

Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund

Board Meeting Minutes

July 9th, 2024

Clover Bottom Mansion

2941 Lebanon Pike, Nashville TN 37214

Attendance

Quorum ✓

Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund Board		
Trustee	Representation	Attendance
Phil Poux	West	Present
Mike Frick	West	Present
Angie Box	West	Present
Andrew Goddard	Middle	Present
Bernie Butler	Middle	Absent
Charles Hankla	Middle	Present
Jeremy Nagoshiner	Middle	Present
Larry Zehnder	East	Present
Madge Cleveland	East	Present
Pete Claussen	East	Present
vacant	East	Absent

TDEC Hosts: Bill Avant & Liz Campbell

Guests: Jeff Zentner (TDEC), Greer Tidwell (TDEC), Rick Diamond, Ken Coffee, Lisa Clayton (City of Franklin), Tim Churchill (TWRA), Carol Evans (Legacy Parks), Justine Cucchiara (TDEC), Aaron Reid (TDEC), Christy Henderson (TennGreen), Heather Slayton (DOF), Zachary Luschie-Huie (The Conservation Fund)

Orders of Business

1. Roll Call
2. Review of the Annual Report

Reading of the Minutes

- Motion made to approve the minutes by Zehnder.
- 2nd by Hankla
- Motion to approve is unanimous

NEW Applications

1. Grainger County / City of Bean Station – Bishop Tract for the Veterans Island Park \$125,000, 1.84 acres, Grainger County

Grainger County, in collaboration with the Town of Bean Station and the Grainger County Historic Society, aims to preserve part of the historic 1863 Battle of Bean Station site at Breastworks Island by creating Veterans Island Park. Cherokee Dam, constructed by TVA in 1941, submerged much of the area, but Breastworks Hill remains above water, forming an island. The project requires establishing public access via a lease agreement with TVA and acquiring nearby mainland land, currently owned by David Bishop, totaling 1.84 acres. The estimated project cost is \$250,000, with a funding request of \$125,000 to the Board. Future plans include developing recreational and educational facilities such as a 2,500 ft walking trail, picnic area, park benches, fifteen informational kiosks, a park office, parking spaces, fencing, security lighting, cameras, and Wi-Fi.

- a. Motion to approve by Hankla
- b. 2nd by Cleveland
- c. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$125,000) is unanimous.

**2. City of Franklin – Preserving History: Creekside Historic Corridor
\$4,194,262, 44.53 acres, Williamson County**

The only undeveloped historic gateway in Franklin, TN faced potential development until the Franklin Preservation Partners intervened. Initially threatened with a residential community proposal called Emeline Acres, which included 33 single-family lots and 32 multiplex buildings across 61 acres, the site was eventually purchased by the Preservation Partners in early 2023. The group aimed to preserve the property's open space and historical significance, including landmarks like the Peter Keener Pioneer Home and an old sawmill. With support from the Heritage Foundation of Williamson County, the 61.8-acre tract was secured, and a portion may be sold under conservation easement. The City of Franklin then purchased a 44.53-acre parcel adjacent to the property, using funds from the Hotel-Motel Tax designated for historic land purchases. This acquisition aligns with the city's "Envision Franklin" plan, emphasizing natural beauty preservation and expanding public spaces. The City's ownership includes plans for recreational enhancements such as trails, interpretive signage, and potentially an Equine Museum, in partnership with Friends of Franklin Parks. Management will focus on maintaining ecological health, including creekbank restoration and forestry management, funded through the city's general fund. Future plans may involve public-private partnerships to expand the park's footprint and enhance amenities for residents and visitors alike. This project is specifically aimed at requesting reimbursement for the acquisition of the 44.53-acre parcel adjacent to Franklin's historic gateway. The total project cost amounts to \$4,194,262.00, with the funding request to the Board also totaling \$4,194,262.00. This reimbursement request aligns with efforts to preserve open space and historical heritage in Franklin, ensuring the continued protection and enhancement of the city's natural and cultural assets.

- A. Motion to defer application by Claussen
- B. 2nd Zehnder
- C. Vote to defer application is unanimous. The board wishes to see a more comprehensive plan including project costs.

