

# NewsStreams

Because Clean Water Can't Wait



Front and Back Cover Photos:  
Susan Griffin Ward

# NewsStreams

Because Clean Water Can't Wait - Winter 2019



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## 3rd Annual Wild & Scenic Red Riverfest



Dedication of 7th Street Clay City  
Red River Canoe-Kayak Access

The third annual Wild & Scenic Red Riverfest was held on September 7, 2019 to commemorate the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Red

River receiving the invaluable designation that put an end to the dam struggle that began in the 1960s- a milestone for free-flowing Red River, one of our unique Kentucky treasures. The event was also to promote, celebrate, and fundraise for the wonderful work that is being done to protect, restore, and honor the Red River through clean ups, environmental education, access, policy, and fun events by Friends of Red River (FORR) and Kentucky Waterways Alliance (KWA).

The day began with a wonderful dedication at the new 7th Street Clay City River Access where approximately 40 people from the community, FORR, KWA, local stakeholders and officials, etc. celebrated the great contribution from Clay City resident, Bill Cress, and Hinkle Corporation that will provide many residents and visitors access to the Red River. The new launch site was named "Carmen's Landing" as a memorial to Cress' late daughter.

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# A Message From Ward Wilson

Executive Director, Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Dear Friends,

Hello fellow waterways lovers! As I write this, we are in the holiday season, a time of thanks and of reflection on the closing year. I feel a deep sense of gratitude to you all for your support of KWA and our mission to protect, restore, and celebrate the waterways of Kentucky. We get grants and funding for our services, but the individual donations large and small from our members are what keep us going. We very much appreciate your support and promise that we will spend it wisely.

I am also most thankful for the staff that work so hard, but cheerfully, alongside me. Laura Gregory, our Red River Watershed Coordinator, has been implementing a watershed plan to restore water quality in the Red River and tributary streams for over two years. She has a way of getting things done in partnership with so many groups - US Forest Service, Wolfe and Powell Counties, Friends of Red River, Kentucky River Authority, and so many more. Charlotte Caldwell joined KWA in February as our Office Administrator, but soon it was clear she offered much more and we named her Director of Donor & Community Relations. Charlotte keeps things going in the office, but is out in the community making and maintaining connections that we need. Bonnie Johnson is our bookkeeper but so much more - she serves on the Resource Development Committee and brings us many money-saving ideas. Charles Frank is our communications consultant, a pro at taking our technical details and making a story that reaches a broad audience. Stephanie Davidson is our grant writer and helps us find the essential funding that we rely on. I rely on this team every day and they are also great fun.

I had a rewarding career as an environmental engineer for three decades, but this is the best job I've ever had. Thank you for keeping KWA afloat. Let's do even more in 2020!



*Ward*

# 2019 Creek Cleanup Report



McNeely Lake Cleanup with Knight Middle School Students. October 17, 2019 in partnership with Louisville Metro Parks.

Through these cleanup efforts, we were able to remove 638 tires and approximately 27,000 pounds of trash including plastics, metal scraps, bottles and cans. If you can imagine it, we've found it. By cleaning 50 miles of waterways, we were able to help restore about 600 acres of wildlife and fish habitat across the state of Kentucky.

The sun has set on another successful creek cleanup season. In 2019, KWA hosted 15 different cleanup events by partnering with various watershed organizations, schools, corporate groups and churches. We are grateful for our network of volunteers and community partners who donate their time and energy to join us in getting down and dirty in order to help restore our beautiful natural resources for future generations.



Kulmer Beach Cleanup on the Ohio River with Beam Suntory employees. September 26, 2019 in partnership with Louisville Metro Parks.

## KENTUCKY WATERWAYS ALLIANCE 2019 IMPACT REPORT



**4195**  
volunteer hours

KWA relies on our network of dedicated volunteers to help coordinate cleanup events and other community outreach opportunities.



**26,900 pounds**  
of trash

KWA's cleanup efforts to combat illegal dumping and littering result in the removal of trash including: tires, scrap metal plastic bottles and bags, etc.



**638** tires

In 2019 KWA removed 638 tires from waterways across the state, helping to restore habitat for native fish and wildlife.



KWA partners with local organizations to clean up waterways around the state.



**430** supporters

KWA is a member-supported organization with 430 supporters across the state.

