

WILDERNESS LOUISVILLE



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Board Members



Andy Reynolds, Chair
Vicki Welch, Vice Chair
Sharon Bond, Treasurer
Patricia Tennen, Secretary
Kendall Boyd, DEI Officer



Tom Armstrong
Krista Drescher Burke
Chuck Haddaway



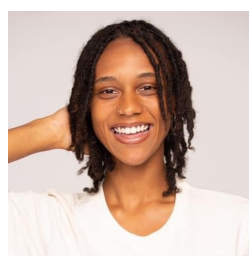
Johnique Ison
JoAnn James



Jenny Johnston
Tiffany Ogunsanya



Lynn Rippy
Randy Strobo
Layne Taylor
William Wright



MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Championing Louisville's Natural Areas

Wilderness Louisville exists to be the champion for Louisville's natural areas, from the nation's largest, municipally-owned urban forest, Jefferson Memorial Forest to the ones in your neighborhood.

Jefferson Memorial Forest, aka, "The Forest" is the crown jewel of the Natural Areas Division and encompasses nearly 7,000 of the 7,500 acres managed by staff based at the Forest. In 2022, with support from Wilderness Louisville, a great deal was accomplished to advance the vision that everyone in Louisville has access to safe, natural spaces to explore and behold. Here are some of the highlights.

Advancing the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative

The West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative continues to move forward with infrastructure projects providing outdoor recreational access for the community. This year included the opening of a 0.6 mile hiking trail in Shawnee Park, the first hiking trail in west Louisville. The trail was completed in partnership with Americorps National Conservation Corps (NCCC) as well as SummerWorks youth through Kentuckiana Works.

Bud Dorsey was instrumental in creating the photographic story of our Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors (ECHO) programming. A mural honoring him and portraying Mr. Dorsey's ECHO photos was designed and installed at Shawnee Park by a partner community center, STEAM Exchange. The Bud Dorsey mural will eventually have a permanent home in the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center.



MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Cultivating National Collaborations

In 2022, Wilderness Louisville continued work on the Getter Further Faster (GFF) program funded by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association for County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The “Improving Social Determinants of Health: Getting Further Faster” program, supports community partnerships in evaluating effective strategies for addressing social determinants of health (SDoH). This collaboration provided guidance on developing a sustainability and policy plan for Louisville ECHO and the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative as well as some key communication elements. Please see p. 7-8 for the information document on the upcoming Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center produced with the GFF program.

Providing Youth with Ongoing Nature Connection

In 2022 across all of the youth programs we offer, nearly 3,500 youth were provided environmental education and recreational opportunities. Jefferson Memorial Forest continues to serve as a destination for local schools to take part in environmental education, recreation, and teambuilding field trips. Hands-on, immersive experiences allow students to connect more deeply and retain curriculum information more effectively. The Forest also is one of the most popular summer camp venues with six weeklong day camps full of outdoor fun and learning including canoeing, hiking, archery, and plenty of hands-on environmental activities.



MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Managing Trails and Natural Areas