**3. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency – Somerset
\$137,750, 71 acres, Jackson County**

The TWRA plans to acquire the 71-acre Blackburn Fork-Somerset tract adjacent to the Blackburn Fork Wildlife Management Area (WMA). TennGreen and The Conservation Fund (TCF) have the property under contract for joint pre-acquisition by August 2024, after which ownership will transfer to the State of Tennessee to expand the WMA. Once integrated into the WMA and managed by TWRA, the Somerset tract, which is primarily composed of forested habitat with some open land along Blackburn Fork State Scenic River, will support public recreation, including small game hunting and fishing. The tract features a mix of deciduous forest, evergreen forest, and pasture, and is bordered by approximately 1.25 miles of the Blackburn Fork River or its tributaries. This area is part of the Tennessee Highlands Conservation Partnership's Blackburn Fork/Roaring River/Spring Creek Area of Interest. The property to be acquired spans 71 acres, with a total estimated project cost of \$417,450.00. The request to the Board is to fund \$137,750.00 towards this acquisition.

- A. Motion to approve by Claussen
- B. 2nd by Hankla
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$137,750) is unanimous.

**4. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency – Hastings
\$737,550, 170.01 acres, Rhea County**

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) aims to acquire the 170-acre Hastings tract to expand the Yuchi Refuge at Smith Bend for \$2,200,000, a \$180,000 discount from its fair market value. Once

acquired, the property will be managed by TWRA for public use, including hunting, wildlife watching, and fishing. The Hastings tract is part of the Hiwassee Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), which is crucial for migrating waterfowl and endangered Whooping Cranes and sandhill cranes. The acquisition will prevent negative impacts such as shoreline development and agricultural practices. The Yuchi Refuge – Smith Bend, spanning 2,500 acres, is a diverse habitat along the Tennessee River, known for its bird, wildflower, and butterfly habitats. Acquiring the Hastings tract could encourage the last private owner on the peninsula to sell, further preserving the habitat. TWRA has appraised the property and negotiated the price with the landowners, who are eager to sell. Without this acquisition, the land could be sold for shoreline development, adversely affecting the Hastings tract and the Yuchi Refuge. TWRA is requesting \$737,550 from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to help purchase the Hastings tract, which has an estimated total project cost of \$2,235,000. If funded, the property will be protected with grant-required restrictive covenants and ongoing management costs will be covered by the State of Tennessee. The property is bordered by the Tennessee River to the south, Yuchi Refuge to the west and part of the north, and one private landowner to the east and part of the north.

- A. Motion to approve by Cleveland
- B. 2nd by Box
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$737,550) is approved unanimously

5. **Legacy Parks / Seven Islands State Birding Park – Dorsey**
\$310,000, 134 acres, Knox County

The acquisition of two islands adjacent to Seven Islands State Birding Park in east Knox County aims to expand the park and protect critical habitat. This initiative includes three islands, three homes, and 19,000 feet of river frontage along the French Broad River's south shore. The Claussen properties, which border the river and Seven Islands Road, hold significant historical structures like the Peter Keener Pioneer Home and an 1800 Farmhouse, alongside steamboat landings and remnants of a sawmill and store. Ecologically, the area boasts over 40 fish species and 220 bird varieties, including nesting bald eagles, making it regionally diverse. Legacy Parks Foundation will acquire the properties in collaboration with Foothills Land Conservancy and Seven Islands Foundation, aiming for permanent conservation before transferring them to the State of Tennessee. Managed by Seven Islands State Birding Park, the properties will support scientific research, habitat conservation, interpretive programming, and trail system expansion, including recreational backcountry camping. Plans also include hiking trails, river access, and a pedestrian bridge for enhanced park connectivity and biodiversity protection. The total project cost is estimated at \$2,080,000, with a funding request of \$310,000 to support acquisition and initial conservation efforts. This acquisition aligns with local planning strategies emphasizing rural character preservation and enhancing natural areas, as outlined in the Knoxville-Knox County Planning 2017 East Knox County Community Plan and the French Broad River Corridor Study. It supports Advance Knox's 2024 Comprehensive Plan, prioritizing conservation, and recreation in East Knox County's long-term land use policies.

- A. Claussen & Cleveland recuse their voting privileges
- B. Motion to approve by Zehnder
- C. 2nd by Goddard
- D. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$310,000) is approved unanimously

