

Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund

Board Meeting Minutes

October 14th, 2025 12:00pm

Clover Bottom Mansion

2941 Lebanon Pike, Nashville TN 37214

Attendance

Quorum 

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

TDEC Hosts: Bill Avant, Benjamin Adams, Amanda Latham, Heather Iverson,

Orders of Business

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Reading of the minutes
4. Budget Review
5. Report items
6. Review of grant applications
7. Public comment period
8. Adjournment

Reading of the Minutes

- Changes to July 8, 2025 minutes to include the following change:
 - “Bryson agreed that HCTF funds should be applied for after other funding sources have been attempted” will be replaced with: “Bryson indicated that HCTF funds generally should be applied for after other funding sources have been attempted.”
- a. Michael Frick motioned to approve minutes with the above listed changes.
 - b. 2nd by M. Cleveland
 - c. Vote is unanimous and motion carries.

Budget Review:

- Four applications are questionable as to still requiring funding from HCTF
 - TennGreen/NPS – Clear Creek - Brewer
 - TLT – Gordon Farm
 - TDEC-TSP/BF - Luke
 - City of South Pittsburg- Happy Hollow Vista – a newer application and needs more confirmation
- These projects may be removed from the list due to a variety of reasons/issues.

- The projects being presented total more than what HCTF budget will allow.
- A change in procedure was made to allow for budget constraints
- Board will hear presentations and vote no or defer at that time then leave remaining projects to be voted on at the end of the meeting.

Report Items

1. Update Grainger County - structure on the property
 - Motion to allow group to demolish structure on property as it is not feasible to be remodeled or saved by M. Frick
 - Seconded by C. Hankla
 - The motion carried unanimously.
2. Jones Tract Funding to show up at state closing
 - Motion to allow NGO/Nature Conservancy to arrange approved funds as needed for closing by P. Claussen
 - Seconded by M. Cleveland
 - The motion carried unanimously.
3. Kingsport TN – request to not require a survey
 - Surveyors were contacted by NGO but were advised that no surveyors would be available until the first months of 2026 and that a survey would likely not be needed.
 - a. Motion to allow applicants to continue with contract as is with no formal survey required by M Frick.
 - b. Seconded by M Bittel.
 - c. The motion carried unanimously.

Review of New Applications

1. TennGreen Land Conservancy - Lea / Buchanan Homeplace Farm - revisit

The TennGreen Land Conservancy seeks \$485,000 from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to protect the 174-acre Lea Homeplace Farm with a conservation easement. This significant property, adjacent to Cedars of Lebanon State Park, is crucial for the conservation of endangered bat species, including the Indiana bat and the Tricolored bat. Lea Homeplace Farm provides critical habitat for these species within a rapidly developing region. The proposed conservation easement will allow the Lea family to continue limited agricultural and forestry activities while permanently protecting the land from development. This project aligns with several conservation priorities, including the State Wildlife Action Plan and the Interior Low Plateau Cedar Glades Conservation Opportunity Area. Securing this conservation easement will safeguard valuable natural resources and contribute to the long-term health of the Cedars of Lebanon ecosystem.

Originally presented in January 2025. Motion made and approved to defer with the desire to see a more comprehensive plan including what type of home is to be allowed and commercial logging plans.

Total estimated project cost: \$1,466,800

Request: \$485,000

33%

- One residence may be built but shall not exceed two stories in height
- The future residence must be located in a delineated Building Envelope not to exceed two acres and all impervious surfaces (e.g., pool, sheds, parking areas) must not exceed 15% of the Building Envelope

