

*We are the river. United we are the solution.*



# VOICES of the HARPETH

# 20

ANNIVERSARY

SUMMER 2020

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Photo credit: Trent Rosenbloom

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

I am writing this letter to our GREAT supporters and partners from my home in a time of physical distancing and “stay at home” directives, so this photograph really struck me with the raw beauty of the State Scenic Harpeth River along the empty greenway in Nashville. We are all SO ready to enjoy our waterways with others again and appreciate YOUR help to protect these assets.



We have weathered lots of storms, literally, during our 20 years as an organization, but our work has never been so important! Through the tornadoes and COVID-19 pandemic, what does everyone value, want and need the most? Their health, safe drinking water and the ability to get outside to enjoy their favorite waterways. To do that, you need good water quality that protects wildlife and that of your pets, livestock and you and your family. We work to protect these things for you, and even more so during these times. We are your voice. We are making sure that proposed activities do not get approved without your right to a public hearing and involvement. We track and advise on proposed legislation, regulations and growth plans related to how these affect water quality, flooding, wildlife and drinking water. We are conducting scientific studies to determine the health of the rivers that are your and your families’ source for life, livelihood and emotional grounding. We are working statewide now more than ever to bring together groups ready to be a part of something larger after these trying times. I don’t know what things will look like when this arrives in your mailbox, but I do know that our commitment to be your voice and provide the best science, policy and legal expertise for clean water and healthy rivers across Tennessee will continue on for the next 20 years just as we have done for the past 20. Maybe you will be reading this gathered with friends along a riverbank and thankful that we have protected their beauty and health with your help.

*With Thanks –*

**Dorie Bolze**, President & CEO

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**Over 3.5 Million**  
**Tennesseans (60%) rely on**  
**waterways for their drinking**  
**water and almost 50% of**  
**those assessed do NOT**  
**meet water quality**  
**standards.**





# CELEBRATING HARPETH CONSERVANCY



A river is the perfect analogy for **Harpeth Conservancy**. Sometimes things are swift with bubbling rapids. Sometimes we are floating at a gentle pace enjoying the beauty. There have been log jams and receding waters. We flow along the riverbed of our mission, while carving a new path when needed. The past two decades have been a great ride! **Throughout the newsletter, you will see some accomplishments from our past 20 years, but here are a few highlights:**

## NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LOWHEAD DAM REMOVAL

In 2010, HC secured funding and managed a **\$350,000 grant** from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve fish habitat and remove barriers to fish passage. The lowhead dam removal eliminated a 1.7 mile-long impoundment to reconnect 36 miles of river and restore shallow aquatic habitat that was inundated under deep water behind the dam. The **\$725,000 project** was a collaboration that HC led between Harpeth Conservancy, the City of Franklin, TN Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and other state and federal agencies, businesses and non-profit partners. By removing the lowhead dam, the entire river system became **one of only 3 free-flowing rivers in Tennessee**. The project is a national demonstration of a natural channel design approach to significantly **improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat** and **public recreation**. It received a Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award in 2013.



BEFORE



AFTER

## WHAT IS DOWNSTREAM IN THE YEARS AHEAD

In 2017, we rebranded from Harpeth River Watershed Association to Harpeth Conservancy to reflect how our work on the Harpeth was being expanded statewide. We have been working with other groups like Protect Our Aquifer in Memphis and the Obed Watershed Alliance in Cookeville. Our work on water withdrawal limits and stormwater regulations is in place statewide. We continue to be a sought-after leader in water quality, restoration, science, policy and law. As such, look for us to work to expand our partnerships and work with more groups across the state in the coming years. It is time to combine forces to have the greatest impact on our waterways. We are working with groups like Richland Creek Watershed Alliance, Mill Creek Watershed Association, Piney Creek Citizens, Keep Williamson Livable and more. The waters are rising, in a great way. We have power in numbers, and our work for YOUR clean water will only grow and continue for the next 20+ years with YOUR help. **WE are the river. UNITED WE are the solution.**

## REDUCING POLLUTION - OPTIMIZING SEWER PLANTS

In 2015, the Harpeth River was declared among the **10 Most Endangered Rivers by American Rivers because of the threats of sewage pollution and excessive water withdrawals**. The annual national highlight focuses on rivers at a crossroads. The public attention helped elevate our efforts to focus on improving sewer plant issues along the Harpeth and the need to develop a nutrient pollution reduction plan to avoid the likelihood of harmful algal blooms. Thanks to science, collaboration, partners and persistence, levels of phosphorus discharges from the Franklin sewer plant, the largest on the Harpeth, have declined and the Pollution Reduction Study is underway with expertise provided by the EPA to support the collaborative effort. The Harpeth is one of the most highly recreated rivers and can be a showcase for how communities, agencies and citizens can pull together to recover an entire river.

### 20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

In 2015 and 2016, HC secured federal **Clean Water Act court agreements** on 3 sewer plants on the Harpeth to fix permit compliance issues, improve plant operations to reduce pollution and reduce raw sewer overflows.

**Settlement agreements included \$230,000** of funding from the sewer plants for new Harpeth pollution reduction study that started in 2015.

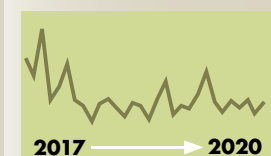
In 2015, HC helped launch the multi-city and agency **Harpeth Pollution Reduction Study** based on our 2012 draft monitoring plan.

HC raised **\$125,000 for specific studies** needed that government partners were not able to do.

**Reduced nutrient pollution** in the Harpeth by advocating for changes to the state sewer plant permit for **Franklin in 2016**.

Accomplished **30% less discharge of phosphorus pollution** that can cause **harmful algal blooms** in less than 1 Year from Franklin!

#### City of Franklin Phosphorus Pollution Levels



Secured increased removal ability with new sewer plant expansion so Franklin is able to remove all that is needed based on findings from pollution reduction study now underway.

