



Duck River Planning Partnership

Conservation and Recreation Subgroup

October 6, 2026

Subgroup Members

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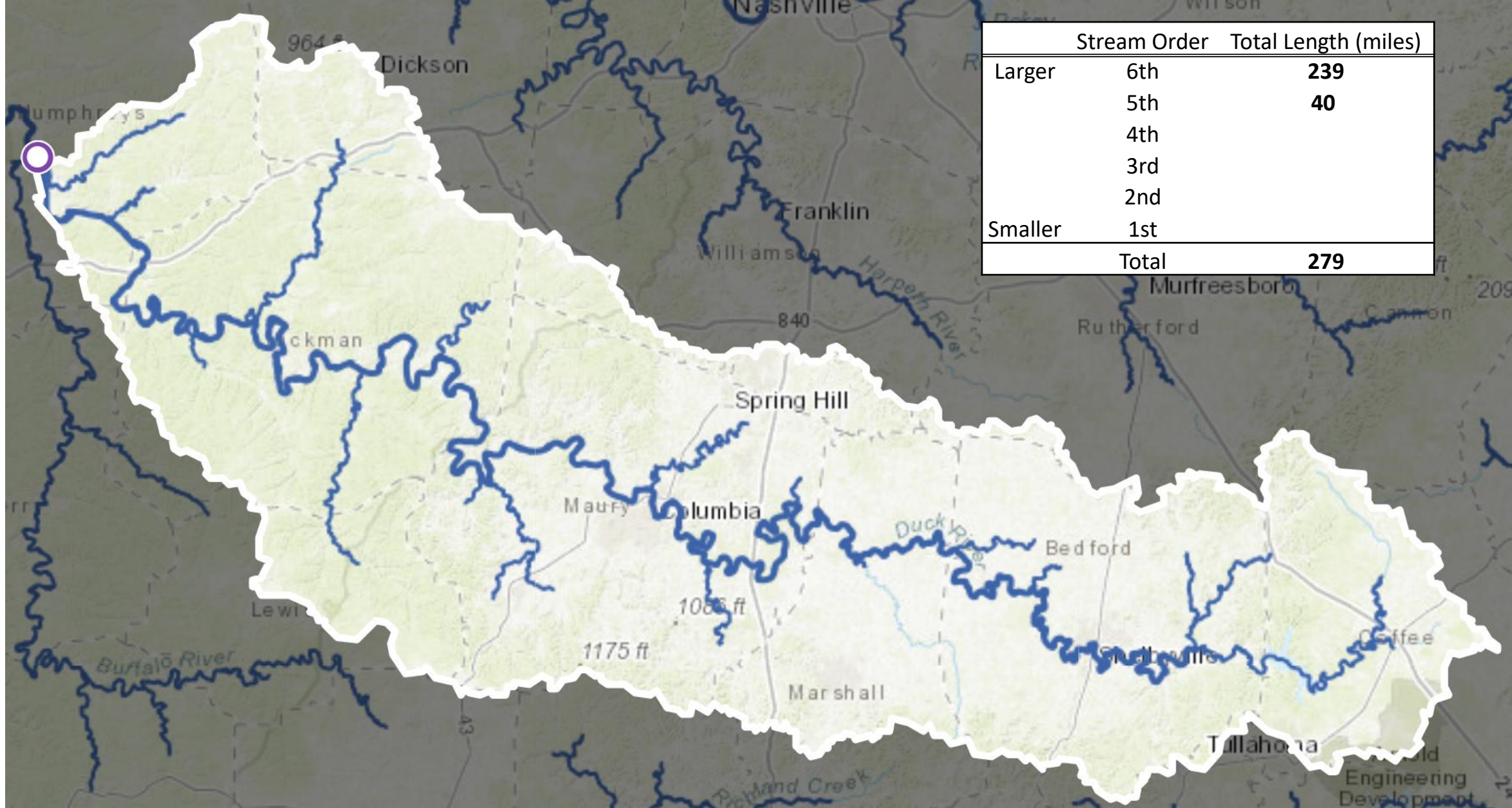
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- **Joey Wisby** — The Nature Conservancy

	Stream Order	Total Length (miles)
Larger	6th	239
	5th	
	4th	
	3rd	
	2nd	
Smaller	1st	