- One barn and old silo reside on the property and can be maintained, replaced, and renovated
 - Forest and habitat management must adhere to a Land Management Plan (LMP), approved by TennGreen, and reviewed and updated every five years.
 - The LMP must adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Enhance or maintain healthy, vigorous, and resilient forests
 - Promote diversity of forest age classes and structures
 - Conserve and protect soil and water
 - Maintain or improve wildlife habitat
 - Commercial timber harvest is not allowed.
 - Division/Partitioning: Property shall stay in one legal ownership
 - Agricultural structures (e.g., barns) may be built solely for agricultural purposes.
 - Agricultural activities must meet NRCS standards and be conducted in a manner that sustains soil health, water quality, and ecological integrity.
 - No high-density feed lots or commercial slaughter/animal processing.
- a. Motion made to approve as presented and award \$485,000.00 by M. Frick
 - b. Seconded by M. Cleveland
 - c. Vote is unanimous and motion carries.

2. Town of Coalmont – Pryor & Pryor Tract

The Town of Coalmont currently owns and operates the 1,766-acre Coalmont OHV Park in Grundy and Marion Counties, offering a range of off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails, primitive and RV camping, and access to the scenic Cumberland Plateau. Established to generate economic activity and attract visitors from across Tennessee and neighboring states, the park has already become a regional destination since opening in March 2023. The Town has invested in infrastructure such as public water, electricity, and a centralized campground, and it is now working to broaden recreational opportunities by considering additional trail types and user groups. With conservation as a guiding principle, Coalmont envisions expanding the park while protecting the natural landscapes of the Sewanee Gulf and surrounding areas.

A fee simple purchase option is in place for an additional 881 acres adjoining the park's western boundary. This rugged, forested property overlooking the Sewanee Gulf will be redeveloped with looping OHV trails, hiking paths, scenic overlooks, and interpretive signage, designed to minimize environmental impacts. Managed by the Coalmont OHV Park Board, a volunteer-led group committed to conservation, the expanded park will follow the established business plan and be sustained through user fees. However, these revenues are not sufficient to fund expansion, making support from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund essential. If awarded, the new property will be placed under a conservation easement like the existing tract, advancing both the Town's and the State's long-term conservation and recreation goals while enhancing local economic opportunities.

Total estimated project cost: \$3,736,400

Request: \$3,736,400

100%

- 50% Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant has been applied for but not yet guaranteed- this would be served later as a reimbursement to HCTF.
 - Much work is done in house and by volunteers.
- a. Motion to defer to next meeting 1/13/26 by J Nagoshiner
 - b. Seconded by M Bittel
 - c. The motion carried unanimously.

A 10-minute recess was called at 1:20 pm, meeting reconvened at 1:30 pm

3. Legacy Parks – Southshore Pedestrian Bridge

The proposed pedestrian bridge connecting Seven Islands State Birding Park's Newman Island to the south shore of the French Broad River would be a transformative addition to the park. By spanning the river, it would directly link park lands on both sides, providing safe and scenic access for residents of Sevier, Knox, and Blount counties. The bridge would strengthen trail connectivity, expand recreational opportunities, and open underutilized lands for public enjoyment, environmental education, and wildlife management. It would also improve efficiency for park staff, eliminating the current 30-minute one-way drive required to access land across the river.

Beyond access, the bridge project is tied to the donation of 146 acres that include three islands, historic homes, and more than four miles of river frontage. These lands are ecologically and culturally rich, with nationally recognized biodiversity, historic structures dating to the early 1800s, and remnants of steamboat landings and sawmills. Legacy Parks Foundation, in partnership with Foothills Land Conservancy and Seven Islands Foundation, will conserve and convey these properties to the State of Tennessee for inclusion in the park. Managed for research, conservation, interpretation, and recreation, the new lands will balance growing public use with expanded wildlife habitat. Legacy Parks Foundation will construct and donate the bridge, ensuring it blends with the natural landscape while the state oversees long-term care and maintenance. This project represents a major step forward in fulfilling the park's vision of accessibility, conservation, and cultural preservation.

