




2025 - 2026

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK



Boone County Conservation District

 bccdky.org
 859-586-7903 Ext.3
 info@bccdky.org



6028 Camp Ernst Rd.,
Burlington, KY 41005

INTRODUCTION

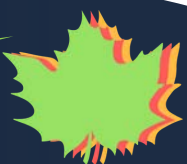
The Mission of the Boone County Conservation District (BCCDKY) is to promote the protection and wise use of natural resources through education and service to the citizens of Boone County, Kentucky. The BCCDKY identifies and addresses the county's natural resource issues and provides technical assistance, conservation planning, and access to cost share programs to the community.

The supervisors and staff of the Boone County Conservation District look forward to 2025-2026. We were fortunate enough to have finally filled our Forest Health Specialist position; a position we see as crucial for our conservation plan of work. James Acey is the newest member of our staff and began his journey as the Forest Health Specialist in November. Almost all of the forestland in Boone County is privately owned therefore, James will focus on understanding the issues that affect our local forest as well as working with and providing technical assistance to private and public landowners in Boone County.

Boone County, despite constant development pressure over the last several decades, is still 47% forested. Almost all the forested areas in the county are located on the western side and north end of the county. The forests in these areas protect deeply incised stream valleys that slope toward the Ohio river. These unique resources provide our community with great opportunities to identify and protect the best natural areas and biodiversity left in Northern Kentucky. We also have the opportunity to preserve our agricultural roots and rural lifestyle in western Boone County and provide unprecedented access to our beautiful stream valleys and 42 miles of Ohio River shoreline.

Forest health and stream health are so interconnected that it is almost impossible to discuss one without the other. BCCDKY has been involved in watershed planning and forest management for decades and will continue these efforts. BCCDKY's newly established Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation along Gunpowder Creek provides the perfect opportunity to develop a better understanding of the entwined relationship between stream and forest and the wildlife it supports. BCCDKY staff and partners will use this property to train the next generation of conservationists and provide workshops and educational events for the people of Boone County.

In 2025 - 2026 we will continue planning and implementing projects to enhance or establish forest diversity, wetland habitat, and native meadow habitat. We will continue to work with local, state and federal partners and the general public to protect our local streams and forest and use what we've learned to provide education opportunities for families, students, and conservation professionals.



KRS 262.020

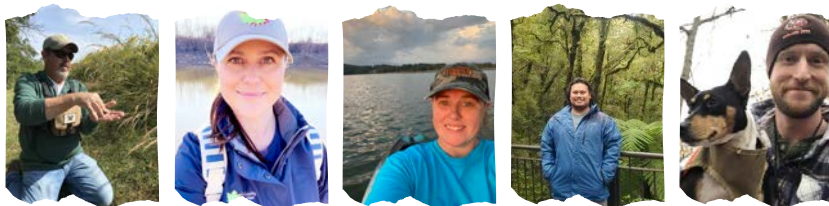


Purpose of soil and water conservation district -- Methods of achieving purpose. The purpose of a soil and water conservation district is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. In so doing, the district is authorized to undertake, sponsor, or participate in projects 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

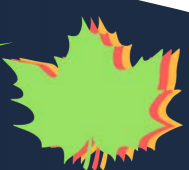
Staff

Mark Jacobs, Director of Conservation Programs
Pavla Link, District Operations Manager
Susan Brown, Conservation Education Specialist
James Acey, Forest Health Specialist
Tyler Rankin, Forest Health Specialist



Board of Supervisors

Mike Wilson (Chair)
Debra Waller (Vice-Chair)
John Stork (Treasurer)
Dr. Shannon Galbraith-Kent, Ph.D.
Kevin Bond
Kathleen C. King
Casey Moll



OPERATIONS

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 and with their accountants when necessary.
- 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 Boone County Judge Executive and other members of the Fiscal Court at least once a year.
- The Budget Committee will meet with the Boone 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 and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation



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.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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 by providing lesson plans, curriculum resources, and technical support.

Provide opportunities for the public to access and benefit from the Earl and Hazel Jones Center for Conservation

- Host public education programs and volunteer events throughout the year for children and adults.
- Use natural resources on the property to demonstrate best management practices.
- Develop curriculum based on cultural and historic resources of the property.



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

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

Engage and effectively communicate with local legislators and government leaders, including Boone County Fiscal Court.

Promote conservation practices and Best Management Practices (BMPs) among local agencies.



Expand Conservation Leadership Programs

- Create pathways for careers in conservation for local youth.
- Further develop college internship program.
- Provide resources 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.

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FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

The forests in Boone County are perhaps the most neglected, and under-utilized resource in the County. Approximately 47% of the original forested canopy cover, located mostly in the western and northern slopes along the Ohio River and its tributaries, remains. In order to preserve and promote the development of the remaining forests, BCCDKY will:

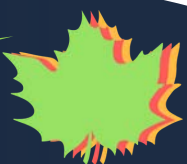
- Utilize our Forest Health Specialists to create studies and plans for Boone County which focus on ecological health of forest lands in Boone County including biodiversity, habitat fragmentation, invasive species management, plant and animal diseases, threatened/endangered wildlife and species of special concern, and public and private land management.
- Work with local universities to encourage student research on local forest and wildlife issues.
- Pursue stream, wetland, forest mitigation funds and other sources of funding to protect forest and wildlife resources.
- Collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies where appropriate to support conservation efforts on public and private forest land.
- Continue to develop and offer educational opportunities for the management of forest and wildlife resources (i.e. field days, lectures, etc.).
- Collaborate with the Boone County Planning Commission to identify and inventory the county's most environmentally sensitive areas and create conservation initiatives for those areas.