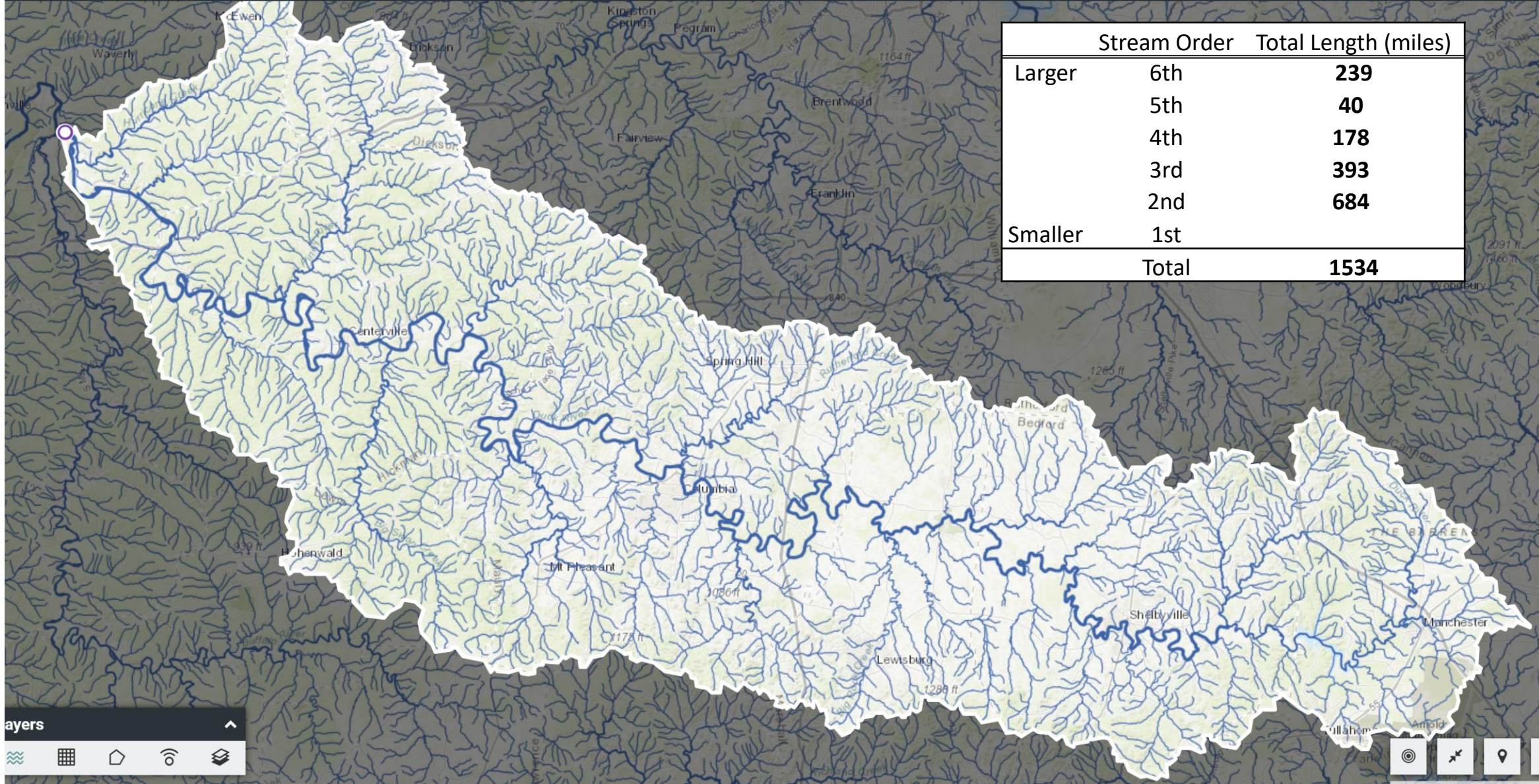
Recommendations
based on a
**WATERSHED
APPROACH**

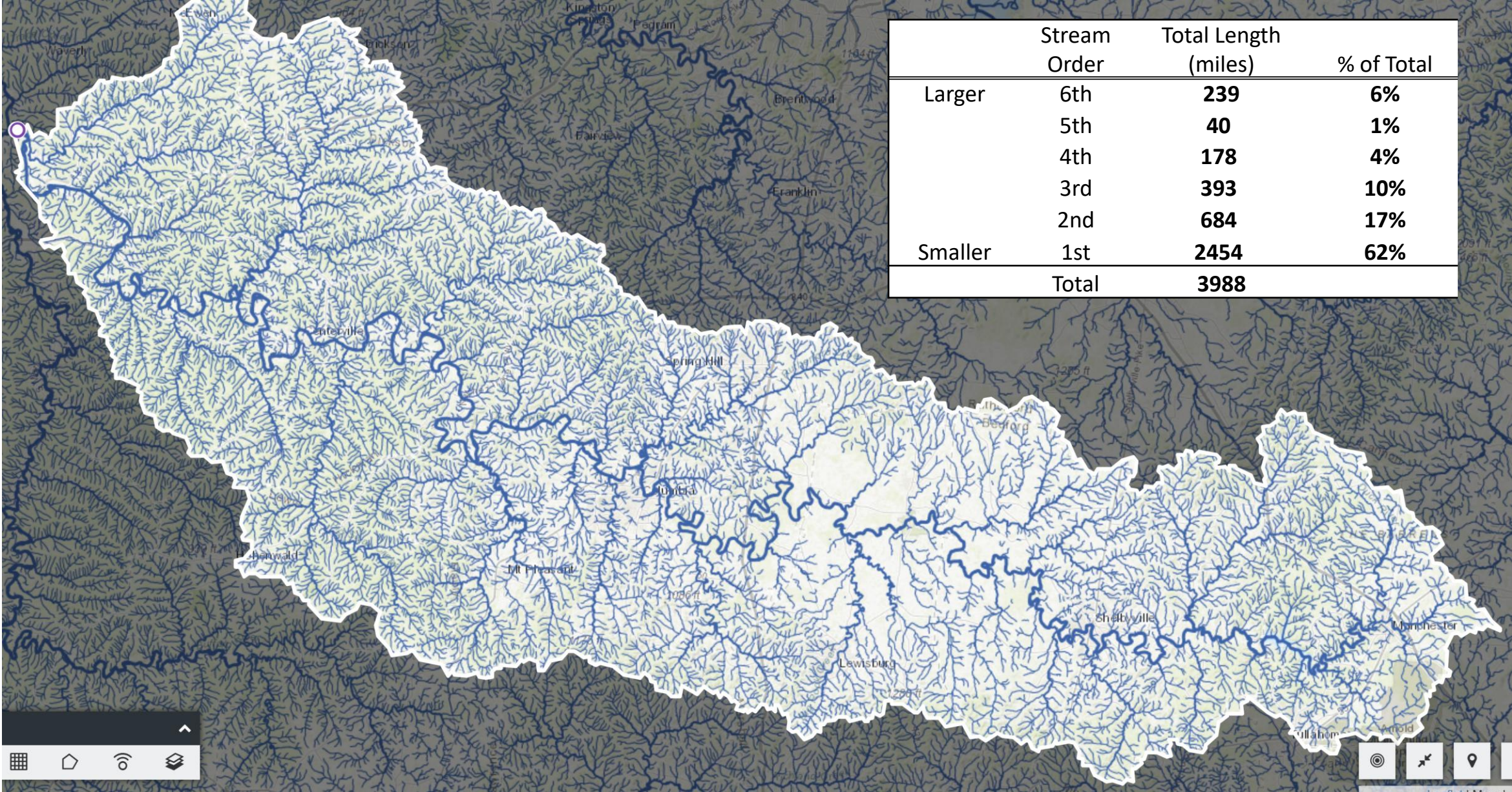
Addressing aspects not
in other work groups.



