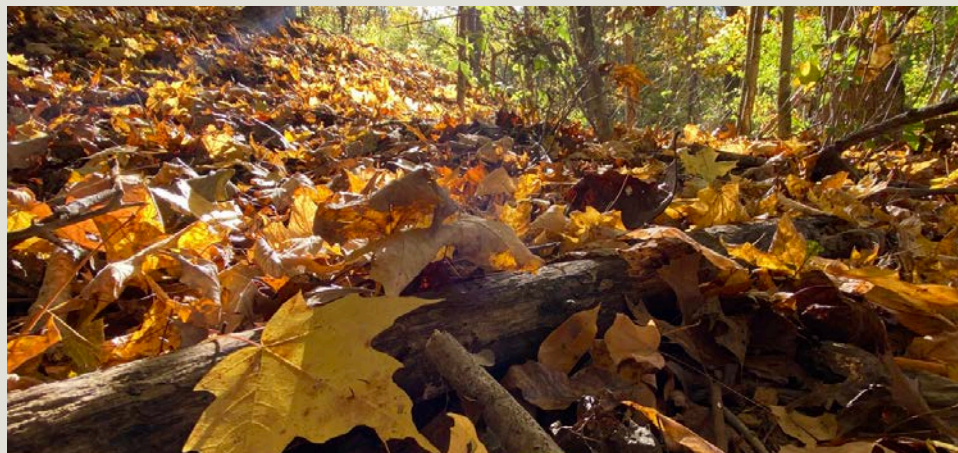
BCCDKY staff and partners regularly provide technical assistance and conservation planning on both public and private land. BCCDKY staff works closely with local partners such as Boone County Parks and the Boone Conservancy to incorporate conservation planning into the management of public lands and identify and implement practices that improve accessibility, habitat, biodiversity, soil and water management and promote public education.



PRIVATE LANDS

Approximately 93% of land in Boone County is privately owned. BCCDKY works closely with many private landowners to address resource concerns on their properties. We have the ability to access professionals from partner federal, state, and local agencies to assist with planning and implementing conservation practices when needed. This year we helped Boone County landowners with the following practices:

- Reforestation/tree and shrub planting
- Site prep, planting and management of grassland/pollinator habitat
- Pond management
- Invasive species identification and management
- Forest stand improvement
- Management of stormwater and soil erosion
- Identification of potential stream and wetland mitigation projects
- Resource protection and management for agriculture producers