### Board of Directors

#### Executive Committee:

Martin Hjalm - President  
Gordon Garner - Past President  
Kay Harker - Vice President  
Pamla Wood - Secretary/Treasurer

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Frank Elsen  
Beverly Juett  
Bruce Scott

### Board Members:

Tom Vierheller - Big Sandy River  
Bob Johnson - Jackson Purchase  
Marcia Boone - Salt River  
Linda Cowan - Salt River  
Caitlin Johnson - Salt River

# 3rd Annual Wild & Scenic Red Riverfest

*continued from Pg.1*



88 people enjoyed a FREE paddle (thanks to our awesome sponsors!) on the Red River from Clay City Park (8 mile) or 7th Street Clay City (4.5 mile) to iconic Meadowgreen Music Park. For some, it was the first time to paddle the Red River! For others it was the first time to paddle this section of Red River! Mike's Hike & Bike and Friends of Red River provided the boats while Double Dog Adventure provided the shuttle. Powell County Search & Rescue and Fire Department were on the water and on call for any incidents. Though the water levels were low, the spirits were high and everyone had a great time.

The celebration continued in the afternoon at Meadowgreen Music Park with 300 people attending throughout the event. There was live, local music from The High Tops, Josh Nolan and band, Mama Said String Band, and The Local Honeys. Kids enjoyed the inflatable water slides. Local water(shed) information and education was provided by professionals: visitors received a "passport" which they got stamped as they visited the educational booths. Once

their passport was full they could receive a prize. Becky Brewer was awarded the Friends of Red River Volunteer of the Year award. Many local businesses donated prizes for the raffle which was a big fundraising success for FORR.

The event benefited local nonprofit watershed group, Friends of Red River (under KWA's umbrella), who works to clean up the Red River, educate the public about clean water, and create more access to the Red (protect, restore, and celebrate our waterways)! We were able to raise funds for FORR from t-shirt sales (thanks to Clay City tourism), donations, and raffle ticket sales for great prizes from awesome area supporters/businesses. We raised awareness of how awesome Red River is and the work that has been done and will be done to protect and restore and celebrate it through the "passport" tent and announcements by Red River Watershed Coordinator, Laura Gregory, throughout the fest.

4.5 of the 8 mile section of Red Riverfest event paddle had not been cleaned before. Friends of Red River hosted 3 clean ups this year to deal with the horrendous garbage issues in order to prepare



The Local Honeys performed at Meadowgreen Music Park



for the event. Red Oaks Forest School and FORR cleaned the nearly 4 mile Clay City Loop in June, removing 23 tires- nearly a full dumpster of garbage. In August FORR attempted to clean the remaining 4.5 miles from Carmen's Landing to Meadowgreen. With 17 volunteers and a full day of cleaning, we removed 192 tires – 3 dumpsters of garbage (a whopping 6,300 lbs)! Unfortunately, we ran out of room in our boats and duckies before we reached our final dumpsters. So FORR hosted one more clean up on Labor Day where 16 volunteers revisited the last 2 miles and removed another 120 tires- 1.5 dumpsters (3200 lbs)! It was an astonishing amount of garbage to be removed from a relatively short section of Red River. Some of the waste was obviously from a long-ago dumping issue (old white-wall tires growing algae, etc). We hope that the media we received following the clean up, and the act of cleaning this section, will help to

counter future illegal dumping in the area. We left one of the overflowing dumpsters from the Labor Day Clean Up at the entrance of the festival which was eye-opening for those in attendance. People were shocked to see how much is removed from our waterway!

**Presenters included:** Friends of Red River, Kentucky Waterways Alliance, U.S.Forest Service-Daniel Boone National Forest, Kentucky Division of Water/ Kentucky River Watershed Watch, Kentucky River Authority/Kentucky Water Resource Research Institute, Eastern Kentucky University, Bluegrass Greensource, Leave No Trace, Trout Unlimited Bluegrass Chapter, and RRG Climbing Coalition.

**Sponsors include:** Stanton Tourism, Clay City Parks & Rec, Clay City Tourism, Powell County Tourism Commission, and Kentucky Waterways Alliance.

**Donors include:** West Sixth Brewing, Ale-8, Southeast Mountain Guides, Red River Gorge Zipline Tours, Red River Rockhouse, Scenic Cabin Rentals, Daniel Boone Coffee Shop & Deli, Red River Gorgeous Cabin Rentals, Miguel's Pizza, Thrillville Adventure Park – Gorge Underground, Shut Up Larry, and Red River Gorge Hiking.



An ECU herpetologist gives visitors a closer view of indigenous wildlife.