Total Project Cost: \$12,700,000

Request: \$7,700,000

61%

- Have other sources like TDOT been tapped for funding due to pedestrian bridge?
- Construction will not begin until all funding is identified and "in hand". If a gap occurs, NGO will fundraise themselves.
- This is not to exceed \$7,700,000.
- HCTF will fund as progression grants and not all at once. This is a reimbursement paid by HCTF once paid invoices are received and processed.

- a. Motion made to approve as presented by M. Cleveland
- b. Seconded by M. Frick
- c. Chairman D. Goddard chose to recuse
- d. P. Claussen chose to recuse
- e. The motion carried with five remaining votes.

4. Tennessee River Gorge Trust – Stolpmann Tract

The Tennessee River Gorge Trust (TRGT) has the opportunity to acquire 146 acres of undeveloped land that would secure a 3-mile stretch of conserved property within the upper Tennessee River Gorge. Known as the Stolpmann property, this tract has long been a conservation priority due to its intact mature forests, interior wetland, tributary stream, and forested riverbank, as well as its location within the viewshed of the Cumberland Trail and Tennessee River Blueway Network. With nearby residential development encroaching, the aging landowners have expressed concern about the future of their land, making this acquisition

especially timely. The property already serves as a research site for a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and TWRA project on the declining wood thrush, and it supports a wide array of conservation-priority species, including multiple state-listed plants and birds.

Ecologically diverse, the site encompasses oak-hickory forest, calcareous and acidic cliff habitats, remnant grasslands, riparian buffers, and a shortleaf pine forest component. Its wetland areas provide breeding habitat for salamanders, while its grassland patches present restoration opportunities for species of concern. Bird surveys have documented cerulean warblers, blue-winged warblers, and other imperiled species, underscoring its role as a critical migratory stopover. Future stewardship by TRGT will emphasize habitat conservation, ecological restoration, historic preservation, and public engagement. Plans include guided hikes, birdwatching events, and ongoing ornithological research, ensuring that the property contributes to both regional conservation goals and community connection to the Gorge.

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$1,718,500

Request: \$850,000

49%

- Presenter stated total estimated project cost could approach \$2.5 million.
- a. A motion was made by M Frick to approve funding for the project at 33% of the total cost, with a maximum contribution not to exceed \$850,000, acknowledging that the total project cost has not yet been finalized.
 - b. Seconded by M. Cleveland
 - c. Vote is unanimous and motion carries.

5. Wolf River Conservancy – Briggs Tract

The Wolf River #1 conservation acquisition is a collaborative effort by Wolf River Conservancy (WRC), Ducks Unlimited (DU), and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) to permanently protect 747 acres of bottomland hardwood forest and wetlands in Fayette County, Tennessee. Secured through a competitive bidding process against a logging interest, this property adds 2.75 miles of Wolf River frontage and connects over 5,800 acres of conservation lands along 14 miles of continuous river corridor. The site holds exceptional ecological value, falling within multiple conservation priority areas identified by TWRA, HCTF, and the State Wildlife Action Plan. Its protection will enhance flood storage, water quality, and aquifer recharge for the Memphis Sand Aquifer, the primary drinking water source for over one million people. The acquisition also safeguards rare and threatened species such as the fatmucket mussel, piebald madtom, and alligator snapping turtle, while ensuring habitat for over 200 bird species, including prothonotary warblers.

Beyond its ecological benefits, the property offers recreational opportunities for hunting, fishing, paddling, and birdwatching, while protecting high-quality mature forests of oak, hickory, and cypress. Its proximity to growing development pressures, including Ford's Blue Oval City, makes conservation of this tract urgent to prevent subdivision and poor-quality logging. WRC will temporarily hold the property until it is transferred to TWRA for incorporation into the Wolf River Wildlife Management Area, where it will be managed for wildlife conservation and public use. Supported by \$2.65 million from HCTF, this acquisition represents a critical step in expanding the Wolf River conservation corridor, protecting water resources, and enhancing both ecological resilience and recreational access in western Tennessee.