## HEALING THE HARPETH

### 10 YEARS AFTER THE HISTORIC MAY FLOOD

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the historic flood on May 1-3, 2010. This disaster left the Harpeth River and waterways throughout Nashville flooded with debris from buildings, sheds and more. Thousands of trees were uprooted causing seriously eroded areas along the river. We took the lead to tackle this problem that fell through the government cracks of emergency response. We pulled together various organizations, local governments and volunteers. In over 2 years with over **2,000** volunteers, we accomplished this:

### 20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

Harpeth Conservancy created **Nashville Flood Recovery Project** collaborative in response to the historic Nashville 2010 flood. **200 sites** assessed, **153 tons** of debris removed, **12,656 trees** planted, **70+ volunteer** river cleanup and restoration projects in 3 counties.

### 20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

**3 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards.**

**Harpeth Lowhead Dam project recognized in 2012 U.S. President's River Initiative.**



## ESTABLISHED WATER WITHDRAWAL PERMIT FOR FRANKLIN DRINKING WATER PLANT

At Harpeth Conservancy, we are always seeking science-based support of issues. We want data on what is happening and why, then we work with experts to solve the issue. When Franklin began considering expansion of their small and old drinking water plant in 2002, several years of expert analysis in river flow science and economics, some of which HC funded, ultimately led to the establishment a water withdrawal permit that set limits on the amount of water the city could pull from the Harpeth to only 20% once the river flow is above a minimum level. This prevented the flow in the river from "drying up" during the summer in the area of the drinking water intake. The 2007 permit and revision in 2015 established a science-based approach that the state can use to set conditions and regular reporting required by water withdrawal permits in order to protect river health and water quality. This effort also led to the lowhead dam removal project that set a national example of updated withdrawal design. Tennessee's water withdrawal permitting approach is a template around the southeast.



## SCIENCE FOR CLEAN WATER

Harpeth Conservancy provides science-based conservation for the rivers of Tennessee

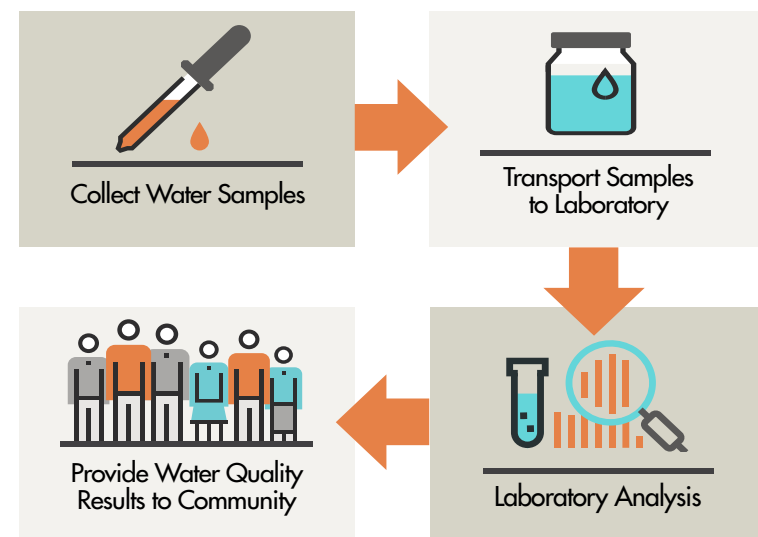
### WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK

The health of our rivers is critical for **environmental sustainability**, preservation of wildlife and **drinking water protection**. River health is based on water quality monitoring efforts. Water quality data are utilized to identify and quantify contamination/impairments, inform protection and management strategies and verify and evaluate management efforts. Citizen water quality monitoring programs can help provide high quality data as well as provide hands-on educational science experience to members of the community. Data can be used to forecast water quality like a weather forecast! HC is working to establish a Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Network all across Tennessee!



Dorie and Ryan conducting sampling for algal blooms.

### HOW WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS WORK



**Thank you for supporting our Science and Water Monitoring Programs**

Mississippi River Network  
Andrea Waitt Carlton Foundation  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee  
Grateful Daniel Fund  
Lucius Burch Jr., Wildlife Habitat Fund  
Robert K. and Anne H. Zelle Fund for Education  
Memorial Foundation  
Dan and Margaret Maddox Fund

## 20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

Conducted, funded and advised **40+ science studies** on water quality and wildlife, **25+ expert analyses** and **6 watershed restoration plans**.



### TACKLING NUTRIENT POLLUTION-ALGAL TOXIN STUDY ON HARPETH

Nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen are essential for aquatic habitats, but an excess of phosphorus and nitrogen can lead to rapid algae growth (a.k.a. algal blooms). Algal blooms have a multitude of negative impacts on human and environmental health including: (1) **low oxygen conditions** in aquatic habitats, (2) **outcompeting native algae and vegetation**, and (3) producing **toxins that are hazardous to human and animal health**. Algal toxins are produced by cyanobacteria, often referred to as blue-green algae, and the most common toxins produced by cyanobacteria are microcystins.

The EPA has determined **nutrient pollution exists in all 50 states, but Tennessee is one of 15 states lacking this important data**. So in 2017, HC funded Dr. Jefferson G. Lebkuecher at Austin Peay University to conduct an algae composition study within the Harpeth River. This is part of our work with the Harpeth River Pollution Reduction Plan that has been underway for several years with the state, EPA and cities around the Harpeth. Several species of cyanobacteria were identified in the river.

Last summer, HC conducted a survey focused on whether the algal toxin, microcystin, was present in the river. **We found microcystin in 2 small streams at levels just above EPA drinking water standards**, but lower than for recreational exposure. Our results indicate that in the right conditions, harmful algal growth is producing at least one of the common toxins. The survey did not detect microcystin at the 16 locations on the main river at that time. The results are alarming and reinforce how important it is to determine the pollution reduction plan for the Harpeth so nutrient levels are not driving harmful algal blooms that are likely to peak during the hot and dry late summer conditions when the most people and their pets are enjoying the Harpeth.



## SCIENCE FOR CLEAN WATER

Harpeth Conservancy provides science-based conservation for the rivers of Tennessee

### BUILDING A REAL-TIME PREDICTOR OF E.COLI IN WATERWAYS

With the assistance of Dr. Ryan Jackwood, MacKenzie Higgins, senior intern at Harpeth Hall (p. 14), researched ways to use real-time modeling to predict levels of Escherichia coli (E.coli) in the Harpeth River. Currently, swim advisories in waterways are based on traditional sampling that has a 50% accuracy and takes 18-24 hours to complete; therefore, data isn't based on same-day conditions. Real-time modeling accurately predicts E.coli levels immediately reducing the "wait time" for results and increasing the recreational safety. Using information from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and data collected regularly by the Franklin sewer plant, this modeling exercise was effective at forecasting levels of E.coli in realtime and determining the safety of river water. The graph below displays 161 days when E.coli samples were analyzed for the Harpeth River in Franklin and the resultant values predicted by the real-time model for that day. Overall, the realtime model successfully predicted values for E.coli more than 70% of the time.

