

NewsStreams



A publication of Kentucky Waterways Alliance: Working to protect and restore Kentucky's waterways.

The Times They Are A Changin'

By KWA Executive Director Judy Petersen and Board President Gordon Gamer

KWA turns 21 this month and, as the Bob Dylan song goes, the Times They Are a Changin'. Our current Strategic Plan is due for revisions, and we're excited about finding ways to make our growing organization even more effective. Don't worry – **KWA will continue to be your advocate for clean water in Kentucky, we'll just be doing it in an even bigger and better way!**

One exciting aspect to this change is happening with our Governing Council (the Board). As with any growing organization, the Board is becoming more of a governing body that provides oversight and strategic visioning. At the same time, we're expanding the opportunities for our members to get involved. We're working right now to recruit new trustees and advisors to help guide our organization into the future. We will adapt KWA into an organization that will continue to be the strongest voice in Kentucky on water issues.

That's where you come in! **You can join one of our new committees as an advisor or trustee and provide your perspective on the issues and future of KWA.**

What do you see as some of the biggest threats or needs for our waterways in the future? Since we will engage in Strategic Planning early in 2015, we want to hear from you now! Offer your feedback by taking a brief survey on our website at: www.KWAlliance.org/2015-strategic-planning/. If you would like to offer your time and talents to one of our committees, please go online and provide that information or call our office and ask for Angela or Judy.

In addition to new board committees, there will be committees for providing input to staff on programmatic work. Our Water Policy Director is looking for members with some expertise and time to join his new Waterways Protection Council

now! If you are interested, contact Tim@kwalliance.org for more information.

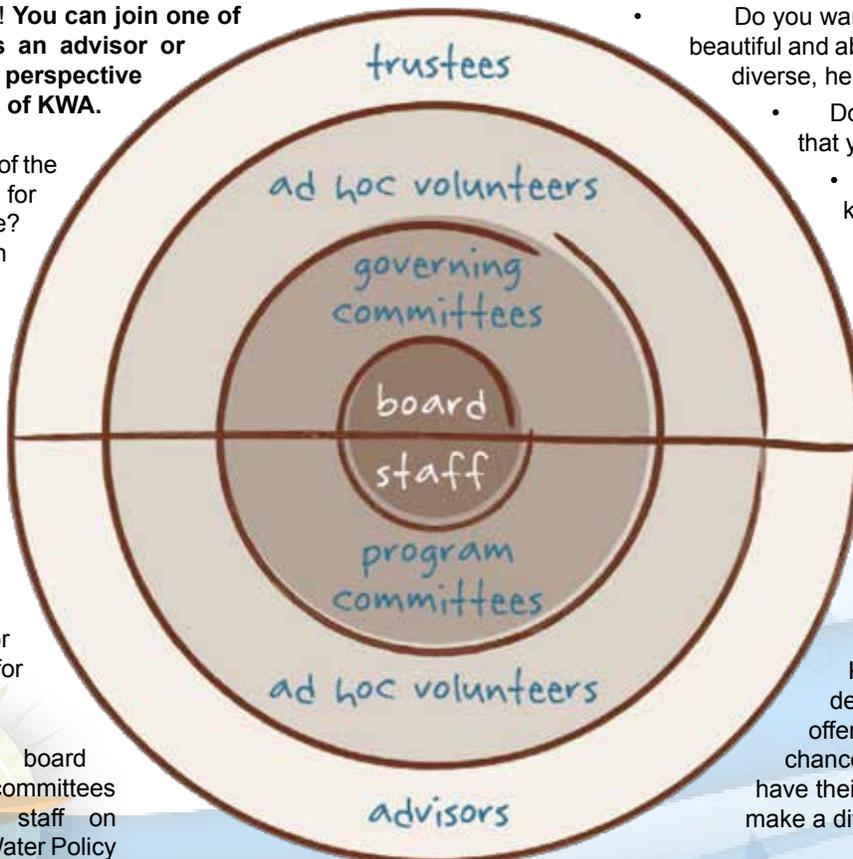
Our new affiliation with the National Wildlife Federation will be a factor in developing our future strategic direction. As the NWF affiliate, we can be a bigger voice for conservation and protection of our streams and forests and wetlands.

