

Wilderness Louisville

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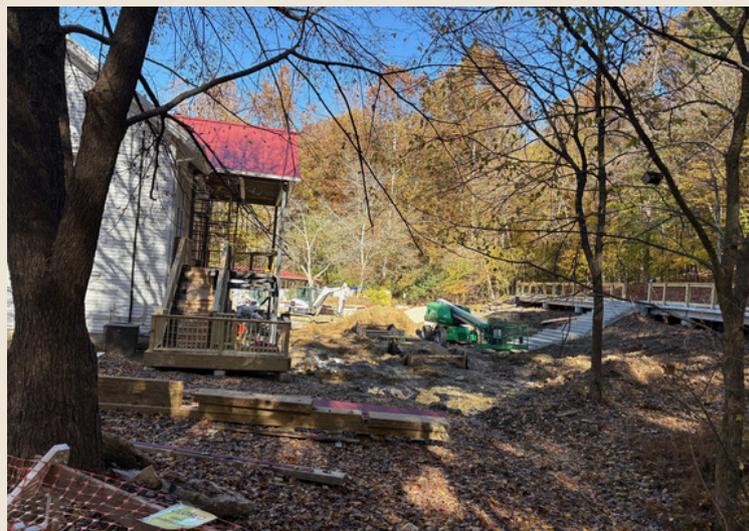
Jessica Kane
*Natural Areas
Parks Administrator*

Fall has been a colorful and eventful season at Jefferson Memorial Forest. The team has been busy with maintenance and trail rerouting.

The Welcome Center at JMF is under construction, as you know if you've visited in the past few months! We are hoping that construction will be complete before the end of 2025



*Thanks for your
patience during these
improvements, the new
and improved exterior
will be worth the wait!*





Note from the Wilderness Louisville Board Chair

Happy fall, everyone! This newsletter marks not just the conclusion of a busy, productive year for Wilderness Louisville but, for me, the end of my term as Board Chair. I joined the board in 2016 at the request of our original Executive Director, Bennett Knox, and was elected Chair in 2019. It's been a great honor to serve in that capacity for the past seven years, and to witness the dedication of the Wilderness Louisville board, the Natural Areas staff, and our volunteers.

A lot has changed since 2016! Wilderness Louisville was founded in 2013, meaning we were a new organization trying to define our role in championing Louisville's natural areas. In 2019, one of my first actions as Chair was to approve funding for a temporary program office for the Louisville ECHO (Engaging Children Outdoors) program. That's a fancy way of saying we rented a trailer in Shawnee Park. While we're still using that trailer, WL and Metro Parks last year secured over \$8 million for the construction of Echo's new permanent home, the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center.

2025 also saw the completion of the Tom Wallace restoration project, a \$2.7 million restoration of Tom Wallace Lake at Jefferson Memorial Forest, which includes accessible walk paths, seating areas, a picnic pavilion, and an accessible nature playground.

Whether it's the two projects above, the Chickasaw Forest Play Area, the construction of a new teaching pavilion at JMF, a boat ramp to the Ohio River at Shawnee Park, mitigating invasive glade cress, or restoring the Mill Creek Greenway, Wilderness Louisville will continue to support its vision to make Louisville a national leader in the development of, and equitable access to, nature.

I look forward to what's next for Wilderness Louisville!

Thank you to all of our Wilderness Louisville donors.

It is only through your ongoing generosity that we can steward natural areas & champion both nature education for youth and equitable access for the community to natural spaces