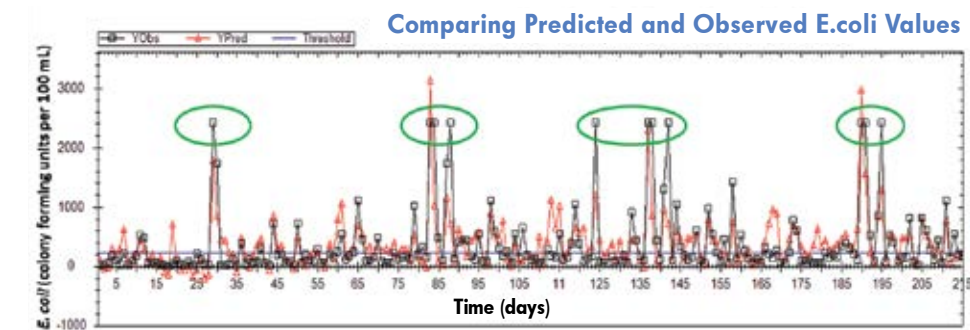
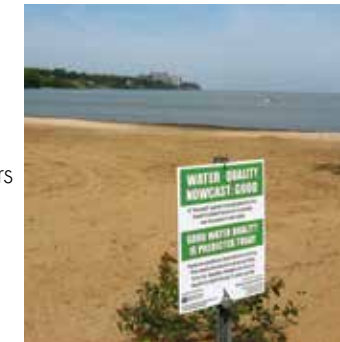


Figure: Comparison of predicted (red lines) and observed (black lines) values of E.coli on sampling days. Blue line is the threshold for recreation - E.coli Beach Action Value (235 CFUs/100 mL of E.coli). Green circles indicate days when E.coli measurements might have been higher but hit the maximum for the lab test used.

### PROVIDING SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP



Dr. Ryan Jackwood presenting Tennessee Rivers: Science, Problems and Ways to Help at the Goodlettsville Public Library.

In addition to being HC's Director of Watershed Science and Restoration, Dr. Ryan Jackwood, is also an Adjunct Professor in the Sustainable Practice Graduate Program at **Lipscomb University**.

Jackwood has given presentations to local, regional and national groups about water quality and river science such as:

- ▶ Water Reporter Training at Brentwood REI
- ▶ New Neighbors League of Nashville
- ▶ Science Club of Nashville
- ▶ Goodlettsville and Madison Libraries
- ▶ Vanderbilt Institute of Energy and Environment
- ▶ Mississippi River Network Annual Meeting
- ▶ TN Stormwater Association Annual Conference
- ▶ River Network Annual Conference

### HARPETH POLLUTION REDUCTION STUDY IN PROGRESS



This February we participated in a key scientific discussion on next steps for the EPA's work to develop the computer model that the stakeholders in the Harpeth River Pollution Reduction Plan, called a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), will use. Dr. Ryan Jackwood presented findings from our Algal Toxin study on the Harpeth. HC funded travel for Dr. Joann Burkholder, national expert in algal growth and toxins, who has worked with EPA on similar nutrient pollution plans in NC. She is the Director of the **Center for Applied Aquatic Ecology** located in the Department of Applied Ecology at **NC State University**. Thanks to **the Harpeth Hotel** for their complimentary room!

We held a Meet & Greet that over 50 people attended at the Harpeth Hotel to hear from Dr. Burkholder about how nutrient pollution drives toxic algal bloom risks that we are working to prevent on the Harpeth.



**Help Report Water Quality Issues and Be Part of Monitoring Studies**

Want to get more involved? Become a citizen scientist with **Water Reporter!**

1. **Download** the FREE Water Reporter App from your Android or iPhone store:
2. **Join** the Harpeth Conservancy's Group which covers all of Tennessee.
3. **Take pictures** of anything suspicious.

<https://tinyurl.com/WaterReporter>

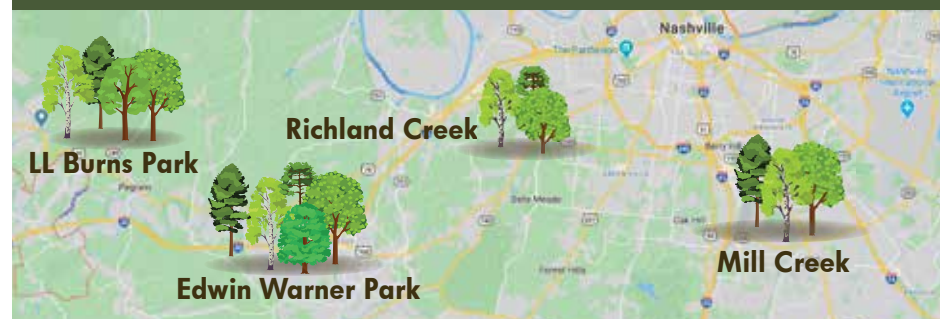


## RESTORING HABITAT ALONG WATERWAYS

Deforestation is one of the world's leading environmental threats. Forests cover 31% of the Earth's surface and **help to mitigate climate change, provide habitats for nearly all land-based species, purify water and air and much more. It is crucial that we take action now and prioritize reforestation.** Trees and other vegetation along a stream bank provide a buffer between the land and water. This buffer is known as the riparian zone and is important along our rivers because **it cleans water, reduces flood damage and property loss, restores groundwater supply and protects biodiversity.**

Here is where we planted seedlings this year:

### 2020 TREE PLANTINGS MAP



**LL Burns Park/Harpeth River:** 175 trees and 100 shrubs  
**Richland Creek:** 38 trees and 12 shrubs  
**Edwin Warner Park/Harpeth River:** 105 trees and 205 shrubs  
**Mill Creek:** 77 trees and 33 shrubs



Vanderbilt's National Leadership Conference students on Mill Creek.