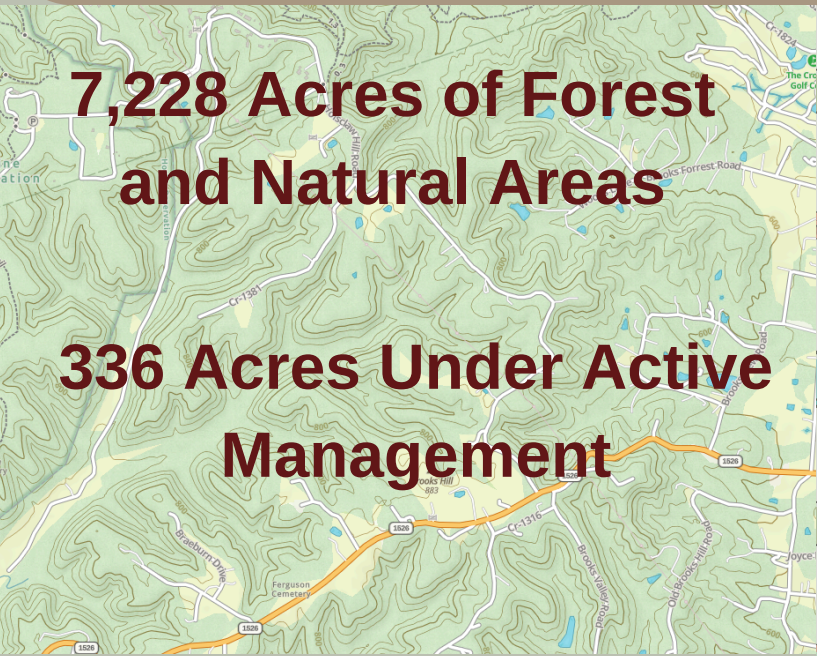
The Natural Areas Division Land Management team completed a variety of projects throughout 2022, including invasive species removal on several large tracts, continuing to make improvements to the trails throughout our trail system, watering trees, maintaining natural plantings, mowing the Louisville Loop, and engaging with volunteers and the youth in the communities that use our Forest and Natural Areas parks. In late Spring, construction began on the new entry to the Scott's Gap trail which will eventually replace the connector trail from the Siltstone to the Scott's Gap trail. The Land Management team also designed, constructed, and installed four new wooden benches around the Meadow Meander Trail. Renovations will continue to occur over the next few months while a new entry path to the trail and work on a significant reroute take place on the Scott's Gap trail.



LOCAL IMPACT

**7,228 Acres of Forest
and Natural Areas**

**336 Acres Under Active
Management**



**256,000 Annual
Visitors to Jefferson
Memorial Forest**



**414 hours volunteered by
47 volunteers, valued at
\$12,345.48**



**275 species of trees,
shrubs, and ferns**



**3422 Youth received
outdoor experiential
education**



**47.9 miles of hiking,
shared use mountain
biking, and equestrian
trails along with 1
bicycle pump track**



2022 FINANCIALS

WILDERNESS LOUISVILLE

NET ASSETS AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE YEAR:

\$447,628

REVENUES

GRANTS AND
CONTRIBUTIONS:

\$677,212

EXPENSES

PROGRAM EXPENSES: \$111,241

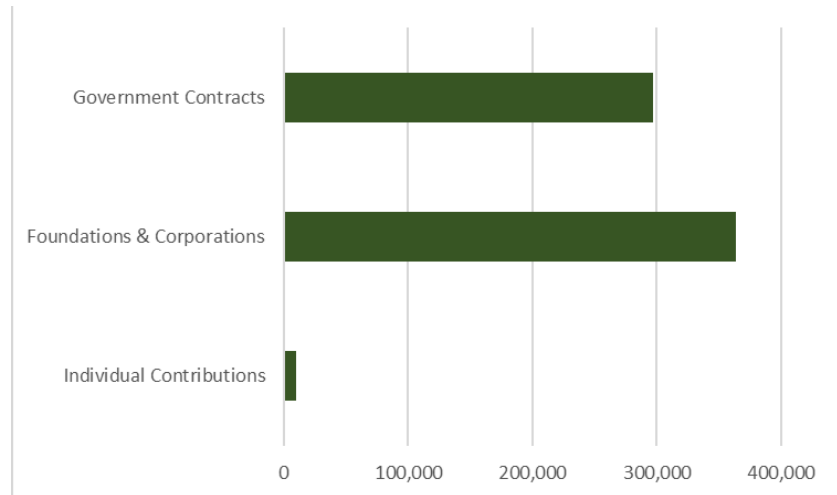
FUNDRAISING: \$5,858

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL: \$150,8274

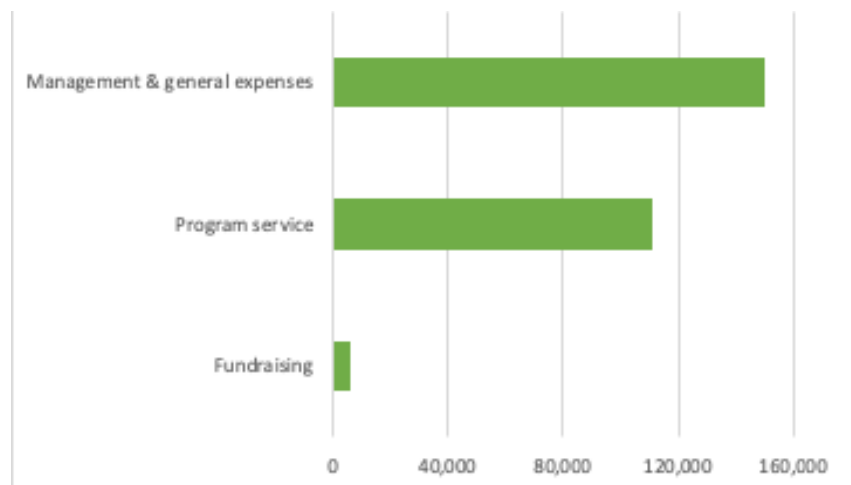
NET ASSETS AT THE END OF THE
YEAR:

\$857,499

REVENUE



EXPENSES





West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative's Engaging Children Outdoors (ECHO) Program

ENSURING EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO NATURE AND OUTDOOR SPACES

Spending time in nature is essential for our health and wellbeing. Green outdoor spaces provide options for everyday physical activity, community and social connections, and learning about the natural environment. We need to ensure that all residents of Louisville – no matter where they live, work, or play – have access to safe parks and public outdoor spaces.

WHAT IS THE ENGAGING CHILDREN OUTDOORS (ECHO) PROGRAM? RECREATION INITIATIVE (WLORI)?

ECHO offers learning opportunities, activities, and job opportunities to encourage more children, young adults, and families in Louisville to spend time outside and become the next leaders in the outdoor and environmental fields.

For more than a decade, ECHO has provided learning opportunities for children ages 3 to 21, making experiences in nature a fun, interesting, and regular part of the public-school curriculum. ECHO also provides out-of-school opportunities, including summer camps, green career job opportunities for young adults, and community events like Shawnee Outdoor Adventure Day.

WLORI is a community-led planning effort to make outdoor spaces, such as local parks and along the Ohio River, more accessible to everyone. From designing parks and installing nature play spaces to supporting ECHO classes and activities like boating and hiking that get people outside, WLORI connects more Louisville residents to the health benefits of outdoor activity.

WLORI uses a step-by-step process that allows community members, families, and young people to steer park improvements and programs. This community-led process finds new ideas and solutions to longstanding problems that support the community's priorities.



Environmental education



Out-of-school outdoor activities



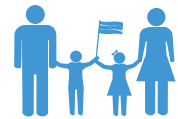
Nature play



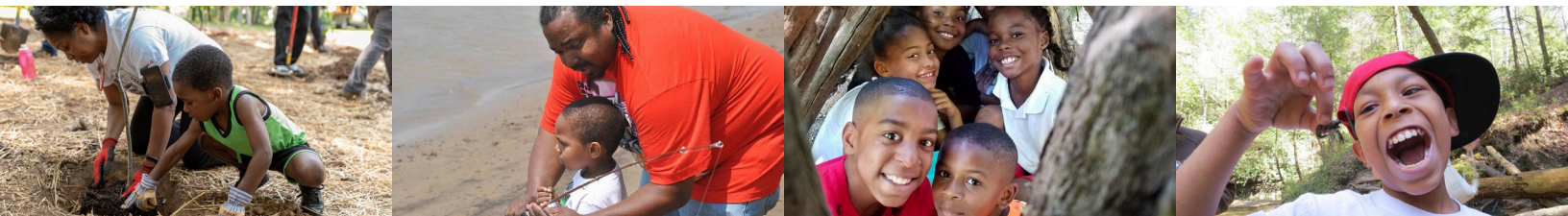
Recreational sports



Youth summer jobs



Family & community events



ECHO promotes fair and inclusive access to green spaces and outdoor activities for children and families. WLORI improves parks and outdoor recreation infrastructure so community members can enjoy nature and be as healthy as possible.

