RESTORE & PROTECT DUCK RIVER

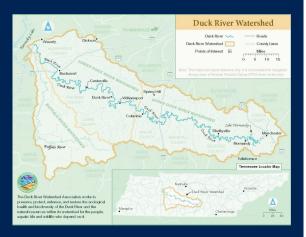
Community Stewardship to Safeguard Tennessee's Watersheds

AT A GLANCE

The Duck River is North America's most biodiverse river and a vital water source for nearly 250,000 Tennesseans. It supports agriculture, industry, and recreation, and is home to endangered fish and mussels found nowhere else on Earth.

Rapid development and increasing water demands threaten the river's ability to sustain both people and wildlife long-term. Overconsumption is outpacing what the Duck can provide.

In response, Governor Bill Lee signed Executive Order 108, establishing the Duck River Watershed Planning Partnership. This effort marks an important step forward, uniting stakeholders to develop collaborative, science-based solutions that protect this irreplaceable river for generations to come.



HARPETH



https://harpethconservancy.org/the-duck-river

Tennessee

THE RIVER



The Duck River winds **284 miles** through **seven counties** in Middle Tennessee. This pearl of Tennessee is home to an astonishing array of wildlife, including **22 aquatic snail species**, **56 mussel species**, and **151 species of fish**. Several of these species are federally listed as threatened or endangered, and some can be found nowhere else on Earth.

The Duck River also holds deep historical significance for Indigenous peoples, including the Muscogee (Creek), Yuchi, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Shawnee, and Seneca Nations, who have long stewarded and depended on these lands and waters.

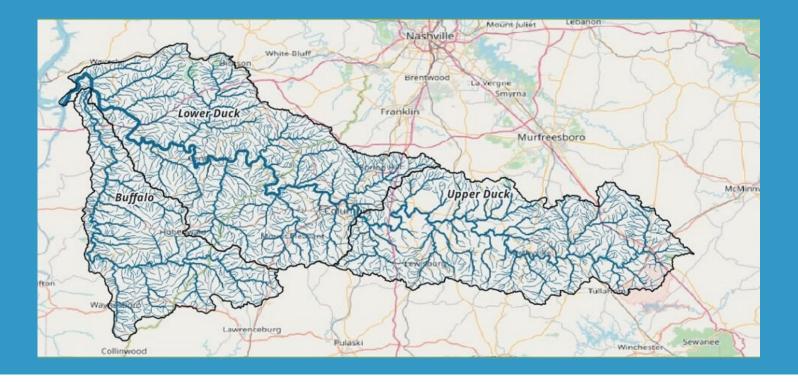
Beyond its ecological & cultural importance, the Duck River is a beloved destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Anglers, boaters, and kayakers flock to its waters each year, contributing to a vibrant and growing outdoor recreation economy. In fact, more than **150,000 people** recreate on the Duck River and its tributaries annually.

The Duck River is also a critical resource for the region's residents. It supplies drinking water to **nearly 250,000 people** and supports the needs of a rapidly growing population and expanding local industries. From its ecological wonders to its everyday utility, the Duck River is truly one of Tennessee's most vital natural assets.

THREATS TO THE DUCK



- Increase in water withdrawals by utilities and industry to keep up with rapid population growth and development
- 2 Development processes lead to more paved surfaces, allowing more stormwater runoff to enter rivers and streams
- Longer and more significant periods of drought and wet weather require long-term planning across the watershed
- Water quality impairments (i.e. nutrient pollution, heavy metals, *E. coli* and microorganisms, erosion)
- Destruction of ecologically sensitive habitats and potential permanent loss of endangered species



THE DUCK RIVER

The Duck River is the most aquatically biodiverse river in North America and one of the top three mussel-diversity hotspots globally.



7 Counties

in Middle Tennessee are connected by the Duck River, supporting local communities, agriculture, and wildlife along its path.

250,000

Tennesseans rely on the Duck River as their primary source of drinking water.

150,000

paddlers, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts visit the Duck River Watershed each year.

Recreational hotspots include Henry Horton State Park (1,140 acres), Shelbyville, Columbia, Pulaski, and Old Stone Fort State Park offering fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and hiking

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Duck River Watershed Planning Partnership

On Nov. 20, 2024, Gov. Lee issued Executive Order 108 which established the DRWPP and provided directives for TDEC, other agencies, and partners acting in the watershed. Gov. Lee placed particular emphasis on regional approaches to water supply and the potential of identifying solutions for the Duck River to be a model for statewide water management and other watersheds in Tennessee.



Grace Stranch, HC's CEO, was named to the DRWPP as chair of one of three working groups tasked with delivering recommendations to the Governor.

GRASSROOTS COALITION

In early 2025, we launched the *Duck River Grassroots Coalition* with organizations, community groups, and community leaders in the watershed to coordinate action and advocacy. The coalition includes the *Duck River Watershed Society*, the *Duck River Conservancy*, and the *Friends of the Duck River*.

Want to learn more and get engaged?

Contact Marie Campbell, Director of Community Engagement, at mariecampbell@harpethriver.org.

To find more information, visit https://harpethconservancy.org/the-duck-river

LEARN MORE HERE

