

20⁺

YEARS

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*Science-based
conservation
for the rivers
of Tennessee*

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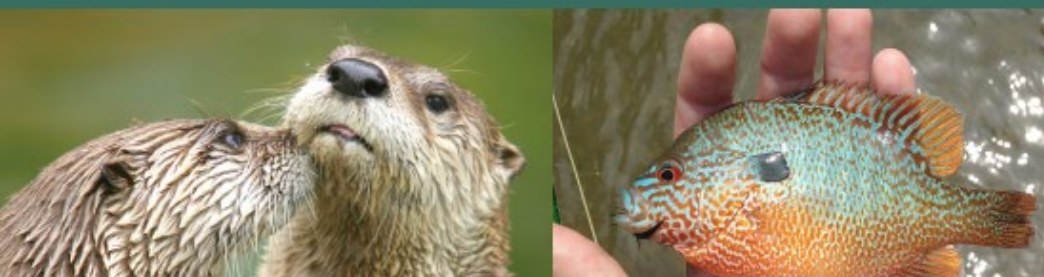
HARPETHSM
CONSERVANCY

www.harpethconservancy.org

HarpethConservancy.org

YOUR INVOLVEMENT MATTERS

The rivers of the
Southeast are the
3rd most biodiverse
in the world!



Clean Water Protection



Community Engagement



Franklin Lowhead Dam Removal
& Restoration Project

Before

After

Science & Restoration



Rural Protection & Land Use



Science-based conservation
for the rivers of TN

OUR VISION

Clean water and healthy ecosystems for rivers *championed* by the people who live here



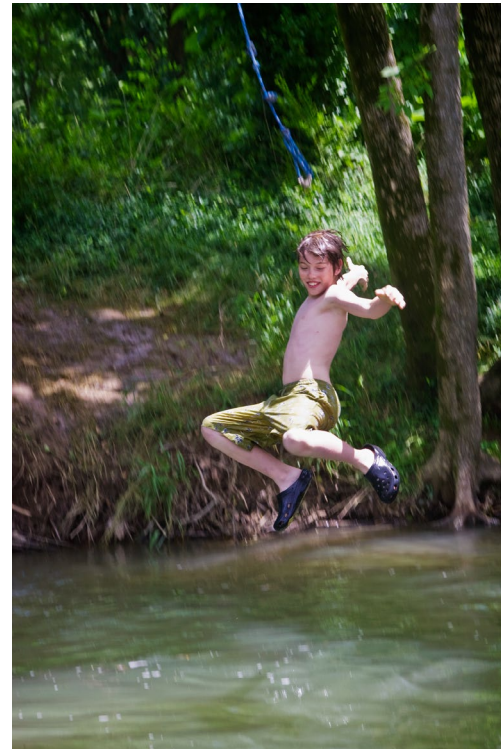
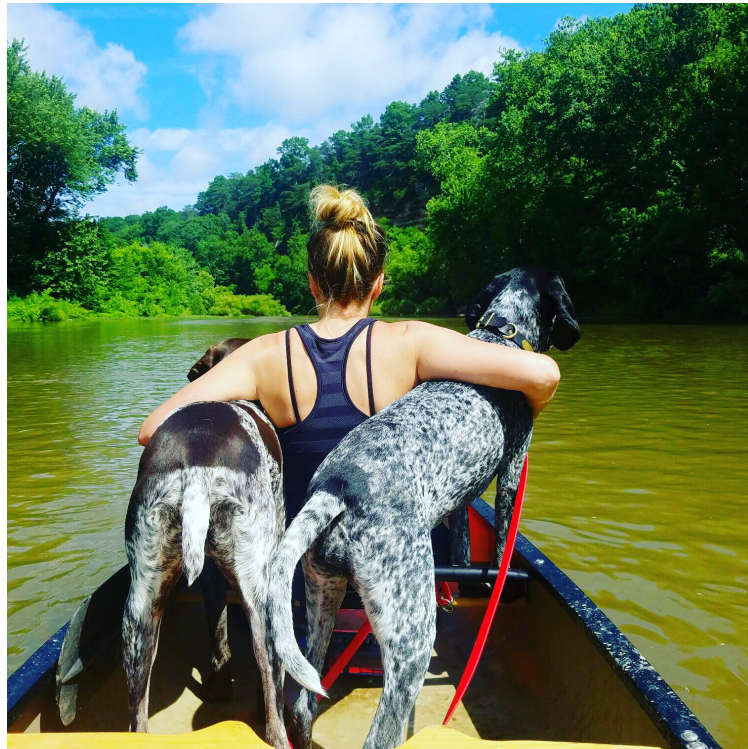
20 years of success highlight

Created Blueways/Water Trails

Over 500,000 people paddle the Harpeth River Blueway annually! Just 30 minutes from downtown Nashville. Class II State Scenic River * Mound Bottom archeological site * Montgomery Bell Tunnel * Newsom's Mill * Narrows of the Harpeth



- Co-creator of 3 county water trail
- Raised \$45,000 for access builds
- Support the blueway through restoration education, land protection, and social media initiatives
- Helped design the ARAP general permit for construction of access points throughout TN
- Blueway is model for Water Trails across TN.



Reduce & Eliminating Waste



River Property Owners:
Post one of these metal signs.
Contact us!