bccdky.org / Landowner Services

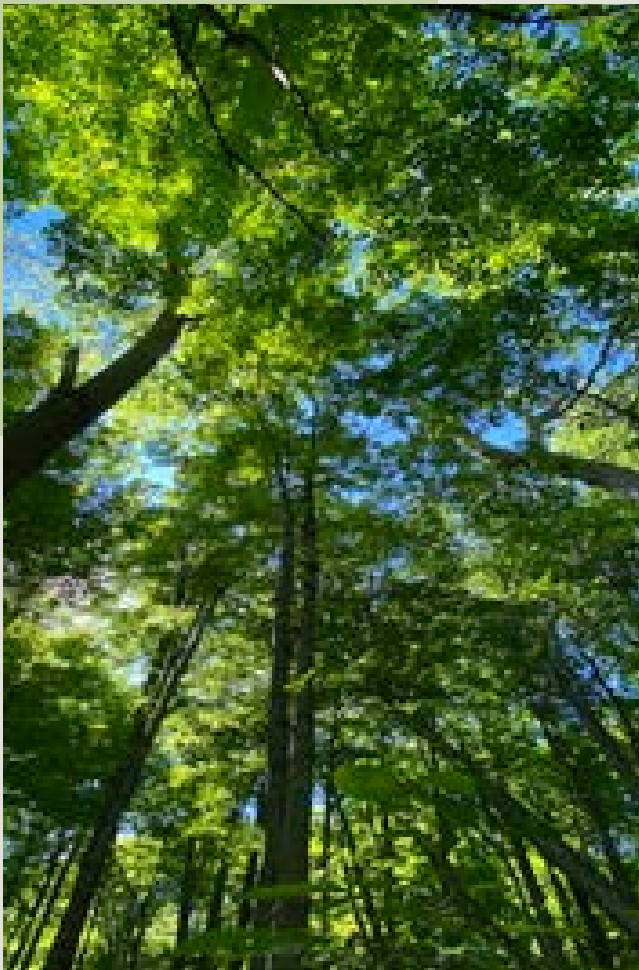
STREAM HEALTH

BCCDKY has been working with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) Stream Mitigation Team for the last several years and has identified multiple large stream and wetland mitigation projects in Boone County. These projects are located in the Gunpowder Creek, Woolper Creek, Big Bone Creek, and Middle Creek Watersheds. The engineering plans for these projects are near completion and the actual groundwork on these projects will begin soon. Meanwhile, BCCDKY continues to work with partners, particularly SD1, to collect and evaluate data on the streams in Boone County. We have set up a stream sample site at the Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation that will continue to collect data in the Gunpowder Creek watershed but also provide yearly training for students and interns in techniques to collect water quality, biological and geomorphic data for analysis. This training is meant to teach practical skills that will help them with the development of their careers in resource conservation.



FOREST HEALTH

BCCDKY has identified the protection of high-quality and mature forest health as a priority in our long range plan of work. Boone County is home to hundreds of acres of large canopy mature forest, primarily within 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 conservation management plan to protect what remains of our forest resources.



EARL AND HAZEL JONES CENTER FOR CONSERVATION

In September 2023, BCCDKY purchased 92 acres of land along Gunpowder Creek in Boone County.

The property has approximately 5,000 linear feet of frontage on Gunpowder Creek with forested uplands and approximately 24 acres of bottomland currently used for crops. The property is also the site of a historically important grist mill and sawmill known locally as The Grand Water Power and was the hub of the local farming community in the early to mid 1800's.

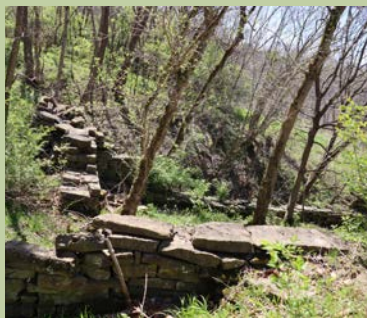
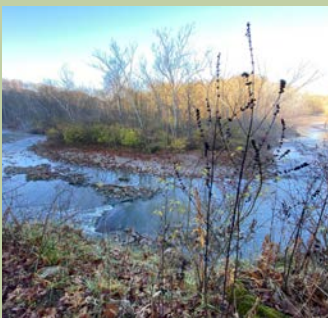


This area in the Gunpowder Valley contains some of the best natural forest and stream habitat left in Boone County. The purpose of this acquisition is to preserve the natural and cultural resources in the Gunpowder Valley and provide conservation education opportunities to the citizens of Boone County. The goal is to develop a center for conservation education, providing demonstration projects and offering innovative programs to Boone County and Greater Cincinnati citizens and educators. To achieve this goal, we will continue to work toward the following objectives:

1. Create multiple educational programs focused on local conservation issues for different interests and age levels.
2. Initiate conservation planning and projects that demonstrate sound conservation principles.
3. Restore key ecological features to improve biodiversity and support educational programs.
4. Promote the appreciation of our wildlife heritage and good land stewardship.
5. Encourage community involvement by providing diverse and well-organized programs that highlight local conservation issues.



The acquisition of this property was made possible through a generous donation from Earl and Hazel Jones as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund. In April 2024, the property was dedicated as the Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation.



WILDLIFE HABITAT STUDIES

BCCDKY continues to monitor local wildlife as part of our forest health initiative. Wildlife 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.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Education and outreach is an important part of BCCDKY's mission. We strive to provide educational resources to all the people of Boone County. Our education programs are based on scientific research and draw on our staff's extensive experience in the field of local conservation.