# 3rd Annual Make A Splash Water Festival



KWA's Red River Watershed Restoration Project, Wolfe County 4H and Wolfe County Schools & Family Resources teamed up for our 3rd and most successful Make A Splash Water Festival for 88 Wolfe County 6th grade students on 10/8/19. KWA's Red River Watershed Restoration Project, Wolfe County 4H and Wolfe County School's Family Resources teamed up for our 3rd and most successful Make A Splash Water Festival yet on 10/8/19. It was a beautiful fall day to be outside, learning about clean water

concepts and practices from experts in the field. Lessons/activities included: macroinvertebrate sampling in Swift Camp Creek led by KY Division of Water; recycling lesson and relay game led by Wolfe County Solid Waste and East KY Pride Coordinator; enviroscape lesson led by USFS soil scientist; waste water treatment lesson/game led by KWA's Ward Wilson; Project WET's Incredible Journey led by KWA's Charlotte Caldwell; and herpetology lesson taught by grad students from EKU. Students finished the field day with a recycling poster campaign to promote a recycling drive at their schools.



Wolfe County students learn about watershed sustainability.



Educators from around the state lead environmental activities for Wolfe County 6th graders.

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Photo: Susan Griffin Ward

## An Interview with Becky Brewer

with Laura Gregory, Red River Watershed Coordinator

**Laura:** How long have you been involved with Friends of Red River?

**Becky:** Since I think 2015 is when we done our first cleanup.

**L:** Why did you join Friends of Red River?

**B:** Well it actually started when just Donnie and I were just floating down the river and we thought, "This river is really nasty. It would be a lot more fun to float if it didn't look so bad. I don't even know how me, Chris and Cody hooked up, but we did. They wanted to put some river accesses in. We wanted to clean the river. They were like, "Hey if you clean this area we might be able to get a river access put in if we show a little interest."

**L:** You've mentioned it also had to do with Russ Miller, right?

**B:** Yes! When Donnie and I decided we wanted to try and clean the river it was like, "How do you get this stuff out of the river? How do you get it down the river?" People were telling me, "Yeah there's a guy that cleans the upper Red River and his name's Miller, Russ Miller." So I just Googled it, found him on YouTube. When I did get ahold of him he was more than helpful. He said, "I have some duckies. You're welcome to use them."



Clay City Loop Clean Up 2017

morning and I'm just like, "I might as well go ahead and get ready for work." And just go on in to work. But I sleep really good when I get home that night.

**L:** What would you tell someone who wants to get more involved?

**B:** Just do it. There is no project too big. Just gotta take that first step.

Becky is incredibly humble and hard working. Becky's response to receiving the 2019 Friends of Red River Volunteer of the Year Award: "It's not about getting an award. It's about making a difference."



Upper Red River Clean Up 2018

**L:** What is your favorite waterway?

**B:** Red River! Duh! ... Who's my favorite Coordinator? Laura Gregory!

**L:** What other volunteering do you do? How long have you been involved in other groups?

**B:** Wolfe County Search & Rescue. 10 years. I guess that's about it.

**L:** Well, that is extremely active group! More so than Friends of Red River, right? Because you're always on call.

**B:** It keeps me very busy. It's like all the time. Anytime of day or night. There's been times when I've gone out on a search, get back home about 3 o'clock in the

## Intern Spotlight: Iyana Burton



Iyana's love of the outdoors grew from a very early age, since she's originally from Florida. On the weekends she would go to the beach, Gemini Springs, and SeaWorld. Being surrounded by nature and animals was where Iyana knew she belonged. When she moved to Kentucky, her passion was rekindled after a family canoe trip on the Kentucky River. The beautiful sights and the serenity she felt while on the water stuck with her, and she knew she had to work to protect the waterways.

KWA aligned with her interests for this very reason. After finding out about KWA from a contact at Louisville Metro, Iyana knew she found a great spot with a compassionate staff who genuinely cared about serving the waterways and working to restore them. The merging of people and nature to uphold the mission of keeping the waterways clean and the public informed worked perfectly with Iyana's future aspirations. She just received her undergraduate degree at the

University of Louisville in Communications, where she'll be continuing her graduate studies at the Urban and Public Affairs school. There she'll be completing her degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a Concentration in Sustainability. She hopes to combine these degrees and work to advocate the importance of living more sustainably to the public, while also translating the message of scientists to the public in understandable terms. Ideally, Iyana will end up in the distillery business or an ethical clothing company. However, after her amazing experience with KWA, she may want to work with nonprofits in the future.