Another big challenge/opportunity is figuring out how we can best work in a rapidly changing environment and where the biggest needs will be in the future.

- Do you care about clean drinking water for your family?
- Do you want to be able to swim and splash in your local creek?
- Do you canoe, kayak or paddle on a lake or waterway?
 - Do you need clean water for your farm or your business?
 - Do you want to make sure Kentucky's beautiful and abundant waterways support diverse, healthy, native populations.
 - Do you fish and want to know that your catch is safe to eat?
 - Do you hunt and know that deer, turkey and all wildlife are dependent upon clean water and a clean environment?
 - Are you worried about climate change impacts on our waterways and land and want us to focus on green infrastructure or adaptations to help mitigate the changes?

There are many reasons to care about clean water. KWA's upcoming strategic development process will offer a unique and intimate chance for our supporters to have their voice heard and actively make a difference.

So yes, the times are a changin' - and we'd love for you to be involved!



KWA's new shared roles of leadership will follow this model.
 Source: 2014 Solid Ground Consulting

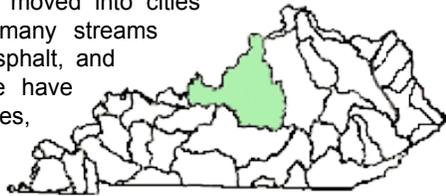
Message from the Salt River

Guest article by Emily Hogue, Salt River Basin Coordinator

As human beings whose bodies are 50-65% water and who must consume water to live, one would think that all of us would have an appreciation and respect for our water resources.

However, as we have moved into cities and suburbs, buried many streams and wetlands under asphalt, and limited the access we have to the remaining ones,

our connection to the water we depend on for survival has been lost.



Salt River Basin

We have lost our sense of stewardship for our natural water sources because we don't pay much for water and, hey, when we turn the faucet on, it is always there. So, how do we, as people concerned about water related issues, get our message to the general public and help create a positive change in water quality? Well, of course, the answer to this question is not a simple one, or else it would have been done already. The Clean Water Act of 1972 did an amazing job of forcing point sources (particularly big industry dumping their waste into the river) to change their ways, but our water was still polluted. With the industrial discharges under control, we found a much more complicated source of pollution to deal with...all of us! Everyone's actions have an effect on the land and, when water from storms runs over the land, this runoff pollution, or nonpoint source pollution, is carried into our streams. So how do we get people to change behaviors that contribute to runoff pollution? Now that's a tricky one!

I believe one of the answers is collaboration and, hopefully, that is what I can help create as the Salt River Basin Coordinator for the Kentucky Division of Water. In addition to working together, we also need to work in a way that doesn't exclude the public from the conversation, because after all it is a behavior change that we are striving for. Telling someone not to wash their car in the driveway doesn't mean a whole lot to someone who doesn't know storm drains empty directly into our streams.

With that being said, my priorities as the Salt River Basin Coordinator are to get the folks actively involved with water related issues talking to one another. Like the old saying goes, "There is no point in re-inventing the wheel." After all, the thing worked pretty well the first time. If you are doing great work in one county, the folks in the neighboring county probably aren't aware, but they should be. I also want to update our communication network and get an electronic newsletter created. My colleagues and I are also in the midst of finalizing and updating a group of websites and documents that provide a new way to share information about the health of Kentucky's streams. We hope this public friendly information will highlight some of our water quality problems and what folks can do to help. My work also entails helping interested citizens and agencies develop watershed groups to address local water issues. In addition, I am working with existing watershed groups to create and implement watershed based plans and projects that work to protect or restore local streams. If you are interested in receiving the upcoming newsletter of happenings in the Salt River Basin please e-mail me at Emily.Hogue@ky.gov.

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Tessa Edelen, Watershed Program Director
Tim Joice, Water Policy Director

Mark Howell
Bacon Creek Agricultural Coordinator

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**Want to be in the know about water-related happenings?
Visit our website at
WWW.KWALLIANCE.ORG
to check out upcoming events in Kentucky!**

KWA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. Articles express the opinions of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of KWA or its officers.