BE RIVER RESPONSIBLE

-  Take your trash
-  Use refillable water bottles
-  Don't trespass on private property
-  Follow Tennessee boating rules
-  Share the river, respect others
-  Report a pollution problem

LEARN HOW: BeRiverResponsible.org

ENJOY THE RIVER. SEE A PROBLEM?
CONTACT HARPETH CONSERVANCY
615-790-9767

Providing leadership on TWRA's State Paddlecraft Legislation that will oversee outfitters

TACIR Study: Evolving Recreational Use of Waterways

- In response to some stakeholders' concerns about congestion and access issues, the TN General Assembly passed public Chapter 969, Acts of 2018, giving the TN Fish and Wildlife Commission (TFWC), the governing and rule making body of TWRA, authority to establish rules and regulations for commercial outfitters that provide non-motorized vessels, such as canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, and tubes, for rent to the public for recreational use on Tennessee's waterways.
- In January 2019, the TFWC established new rules requiring these outfitters to obtain free permits to be able to operate.
- Public Chapter 347, Acts of 2019, requires these commercial outfitters to submit data to TWRA on the number of vessels they rent to the public.
- TWRA has stated that TWRA needs additional money to manage their boat access areas and that a data-based fee structure would be implemented in the future.
- TDEC is also in the process of promulgating rules to establish a permitting process and fees for outfitters who want to use boat access areas within state parks. Commercial outfitters are concerned there could be a duplication of fees if both agencies charge fees.
- To help these agencies identify the best ways to manage the state's resources given the evolving recreational use of waterways, the TN General Assembly passed Public Chapter 497 in 2021 directing TACIR to study and provide a final report of their findings to the TN General Assembly December 31, 2022.

Options & Considerations for any proposed State and Local Fees

- TWRA boat access ramps provide public access to public waterways and fill the gaps between many water trail (blueway) access points and outfitter trips.
- On some waterways, outfitters and private boat owners rely solely on TWRA boat access ramps.
- But many waterways have access areas managed by more than one entity such as a city, county, TDEC, or federal entities. Such is the case in many “hot spots” like the Harpeth that have no TWRA access points of the 20+ accesses.
- Contractual agreements already exist between commercial outfitters and managing entities on many TN waterways.
- Some managing entities prefer to manage their own boat access areas without additional administrative burden from statewide rules and regulations.
- It seems reasonable to require outfitters to provide a record of daily launch data. The data can be helpful for studies, fee structures and operational schedules.
- Harpeth Conservancy supports funneling any future fees back to the use area(s).
- In fairness, it makes sense that the only vessels exempt from fees would be those used solely for law enforcement, search and rescue, medical emergencies, and state regulatory or research purposes.

Oversight and Sustainability

- ❑ **Standards for recreational non-motorized watercraft users and outfitters** – Standards addressing commercial outfitters is long overdue. The increase of non-motorized watercraft use is creating issues relative to safety and environmental impacts to waters of the state. TWRA should continue the process of designing rules and regulations governing commercial non-motorized vessel outfitters and rules and regulations governing permit and access fees. See TWRA Rules and Regulation Chapter 1660-04-.01 and 1660-04-.02.
- ❑ **Paddle craft Advisory Board (PAD) and Share Our Rivers Trusts** – Because TWRA is not the authority of the non-motorized watercraft community, the state of TN should establish a paddle craft advisory board to represent the voices of the non-motorized watercraft community and outfitters. Before fees are collected, this advisory board would create a fee structure with systems in place identifying what funds will be collected, how funds will be collected, who will have oversight of the funds and how funds will be directed back to the use area where they were collected. Additionally, trusts could be set up around rivers to funnel funds from permits and fee structures back to the river. Comments submitted to TWRA by HC during the regulatory process provide details of both boards. Recommend housing these boards in the TN Department of Tourist Development.
- ❑ **Study of Recreational Rivers in TN** - To promote the long-term health of the state's waterways, recreational studies of the most heavily used waterways must be started promptly, whether funded through a fee structure or other form of appropriations. Excessive unmanaged/poorly managed recreational use of these waterways threatens their long-term viability. TWRA should provide a list of "hot spots." Potential partners to help conduct the studies include students in the River Management Leadership Program at UTC; UTK School of Architectural Design; MTSU; APSU; and members of the TN River Line Program.

Oversight and Sustainability

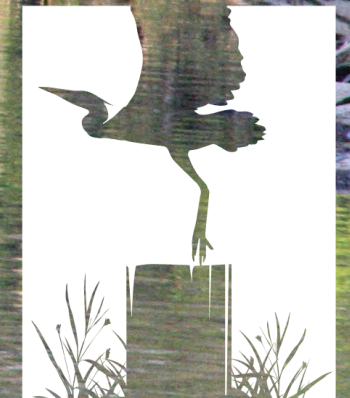
- ❑ **Collaboration and Partnerships** - TWRA needs to continue to work collaboratively with partners to address "Hot Spot" issues. Explore other state LE and Steward programs. Reach out to 501c3 non-profit environmental and recreational organizations to assist with the construction of non-motorized vessel lanes at boat access areas, set up trust, conduct swift water rescue training, improve safety messaging, and so forth.

Examples to be Provided to the TACIR Commission from Around the United States:

- Permits and fee structures
- Community partnerships around a river
- Available Grant Programs
- User Capacity Studies

Please contact Harpeth Conservancy for a copy of these documents provided during the TACIR Commission meeting.

We are the river.
United we are the solution.
www.harpethconservancy.org



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