After only a short time, Iyana has grown very fond of not only KWA as an organization, but of their mission and their staff. She tells her friends and family about her work here, and how it has been fulfilling to advocate for such an important cause. She thinks very highly of the staff and feels like because of them, she has a better appreciation of the ins and outs of a nonprofit.

Iyana's favorite thing about KWA is that they give a fresh and hip point of view to water conservation. Her advice to anyone that's interested in KWA is to take initiative, call, and reach out to find out about all of the awesome events that they host. By putting on events like the cleanups on the water and the annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival, KWA is appealing to a younger demographic and Iyana loves that they're getting people excited about what the future holds.



## Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund Update

KWA and the US Fish & Wildlife Service have been working together for over 11 years to protect threatened and endangered aquatic species. Among other things, we have sponsored restoration and research projects with the Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund (KARF). This fund has made it possible to do some amazing research on the biology and ecology of endangered fish, mussels, and crayfish. We also fund stream and wetland restoration projects across Kentucky. Here are a few examples of recent work funded by KARF.

■ **Expanded stream restoration on Stonecoal Branch in Rowan County, Licking River Basin.** The KY Transportation Cabinet, US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and University of Louisville Stream Institute designed and implemented a restoration project on Stonecoal Branch in 2015 to compensate for stream impacts from widening Mountain Parkway. This project has been a success and was recently expanded to include several thousand more feet of stream. Construction will proceed into year 2020 and success monitoring will be done for five years.

■ **Eastern Kentucky University environmental DNA research.** KARF funds research into methods for finding mussels using analysis of water samples for the DNA of federally endangered mussel species, particularly the Spectaclecase (*Cumberlandia monodonta*) and Ring Pink (*Obovaria retusa*). This method allows biologists to survey many more streams for these rare organisms at lower cost than manual surveys.



■ **Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves Green River Biological Surveys.** In 2017, KWA and partners removed Lock/Dam 6 from Green River near Brownsville, Edmonson County, on the edge of Mammoth Cave National Park. KARF funded annual surveys of the aquatic macroinvertebrates, fish, mussels, and vegetation in a 12-mile section of the river affected by the dam removal, which changed this section of stream from impounded to free-flowing conditions. The second year of surveying has been completed and is expected to show continued positive changes in the aquatic ecology of the Green.



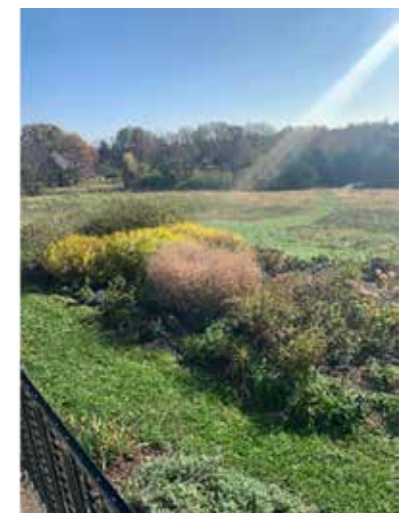
■ **West Liberty University ecological, life history, and movement study for the Big Sandy Crayfish (*Cambarus callainus*) and Guyandotte River Crayfish (*C. veteranus*).** The research into these species was needed to determine their conservation status. The Big Sandy Crayfish is found in the upper Big Sandy River in Eastern Kentucky and in a few streams in West Virginia. These species have been eliminated from many streams by disturbance from coal mining. The researchers are preparing a research article on their study to be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

## Yew Dell Pollinator Meadow



In the spring of 2019 KWA used Aveda funding to help sponsor the development of a pollinator meadow at Yew Dell Botanical Gardens. This pollinator meadow is being developed on the site of a former cow pasture, between Yew Dell's current overlook gardens and the start of their woodland trails. KWA was the first funder to help "plant the seed" at Yew Dell for this initiative. The first phase of this pollinator meadow was to remove Johnson Grass and other invasive plants on the 3-acre pasture. The second phase

included a widespread planting by Margaret Shea with Dropseed Nursery of mixed native grasses and wildflowers that will provide habitat and food for pollinators. We look forward to providing an update in 2020 on the status of the wildflower and native plant growth, as we hope to establish a thriving ecosystem that is able to provide plentiful habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Thank you Aimee Conrad-Hill, Yew Dell Development Manager, for the lovely tour of the Yew Dell grounds on a gorgeous fall day. We look forward to providing an update on the status of the pollinator meadow next spring!



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