## RIVER CLEANUPS

In 2019, we led **5 cleanups** with over **67 volunteers** from various partner groups, students and community members (**Shout out to Hospital Corporation of America and Turner Construction** corporate groups). Through the efforts of volunteers and funding from **Waste Management, Tennessee Valley Authority and International Paper**, we removed over **2,000 lbs** of trash from YOUR waterways! This does not account for independent cleanups organized by folks like you! Questions on how to run your own cleanup? Give us a call!

**THANKS TO** Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and our volunteers from New Hampshire for funding seedlings from the TN Department of Agriculture-Division of Forestry.



Emory and University of Virginia Students on an alternative spring break planted native trees in Edwin Warner Parks to restore the riparian zone.



### BE RIVER RESPONSIBLE

As a reminder, when YOU get out on the river, Don't Be Crappie! **With support from TVA**, we produced 100 of these signs for river property owners and outfitters. Contact us so these can be deployed across Tennessee at outfitters, marinas, and along highly recreated areas of our waterways.

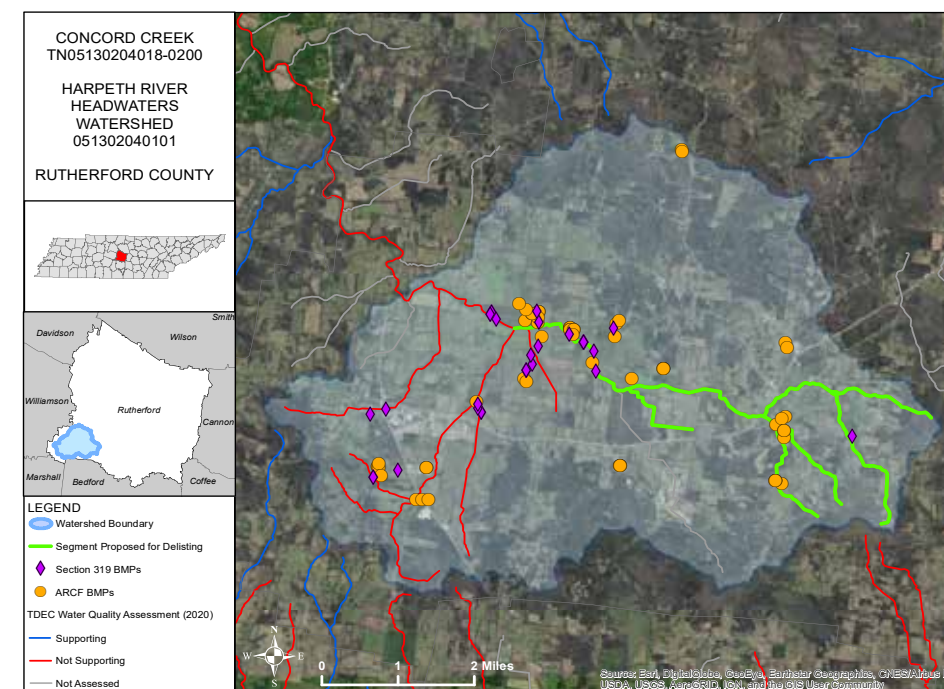


## PLANTINGS

**49** VOLUNTEERS  
**125** VOLUNTEER HOURS  
**775** SEEDLINGS PLANTED

## 20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHTS

### RESTORATION SUCCESS IN CONCORD CREEK!



Map produced by Heidi McIntyre-Wilkinson, Non-Point Source Program, TN Dep't of Agriculture.

A key long-term approach to our restoration work is partnering with farmers and rural property owners and the TN Department of Agriculture to restore streams and improve agricultural production. We have managed **8 state grants** that put over **\$125,000 into restoration projects** around the Harpeth River system in **5 counties** which have leveraged another **\$88,000 in federal Agricultural Resource Conservation Funds**. The types of agricultural practices included **24 livestock heavy use areas** that are designed to reduce erosion, **6 streamside re-vegetation buffer areas**, **675 feet of streambank stabilization projects**, nearly **20,000 feet of livestock exclusion fencing** along streams coupled with **31 watering facilities** with **13,000 feet of pipeline**, **2 water wells** and **3 specific livestock stream crossings**.



This also involved **34 acres of cover crops** and nearly **150 acres of forage and biomass planting** to reduce erosion. Concord Creek, located in Rutherford County in the headwaters of the Harpeth, has officially been delisted for water quality impairments by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. This fantastic success shows our restoration projects are working to improve our rivers and protect clean water.

## 20 YEARS PROTECTING CLEAN WATER AND RIVERS IN TENNESSEE

Secured over **\$1 million in state and federal grants** for projects on developments, rural communities, farms, schools and parks (**50+ projects, 6 counties**) to improve water quality and enhance economic value.

## Co-Creator of the HARPETH RIVER BLUEWAY

with **25+** public non-motorized accesses (official and informal). Harpeth Conservancy **raised \$45,000** and helped write the state permit for hand-built accesses.

HC created the **Don't Be Crappie** campaign and are working with state agencies on recreational issues. This encourages 500,000+ annually who enjoy the Harpeth and other state hotspots to remove their trash, respect private property owners and others enjoying the rivers.



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Join a volunteer project or contact us for advice on how to organize your own!

Clean up after pets and properly dispose of waste (a leading sources of E.coli in suburban and urban streams).

Don't mow up to stream banks in order to maintain a vegetated area for deep roots to prevent erosion.



RURAL LAND PROTECTION



Rural land is rapidly disappearing in middle Tennessee. HC has been involved in growth and development planning for 20 years to preserve our rich history, farmland, waterways and clean water.

HISTORIC VOTE IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY ON LAND USE PLAN

Two historic votes passed the first week of March. Both the Williamson County Planning Commission (8-2) and the County Commission (20-1) voted to adopt the new **Williamson2040 Plan!** Some of the recommendations were 15 years in the making after having not been adopted, even though they were in the 2007 plan. The Williamson2040 Plan has many important recommendations to tackle the projected DOUBLING of the county population in the next 25 years. The tremendous growth in the greater Nashville region has meant the loss of 260,000 acres of rural land since 2002! A core intent of the Plan is to focus the growth around the cities where it is more cost effective to increase infrastructure (think roads and sewer) and to reduce the loss of working farms and rural land. The county's analysis shows significant savings in road costs, traffic trips and schools with the revised Plan.