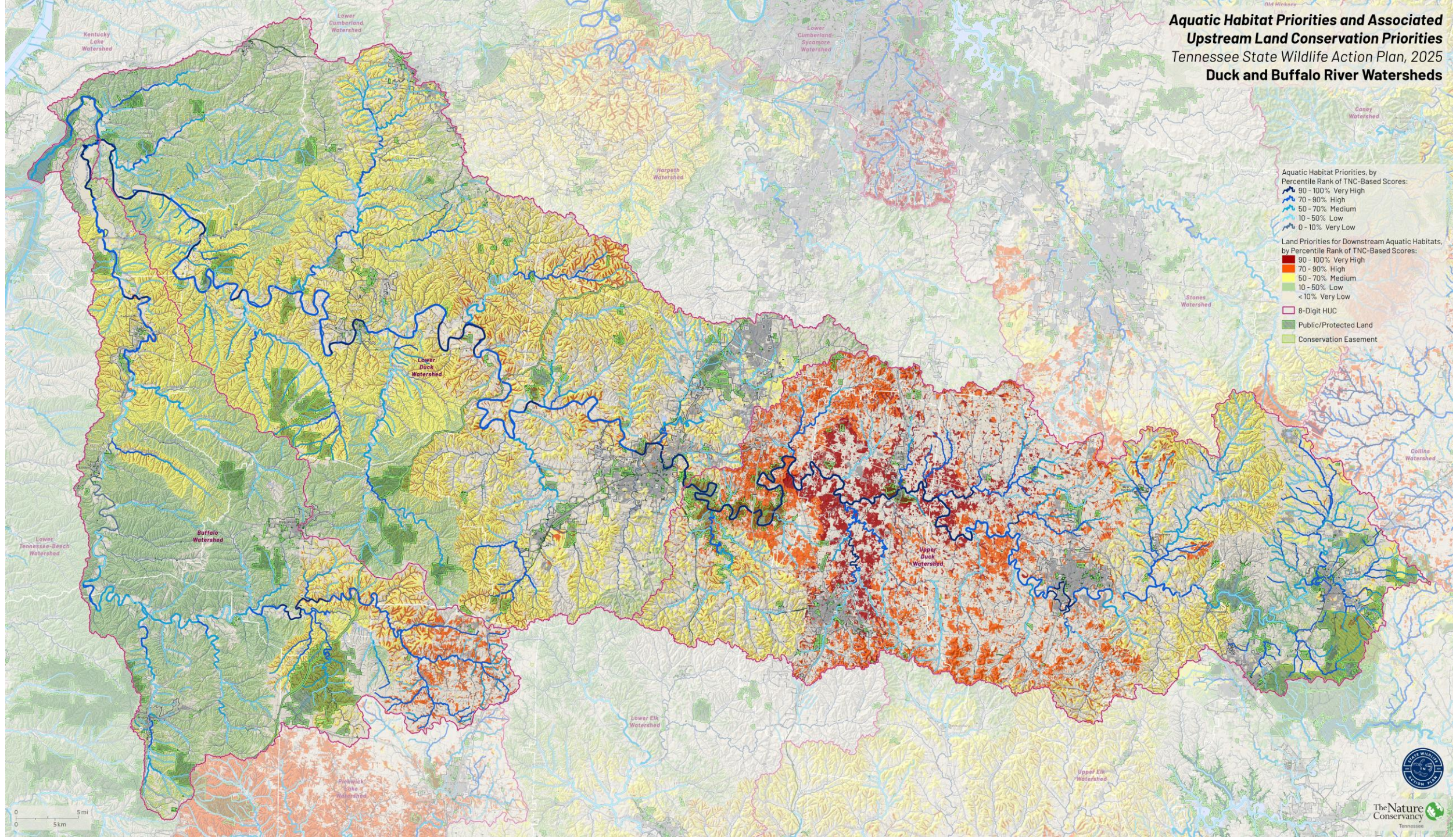


Stream Order		Total Length (miles)
Larger	6th	239
	5th	40
	4th	
	3rd	
Smaller	2nd	
	1st	
Total		279