The acquisition of the Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation is a tremendous opportunity to provide experiential education in both natural and cultural history. At the Center, our students can not only enjoy time in a natural setting, but they can also see and even participate in actual conservation work. As we develop a management plan for the property, we will hold workshops and demonstrations where participants can get hands-on experience in habitat construction and maintenance. Additionally, the Center is being used as a training ground for college students and interns to learn stream and forest health monitoring techniques.

In the Spring of 2024, we began piloting education programs at the Center. Since then, we have hosted a total of 193 people at the property through adult hikes and tours, family programs, youth camps, and homeschool groups, and we look forward to many more!



2023 - 2024 Programs

- 6 professional presentations
- 6 education tables at fairs and festivals
- 14 public outdoor family and community programs
- 18 school visits and homeschool field trips
- 2 summer youth programs
- 7 Junior Board events
- 6 adult workshops and field days
- 2 river clean ups

Total number of people reached directly through BCCDKY programs: 2,245

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

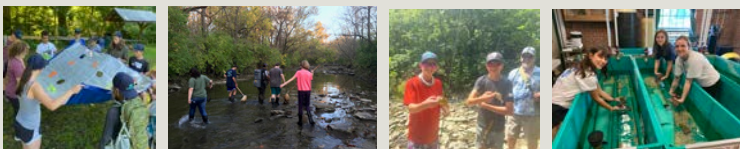


K-12 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

BCCDKY offers lesson plans and school visits to K-12 schools and homeschool groups. This year, we presented monthly conservation lessons to the 5th graders at Kelly Elementary, judged the science fair for Classical Conversations, awarded certificates and prizes to the Jim Claypool Writing Contest winners at Jones Middle School, and led several homeschool field trips to the Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation.

CONSERVATION KIDS CAMP

This year, BCCDKY was fortunate to host Conservation Kids Camp at our very own Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation. We hosted a total of 48 students aged 9-12 in two sessions of camp. Students used the newly-built trails to explore the forest, were able to access Gunpowder Creek for habitat study and free play, and investigated the vernal pool for frogs and salamanders. Hosting camp at the Center allowed students to become fully immersed in their natural surroundings and form deeper connections with their natural resources.



L.E.A.F! ACADEMY

In July 2023, twelve students aged 13-15 graduated from L.E.A.F! Academy, BCCDKY's five-day teen leadership program. Students studied essays by Aldo Leopold, who is known as the father of modern conservation, as they visited different natural areas of Boone County and learned about the value of protecting natural resources. They kayaked on the Ohio River, snorkeled and fly fished in Gunpowder Creek, and hiked through the forest at Middle Creek Park. Students then put their knowledge to action by helping the Boone County Cooperative Extension staff with an invasive species removal project at the Boone County Nature Center. They were rewarded on the last day of the program with a field trip to the Archaeological Research Institute in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, where they learned about many cultures of people who lived here before us and their interactions with the land.



BCCDKY JUNIOR BOARD

The Junior Board program allows BCCDKY to cultivate the next generation of leaders while high school students get to explore academic and career opportunities in conservation. This year's Junior Board met seven times throughout the 2023-2024 school year. A total of 13 students from different high schools participated, representing various public, private, and home schools in Boone County. During these events, Junior Board members were able to explore different natural areas of Boone County, learn about conservation research, and earn service hours while volunteering with BCCDKY's conservation projects.



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

BOONE COUNTY OHIO RIVER INITIATIVE (BCORI)



The Boone County Ohio River Initiative (BCORI) 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 two years, 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.



THANK YOU TO OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS:



BOONE COUNTY
PARKS

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS
"the nation's finest"



NKU NORTHERN
KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITY



Natural Resources Conservation Service



THOMAS MORE
UNIVERSITY

Make It **More.**



FOUNDATION for OHIO RIVER EDUCATION



KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND



Archaeological
Research Institute



COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment



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



Boone County Public Library



Kentucky Natural
Lands Trust



Ohio - Kentucky - Indiana Regional Conservation Council



Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers, Inc.



National Association of
Conservation Districts



BOONE COUNTY
SOLID WASTE

... AND SO MANY MORE.



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