Now the hard work begins. Key recommendations include that the county and cities develop agreements that set the cities' boundaries that have been upended in recent years as well as the need to develop programs that incentivize maintaining rural land.

Harpeth Conservancy is involved in these efforts, as well as being part of the new Regional Environmental Roundtable just launched by the Greater Nashville Regional Council.

BRINGING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS TOGETHER

We introduced people who have been champions in their areas of the county to form a cohesive network of community members that effectively work with county staff and elected officials and their neighboring communities. They formed **Keep Williamson County Liveable** that HC board member Christian Currey founded to provide a vital network of citizens involved in county decision-making.



Advisory Council member Ginger Shirling in line to register to speak at public meetings.



SEWER OVERFLOWS POLLUTION PROBLEMS THE PUBLIC NEEDS TO KNOW IN REAL TIME

A major hidden and smelly public health risk from the unprecedented growth in the region is untreated sewage that gets into our creeks and rivers during storms from aging sewer lines and other failures. Sewer overflows are prohibited, but occur readily in hotspot areas. Since 2018, over 8.5 million gallons of untreated sewer and rain have overflowed out of manholes into the Little Harpeth from the sewer system in Brentwood.

Nashville, Brentwood and Franklin are some of the cities under legal agreements to invest in extensive and massive upgrades. We are working to require all sewer systems to use a public reporting system like the one we established with Franklin from our settlement agreement so the public gets quick notice via the press, signage at the site and reporting on the website within a few days.

20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

Reviewed more than 100 proposals for permits and responded to pollution problems from chemical contamination of streams to onstruction activities.

CLEAN WATER PROTECTION

Providing expertise to agencies, legislators and elected officials to shape laws and regulatory policies that ensure clean water and healthy rivers for all Tennesseans.

WORKING FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING

With generous support from the Dan and Margaret Maddox Fund and all our donors, we work to preserve clean water and healthy rivers for all Tennesseans. One of the key principles that continues to be undermined is public participation in environmental decision-making. This fundamental imperative seems under particular threat, whether through misuse of the state legislative process or by those seeking to take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to push through questionable permits without adequate public participation.

CHANGING BILLS AT THE LAST MINUTE

During the recently suspended TN General Assembly session for the pandemic, proponents of several pieces of legislation attempted to use loopholes in procedures to pass special-interest legislation that puts the cost on neighbors and the public instead of the businesses. Using a "bait & switch" technique called a "caption bill," legislators changed, at the last minute, a bill (SB2224/HB2206) that was introduced supposedly to shorten the time in which TDEC had to publish actions on its website into a bill to eliminate TDEC's ability to review the design and construction of a critical component of "alternative sewer systems." TDEC would not review the design of the land application component of these types of sewer systems which is a vital part of the treatment system. It is important that this bill not pass in its current form.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC LIMITING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, public hearings on several proposed non-essential permits have been set involving web/internet-based sessions only. HC has focused on the limestone quarry expansion UNDER Richland Creek near the Cumberland River in Nashville and the sand and gravel mine along the Duck River with endangered mussel species at risk in rural Humphreys County. These web-only formats do NOT give the public adequate rights to participate in matters that will change their public health and livelihoods, especially when 46% of rural Tennesseans do not have reliable access to the internet. We are working with TDEC to devise appropriate procedures that both facilitate physical distancing for in-person public meetings and protect the fundamental rights of citizens to participate in their government.

50 YEARS OF CLEAN WATER PROTECTION PROGRAMS BEING UNDERMINED AND CHALLENGED



Photo credit: Stacy Vairen

We are working in statewide and national partnerships with other conservation groups to preserve 50 years of protection of rivers and streams under the Clean Water Act (CWA). National politicians have just issued the "Dirty Water Rule" from the EPA which threatens the drinking water of 3.5 million Tennesseans (over 60%). The U.S. Supreme Court, however, recently upheld a major portion of the CWA related to regulating sewer plants. We held two Clean Water Act information sessions with our partner, Southern Environmental Law Center, last year and will continue this year. Thanks to Puckett's Boathouse and Patagonia for hosting these sessions.

20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

Secured a \$200,000 EPA grant with Franklin, Williamson County and two developments as partners to design local programs to reduce erosion and flooding from stormwater runoff.





## EDUCATION

Rivers in the Southeastern U.S. are the **THIRD** most biodiverse in the world!



AmeriCorps Member, Sarah Haltom, engaging P.E.N. Pals campers in macroinvertebrate activity.

### P.E.N. PALS

P.E.N. Pals (People Exploring Nature Pals) is a summer program created by Metro Parks with Friends of Warner Parks where kids from community centers experience the outdoors in an engaging way, many for the first time. HC conducts water quality lessons to teach campers about what lives in the river and how pollution affects them. This achieves our mission to create a lasting respect for our local environment.



### FAMILY FUN DAY\*

**AUGUST 8, 1-4 P.M.**

**Join us for a fun and educational way to round out the summer!**

Fly-fishing lessons with Jen Ripple, Editor of *DUN Magazine* | Water safety demonstrations | Food & Beverages | Swimming | Kids' Activities



TWRA expert showing children what is in their river!

### LESSONS ON THE RIVER\*

**Exciting Changes!** In 2020, Lessons on the Harpeth will be Lessons on the River. Experts and HC staff will offer a range of lessons related to clean water and the incredible diversity of wildlife found in Tennessee's rivers. These are **HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES** where you can see, touch and taste why clean water matters. Summer events are family/children focused.