**Aquatic Habitat Priorities and Associated
Upstream Land Conservation Priorities**
Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan, 2025
Duck and Buffalo River Watersheds



CONSERVATION

(Watershed Approach)

RECREATION

1. Increase **conservation easements** and sustainable **agriculture practices** within the watershed through collaboration, partnership development, and incentivization
2. Create a **wetland restoration fund** to restore and expand wetlands in the watershed
3. Encourage local governments to adopt measures to protect **riparian buffer zones and floodplains** along the river and its tributaries
4. Develop a watershed-wide **stormwater and impervious surface** growth plan
5. Invest in **green infrastructure** to enhance runoff retention and water quality, and increase groundwater recharge
6. Assess and protect **whole-river** and **tributary ecological flow** needs

1. Develop and Manage a Strategic Network of **River Access Points**: Enhance existing river access points and add new sites in strategic areas to provide safe, sustainable, and accessible recreation opportunities, distribute recreational use appropriately, and protect ecological resources, including state and federally listed species.
2. Promote **Responsible Recreation and River Safety**: Develop outreach, education, and communication efforts to encourage responsible outdoor recreation and river safety
3. Use Tennessee **State Parks as Anchors** for Watershed Interpretation, Education, and Stewardship

Increase conservation easements and sustainable agriculture practices within the watershed through collaboration, partnership development, and incentivization

Outcomes: This recommendation focuses on protecting Duck River habitat and water quality by reducing the transport of agricultural pollutants into the river and its tributaries through expanded conservation easements and targeted promotion of sustainable farming practices.

Actions: Match priority locations with willing landowners through expanded community-based technical assistance, estimating available conservation funding, developing a tiered incentive structure based on conservation value, streamlining access to existing easement programs, simplifying participation in conservation programs, and establishing a state-based cost-share fund to leverage federal conservation investments. Implementation will be supported by existing resources such as State Wildlife Action Plan maps, the South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) Duck River Green Infrastructure Plan, TDEC wetland tools, NRCS easement maps, and the National Conservation Easement Database. Collected additional data regarding stream channel erosion, species distribution, land-cover, water quality, and economic valuation data. Develop user-friendly decision-support tools and pursuit of USDA source water protection designations could further expand participation and funding opportunities.

Expected Benefits: This initiative seeks to accelerate conservation and restoration across the Duck River. This recommendation would reduce sediment, nutrient, and pollutant runoff to the Duck River and its tributaries, improve water quality, increase drought resilience, protect aquatic habitats, and support the long-term conservation of fish, mussels, and other species throughout the watershed.

Threats Addressed: The strategy directly responds to altered flow regimes and drought vulnerability, increasing water withdrawals, and ongoing water quality impairment across the watershed driven by agricultural runoff and land-use practices.

Partners: Key partners include USDA NRCS, state (e.g., TDEC, TDA) and federal (e.g., USFWS, TVA, USACE) agencies, conservation organizations (e.g., Land Trust for Tennessee, Quail Forever, Ducks Unlimited, TNC), local municipal and county governments (e.g., SCTDD), universities and technical colleges, community groups, and private partners, with organizations providing *outreach* and embedded *technical assistance*.

Transfer Potential: Because much of the necessary data, funding, and partnership infrastructure already exists statewide, this approach has strong potential for replication across Tennessee, particularly in West Tennessee, where agricultural wetland conservation opportunities are abundant.

Conservation and Recreation Working Group Final (4) Recommendations

TDEC should create a Duck River Conservation Project Fund to enable voluntary conservation projects in priority locations that will improve drought resilience, flood control, and water quality in the river.

TDEC should create and administer a conservation fund to enable voluntary conservation easements, encourage agricultural best management practices, and protect or enhance wetlands within the Duck River watershed. Other federal and state agencies, local governments, academia, and conservation organizations should collaborate with TDEC to match conservation funding with willing landowners in priority conservation locations. TDEC and partners could identify priority conservation sites by using established decision-support tools like the State Wildlife Action Plan and Tennessee Wetland Screening Tool. Strategic conservation projects in the watershed will help maintain base flows during drought, increase flood resilience, enhance critical wildlife habitat, and provide community benefits such as enhanced recreation, aesthetics, and natural resource value.

1. Conservation easements; 2. Wetland restoration fund

Increase conservation easements and sustainable agriculture practices within the watershed through collaboration, partnership development, and incentivization

Outcomes: This recommendation focuses on protecting Duck River habitat and water quality by reducing the transport of agricultural pollutants into the river and its tributaries through expanded conservation easements and targeted promotion of sustainable farming practices.

Actions: Match priority locations with willing landowners through expanded community-based technical assistance, estimating available conservation funding, developing a tiered incentive structure based on conservation value, streamlining access to existing easement programs, simplifying participation in conservation programs, and establishing a state-based cost-share fund to leverage federal conservation investments. Implementation will be supported by existing resources such as State Wildlife Action Plan maps, the South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) Duck River Green Infrastructure Plan, TDEC wetland tools, NRCS easement maps, and the National Conservation Easement Database. Collected additional data regarding stream channel erosion, species distribution, land-cover, water quality, and economic valuation data. Develop user-friendly decision-support tools and pursuit of USDA source water protection designations could further expand participation and funding opportunities.

