

Wolf River Conservancy-Epping Way, Memphis, Tennessee

A portion of a 66-acre tract of land located at 2630 Epping Way, in the Raleigh neighborhood of Memphis, was once the estate of a big-game hunter Berry Brooks. Later, the property became the site of a country club. Despite its popularity as a family recreation spot, the country club operated until the early 1980s, after which the owners defaulted on a loan. The property was then sold at public auction in 1990 and gradually deteriorated, with facilities falling into disrepair and illegal dumping becoming more and more of a problem on the site. In 2007, the property was donated to the former Memphis City Schools system (MCS), which demolished the buildings, filled in the pool and secured it from litterers.

After MCS became part of Shelby County Schools, the Wolf River Conservancy began looking at the property for potential use in their county-wide greenway project. School officials agreed to deed the entire property over to the Conservancy, because they determined the property was not going to be used for a school. Under Shelby County's EPA Brownfields Community Wide Assessment Grant, two Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and one Phase II ESA were completed for an investment of \$46,989 to ensure the property was safe for reuse. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Remediation staff provided technical oversight for this work.

A subsequent grant from the Plough Foundation for \$120,000 started the Wolf River Conservation Corps, which is an eight-week, 2-year pilot program targeting North Memphis youth providing environmental education, CPR and first-aid training, canoeing, and kayaking on portions of the Epping Way property. An additional \$25,000 Five Star Grant was awarded to the Wolf River Conservancy with a portion of that funding being used at this property. The Wolf River Conservancy broke ground in 2015 on new sections of the planned 36-mile Wolf River Greenway, which will follow the river throughout Shelby County. The Epping Way property is one of four parcels where the nonprofit conservancy will launch an effort to complete the nearly 22-mile portion of the greenway within the city of Memphis. Using mostly private donations, the conservancy hopes to complete the \$40 million greenway in 2019.



Before (upper left) and after (upper right) photos of Epping Way Property.