BBQ, Bourbon, & Blues - A Rousing Success

KWA would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our *BBQ, Bourbon, & Blues* event a huge success! Guests including Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, Congressman John Yarmuth, and several other corporate and government representatives were among the more than 300 people who had a fantastic time at the sold out event. **BBQ, Bourbon & Blues was the largest, most successful fundraising event in KWA's history**, and it wouldn't have been possible without the support of our sponsors and donors!

The setting – right next to Floyds Fork in the beautiful Gheens Foundation Lodge at Beckley Creek Park – was perfect! The night was filled with music from the Kelly Richey Band, incredible silent auction offerings, our first-ever live auction, and a moving speech from the National Wildlife Federation's new CEO, Collin O'Mara. Everyone indulged themselves with fantastic food offerings from

Wiltshire Pantry, and the signature cocktail, a Woodford Reserve Old Fashioned, flowed like...well, what else? Water!



A special thank you goes to **Brown-Forman Corporation** and the **Owsley Brown II Family Foundation**, our River Level sponsors, and to **Anderson, Bryant, Lasky, & Winslow, PSC**, without whom the night couldn't have happened.

The event raised almost **\$50,000** for our vital projects to help protect and restore some of Kentucky's most amazing natural

places and to help protect critically endangered aquatic species. Work that might not have been possible without the generosity of our donors.

We can't wait for next year's event on October 9, 2015. We plan on selling out again so please make sure to mark your calendars and secure your tickets early – we hope to see you there!

Living Lands and Waters comes to Louisville



Living Lands & Waters, an industrial strength river cleanup team traveling the Mississippi River and its' tributaries, graciously hosted two fantastic cleanups on the Ohio River this past October. More than 50 volunteers came out to help gather trash off the banks of the Ohio.

Included in the tons of trash that was removed were hundreds of tires and many other interesting items such as baby dolls, trash cans, and computers. Plastic water bottles were the most abundant item we found, a good reminder to take your reusable water bottle with you everywhere!

KWA was honored to help gather volunteers and participate in this cleanup with such an amazing group of people. We hope you will join us for our next clean up on Beargrass Creek, November 22 at Big Rock in Louisville, KY. And if you are ever in an area where Living Lands & Waters is hosting a cleanup, we highly recommend you join them, they are super fun!

Two groups of volunteers dedicated their Saturdays to cleaning up the Ohio River. They were rewarded with a sense of pride for helping rid local waterway of tons of trash, a heightened appreciation for the mighty Ohio, and new friendships with fellow clean water advocates.



KWA Works Every Day on Behalf of Our Families for Clean Water POLICY.. IN BRIEF: what we're doing to protect your water resources

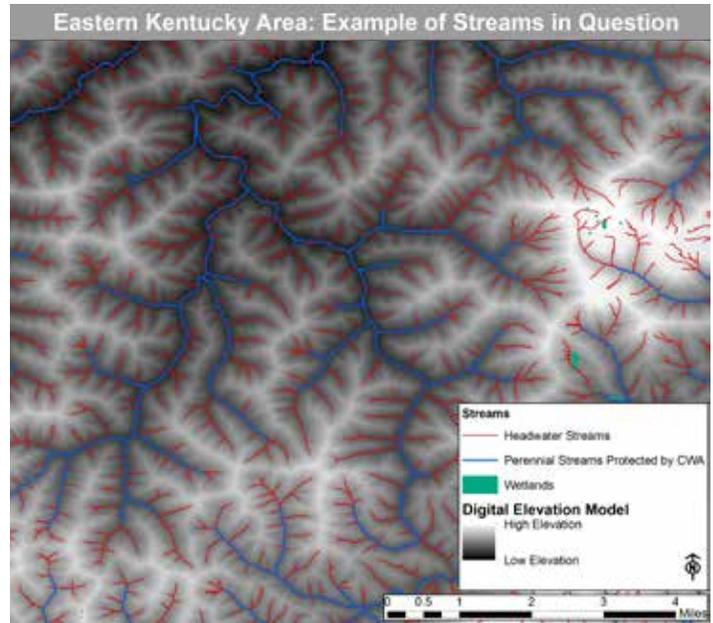
By Tim Joice, Water Policy Director

Clean Water Protection Rule

Last month, the EPA again extended the deadline for submitting comments on the proposed rule to clarify waters protected under the Clean Water Act to the 14th of November. We've said it many times over the past six months, but this is a **critically important proposal by EPA**. The rule explains that small headwater streams are just as important as downstream creeks and rivers, and that wetlands adjacent to streams are essential for improving water quality and for lessening the impacts of floods.