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Partners: Key partners include USDA NRCS, state (e.g., TDEC, TDA) and federal (e.g., USFWS, TVA, USACE) agencies, conservation organizations (e.g., Land Trust for Tennessee, Quail Forever, Ducks Unlimited, TNC), local municipal and county governments (e.g., SCTDD), universities and technical colleges, community groups, and private partners, with organizations providing *outreach* and embedded *technical assistance*.

Transfer Potential: Because much of the necessary data, funding, and partnership infrastructure already exists statewide, this approach has strong potential for replication across Tennessee, particularly in West Tennessee, where agricultural wetland conservation opportunities are abundant.

Create a wetland restoration fund to restore and expand wetlands in the watershed

Outcomes: This recommendation aims to improve water quality in the Duck River and its tributaries by reducing sediment, nutrient, and pollutant runoff; mitigate the severity of floods and droughts; and protect aquatic habitat to support the long-term conservation of critical species.

Actions: Create a Duck River Wetland Restoration Fund (DRWRF) to provide financial, technical, and monitoring assistance for the expansion or restoration of wetlands in the Duck River watershed. The fund should be administered by TDEC or another relevant entity and include partnerships with federal agencies (e.g., USDA NRCS, USACE, USFWS, USEPA), conservation groups (e.g., Tennessee Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy), academic institutions, and other natural resource focused organizations. Additionally, existing state and federal funding mechanisms, including TDEC's Stream and Wetland Restoration Grant Program, the USDA NRCS's Wetland Reserve Easement program (WRE), and private investment for wetland mitigation banks could help supplement the DRWRF by identifying and prioritizing projects within the Duck River watershed. Innovative funding approaches, such as voluntary utility bill round-up programs, could supply additional funds to the DRWRF while giving communities an opportunity to support their local watershed.

Expected Benefits: Strategic wetland restoration in the watershed will provide drought resilience, water quality improvements, flood mitigation, critical wildlife habitat, and community benefits such as enhanced recreation, aesthetics, and natural resource value. Technical assistance from the DRWRF can help identify priority expansion and restoration sites by using established decision-support tools, including the Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) conservation priority maps, Tennessee Wetland Screening Tool, and the Duck River Watershed Green Infrastructure Plan.

Threats Addressed: The strategy addresses the water-resource impacts of population growth and development activity in the watershed and seeks to strengthen resilience to severe weather events, including both flooding and drought.

Partners: Recommended partners include TDEC, the Duck River Agency, USDA-NRCS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, Tennessee Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Earth Economics, universities, conservation organizations, and local stakeholders.

Transfer Potential: Location dependent. Financial, technical, and monitoring assistance from the DRWRF will provide a framework for a wetland fund that considers watershed-scale problems and solutions that can then be administered for other Tennessee rivers.

Encourage local governments to adopt overlays to protect riparian buffer zones and floodplains/floodways along the banks of the Duck River and its tributaries.

Local governments should consider adopting local zoning overlays, ordinances, and development standards that permanently protect riparian buffers, floodplains, and floodways along the Duck River and its tributaries. Conservation organizations should educate city and county officials, develop model ordinances, identify priority buffer locations, and encourage tax incentives and conservation policies. Protecting riparian corridors and floodplains would reduce streambank erosion, improve water quality, enhance groundwater infiltration, increase flood resilience, and protect sensitive aquatic habitats that support the river's globally significant biodiversity.

Encourage local governments to adopt measures to protect riparian buffer zones and floodplains along the river and its tributaries

Outcomes: This recommendation facilitates county and/or municipal implementation of land protection measures that will prevent or reduce non-point sources of pollution from entering the river.

Actions: Promote the adoption of local zoning overlays, ordinances, and development standards that permanently protect riparian buffers, floodplains, and floodways along the Duck River and its tributaries. Actions include developing model ordinances, identifying priority buffer locations using existing watershed planning tools such as the State Wildlife Action Plan, SCTDD Green Infrastructure Plan, Blueways TN, Trutta river channel survey, and other TDEC and USACE flood risk tools. Emphasis should also be placed on protecting tributary streams that are major sources of sediment and pollutant loading. Educate city and county officials, encouraging tax incentives and conservation policies, and combining regulatory approaches with outreach efforts.

Expected Benefits: Protecting riparian corridors and floodplains would reduce streambank erosion, improve water quality, enhance groundwater infiltration, increase flood resilience, and protect sensitive aquatic habitats that support the river's globally significant biodiversity.

Threats Addressed: The strategy addresses the water-resource impacts of population growth and development activity in the watershed. It will prevent or reduce runoff of pollution sources like sediment, pesticides, nutrients, and fecal coliform bacteria from livestock or septic systems.

Partners: Municipal and county governments, planning commissions, development districts, watershed associations, conservation nonprofits (e.g. TNC), TVA, Tennessee Floodplain Management Association.

Transfer Potential: This riparian/floodplain protection framework could be transferred to any watershed in the state as it does not rely on watershed specific characteristics but instead is focused on the integration and coordination of partners across agencies and disciplines to conserve and protect the boundary areas of rivers as communities grow. The decision and approaches are site specific at the watershed or subwatershed scale.

Invest in runoff retention, water quality, and groundwater recharge projects.

Local governments, regional planning entities, utilities, and conservation organizations should identify priority areas for infrastructure solutions to increase the percentage of river flow during low discharge. Actions include identifying appropriate implementation scales, economic feasibility, and effectiveness of different practices for priority areas. These investments will reduce stormwater runoff, improve groundwater recharge, increase drought resilience and river base flows, reduce flooding risks, improve water quality, and help offset the impacts of population growth and expanding impervious surfaces on the Duck River ecosystem.