Thank you,

Andy Reynolds

VIEW FROM JEFFERSON MEMORIAL FOREST



Land Management



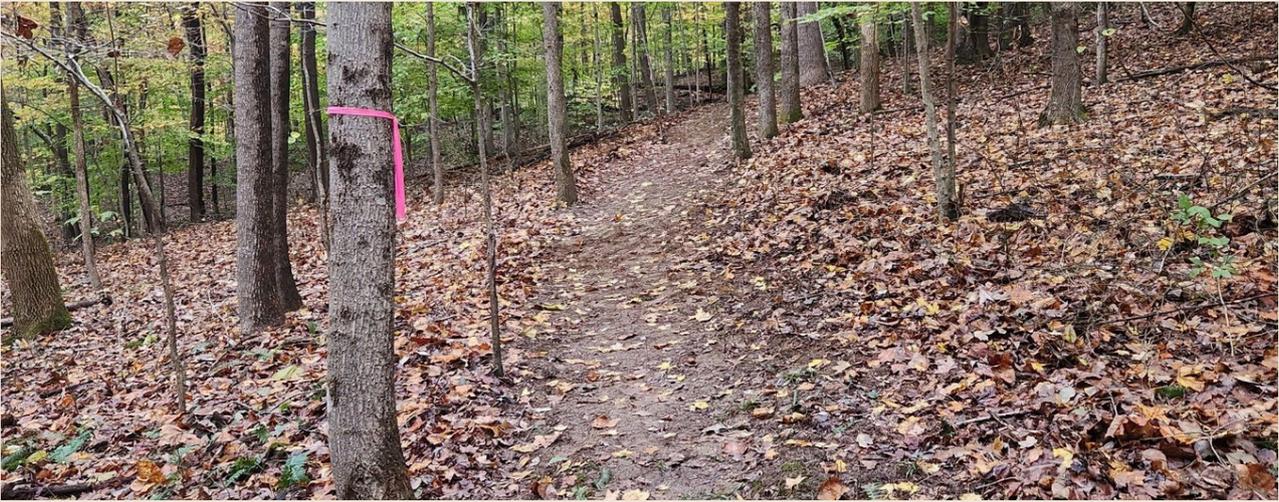
Since the publication of our last newsletter this summer, the Land Management team has been hard at work. Their larger projects include treatment of large stands of invasive tree species (Tree of Heaven, Paulownia) on the Siltstone Trail, McNeely South, and in Horine. They also did bridge repair at Waverly Park and invasive plant species management at Scott's Gap, McNeely South, Waverly Park, Horine, Tom Wallace Recreation Area and the Louisville Loop. Other activities include installing mile markers along the trails, erosion control, volunteer days, trail re-routes, and wild fire training.

The team collaborated with the Louisville Equitable Forest Initiative (LEFI), a program in Urban Forestry with a mission of growing an equitable tree canopy and encouraging holistic sustainability in underserved communities. One component of LEFI is a workforce development program that trains people from underserved communities in green industry skills that are in high demand. Members of that group came out to JMF for a job shadow day, both observing and helping the Natural Areas staff as they installed water bars on the Orange Trail, removed leaning trees on the trails in the Programs area, and felled dead trees in preparation for the prescribed burn in Scott's Gap.

Thanks to the Natural Areas Land Management Team for all they do and for making JMF and our other natural areas accessible and enjoyable for everyone!



VIEW FROM JEFFERSON MEMORIAL FOREST



Eagle Scout Service Project *written by Sawyer Beavan*

I have been working on this Eagle Scout project by volunteering to reroute a quarter mile portion of the Mitchell Hill Lake Trail. Each day, we had about 12 to 15 volunteers including several Eagle Scouts, Scout Leaders and parent volunteers from my troop, as well as several school friends and volunteer Trail Rangers with Jefferson Memorial Forest. Together, we created a new path by removing trees, brush and debris and laying two new culverts. With the creation of this new path, the old path will be obscured to encourage hikers to follow the new path. Special thanks to Home Depot for donating some of the trail tools. We plan to close the damaged portion of the Mitchell Hill Lake Trail by late November.



My Eagle Scout project, which benefitted Jefferson Memorial Forest and visitors, resulted in an improved trail incorporating some of the sustainable trail guidelines. The new trail follows the natural contours of the land and includes subtle elevation changes that help water drainage to maintain the trail, while also creating a more interesting hiking experience for visitors. The old path was damaged by erosion that washed away the trail in areas and exposed tree roots. The new path was routed uphill and around the main watershed of a hillside allowing water to easily run off and thus establishing a sustainable trail. The two new culverts also add to the trail's sustainability by helping to redirect the water downhill and away from the trail.

Thank you to Sawyer, and all the volunteers who joined him to reroute a portion of the Mitchell Hill Lake Trail! Visit JMF to see the end results of their hard work and enjoy some time outdoors in the forest.





Thank you to all that came out to visit us at Forest Adventure in October in the Horine Reservation. The weather was beautiful and we enjoyed sharing more with you about Wilderness Louisville.



Partnerships

Wilderness Louisville has become a member of the **Healthy Waters Coalition**, a collaboration interested in restoring and protecting the interconnected waters of the Ohio River Basin – a vast region that includes portions of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia, as well as Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Seneca Nation of Indians.

Wilderness Louisville has also become a member of the **Kentucky Nonprofit Network (KNN)**

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You're ongoing support helps sustain youth programming, improve trail maintenance needs, tree plantings, and much more!

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COME OUT TO THE FOREST



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happy
Thanksgiving

from Wilderness Louisville