DATE	TOPIC
June 13	Macroinvertebrates (cool tiny stuff in the river), water sampling and river bingo
July 25	What's in your River? TWRA will catch fish and other fun stuff!
August	Fly fishing with Jen Ripple, Editor of <i>DUN</i> magazine and nature/water safety
September 8	Water, food & beverages with Pennington Distillery, Little Harpeth Brewing and TomKats Catering
October	Wildlife Photography on the River with John Guider and Tom Boone Thomson
November	Where your drinking water comes from – tour the water plant!
January	Water & small animals – how water affects your dogs, cats and such
February	Legislature, Policy and Advocacy - YOUR voice matters for clean water
March	Birds of the River
April	Composting, Recycling and why it matters
May	Native plants, pollinators, invasive species, fertilizers with Bates Nursery and Curtis Stewart

### CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS\*

**NEW video format educational series.** Join us the 4th Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. The series started in May at our Annual Meeting featuring Accessing and Safety on the Rivers. Look for these upcoming talks:

DATE	TOPIC
June 24	Public Participation in Govt: How the Covid-19 Pandemic could Affect your Voice
July 22	Water Quality and Harmful Algae Blooms- An Increasing Risk during the Summer
August 26	Fertilizers and Soil/Yard Preparations and Nutrient Pollution

*\*All dates, topics and locations are subject to change. Please check our website or Facebook for up to date information.*

### LESSONS ON THE HARPETH

Last summer, **Lessons on the Harpeth** educated over 100 people about the extreme biodiversity of the Southeast. HC partnered with experts from Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere to collect and identify creatures living in the water.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

Last year we had a presence at over **30 community events reaching over 150,000 people (and over 2,000 kids)**. A sampling of the events we attended included:

- ▶ Holiday Gift Wrapping at REI
- ▶ Bell's Bend Farm Day
- ▶ Dancin' in the District
- ▶ Predators Foundation Craft Beer Festival

LET US  
KNOW WHERE  
YOU WANT TO  
SEE US!

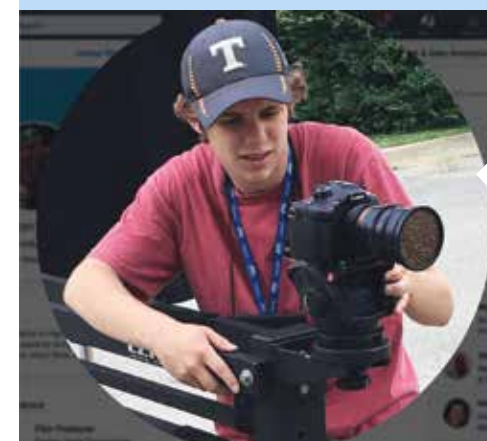
### WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

This is our 5th year as the exclusive Nashville area host of the South Yuba River Citizens League Wild & Scenic Film Festival. Our screening in November at the Belcourt Theatre was our most well-attended yet with almost **150 people!** We featured *Heroes by the Sea*, the first in the Earth Endeavor Series from Landon Rowles, senior at Independence High School. Another 8 short films like *Our Last Trash*, addressing issues around water quality, land preservation and activism were shown. A discussion was held afterward at Double Dogs in Hillsboro Village.



#### Special thanks to our sponsors:

AAA Nashville  
Cumberland Kayak  
Middle Tennessee Electric  
Sharing Change  
Mississippi River Network  
Nantahala Outdoor Center  
Paddle Dog Adventures  
Puckett's Boat House  
Rock City Construction  
Rowles Reels Productions  
Sieveking Plastic Surgery  
The Village Fund  
1 Mississippi



Landon Rowles, film producer at Rowles Reels Productions.

**STAY TUNED FOR the info on the 2020 WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL!**



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS

We are SO thankful for volunteers who work our tabling events, clean-ups, science studies and more. We can't highlight everyone, but wanted to give a shout out to a few stellar volunteers:

#### ANNA BARNES

Anna is on the **Green Team at Nissan North America**. She has participated in many river clean-ups in addition to cleaning up the river with her family, like her son Charlie pictured right, most weekends! She has removed around 100 bags of trash over the past 5 years! She is a great River Swing Committee member doing everything from removing labels from candles, working recycling/composting, gathering auction items including crocheted otters from her mom and SO much more.



#### TOMMYE MADDOX

Tommye is a longtime champion of Harpeth Conservancy's work, as well as of many other causes in Middle TN. We have been lucky to have Tommye's



support of River Swing and the Wild & Scenic Film Festival for many years. She will be leading the River Swing Recycling/Composting efforts

this year offering improvements and educational opportunities, as well as helping select films for this year's Film Festival. Tommye makes suggestions and offers her time and talents to make things better. Tommye (center) with her parents Jim and Jean Maddox.

**We would love to have your help as a volunteer!**

*Special Thanks to Barbara J. Mapp Foundation, Middle Tennessee Electric Sharing Change, Predators Foundation, Memorial Foundation, Colonial Pipeline and Tennessee Valley Authority for providing crucial funding for our wildlife education programs.*





2019 RIVER STEWARD AWARDS

At the Little Harpeth River Fest, we recognized some outstanding individuals for their volunteer efforts throughout the year.

**Laura Louise**, Director of People Exploring Nature (P.E.N. Pals) – *Phenomenal Educator Award*

**Glenn Remick**, Kingston Springs Commissioner – *Community Leader Award*

**Rus Snyder**, fishing guide service Kick Fishing – *Smallmouth is King Award*

**Virginia Waddey**, master gardener – *Special Events Volunteer Award*

**Damon Breckenridge**, HCA Healthcare – *Volunteer Team Lead Award*

**Ross Mohsenzadeh**, HCA Healthcare – *Volunteer Team Award*

**Brian Perrone** – *Restoration Award*

**Wray Estes**, office volunteer and orchid keeper – *Dedicated Volunteer*



NASHVILLE WATERWAYS CONSORTIUM

FIVE ORGANIZATIONS – ONE MISSION

With 250 miles of Nashville’s waterways already in need of repair, the area’s continued rate of growth threatens to place unimaginable demands on our natural water resources, unless we do something today. Visit [www.nashvillewaterways.org](http://www.nashvillewaterways.org) for more information. Harpeth Conservancy founded this collaboration with the Cumberland River Compact, The Nature Conservancy, Richland Creek Watershed Alliance and The TN Environmental Council. The group started with generous support from The **Dan and Barbara Maddox Charitable Fund** and has created murals and the WADE live musical experience with partners The Nashville Walls Project and Metro Arts.

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		<b>Darrell Waltrip</b> , Darrell Waltrip Automotive Group

20

ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

Organized 10,000+ volunteers for 200+ projects in stream restoration, rain gardens that reduce runoff, river cleanups, science and water monitoring projects.