Develop a watershed-wide stormwater and impervious surface growth plan

Outcomes: This recommendation seeks to produce a comprehensive, watershed-wide plan to sustainably manage the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff, paired with an impervious surface growth plan designed to balance runoff impacts with the protection of priority permeable surface areas.

Actions: Develop a coordinated watershed-scale plan for managing stormwater and future growth by improving stormwater planning, tracking impervious surface expansion, protecting karst and groundwater recharge areas, providing technical assistance to local governments and TDOT, and creating consistent watershed-wide guidance and standards for stormwater management. The plan should include vulnerability mapping, green infrastructure assessments, enhanced water quality and hydrology monitoring at priority HUC-12 subwatersheds, growth projections, educational programs, and coordinated planning across municipalities and counties. The plan should consider the needs of the entire watershed while allowing for adaptations to specific HUC-12 subwatersheds where hydrology and geology may vary.

Expected Benefits: This recommendation would reduce the impacts of urbanization on the river, protect groundwater resources, improve river and drinking water quality, reduce flood and drought risks, support sustainable growth, and protect critical habitat and other aquatic resources throughout the watershed for fish and wildlife.

Threats Addressed: The strategy directly addresses the water-resource and water-quality consequences of population growth and development pressure across the watershed, and seeks to improve stormwater management in both MS4 and non-MS4 jurisdictions.

Partners: Coordination should be led by a regional development districts, Duck River Development Agency, or other relevant entity and should include stakeholders such as elected officials, utilities and TDEC MS4 leadership, TDOT, non-profit/community groups, universities as technical resources, and county and municipal technical assistance services (e.g., CTAS and MTAS).

Transfer Potential: This growth plan structure could be transferred to any watershed in the state as it does not rely on watershed specific characteristics but instead is focused on the integration and coordination of partners across agencies and disciplines to address impacts of urban growth. The decision and approaches are site specific at the watershed or subwatershed scale.

Invest in green infrastructure to enhance runoff retention and water quality, and increase groundwater recharge

Outcomes: This recommendation seeks to increase green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to urban and rural stormwater runoff issues, and optimize that application of these practices. This investment will also increase water infiltration and groundwater recharge rates in the watershed.

Actions: Identify target and priority areas that have potential for standard and innovative green infrastructure solutions to stormwater runoff and would make a larger contribution to increase the percentage of river flow during low discharge in both urban and non-urban areas. Identify appropriate implementation scales, economic feasibility, and effectiveness of different practices for priority areas. Define the local and regional target audiences (communities, households, private landowners) and tailor implementation approaches accordingly, including social aspects into design and implementation. Pair engineering approaches with social and behavioral outreach to inform communities of how creating green infrastructure will benefit communities. Using the South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) Green Infrastructure Plan as a starting point for data availability and potential actions.

Expected Benefits: Green infrastructure investments will reduce stormwater runoff, improve groundwater recharge, increase drought resilience and river base flows, reduce flooding risks, improve water quality, and help offset the impacts of population growth and expanding impervious surfaces on the Duck River ecosystem.

Threats Addressed: The strategy addresses the water-resource impacts of population growth and development activity in the watershed. It will reduce runoff of pollution sources like sediment, pesticides, nutrients, and fecal coliform bacteria from urban and rural sources, slow water movement in the watershed, elevating river baseflows between rain events.

Partners: Primary partners include SCTDD, municipal and county governments, utilities, planning commissions, universities, conservation organizations, engineering and geological consulting firms, and other watershed stakeholders.

Transfer Potential: The diverse design options of green infrastructure allow customization for each watershed. Current practices focus on areas of urban development but can be applied to all areas where urban and rural development occurs. Thus, this recommendation would be most transferable to watersheds with growing populations, but in any area of the state.

Enhance and increase river access points while supporting responsible outdoor recreation activities.

In coordination with TWRA and TVA, TDEC should improve and standardize existing river access sites while strategically creating new access points along the Duck River. This includes upgrading facilities for safety, durability, ADA accessibility, and erosion control; reducing access gaps along popular recreation reaches; distributing recreational use more evenly across the river system; integrating resource protection into site development and establishing a Duck River Blueway Council to coordinate access development among stakeholders. Simultaneously, TWRA, TDEC, the DRA, and nongovernmental organizations should develop a comprehensive education and outreach effort focused on river safety, stewardship, and responsible recreation. Recommended activities include installing standardized signage, developing trip-planning tools and safety resources, launching stewardship campaigns, improving communication about river-use laws and private property rights, creating a central information platform, and coordinating messaging among recreation providers and emergency responders. These efforts would improve public safety, reduce littering and trespassing, strengthen stewardship of the river, reduce conflicts between users and landowners, and increase public awareness of the Duck River's ecological significance.

1. River access points; 2. Recreation and river safety

Develop and Manage a Strategic Network of River Access Points: Enhance existing river access points and add new sites in strategic areas to provide safe, sustainable, and accessible recreation opportunities, distribute recreational use appropriately, and protect ecological resources, including state and federally listed species.

Outcomes: This recommendation aims to improve public access to the Duck River, reduce crowding at overused sites, expand accessible and inclusive recreation, minimize erosion and resource degradation, and protect sensitive habitats, cultural resources, and private property while providing high-quality visitor experiences.

