



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 21, 2024**

**Harpeth Conservancy applauds Governor Lee’s efforts to protect Tennessee’s Duck River**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.**— On Wednesday, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee took a significant step toward protecting one of our state’s most precious resources by signing [Executive Order 108](#). This order, which aims to protect the Duck River, highlights the importance of balancing economic growth with water resource management and environmental conservation to ensure the sustainability of Tennessee’s watersheds now and for generations to come.

The executive order comes at a time when local water utilities are proposing significant increases in water withdrawals from the Duck River, a waterway renowned as one of the most biodiverse rivers in the world. Recent droughts have placed immense strain on the river, and this summer’s severe drought conditions drove flows to historic lows, jeopardizing aquatic wildlife and threatening the overall health of the river.

This iconic waterway, was listed as one of American River’s [Most Endangered Rivers](#) earlier this year, bringing a spotlight onto the threats it’s facing and a powerful call to action to safeguard this vital waterway.

“The Duck River is not only North America’s most biologically diverse freshwater river, but it is also a vital water source for approximately 250,000 Tennesseans and a cornerstone of our outdoor recreation economy,” said Gov. Lee.

The executive order establishes the Duck River Watershed Planning Partnership, a collaborative initiative tasked with developing water management recommendations, identifying strategies for drought resilience, and fostering engagement with local communities and stakeholders. The Partnership aims to achieve a balanced approach to managing water resources, protecting the environment, and supporting sustainable economic growth.

Harpeth Conservancy applauds the creation of this partnership and its recognition of the Duck River’s unique biodiversity and economic significance. As long-time advocates for clean water and healthy rivers in Tennessee, the Conservancy is committed to supporting collaborative efforts like this that prioritize conservation, enhance water resource management, and promote sustainable growth.

Grace Stranch, Harpeth Conservancy’s CEO, commented by saying, “Governor Lee’s executive order marks a pivotal step forward for the future of the Duck River and Tennessee’s waterways. It sets the trajectory for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to management of our waters that is necessary to keep the balance between growth and sustaining our precious natural resources. Together, with actions like this, our vision of clean water and healthy ecosystems for all

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rivers in Tennessee is closer to fruition. Thank you, Governor Lee, for taking this critical measure on behalf of our rivers and all who rely upon them.”

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## **ABOUT HARPETH CONSERVANCY**

Founded in 1999, Harpeth Conservancy is a science-based non-profit conservation organization. Harpeth Conservancy’s mission is to restore and protect clean water and healthy ecosystems for rivers in Tennessee by employing scientific expertise and collaborative relationships to develop, promote, and support broad community stewardship and action. Harpeth Conservancy’s success is driven by working with landowners, businesses, community, local, state, and federal decision-makers and members to foster solutions that reduce pollution and maintain healthy areas.

To learn more about Harpeth Conservancy, its mission, and its upcoming events, please visit its website at [www.harpethconservancy.org](http://www.harpethconservancy.org).

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