HARPETH CONSERVANCY SENIOR STAFF



**Dorie Bolze**, President & CEO with her dogs Hank, Jr., Sheba and Roxy, cockatiel–Lola, and Mo, the snake. The cat, Lola, refused to pose with the group.



**Jim Redwine**, Vice President & COO and his dog Jinx.



**Ryan Jackwood**, Director of Watershed Science & Restoration Programs and his cat Link.



**Haylee Waddey Hall**, Development Director with her pups, Costa and Allie. Haylee is also Editor of *Voices of the Harpeth* newsletter.

OUR STAFF IN STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP ROLES

- ▶ **Jim Redwine** was appointed by Gov. Haslam as the representative of Environmental Interests on the Water and Wastewater Financing Board. He also coordinates the Tennessee Water Groups, a coalition of conservation organizations.
- ▶ **Dorie Bolze** has led stormwater management work for 20 years. She is recent past Chair of the Williamson County Stormwater Appeals board and has been Vice-Chair of Franklin’s Board.
- ▶ **Dr. Ryan Jackwood** sits on the TN Stormwater Association Board.

NEW FACES AT HARPETH CONSERVANCY

**ANGELA BRYAN - Philanthropy & Membership Manager**  
A longtime community non-profit administrator with more than 20 years’ experience in program development, Angela joined HC in December 2019. With a B.A. in Sociology from Western Kentucky University, she has built a career at multiple nonprofits in Middle TN, including Renewal House, St. Luke’s Community House and FiftyForward. A Cheatham County native, she was raised on the Harpeth River and loves kayaking, hiking and being outdoors. Here with her dog Cutie.



**JANE POLANSKY - Volunteer, Education & Outreach Program Manager**  
Jane joined the HC team in April 2020. Her background as an educator, Park Manager, Scenic Rivers Coordinator, and her years of experience with watershed and river management organizations give her the skills to direct volunteer activities, provide exceptional educational experiences and network across the state with communities and organizations. Jane has a B.S. in Education and Master of Arts in Teaching Degree from Winthrop University. Here with her dog Pinkerton.



**TORNADO RELIEF HIGHLIGHT:**  
As part of their service, AmeriCorps members can be deployed during times of disaster, and the tornadoes of March 3 qualified as such. Once the affected areas were deemed safe, our AmeriCorps went into full-time tornado relief following the tragic storms sorting donations and supplies and organizing volunteers. **#nashvillestrong**



20 ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHT

Senior staff appointed or participated in 20 local and state committees, development and growth plans, stormwater management and state water policy.



## NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS



**AmeriCorps** is a voluntary service program within the U.S. federal government. They help organizations focus on capacity building to meet needs of the community.



**HALEY TUCKER** joined HC in August and serves as Citizen Science and Restoration Coordinator. She works on restoration projects, data analysis, clean water protection and communications. She is from New Orleans and graduated from Sewanee with a BA in Environment and Sustainability and a minor in Politics. She hopes to continue in the environmental field focusing on policy management.



**SAMANTHA ESTES** is in her 2nd term and serves as Restoration Projects and Volunteer Coordinator. She focuses on restoration projects, volunteer management and communications. Originally from outside Philadelphia, she graduated from Berry College with a degree in Biology. She hopes to stay in the Nashville area with Aspen, her rescue pup, and continue protecting our beautiful, natural resources.

**MERIWEATHER BEAN** joined HC in August to serve as the Community Outreach and Education Coordinator. She expands our outreach efforts through community events, educational programs and social media. She moved to Nashville from Jackson, MS where she earned a B.A. in Anthropology at Millsaps College. She is passionate about our community and being connected to our natural world.



**KATIN LIPHART** serves as the Watershed Education and Renewal Coordinator for Richland Creek Watershed Alliance. She focuses on restoration, education and projects in the Richland Creek watershed. She grew up in Hawaii and Wisconsin and graduated from Carleton College with a B.A. in Political Science. She enjoys getting outside with her friends, family, and corgi named Winston.



## INTERNS



**MACKENZIE HIGGINS**, a Senior at Harpeth Hall School, spent last school year performing independent research for HC (see p. 4). This fall she will attend Vanderbilt to study Medicine, Health, and Society, as well as French. She plans to continue conducting research about local rivers.

### SUMMER 2020 INTERNS

look for these smiling faces this summer!

**JAKE PETERS** – Hume Fogg '18 and Williams College '22

**EVANGALINE RAULSTON** – Hume Fogg '17 and Georgia Institute of Technology '21

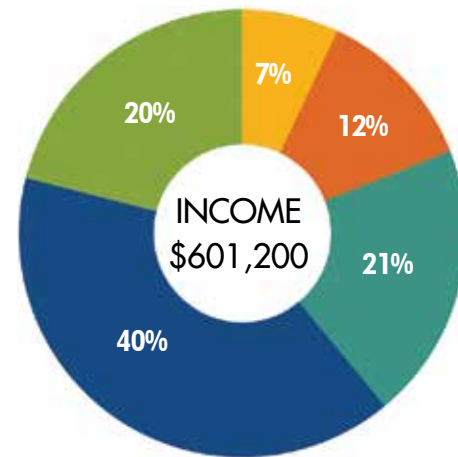
### WHERE ARE LAST YEAR'S INTERNS?

**HANNAH BLACK** will be pursuing a dual MS in Sustainability and MBA Masters degrees at Lipscomb University. She came back to volunteer at River Swing and brought her whole family. We hope to have her help and expertise as a volunteer for many years.