Actions: Existing access sites should be upgraded using BluewaysTN design standards for safety, durability, ADA compliance, and erosion control; new access points should be added to fill gaps and reduce float distances; and a consistent prioritization framework should guide all access investments by considering safety, resource sensitivity, accessibility, landownership, partnership feasibility, and long-term maintenance capacity. Recreation use should be distributed across a network of complementary sites, resource protection integrated into all siting and design decisions, and long-term maintenance responsibilities formally assigned before public investments are made. A Duck River Blueway Council or similar working group should coordinate planning and management across agencies, governments, outfitters, conservation organizations, and landowners, and ongoing monitoring should track use, safety, erosion, and resource impacts to support adaptive management.

Threats Addressed: The strategy directly responds to overcrowded and informal access points, recreation-related riverbank degradation, conflicts with ecological and cultural resources, and gaps in accessible recreation opportunities.

Partners: TWRA, TVA, TDEC (including BluewaysTN, Water Resources, Natural Areas, State Parks, and Division of Archaeology), South Central Tennessee Development District, municipal and county governments, local EMS and law enforcement, private landowners, outfitters, conservation organizations, land trusts, and accessibility and outdoor recreation partners.

Transfer Potential: High. BluewaysTN design standards, access-prioritization criteria, partnership models, and network-based planning approaches can be applied to other recreational rivers across Tennessee, with site-specific decisions tailored to local ecological, recreational, landownership, and community conditions.

Information Needs: Implementation requires spatial analysis of access gaps, inventory and condition assessments of existing sites, visitor-use and crowding data, ecological and cultural resource mapping, landownership information, safety incident records, accessibility assessments, and long-term maintenance cost estimates.

Existing Resources, Programs, and Activities: BluewaysTN database, planning tools, and Access Design Manual; Henry Horton State Park; State Wildlife Action Plan datasets; existing TWRA, TVA, TDEC, and local government access sites; river outfitters; and existing conservation, recreation, and healthy-community funding programs.

Measures of Success: Progress will be tracked through reductions in access gaps and excessively long recreation reaches, increased number and distribution of sites meeting safety, accessibility, durability, and resource-protection standards, expanded accessible recreation opportunities, reduced crowding and documented resource impacts, increased sites with identified long-term management responsibility, and improved visitor safety and experience, with baselines and targets established during implementation.

Promote Responsible Recreation and River Safety: Develop outreach, education, and communication efforts to encourage responsible outdoor recreation and river safety

Outcomes: This recommendation aims to improve trip planning and user safety, reduce preventable incidents, decrease littering and landowner conflicts, increase responsible recreation practices, improve public understanding of river conditions and hazards, and raise awareness of the Duck River's ecological significance and the relationship between recreation and conservation.

Actions: Consistent BluewaysTN-based signage and "Know Before You Go" messaging should be implemented at all access sites, with bilingual content where appropriate, and a centralized platform should serve as the primary source for trip-planning information covering access locations, hazards, float distances, closures, outfitters, and responsible-recreation guidance. USGS gauge data and technical river-flow information should be translated into clear, reach-specific recreational safety guidance; information should be distributed through websites, maps, QR codes, kiosks, parks, and partner locations; and a river ethics and stewardship campaign should promote Leave No Trace principles while addressing littering, trespassing, and inappropriate behavior. Clear public guidance on river-use laws and property rights should be developed and widely communicated, emergency-response coordination should be strengthened through standardized river-mile markers and access-site mapping, and safety, stewardship, and conservation messages should be integrated into recreation programs, school events, and community outreach. Visitor-use data, including counts, surveys, and partner information, should be collected to understand visitation patterns and recreation-related economic activity, and sustained funding and management responsibility must be identified to keep public-facing safety information accurate and current.

Partners: TWRA, TDEC, BluewaysTN, Tennessee State Parks, Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute, local EMS and law enforcement, municipal and county governments, outfitters, conservation nonprofits, schools, community and tourism organizations, and appropriate local business and sponsorship partners.

Threats Addressed: The strategy addresses inadequate and inconsistent safety information, preventable incidents, littering and resource degradation, trespassing and landowner conflicts, and limited public understanding of river conditions and appropriate trip planning.

Transfer Potential: High — standardized safety messaging, trip-planning information, emergency-response coordination, stewardship education, and public-information practices can be incorporated into BluewaysTN and adapted to recreation-intensive rivers throughout Tennessee, with reach-specific content tailored to local conditions and visitor-use patterns.

Information Needs: Reach-specific hazard information, float times and difficulty levels, river-flow recreational guidance, vetted river-use law guidance, visitor-use patterns, safety incident records, priority stewardship messages, communication barriers experienced by users, cell-coverage limitations, and long-term hosting and maintenance requirements.

Existing Resources, Programs, and Activities: BluewaysTN website, Access Design Manual, and public information resources; USGS river gauges; Tennessee State Parks recreation and interpretation programs; Henry Horton State Park river safety programming; Duck River Education Day; outfitter safety resources; local emergency response systems; and existing watershed conservation outreach programs.

Measures of Success: Success will be measured by increased availability of standardized safety and stewardship information at priority access sites, improved river-wide trip-planning resources, increased number of reaches with understandable river-condition guidance, stronger emergency-response coordination, fewer preventable incidents and recurring recreation conflicts, improved visitor stewardship awareness, and demonstrated long-term maintenance of public-facing safety information, with baselines and targets established during implementation.