The rule has been the recipient of quite a bit of speculative and outright false suggestions that EPA is trying to regulate agriculture and trying to gain more power. In actuality, **EPA is simply trying to restore original protections under the Clean Water Act that have become unclear after several court cases and previous presidential administration's policies**. Farmers, businesses, citizens, and politicians should all be supportive of EPA's effort to limit pollution in our waterways.

Politicians and federal agencies will still be listening to what people have to say about the rule for many months to come, even if the official comment period has expired. **So please, we need you to speak up!** Write letters to the editors of your local paper, write to the EPA and to your Senators and Representatives, and tell them you want them to protect your water. Find out more at our webpage: iLoveCleanWater.org



Water: It's all connected! If all the streams in red on this map are left unprotected, what will happen to the larger rivers and streams?

KU Power Plant Still Violating Clean Water Laws

Kentucky Utilities' E.W. Brown Generating Station near Danville, KY was notified in March that they had violated their wastewater discharge permit. The facility had been **illegally discharging orange-colored water, contaminated by arsenic, manganese, and other heavy metals, into Lake Herrington** (a drinking water source for thousands of people), and it was caught on video by Division of Waste Management staff. KU responded that they would fix the problem by July. In fact, KU has still not taken sufficient action to stop the pollution.

In September, DOW notified KU again that they were in violation of the permit. Heavy metals and discolored water continued to flow into and stain a ditch adjacent to their old coal ash pond. KU must again try to remediate the problem. Three strikes, and you're out, right? Well, unfortunately, not really. But rest assured, we are staying on top of this to make sure KU addresses their failures.



Picture of the illegal pollution going into Lake Herrington.

LG&E Trimble Landfill

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, LG&E recently reapplied for a Clean Water Act permit to construct a coal combustion residuals (coal ash) landfill in a ravine adjacent to their Trimble County Generating Station. The Trimble station is on the Ohio River. The ravine is just above the generating station and has high quality waters, as well as a cave system and more karst geology.

In short, it's a really bad location for a coal ash landfill. EPA agrees. They have submitted comments to the Corps of Engineers that suggest the project is poorly located and has not fulfilled the federal requirements needed to acquire the permit. KWA will continue to fight permitting of projects that do not follow federal and state requirements, and that do not protect our high quality waters.

Human Impacts of Polluted Creeks

Guest article by Bob Joice, KWA Member

Around this time last year, my son told me about canoeing several Kentucky rivers, and it sounded like a lot of fun. For Christmas, he promised me the gift of a canoe trip on the Elkhorn Creek, and on Memorial Day weekend, we set out on a little adventure.



Elkhorn Creek. Source: smallwaterfishing.com

After getting acclimated and going around a few bends and minor rapids, we came upon a small stretch of larger rapids. Before we knew what happened, we had flipped. As he and I both struggled to get a handle on the canoe, the current pulled us both downstream. In the process, my finger was smashed between a rock and the hard canoe. Though I didn't realize it immediately, I had a significant cut and broken bone in my pinky finger. Fortunately, I was able to get to the stream bank where a fellow canoer helped with a make-shift bandage for my finger. My son, however, stayed with the canoe and eventually made it to the bank quite a bit farther downstream. Eventually, he and I joined back up and made our way to the midpoint take-out.

This was just the beginning of a much longer adventure.

At the take-out, the staff immediately told us to get to a hospital. From there, it only got worse. Elkhorn Creek is an impaired stream, meaning it contains specific pollutants that exceed acceptable levels for certain stream functions. One of those pollutants is the bacteria known as *Escherichia coli*, or *E. coli*, and it originates in human or animal waste. Nowadays, it is more commonly associated with contamination in our food system. My finger became infected with this and several other types of bacteria. It was just my little finger, but a serious infection. I spent one week in a hospital, one month entirely out of work, three months on multiple intense antibiotics, and five months (so far) continuing on one antibiotic. With conscientious care over several months, the finger is much better and the infection appears to be gone.