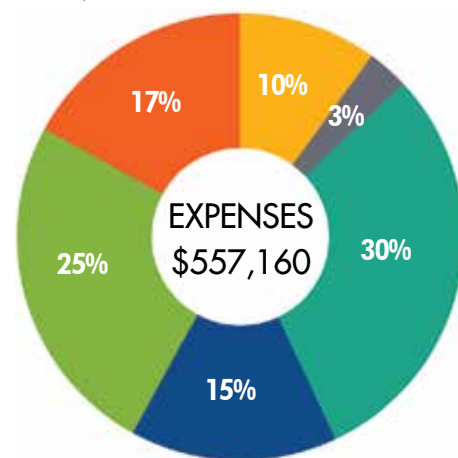
**SETH ADELSPERGER** is entering the Ph.D. program in Geography at Indiana University. He will work on protecting and enabling healthier waterways to promote ecological functioning and biological diversity. He is an avid fisherman and played for the OVC Champions Belmont Bruins basketball team.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Unaudited FYE 2020



- Individual Giving
- River Swing & Events
- License Plate, Government Grants, Other
- Foundations
- Corporate



- Science & Restoration
- Community Engagement
- Fundraising
- Administration
- Clean Water Protection
- Rural Land/Land Use

See our annual audits and financial statements online at our Giving Matters profile ([givingmatters.com](http://givingmatters.com))

**EVERY DOLLAR IS CRITICAL FOR OUR WORK TO PROTECT CLEAN WATER AND OUR RIVERS IN TENNESSEE!** Please start or renew your membership **TODAY.**



## FLOWINGS – A DINNER IN THE CREEK

*Edible Nashville* organized a unique experience with a magical dinner IN the Creek. Fifty guests enjoyed dinner from 1892 in Leiper's Fork and tastings from Leipers Creek Distillery. Flowers were provided from Garden Delights Fine Florists. Hosts Rachael McCampbell and Curtis Stewart each showcased their talents of art and landscaping respectively, while Blessing Offor and Claude Carmichael showcased their vocal talents. Blessing was a contestant on *The Voice* and Claude has recorded with the likes of Billy Joel!

## HARPETH PROTECTION SOCIETY

Harpeth Protection Society includes donors who make annual contributions of \$1,000+. This year, we thanked them along with River Swing sponsors, table hosts and committee members at Gruhn Guitars. Chairs of the Patron Party included George Gruhn, Sara Cohen & Andy Newell and the Gruhn Guitars team, Mary & Hank Brockman and Jennifer Masley & Tom Morales. Ashley Hill, EVP of sponsor, Franklin Synergy Bank, thanked everyone for their support. Colonial Pipeline presented a check for \$10,000 to the organization. TomKats and Acme provided bites for the evening and Lipman Brothers and Little Harpeth Brewing provided beverages.



Ashley & Renee Hill, Sharon Feemster



## RIVER SWING 2020 SAVE THE DATE



Painting by Nashville Artist Rachael McCampbell

**Saturday, September 19th\***  
**RIVER CIRCLE FARM**  
**6:00-10:30 p.m.\***

(or perhaps the entire weekend – stay tuned for COVID compliance)

Entertainment by Joe Andrews (Old Crow Medicine Show), John "JoJo" Hermann (Widespread Panic), Ben Cameron (The Camerons), Tom Landstreet, J.B. Strauss and more!\*

\*Subject to change

## THE BIG PAYBACK & GIVING TUESDAY

Giving for clean water

**#GIVING TUESDAY** This year, there is #givingtuesday and #givingtuesdaynow (because of COVID-19),

as well as Community Foundation of Middle TN's The Big Payback. These events allow us to raise an additional \$15,000+ annually. We are thankful for the over 50 donors who give during these times in addition to the **Barbara J. Mapp Foundation** for matching all donations up to \$15,000 during these giving days. Mark your calendars for **December 1st** for #givingtuesday.







## RECORD BREAKERS!

Most attendance  
**729 guests!**

2nd **BEST** Entertainment  
by *NFocus* magazine!

Highest Gross and Net revenue  
**\$230,000+!**

Best Silent Auction **EVER**  
raised over  
**\$45,000!**



Co-Chairs **Agneta & Brownlee Currey, Kathryn & Christian Currey** and **Patti & Buck Williams** **KNOCKED IT OUTTA THE FIELD** making River Swing 2019 the best one yet! This year kicked off our 20th anniversary with Sen. Jack Johnson and Rep. Brandon Ogles presenting a proclamation from the Tennessee House of Representatives honoring the efforts of Harpeth Conservancy to “diligently seek water quality solutions to improve the streams and rivers in our communities, which are vital for the State’s economic well-being and quality of life.” **A. Marshall Hospitality\*** and **Puckett’s\*** cooked up a **DELICIOUS** dinner and **Lipman Brothers\*** stocked the bars including the Old Hickory Sipping Tea specialty cocktail. There was even a **LIFE-SIZED** heron cake – thanks **Joan Vaughn!** Over 120 silent auction packages included items like a VIP Red Rocks weekend for the Widespread Panic Show\*, a private in-home dinner from TomKats\* chef and beverage packages from folks like Little Harpeth Brewing\*, TC Craft Tequila\* and Yee Haw Brewing\*. **Joe Andrews (Old Crow Medicine Show\*)** assembled a true A+ team including **Ketch Secor (Old Crow Medicine Show\*)**, John “JoJo” Hermann (Widespread Panic\*), **Ben Cameron (The Cameroons\*)**, **Tom Landstreet** and more. Special guests included: JB Strauss\*, Adam Gardner and Quincy Meeks.

*\*During these COVID times, PLEASE support those who support your local non-profits.*



Dan and Lucy McEwen, John and Janie Berry.



Co-Chairs Buck Williams and Christian Currey with Annie Goetze.



Sen. Jack Johnson and Rep. Brandon Ogles reading the TN House Proclamation honoring our 20 yrs of work.

Join us July 31 for a Sunset Skyline Float with Cumberland Kayak (Only \$30/ person and limited to first 20 people!)



## FUNDRAISERS BY FRIENDS

Thanks to the following folks who hosted fundraisers for clean water in our last fiscal year!

- ▶ Buttermilk Sky Pies
- ▶ Cumberland Kayak
- ▶ Franklin Soul
- ▶ Nashville Predators
- ▶ Wild Cow

Let us know if your business would like to host a fundraiser for us.



## THANK YOU

for **YOUR** support of our Rally for Rivers campaign. Thanks to you all, we raised over **\$178,000!** Our water bottle was overflowing with generosity to our work for clean water!

## LEAVE A LEGACY

Our river champions can remember Harpeth Conservancy in their estate planning in a variety of ways, including a charitable bequest, an insurance policy or real estate (and of course, your attorney or tax professional can advise you on the details of different planned giving options). A planned gift of any size allows us to continue to protect clean water and the rivers in Tennessee for generations to come.

## Special Thanks to our 2019 River Swing Sponsors and Partners

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Colonial Pipeline Company

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