

Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund

Board Meeting Minutes

January 14th, 2025

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	Present
Andrew Goddard	Middle	Present
Bernie Butler	Middle	Present
Charles Hankla	Middle	Call in
Jeremy Nagoshiner	Middle	Present
Larry Zehnder	East	Present
Madge Cleveland	East	Present
Pete Claussen	East	Present
Michael Bittel	East	Present

TDEC Hosts: Bill Avant, Liz Campbell & Amanda Latham

Guests: Kristen Hanratty (TennGreen), Christy Henderson (TennGreen), Tim Churchill (TWRA), Megan Krager (Bay's Mtn Park), Gabrielle Lynch (The Nature Conservancy), Heather Slayton (DOF), Scott Smith (DOF), Brian 3Hewitt (DOF), Zachary Lesch-Huie (The Conservation Fund), David Blackwood (WTRBA), Andrew Kiepe, (Memphis River Parks).

Orders of Business

1. Roll Call
2. Reading of the minutes
3. Review of the budget and project completions
 - A. Approx. 9,099 acres protected by the board in 2024.
 - B. 24 projects approved in 2024, 3 projects were cancelled by the applicant.
4. A request was made to include the available balance in the financial report shared with board members.
5. Claussen makes motion to allow TDEC to extend the grant contracts by 1 year without additional approval from the boards as long as no other changes or staff concerns apply.
6. 2nd by Frick
7. Unanimously approved with the amendment that a notification is shared with the board via email that an extension has occurred.
8. Richard's agenda item has been postponed until April meeting.

Reading of the Minutes

- Nagoshiner motions to amend the minutes to include discussion about advertising the call for applications to a broader audience and considerations of leveraging state funding with other sources of state funding.
- 2nd by Bittel
- Vote is unanimous.

Agenda Items:

1. Review of the budget and project completions
 - A. Approx. 9,099 acres protected by the board in 2024.

- B. 24 projects approved in 2024, 3 projects were cancelled by the applicant.
2. A request was made to include the available balance in the financial report shared with board members.
 3. Contract Extension template shared.
 - Claussen makes motion to allow TDEC to extend the grant contracts by 1 year without additional approval from the boards as long as no other changes or staff concerns apply.
 - 2nd by Frick
 - Unanimously approved with the amendment that a notification is shared with the board via email that an extension has occurred.
 4. Richard's agenda item has been postponed until April meeting.

NEW Applications

1. Gibbs Tract - Bay's Mtn Park / The City of Kingsport \$105,000, 38.68 acres, Hawkins County

Bays Mountain Park wishes to acquire a 38.68-acre property in Hawkins County, formerly owned by the Gibbs family. This acquisition is crucial for the park's long-term goal of fully protecting the Laurel Run Watershed, a vital tributary to the Holston River. For over 20 years, the park has sought this land, and the Gibbs family is now willing to sell to the City of Kingsport. This purchase will ensure a clean water supply, improve water quality, protect aquatic habitats, and maintain the hydrological integrity of the region. Beyond watershed protection, the Gibbs property offers significant scenic and strategic advantages. It boasts a 30-foot waterfall, forested landscapes, and panoramic views, enhancing the park's aesthetic and recreational value. Critically, acquiring this land will provide direct vehicle access from Bays Mountain Road to the park's western section, eliminating the current reliance on private landowners for access to trails like Laurel Run Trail and Kiner Hollow. This improved access will enable faster emergency response times and more efficient perimeter monitoring. Future plans include assessing the property for light recreational uses like hiking and backcountry camping. The park, a Class I Natural Area managed by the City of Kingsport, will fund the property's maintenance and operation through its existing yearly budget.

- A. Motion to approve by Frick.
- B. 2nd by Box
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$105,000) is unanimous.

2. Lea / Buchanan Homeplace Farm – TennGreen Land Conservancy \$485,000, 174 acres, Wilson County

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.

- A. Motion to defer application by Nagoshiner
- B. 2nd by Claussen
- C. Vote to defer application is unanimous. The board wishes to see a more comprehensive plan including what type of home is to be allowed and commercial logging plans.

3. Stoltzfus Tract – Big Hill Pond – TennGreen Land Conservancy \$890,000, 1261.35 acres, McNairy & Hardeman County

The Hatchie River Conservancy contacted TennGreen Land Conservancy in late 2024 regarding the imminent auction of over 1,000 acres of land along the Hatchie River. This significant property, adjacent to

Big Hill Pond State Park, presents a unique opportunity for conservation and public recreation. Recognizing the ecological and public importance of this property, TennGreen, The Conservation Fund (TCF), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) collaborated to secure the property outside of the auction. This collaborative effort was crucial, as the auction would likely have resulted in the fragmentation of this valuable land. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) is interested in acquiring and managing the property as a new Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The property possesses exceptional ecological value. It contains significant wetland habitats, diverse forests, and over eleven miles of the meandering Hatchie River, a renowned State Scenic River. This project aligns with numerous conservation plans, including the State Wildlife Action Plan, the Southeast Conservation Blueprint, and the Heritage Conservation Trust Fund's Areas of Interest. Securing this property will safeguard critical habitat, protect the Hatchie River ecosystem, and provide valuable opportunities for public recreation and wildlife viewing.

- A. Motion to approve by Nagoshiner
- B. 2nd by Box
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$890,000) is unanimous.