Challenges still remain in my recovery and may remain for a long time. Regardless, if I knew then what I know now, I would still have joyfully gone canoeing. However, I am now a dedicated believer in the importance of improving water quality in creeks and rivers throughout the Commonwealth. I recognize that while my experience is not typical, accidents can happen to anyone, and they can have considerable impacts, well beyond these that I have had to deal with. I'm learning that there are still a great many streams, rivers, and lakes that are too polluted to support native aquatic life, fish consumption, or recreational activities. The waterways in this state should be clean enough that regular citizens like me aren't risking their life and limb, and enormous health care costs, when enjoying a simple canoe trip or fishing trip - and that's why I support Kentucky Waterways Alliance.

Elkhorn Creek Impairments and Sources

Impaired for:

- Specific Conductance, Fecal Coliform, Nitrogen and Phosphorus Pollution, Sewage, Sedimentation/Siltation, Chlorine, and Total Dissolved Solids

Sources of those impairments are:

- Agriculture (managed pasture grazing, rangeland grazing, manure runoff, non-irrigated crop production, livestock grazing or feeding operations), Municipal Point and Non-Point Source Discharges, Riparian Habitat Loss, Barren Land Erosion, Urban Runoff/Storm Sewers, Habitat Modification, Highway/Road/Bridge Runoff (Non-construction Related), Package Plant or other Permitted Small Flows Discharges, and other Unknown Sources

Source: 2012 Integrated Waters Report

Impaired Waters

Kentucky Division of Water (DOW) made public the complete 2012 *Integrated Report to Congress on Water Resources in Kentucky*. Here's the summary: a significant portion of our waterways continue to be too polluted for various uses, like fish consumption, recreation, or aquatic life. DOW is understaffed and limited by their budget, and simply don't have the ability to address all of the pollution problems around the state. Plus, there are a number of perennial threats to our waterways, like existing surface coal mining discharges and agriculture, that the state has limited capability to address. The lesson with these reports, at least in the eyes of KWA, is that there is a continued need to push representatives in state government to ensure sufficient funds in the budget for our regulatory agencies.

Learn more about how you can help here: <http://kwalliance.org/state-report-shows-continued-water-quality-concerns/>

Water Job Announcements in Kentucky

**WATERSHED
WATCH
IN KENTUCKY**

Watershed Watch in Kentucky seeks a part-time contractor to provide fundraising expertise and planning assistance. Upper Green River Watershed Watch is hiring a part-time Event Coordinator.

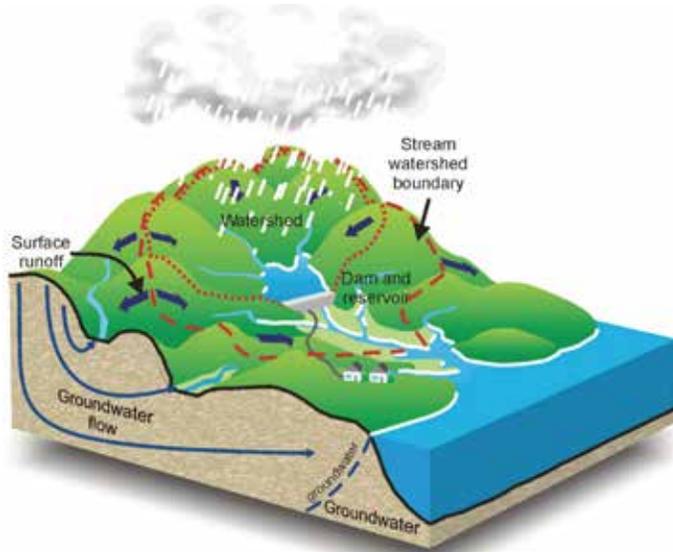
For more details and additional information on either one of these positions, please check our web site: www.KWAlliance.org

**UPPER
GREEN
RIVER
WATERSHED
WATCH**

My Story of Watersheds

By Tessa Edelen, Watershed Program Director

This story of watersheds starts with a 5th grade class of gifted children. I had lugged my plastic model of a watershed across town to their school intent on inspiring and connecting with them. I arrived on time, got out my spray bottle, and set up the little houses and farms and factories and cows and tractors. I sprinkled the whole lot of them with cocoa powder, and I was prepared to make it rain. The first thing out of my mouth was something like, "good morning, who can tell me what a watershed is?" Every single hand shot up, and this answer was delivered: the area of land that drains to a specific stream; a drainage basin.