WATER RESOURCES

Hydromodification and poorly mitigated storm water runoff from past development and rapid present growth have become a major threat to the health of streams and adjacent built infrastructure in Boone County. Our focus will include:

- Working closely with mitigation programs, organizations, and agencies to identify and implement stream and wetland mitigation projects in Boone County.
- Continue efforts to improve stream health through implementation of Gunpowder and Woolper Creek Watershed Plans.
- Continue to maintain and seek new partnerships to implement watershed plans. Work closely with Sanitation District No. 1 to monitor stream health.
- Develop a student and citizen science training program to monitor stream health. Expand watershed planning efforts in Boone County.
- Maintain and strengthen partnerships developed through watershed planning initiatives.
- Work closely with the Boone County Planning Commission to identify and map conservation priorities along the Ohio River and major tributaries in Boone County.

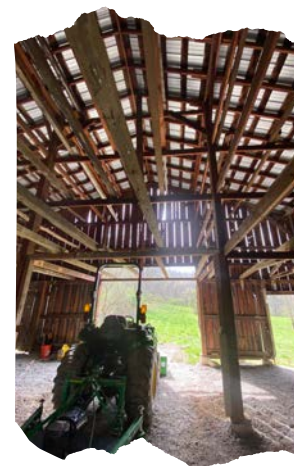
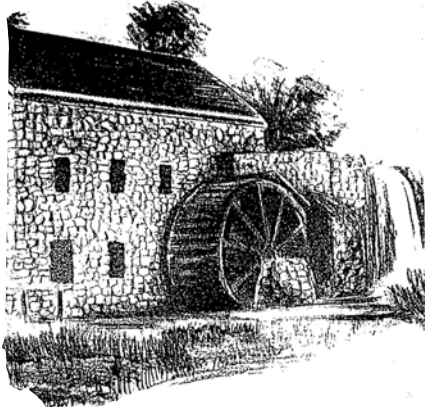


EARL AND HAZEL JONES CENTER FOR CONSERVATION



In 2023, BCCDKY purchased a 92-acre property along Gunpowder Creek. This property, purchased with funds from the Earl and Hazel Jones Estate and the Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund (IBCF), will serve as a center for conservation in Northern Kentucky. It is also the site of the historically significant Crisler-Gulley Mill, active from 1816 until about 1850. The prehistoric and historic cultural history of this site exemplifies the early settlement and agricultural economy of Boone County as well as the early use of and reliance on local natural resources. The streams, forests and rich soils of Gunpowder Creek Valley were essential components of the development of our community.

Perhaps, most importantly, the acquisition of this property continues the decades-long effort to permanently protect the most ecologically valuable portions of middle Gunpowder Creek and will serve as an opportunity to gain knowledge about the management and stewardship of our local forests and streams while informing local citizens about natural resource issues.



In 2025-2026 we will focus on:

- Continue improvements to the barn to provide support for education programs.
- Continue biological and cultural inventories.
- Continue work to improve and maintain trails.
- Utilize Gunpowder Creek access to collect data provide training opportunities for students and citizens.
- Identify and implement forest, wetland, meadow and stream projects.
- Continue developing and implementing educational programs including Conservation Kids Camp, L.E.A.F! Academy, family programs, intern research and training programs, workshops and field days.
- Continue to develop education and outreach materials that address cultural resources on site.
- Continue to work with local archaeologists and historians to identify and document cultural resources on site.



BCORI

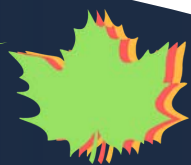
BOONE COUNTY OHIO RIVER INITIATIVE



In 2021, BCCDKY and The Boone Conservancy partnered to spearhead 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. Because of our commitment to regional conservation, The National Park Service (NPS) awarded the BCORI with a technical assistance grant through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, and we have been working with NPS staff to collect input from the community and develop this plan. In 2024 We completed the Boone County Ohio River Initiative Report. This report is an initial summary of recommendations for community leaders to consider for enhancing the natural resources along the Boone County waterways. It is our hope that these recommendations will help guide the planning process for additional conservation and close-to-home outdoor recreation enhancements.

In the 2025 – 2026 fiscal year we will pursue the following objectives:

- Continue to work with volunteer leaders from Rabbit Hash, Petersburg, and other partners to identify and implement projects which enhance the natural and cultural resources of the river, including stream bank stabilization, access for recreation, and community events
- Work with community partners to investigate and pursue funding for concept plans and conservation projects along the Ohio River and its tributaries in Boone County.
- Work with Boone County and residents of Petersburg to make improvements to Petersburg Community Park and other potential river access sites.
- Host education and outreach events for the general public including volunteer clean-up days, canoe/kayaking programs, and river conservation programs.
- Continue to meet regularly with the BCORI advisory committee to review and evaluate goals and priorities.



2025 BCCDKY COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Chair: Mike Wilson
Vice Chair: Debra Waller
Treasurer: John Stork
Mark Jacobs

HR Committee

Chair: John Stork
Kathy King
Susan Brown
Mark Jacobs

Land and Natural Resources Planning Committee

Chair: Kevin Bond
Shannon Galbraith-Kent, Ph.D.
John Stork
Mark Jacobs
Pavla Link
James Acey
Tyler Rankin

Budget Committee

Chair: John Stork
Mike Wilson
Kevin Bond
Mark Jacobs
Pavla Link

Education Committee

Chair: Shannon Galbraith-Kent
Susan Brown
Kathy King
Debra Waller
Casey Moll

Government Affairs Committee

Chair: Kathy King
Kevin Bond
Mark Jacobs
Pavla Link