4. Hubbard's Cave – Wanamaker Tract – The Nature Conservancy
\$500,000, 210 acres, Warren County

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) seeks funding from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to acquire 210 acres of land surrounding Hubbard's Cave, significantly expanding the existing 50-acre preserve. Hubbard's Cave, renowned for its massive bat populations, including federally endangered species like the gray bat and Indiana bat, is a critical site for bat conservation in Tennessee. This project aligns with the THCTF strategy to acquire land surrounding Hubbard's Cave to enhance bat habitat. Expanding the protected area will benefit not only bats but also other wildlife, including rare plant species. The proposed acquisition will also enhance the ecological integrity of the surrounding watershed and protect valuable cultural resources associated with the cave, including evidence of prehistoric and historic human use. This project will contribute significantly to the conservation of this unique and irreplaceable natural and cultural resource in Tennessee.

- A. Motion to approve by Cleveland
- B. 2nd by Frick
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$500,000) is unanimous. The board would like to review the DNA conservation easement & restrictions. Discussed the forest management plan to prioritize the bat habitat rather than a timbering forest. The board also recognizes this as part of a larger concept of the project in consideration of the % of the project cost.

5. Jones Tract / South Fork Forked Deer/South Jackson – The Nature Conservancy
\$1,384,250, 944+ acres, Madison County

The West Tennessee River Basin Authority (WTRBA) seeks funding from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to acquire the Jones Family Trust property, a significant block of bottomland forest in the South Fork Forked Deer River (SFFD) watershed. The SFFD watershed in and around Jackson, Tennessee, faces severe environmental challenges, including frequent flooding, poor water quality, and habitat loss. The acquisition of the Jones Family Trust property will enable WTRBA to implement a multi-benefit floodplain restoration project, including river channel restoration, floodplain reconnection, and bottomland hardwood forest restoration. This project will improve water quality, reduce flood risk, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide new recreational opportunities for the residents of Jackson. This project aligns with the goals of the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund by addressing critical environmental issues within the South Fork Forked Deer River watershed. The acquisition and restoration of the Jones Family Trust property will contribute to a healthier river ecosystem, improve the quality of life for local residents, and create a valuable public resource for generations to come.

- A. Motion to approve by Claussen
- B. 2nd by Frick
- C. Vote to approve as amended:

The board approves 40% of the total project cost (\$1,107,400). The board additionally approves 10% bridge loan (\$276,850) from HCTF to The Nature Conservancy with 0% interest for one year beginning from closing date. Board also wishes to document that plans are in place to add \$4-6 million dollars in facilities and amenities to the property. These enhancements are expected to increase the property's value significantly reducing the percentage of funding requested of the board at the time of proposal. (Currently 50%).

6. Elder Tract – TWRA

\$330,000, 285+/- acres, Dyer County

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) seeks \$330,000 from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to acquire a 285-acre property known as the Elder tract. This acquisition aims to expand the adjacent Tigrett Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and enhance wildlife habitat and public recreation opportunities in the region. The Elder tract lies within a significant conservation area, overlapping with the Middle Fork Habitat Corridor Area of Interest and the Middle Fork of the Forked Deer Conservation Opportunity Area, both identified in state conservation plans. The property includes valuable wetlands, farmland, and approximately 0.4 miles of the North Fork Forked Deer River. Acquisition of the Elder tract would support the conservation goals outlined in these plans, including habitat restoration, watershed protection, and the protection of riparian zones. The Elder tract also falls within the Tigrett WMA Important Bird Area, recognized for its importance to migratory birds, including the Mississippi Kite. Incorporating the Elder tract into Tigrett WMA will expand habitat conservation efforts and provide valuable recreational opportunities for the public, such as hunting and fishing. If not acquired by TWRA, the Elder tract may be sold to a private landowner, resulting in the loss of these important conservation and recreational values.

- A. Motion to approve Butler
- B. 2nd by Box
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$330,000) is unanimous

7. Roach Tract – TWRA

\$110,000, 101.25 acres, Hardin County

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) seeks \$110,000 from the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (THCTF) to acquire the 101.25-acre Roach tract. This acquisition aims to expand the adjacent White Oak Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and enhance wildlife habitat and public recreation opportunities in the region. The Roach tract contains valuable wetland habitat within the Tennessee River watershed, a globally significant area for aquatic biodiversity. The property aligns with conservation priorities outlined in the Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan and the THCTF's White Oak Creek WMA Area of Interest. Acquisition of the Roach tract will help protect existing riparian and bottomland hardwood habitats and expand habitat for species like the Prothonotary Warbler and Southern Cricket Frog. Incorporating the Roach tract into White Oak WMA will enhance public access for recreational activities such as hunting and fishing. If not acquired by TWRA, the Roach tract may be sold to a private landowner, resulting in the loss of these important conservation and recreational values.

- A. Motion to approve Zehnder
- B. 2nd Frick
- C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$110,000) is unanimous

8. South Lory Tract / Stewart State Forest Project – Dept of Ag / Div of Forestry

\$1,792,503, 1991.67 +/- acres, Stewart County

The Tennessee Division of Forestry (DOF) proposed a project to acquire a 1,954-acre property called "South Lory" and add it to Stewart State Forest. This project would conserve a large working forest block, critical for Tennessee's hardwood production and water quality. It would also expand forest and habitat diversity, potentially harboring cultural and historical resources. The acquisition of South Lory presents several economic benefits as well. It supports the timber industry and creates new public access for outdoor recreation, potentially boosting tourism and related jobs. This project aligns with various state and national conservation plans, and funding is requested to cover the acquisition cost. In summary, this project offers

both environmental and economic advantages. It would protect valuable forests, promote sustainable forestry practices, and provide new recreational opportunities for the public.

A, Motion to approve Frick

B. 2nd by Butler

C. Vote to approve the full amount as requested (\$1,792,503) is unanimous

Closing

Public Comment Period

- Andrew Kiepe update from The Flyway Project

Adjournment

3:05pm