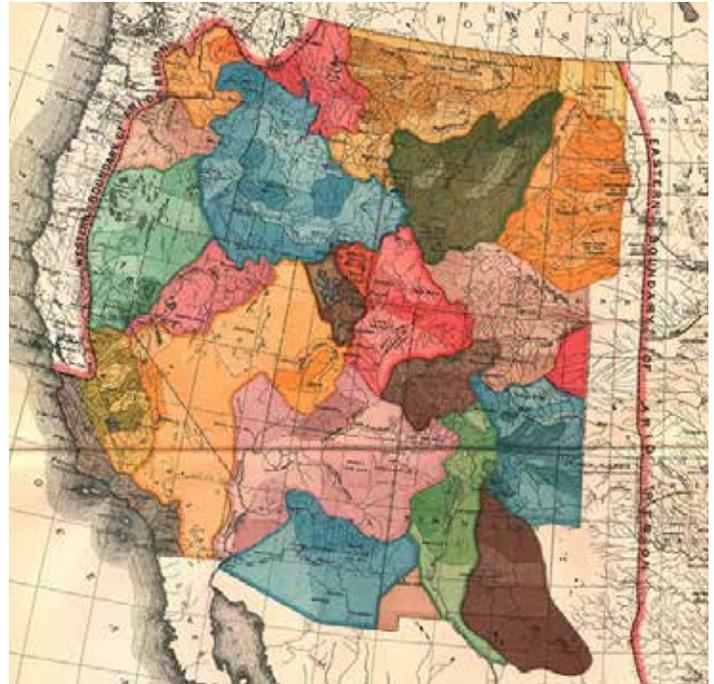


A Watershed. Source: Natural Resources Canada, GeoPub portal.

And I said, "Well, kinda." In reality, that is the exact definition. It just sounded so antiseptic, and, well, boring. Watersheds are not boring!

But really, the story starts much earlier. It starts around 1862, with the Homestead Act and American Manifest Destiny and that famous one-armed explorer, John Wesley Powell, who long ago foretold of our current water woes. Businesses and governments alike encouraged the settlement of the western United States, regardless of the demonstrable lack of water that was obvious even in 1869 when Powell rafted down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. And it's not just the west, anymore. Water shortages, and water supply contamination resulting in water shortages, all over the east from Atlanta to West Virginia provide ample evidence that our world of water is ever changing. Climate change and growing populations mean that stress on our resources will continue to grow. Something as important and dynamic as water requires planning to protect it and ourselves.

Powell's watershed-based map, *Arid Region of the United States*, could have been our model for communities and planning. But it is not. We went with straight lines and political boundaries instead, and today, over 130 years later, I am still struggling to communicate what the word "watershed" even means. I've thought a lot about why the standard definition doesn't work. It's because it leaves out people.



Arid Region of the United States by John Wesley Powell

This is the crux of my story of watersheds. People are a big part of watersheds, so I need people to be involved in watershed planning. As a whole, we have no cultural appreciation of the natural resources on which we rely. Clean water is the very basic element of life. We all realize this, but we have no context for this knowledge. As long as clean water comes out of the faucet when we turn the knob, water quality issues are easy to ignore.

To fix this, let's create a better definition of watersheds. There are many ways to describe a watershed, but a good definition must include people and communities. It's not just topography and bodies of waters. It is not rational to discuss environmental issues of any sort without discussing the impacts that humans and our activities have on the world. Put another way, everything we do on the land impacts the water. Your yard is a watershed. Your kid's school playground is a watershed. The work parking lot is a watershed. Everywhere you go is a watershed – which means that everything you do has the potential to impact our collective water.

Here's the point: city planning and zoning, county lines, congressional districts, neighborhood borders, and utility service areas all have one thing in common – they do not respect the boundaries of watersheds. We did not develop our state lines to account for the very important resource that will come to define the 21st century. But we can still plan for our watersheds. We all can participate in watershed planning and stewardship on some level. At its core, watershed planning is community organizing.