WHY DOES LOUISVILLE NEED ECHO?

Living in a city, we can easily go days and weeks without spending time in nature and experiencing the health benefits of the outdoors. West Louisville, in particular, has historically been excluded from investment in safe outdoor spaces like neighborhood parks and recreational areas, making it even harder for local children and families to spend time learning from, growing, and playing in nature. ECHO provides ongoing outdoor activity opportunities that promote healthy living, social cohesion, self confidence, and career exploration.

The state-of-the-art Shawnee Outdoor Learning (SOL) Center is the final element and most exciting feature of WLORI's Master Plan to improve West Louisville parks infrastructure and access.

HOW WILL THE SOL CENTER HELP ECHO INCREASE ITS IMPACT?

5,000 Children

will have opportunities to experience outdoor activities and nature education with the new SOL Center, doubling the number of children ECHO engages with today.



Inspiring the next generation

Imagine a landscape architect, photographer, mountain climber, environmental engineer, or writer who found their calling through a childhood spent exploring the banks of the Ohio River, rock climbing at the SOL Center, or walking nature paths in Shawnee Park.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Join other organizations and donors that have signed on to support building the SOL Center. Learn more about how to be a part of the movement. <https://www.wildernesslouisville.org/get-involved/donate/>

We're helping Louisville fulfill its commitment to just and fair access to open outdoor spaces. Join us in our journey to nature justice for all by exploring our ECHO programs! <https://www.wildernesslouisville.org/programs/louisville-echo/>

This publication was made possible by cooperative agreement number OT18-1802 Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services Through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health from the CDC, which includes the Improving Social Determinants of Health—Getting Further Faster initiative.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

\$5000 and above

BROWN FORMAN CORPORATION
JEWISH HERITAGE FUND
KENTUCKIANA WORKS
NORTON FOUNDATION
SKYLIGHT WOODS FUND

\$500-\$4999

LG&E
LENORA METCALFE



\$100 TO \$499

CRYSS ARKENBERG
TOM ARMSTRONG
SHARON BOND
SAMMIE BRIAN
MARK CHAFFINS
KELLY CLARK
SHEILA COLLINS
BONNIE CRESS
VIRGINIA DELANEY
KRISTA DRESCHER-BURKE
SUZANNE HOEHNE
EVERETT HOFFMAN
JOANN JAMES
CHRIS & JESSICA KANE
LARRY & EMILY KELLY
BENNETT KNOX
J. KOERNER
TIFFANY OGUNSANYA
TRACY PEPPLER
PRASANTHI PERSAD
TARA & SAM PERSAD
JERRI RINEY
THOMAS RINEY
JOY & DAVE ROELFS
RANDY STROBO
SHARON SWEENEY
LAYNE TAYLOR
PATRICIA TENNEN
ERIN WAGONER
ESTHER WETZEL, in loving
memory of NIELS WETZEL
WILLIAM WRIGHT
ZIKE FAMILY

UP TO \$99

CAMERON ABELL
KATHARINE ADAMS
MELANIE BLOEMER
ERICA BINDNER-WOOTEN
AMANDA BOMMER-
VILLAVECES
MARIANNE BUTLER
RITA BUTLER
CHRISTINE CROXALL
CLIFFORD DEATON
STEPHANIE FUNK
RONITA GIBERSON
MARY GROESCHEN
MICHAEL GROSS
JOHN GUTHRIE
SHERRY HURLEY
ROBERT JONES
KENNETH KAREM
DESTINY MONYHAN
MICHAEL NORMAN
NIKI OVERSTREET
LAURA PARSONS
COLE PAARFUSSER
LYNN RIPPY
MICHELLE SPAIN
MARK YOUNG
MATTHEW WELCH
VICKI WELCH
WARD & SALLY WILSON