Total estimated project cost: \$2,678,500

Request: \$896,333 – 33% from HCTF with

HCTF bridge financing of \$1,785,666 – 66% later to be paid by Wetlands Funds and SLAF at 33% each

- a. Motion made to defer to next meeting 1/13/26 by M. Bittel
- b. Seconded by J. Nagoshiner
- c. Vote is unanimous and motion carries.

6. The Conservation Fund – Just Justifying LLC Tract

The Beaman Park Forest Protection–Land Acquisition Project is a collaborative conservation initiative led by The Conservation Fund (TCF) in partnership with Metro Nashville Parks, the Alliance to Preserve Nashville's Highland Rim Forest, and TennGreen Land Conservancy. The project seeks to acquire an approximately 308-acre property in Davidson County adjoining the 2,370-acre Alvin G. Beaman Park. TCF will purchase and temporarily hold the property before transferring it to the City of Nashville for permanent management and protection. TCF has requested \$1,669,822 from the Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF) to support the acquisition, with an additional \$1.95 million to be secured from other public and private funding sources.

This acquisition represents a critical opportunity to protect one of Tennessee's most ecologically significant forested landscapes. The property lies within the Western Highland Rim Forest, a region facing increasing pressure from fragmentation and development. The tract provides valuable wildlife habitat, scenic views, and recreational opportunities, while contributing to water quality and climate resilience through its inclusion in the Lower Cumberland Sycamore Watershed. By securing this property, TCF and its partners will safeguard one of the nation's largest urban forest ecosystems, improve emergency access for park operations, and enhance community health through expanded access to natural spaces. TCF anticipates going under contract in late 2025, completing due diligence and closing by mid-2026, after which the land will be transferred to Metro Parks within a year for long-term management as part of Beaman Park.

Total estimated project cost: \$3,622,927
Request: \$1,669,822
46%

- a. Motion to approve funding at 33% equal to \$1,087,076.00 by M. Frick
- b. 2nd by C. Hankla
- c. Vote is unanimous and motion carries.

7. Memphis River Parks – Flyway Project Gap

The Mississippi River has long shaped the culture, economy, and heritage of Memphis, where 263 miles of the river define Tennessee's western border. While historically underutilized and largely privately owned along its lower stretches, Memphis has transformed its riverfront in recent years into a nationally recognized system of 11 connected parks spanning five miles. Anchored by the \$61 million Tom Lee Park—recipient of multiple national and international awards—this riverfront renaissance has drawn millions of visitors, fostered biodiversity through habitat restoration, and created a \$7 billion river economy. Rooted in the city's rich history, from Native heritage to Civil War battles and the civil rights movement, the revitalized riverfront also honors local hero Tom Lee, whose 1925 rescue of 32 people remains one of Memphis's defining stories.

Building on this momentum, the Memphis River Parks Partnership proposes The Flyway, a one-of-a-kind observation deck rising 12 stories above the Mississippi. Designed by renowned landscape architect Kate Orff, The Flyway will serve as both an ecological and recreational landmark, offering sweeping views of one of the world's most important bird migration corridors while adding new riparian habitat. Positioned to attract 1.3 million visitors annually and generate an estimated \$66.8 million in tourism revenue, The Flyway will be a free, ADA-accessible public asset that cements Memphis as the gateway to experiencing America's most storied river. Protected in perpetuity for public access, the project aligns with regional sustainability and conservation goals while elevating Memphis as a model for urban riverfront design.

Total Project Cost: \$10,800,000

Requested: \$1,000,000 in addition to the original request.

- a. Motion made to approve by M. Frick
- b. Seconded by C. Hankla
- c. Vote is unanimous and motion carries.

Closing

Public Comments

- No public comments were made.

Other Business

- Six board members' terms expire 10/31/25.
 - Each will be contacted by the Governor's office for reappointment soon.
- Board members proposed moving future meeting start time to 11:00 a.m. to avoid Nashville traffic.

Adjournment

@4:00 pm