Start at the beginning. Do you know your watershed address? Do you know where your nearest storm drain is? When is the last time you had your septic tank pumped out? Inform yourself of the details of water in your life. Learn the meaning of impervious surfaces and hydrologic modification and floodplains and riparian buffers. Figure out where your drinking water comes from. Know which facilities have discharge permits in your town. Show up to creek cleanups and planning meetings. Recognize the definition of the word watershed when someone yells it at you.

Upcoming Events

November 22 **BCA Autumn Cleanup at Big Rock** From

10 a.m. to noon, volunteers of all ages will band together to tackle litter in Beargrass Creek in Cherokee Park. The Beargrass Creek Alliance (BCA) will host the cleanup and asks for volunteers to meet at the Big Rock parking lot in Cherokee Park. Supplies will be provided, but bring a water bottle and dress for the weather.



December 9 **Red River Watershed Team Meeting**

At the Wolfe County Extension Office in Campton, KY at 6 pm.

January 28 **Bacon Creek Watershed Council Meeting**

Everyone is invited to this quarterly meeting in Bonnierville City Hall at 4:30 (CST) where we will discuss upcoming BMP projects.

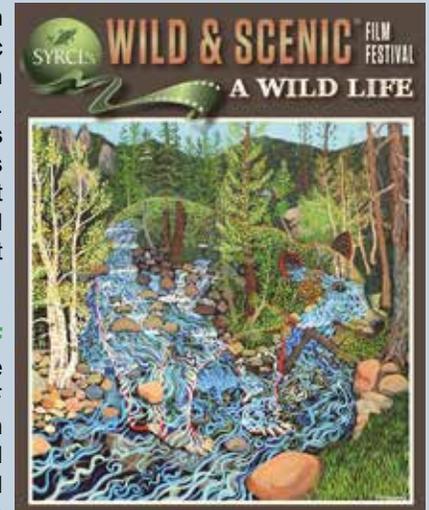
February 4 **BCA Community Meeting** Featuring Louisville Sustainability Director Maria Koetter at 6:30 pm at Bellarmine University at Hilary's in Horrigan Hall.

Feb 7 **Upper Green River WW Annual Conference**

This event, located in the Birch Room of Lost River Cave in Bowling Green, is free and open to the public.

March 13 **Wild & Scenic Film Festival**

KWA will host our 7th annual Wild & Scenic event at the Clifton Center in Louisville, KY. This selection of films to change your world is always one of our most anticipated events and this years lineup will not disappoint.



March 27-29 **NWF Annual Meeting**

Be a part of setting NWF conservation policy with NWF President and CEO Collin O'Mara and NWF Board Chairman Deborah Spalding and network with affiliate leaders from around the country at the NWF Annual Meeting in Shepherdstown, WV.

April 17 **Harrods Creek Party at Ashbourne Farm**

Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

As always, please refer to our website www.KWAlliance.org for a complete list of events!

ADOPT A RIVER



Give a gift that will help protect the future of our water resources!

Kentucky is blessed with an abundance of waterways, from mountain streams to broad rivers - and they all need our support! Your symbolic adoption of one of Kentucky's beautiful rivers will support KWA's efforts across the state to protect and restore Kentucky's waterways. Complete the back of this form and return it today to receive your adoption packet in time for the holidays!

For more information about the program or to adopt online, go to our website: www.kwalliance.org.



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ADOPT A RIVER

CHECK ONE RIVER

- Ohio
- Green
- Salt
- Kentucky
- Big Sandy
- Cumberland
- Licking

CHECK ONE LEVEL

- \$100 - Includes certificate of adoption, a bumper sticker, a KWA tote bag, and a water bottle.
- \$75 - Includes certificate of adoption, a bumper sticker, and a KWA tote bag.
- \$50 - Includes certificate of adoption and a bumper sticker.
- Please accept my donation and I do not wish to receive a free gift.

- My Check is enclosed.
- Charge my credit card

Name: _____

CC#: _____

Security code: _____ Exp Date: _____

To have your gift mailed to you before Christmas, orders must be received in our office by December 16.
Kentucky Waterways Alliance, 120 Webster Street Suite #217, Louisville, KY 40206

Visit WWW.KWALLIANCE.ORG to join us in the pursuit of healthy waterways today.