6. **Savage Gulf State Park – TIR**
\$689,400, 658 acres, Grundy County

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) aims to acquire the approximately 658-acre Savage Gulf – TIR tract to expand Savage Gulf State Park. TennGreen Land Conservancy (TennGreen), The Conservation Fund (TCF), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) plan to jointly acquire the tract at Fair Market Value and transfer ownership to the State of Tennessee. This inholding within Savage Gulf State Park lies within the Middle Cumberland Plateau Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), known for its diverse aquatic and karst features, including numerous caves. It supports state species of Greatest Conservation Need, such as the federally endangered Bluemask Darter, and aligns with goals to increase

habitat under permanent conservation management. The Savage Gulf Area of Interest, identified by the Tennessee Highlands Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF), underscores the importance of acquiring inholdings to enhance the park's conservation value. The TIR tract features over one mile of streams flowing into the Collins State Scenic River, classified as a Class II Pastoral River Area, known for its unique underground flow patterns. Upon acquisition by TDEC, the tract will be managed alongside Savage Gulf State Park's existing amenities, including waterfalls, scenic vistas, hiking trails, and campgrounds. Negotiations between TennGreen, TNC, TCF, and TIR are progressing towards a contract, with acquisition targeted for August/September 2024. TDEC seeks \$689,400 (33% of project costs) from THCTF to support acquisition, with additional funding efforts underway. The property, surrounded on three sides by Savage Gulf State Park, promises to enhance regional conservation efforts and public enjoyment upon integration into the park's management framework.

- A. Motion to approve Zehnder
- B. 2nd by Goddard
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$310,000) is unanimous

**7. TennGreen / Head of the Crow State Park – Keeble
\$591,850, 600 acres, Franklin County**

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) plans to acquire the approximately 600-acre Head of the Crow - Keeble tract to establish the newly proposed Head of the Crow State Park. TennGreen Land Conservancy (TennGreen), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and The Conservation Fund (TCF) intend to pre-acquire the property and transfer it to the State of Tennessee for management by TDEC. This initiative aligns with Governor Lee's goal to establish eight new state parks. The Head of the Crow - Keeble tract is located within the South Cumberland Plateau Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) as defined by the Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). This region features forests interspersed with karst habitats, supporting unique species threatened by unsustainable forestry practices and development. Increasing habitat under permanent conservation management is a key goal in this COA to enhance habitat connectivity. Surrounded by protected lands including South Cumberland State Park, Bear Hollow Mountain Wildlife Management Area, and others, the Keeble tract enhances a corridor of conservation. It scores high in TNC's Resilient Land Mapping Tool for climate flow and local connectedness, crucial for species movement and landscape connectivity. TDEC seeks \$591,850 (33% of project costs) from the Tennessee Highlands Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to acquire the tract, with additional funding efforts underway. Once integrated into Head of the Crow State Park, ongoing management and restoration costs will be covered by the state. The property's protection will be ensured through grant-required restrictive covenants if funded by THCTF. Negotiations with landowner Peter Keeble are progressing, aiming for acquisition in August/September 2024, with TDEC's acquisition from NGOs expected nine months thereafter. The tract is bordered by forested tracts to the west and south, with smaller privately-owned tracts to the east.

- A. Motion to approve Cleveland
- B. 2nd Zehnder
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$591,850) is unanimous

**8. Tennessee Department of Forestry – Ames Forest
\$16,950,000, 5,477 acres, LaGrange County**

Ames State Forest is a 5,477-acre fee acquisition project led by the TN Division of Forestry (DOF) in partnership with The Conservation Fund (TCF) to establish a new state forest in Western Tennessee. The forest is located along the Wolf River, an area known for its bottomland hardwoods and timber industry, supporting a \$21.7 billion industry in Tennessee. The project aims to preserve the forest, which connects 52,000 acres of conserved lands, protects 30 miles of streams and over 1,500 acres of wetlands, and provides a crucial drinking water supply for 2.8 million people in Memphis. The forest is a well-managed, diverse habitat with significant hardwood resources, including 4 million board feet of white oak. It will support local sawmills and the forest industry while providing public recreation opportunities such as

hiking, hunting, fishing, and boating. The forest also serves as a research and education site for the University of Tennessee, particularly in forestry, wildlife, archaeology, and cultural history. The project aligns with various conservation and recreation plans, such as the Tennessee Outdoors Vision 2023, and supports state and local economic impact through outdoor recreation, which directly supports 188,000 jobs in Tennessee. The forest provides habitat for 17 terrestrial and 5 aquatic species of state interest and contains significant archaeological and historical sites, including cemeteries and dwellings of enslaved people. The TN DOF is requesting \$16,950,000 from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to acquire the property from the Hobart Ames Foundation. TWRA has committed \$1,500,000 from the TWRA Wetlands Fund, and The Conservation Fund is supporting the project through private fundraising and grants. The total estimated project cost is \$24,300,000. If funded, the property will be encumbered with grant-required restrictive covenants to ensure its protection and management.

A, Motion to approve under the condition that the Department of Forestry applies for the Forest Legacy Funding

B. 2nd by Cleveland

C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$16,950,000) is unanimous

Closing

9. Public Comment Period – no comments