

The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices

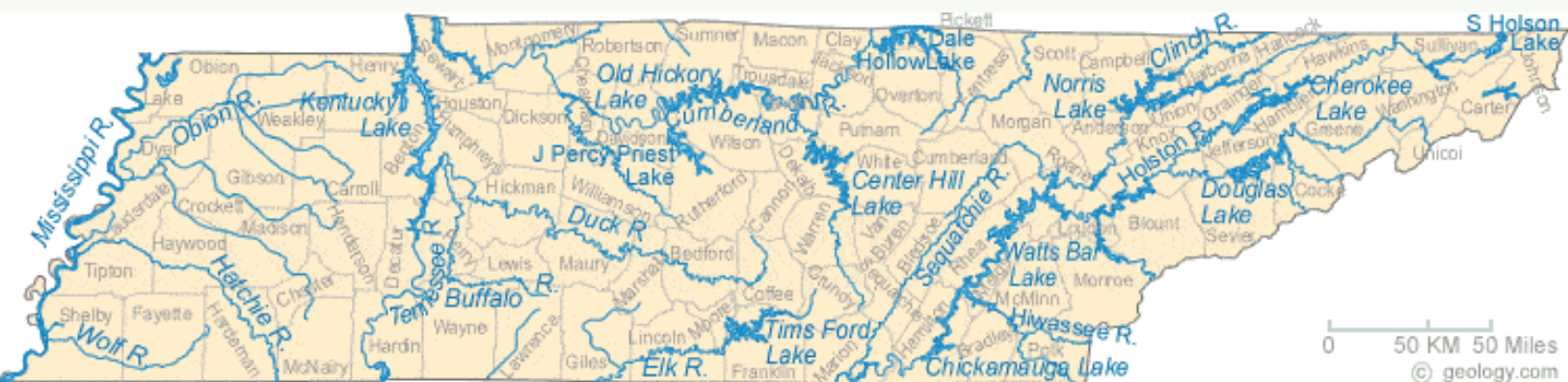


News Articles:

[Nashville a step away from setting up standalone department overseeing waste disposal](#)

[Tennessee State Parks Invite Visitors To Help Shape Future of David Crockett Birthplace State Park](#)

[All-Terrain Wheelchair Available at Roan Mountain State Park](#)



Understanding Water Quality in Tennessee: How You Can Get Involved

By: Crystal Warren

No matter where you are in Tennessee, your life is impacted by water quality. Questions arise, such as: Is it safe to drink this water? Will I get sick if I swim in this lake?

Water quality is a broad term that describes the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of a water sample compared to a set of standards. TDEC's Division of Water Resources is Tennessee's regulatory branch that gathers information to help you answer your water quality questions. Check out the division's numerous [dataviewers](#) that contain information such as [surface water monitoring results](#) from over 8,000 river stations, local [municipal drinking water quality monitoring results](#), and the [location of private drinking water wells](#) in your area.

Citizen science water quality monitoring can help fill in gaps missing from TDEC's monitoring system. Watershed and conservation groups often enlist volunteers to help track levels of pollutants in local waterways. For example, the Harpeth Conservancy [utilizes volunteers to measure and track levels of *E. coli*](#) in frequently recreated waterways in the greater Nashville area. The data is used to inform the TN Water Watch system – a predictive model that offers real-time water quality forecasts to the public. This initiative not only enhances public safety but also aids in identifying pollution hotspots and guiding policy decisions.

Similarly, the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) [Kids Water Monitoring Lab](#) is a virtual program that provides classroom demonstrations to students in grades 4 through 6. The goal of this hands-on approach is to make students aware of the impact we have on our water resources.

Spend some time this summer learning about your local water quality. If you want to do more, check out one of the above programs or ask your local watershed group if there is anything you can do to help measure and improve your local water quality.

Tennessee Sustainability Conference

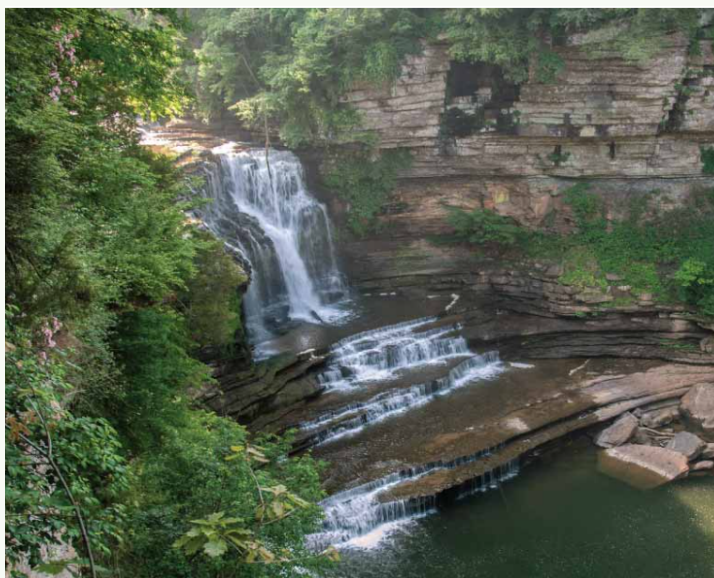
Sign up to attend the annual [Tennessee Sustainability Conference](#) in Gatlinburg from August 20th to August 22nd! This event is a collaboration between the [Tennessee Recycling Coalition](#), [Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#), and Tennessee Environmental Conference. Join in and explore the forefront of sustainability in Tennessee by engaging with experts from diverse sectors including business, government, and academia.