Assess and Protect Whole-River and Tributary Ecological Flow Needs

Outcomes: This recommendation seeks to support and strengthen the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Regional Drought Management Plan already under development for the Duck River by ensuring that ecological flow needs, in-channel habitat requirements, and the flow-ecology relationships critical to the river's aquatic biodiversity are fully incorporated into conservation efforts for the whole river and its tributaries.

Actions:

- Engage state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, universities, and watershed partners in an ecological flow needs assessment to ensure biodiversity priorities are represented alongside water utility and withdrawal interests.
- Conduct ongoing reach-specific ecological flow assessments both within and outside the HCP focal areas (including tributaries), incorporating USGS gauge data, biological monitoring records, and species distribution information to define the flow conditions under which sensitive species experience stress, recruitment failure, or mortality.
- Define priority conservation reaches based on updated data of mussel, fish, salamander, crayfish, and T&E species distribution and condition data, habitat quality data, and available priority (e.g., SWAP) mapping.
- Establish data-based low discharge levels in conservation priority reaches that can be used to trigger water withdrawal actions
- Establish a coordinated long-term monitoring program tracking key parameters such as discharge, mussel recruitment, fish assemblage integrity, water temperature, and dissolved oxygen to evaluate conservation plan effectiveness and inform adaptive management.

Threats Addressed: The strategy responds to altered flow regimes and drought as the dominant stressors on mussel and fish assemblages, increasing and uncoordinated water withdrawals reducing baseflows in ecologically sensitive reaches, and the risk that flow triggers and management thresholds may be set without adequate ecological flow data to protect priority species and habitats, or limit withdrawals when not necessary.

Expected Benefits: Knowledge of minimum flow thresholds will protect sensitive species within the channel, and protect municipal water operations from unnecessary limitations on withdrawals during low flows.

Partners: TVA, USFWS, TWRA, USGS, TDEC, municipal water utilities agricultural and industrial withdrawers, South Central Tennessee Development District, The Nature Conservancy, Tennessee Wildlife Federation, Duck River Conservancy, Duck River Society, municipalities, and universities.

Transfer Potential: Medium to High. The ecological flow assessment methodology and approach to integrating biological data into existing regulatory planning frameworks can be adapted to most any other Tennessee river- with process modifications, particularly those supporting federally listed species or facing increasing water withdrawal pressure.

Use Tennessee State Parks as Anchors for Watershed Interpretation, Education, and Stewardship

Outcomes: This recommendation seeks to increase public understanding of the Duck River's ecological, recreational, cultural, and economic importance; connect outdoor recreation experiences with conservation and stewardship; expand youth and community watershed education; improve accessible and inclusive outdoor learning opportunities; and build long-term public support for responsible use and protection of the river.

Actions: Inventory existing watershed interpretation and education programs. Henry Horton State Park should serve as a demonstration model for integrating recreation, accessibility, interpretation, and stewardship in ways that can be strengthened locally and replicated elsewhere. A coordinated watershed interpretation network should be developed using visitor centers, kiosks, trails, digital resources, guided programs, and partner locations. Youth and school engagement should be expanded through programs such as Duck River Education Day and curriculum-aligned watershed learning opportunities and accessibility. Recreation activities including paddling, fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing should serve as platforms for conservation and stewardship messaging, and coordination among State Parks, BluewaysTN, schools, universities, watershed organizations, and community partners. Consider integrating community science into watershed education and stewardship.

Threats Addressed: The strategy addresses limited public understanding of watershed health and biodiversity, the disconnect between outdoor recreation and conservation awareness, gaps in youth education, limited accessible and adaptive environmental learning opportunities, and fragmented watershed interpretation among programs and organizations.

Partners: Tennessee State Parks, TDEC, BluewaysTN, TWRA, local schools and school systems, universities, municipal and county governments, outdoor recreation organizations, outfitters, conservation organizations, community organizations, and accessibility and adaptive-recreation partners.

Transfer Potential: High. Henry Horton State Park provides an existing and adaptable model for integrating recreation, accessibility, interpretation, education, and watershed stewardship that can be applied to other Tennessee State Parks and watersheds based on local resources, visitation, infrastructure, staffing capacity, and community needs.

Information Needs: Inventory of existing programs and facilities, participation and visitation data, geographic and audience gaps, priority interpretive themes, accessibility needs, existing facility and staffing capacity, school curriculum partnership opportunities, and capital and operating needs associated with program expansion.

Existing Resources, Programs, and Activities: Henry Horton State Park Duck River Education Room; Duck River Education Day and Outdoor Expo; guided kayak floats and river-based recreation programs; existing State Parks interpretive programs; Access 2030 accessibility improvements; accessible kayak launches, trails, overlooks, and boardwalks; and existing school, community, and conservation partnerships, with Henry Horton providing hundreds of annual interpretive programs, thousands of participants, and an established platform for expansion.

Measures of Success: Progress will be tracked through increased participation in Duck River watershed interpretation and education programs, broader geographic distribution of watershed learning opportunities, increased youth participation, expanded accessible and adaptive recreation and educational experiences, stronger integration of recreation, conservation, safety, and stewardship messaging into park programs, increased coordination among State Parks and watershed education partners, and demonstrated application of Henry Horton approaches in other parks and watersheds, with baselines and targets established during implementation.