The conference features insightful sessions, panel discussions, valuable training workshops, and an exhibition hall showcasing innovative solutions. Learn about new regulations, innovative case studies, and actionable strategies to advance sustainability in your organization.

National Rivers Month

Did you know that in Tennessee there are more than 60,000 miles of river? Celebrate our state's natural beauty this June for National Rivers Month. From canoeing and kayaking to swimming and paddleboarding there are numerous activities to help you stay cool and have a great time this summer. June is the perfect time to visit one of the many waterfalls at several of our [State Parks](#) or join a river clean up in your area. While there is plenty to enjoy about rivers, they are also vital to birds and other wildlife as well as providing us with water. It is our duty to protect rivers so that future generations will be able to depend on and enjoy for many years to come. Check out the [Keep the Tennessee River Clean](#) to learn how you can protect rivers.



Sustainable Summer Travel

Traveling this summer? Make your trip more sustainable with a few easy changes. Start by reducing your waste. Pack reusable items like a water bottle, coffee mug, utensils, and a straw to avoid single-use plastics. Go digital whenever possible: opting out of paper receipts, itineraries, and tickets can help save trees and water each year. Reading on an e-reader or listening to audiobooks is another great way to cut down on paper use.



Choosing public transit, biking, or walking instead of renting a car not only reduces your carbon footprint but can also enhance your travel experience. Finally, support hotels and lodgings with eco-conscious practices. Look for places with green certifications and ask about features like refillable toiletries, linen reuse programs, and energy or

water-saving initiatives. These simple steps can help ensure your summer adventures are both enjoyable and sustainable. Learn more about [sustainable travel](#).

Small Business Environmental Assistance Corner



In parts of Tennessee, May rainfall was 1 to 3 inches above average, putting stormwater runoff on our radar. Runoff occurs when rainwater is unable to soak into the ground and instead flows into drainage systems, such as storm drains, streams, creeks, and rivers. As it moves, it can carry pollutants like oil, dirt, and litter into our Tennessee rivers.

One way that TDEC regulates stormwater runoff pollutants is through the Tennessee Multi-Sector General Permit, or TMSP. This permit is issued to manufacturing, recycling, and transportation industries that may store materials outside. It requires businesses to monitor and sample their stormwater runoff.

Small businesses, like scrap metal recyclers, may need to get permit coverage under the TMSP. Luckily, this is something the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) can help businesses with. Staff can assist with permit applications, site reviews, and even stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPP). Does this sound like something you or another small business need help with? If it does, call us at our hotline (800) 734-3619 or email us at BGSBEAP@tn.gov so we can assist you!

Sustainable Recipe

Do you have wilted spinach or kale? Don't let your greens go to waste. Fight food waste and use them in a tropical pina colada inspired smoothie, perfect for hot summer days! [Check out the recipe here.](#)



Events:

[Tennessee State Parks Events](#)

Webinars:

[ReFED Engaging Employees in Food Waste Reduction](#)

June 5, 2025

[Waste Reduction & Efficiency in Paint Spraying](#)

Recording

Funding Opportunities:

[TDEC Grants and Programs](#)

[Bulk Milk Grant for Schools](#)

[Scaling Composting Grant](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

[TDOT Rural Planning Initiative](#)

[Grants.gov](#)

Conferences, Workshops, & Training Opportunities:

[ReFED Food Waste Solutions Summit](#)

Seattle, WA

June 23-25, 2025

[Drive Electric Momentum Summit 2025](#)

Middle Tennessee State University

June 24, 2025

[TDEC Solid Waste Grants Workshop](#)

Knoxville, TN

July 10, 2025

[TDEC Waste Tire Workshop](#)

Montgomery Bell State Park

July 17, 2025

[Tennessee Sustainability Conference](#)

Gatlinburg, TN

August 20-22, 2025

[Clean Memphis Circular Summit](#)

Memphis, TN

October 22, 2025

[green|leader - The Nation's First Localized Sustainability Certificate](#)

Ongoing Opportunity



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