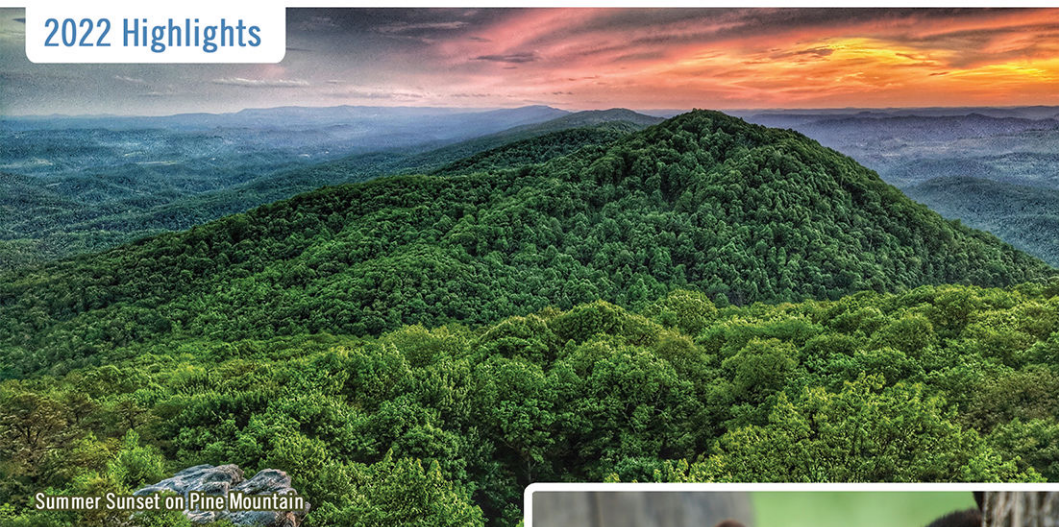


# Kentucky Natural Lands Trust

2022  
Protecting, Connecting  
& Restoring Wildlands

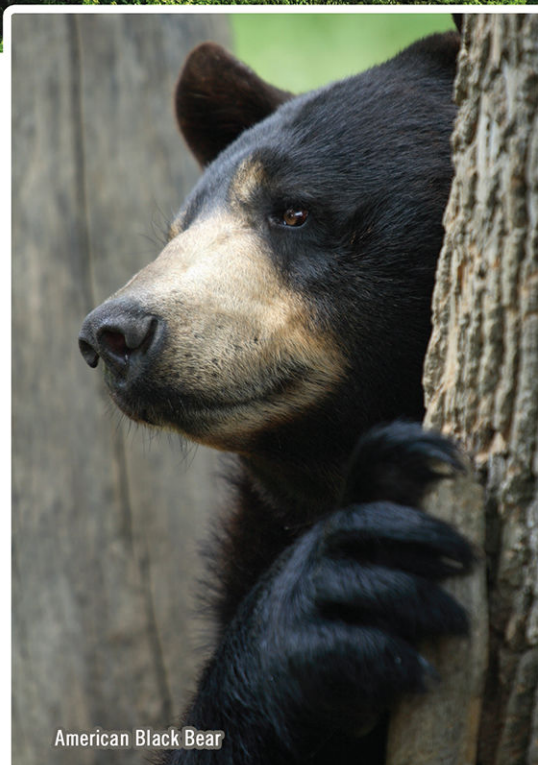
## 2022 Highlights



Summer Sunset on Pine Mountain

<sup>17</sup> Kentucky Natural Lands Trust is grateful to our supporters and partners for a successful year of protecting, connecting and restoring wildlands. Here are a few highlights:

- 🌿 **Protected 2,100 acres of wildlands** adding landscape connectivity and resiliency across Kentucky
- 🌿 **Set a bold strategic vision** that aims to increase the pace of our protection efforts within a broader geography
- 🌿 **Partnered with communities** by expanding outdoor recreational opportunities as well as safeguarding regional drinking water



American Black Bear



## Protecting Wildlands Across the Commonwealth

Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve

**S**afeguarding resilient forests is imperative to addressing biodiversity loss and climate change. In 2022, Kentucky Natural Lands Trust protected more than 2,100 acres of wildlands across the Commonwealth from the eastern mountains to the western sloughs. These projects are local actions with global significance.


In Harlan County, KNLT protected several tracts near Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve, the largest tract of old-growth forest in the Commonwealth and KNLT's first conservation project. The newly protected wildlands expanded existing KNLT preserves adding to an over 7,000-acre network of contiguous conservation lands including and surrounding Blanton Forest.

This spring, KNLT established the Laurel Gap Preserve on Pine Mountain near Frakes along the Kentucky-Tennessee state line. The new

preserve adds to a network of more than 8,000 acres of connected conservation lands including several other KNLT preserves and the Archer-Benge State Nature Preserve which KNLT helped establish.

This fall, we expanded our Warbler Ridge Preserve with an addition that secured a portion of the planned route of the Great Eastern Trail. The preserve is part of a matrix of more than 9,500 acres of state and nonprofit

conservation lands that stretches along Pine Mountain through Harlan and Letcher counties.

KNLT also collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other key partners to protect important swarming habitat for endangered bats. The projects included an addition to Tygarts State Forest in Eastern Kentucky and several acquisitions throughout Western Kentucky, including an addition to the Green River National Wildlife Refuge. 



Red-eyed Vireo

*These projects are local actions with global significance.*



TRAILHEAD ▶

BLANTON FOREST  
TRAIL ↑

## Advancing Our Conservation Vision

Blanton Forest Trail

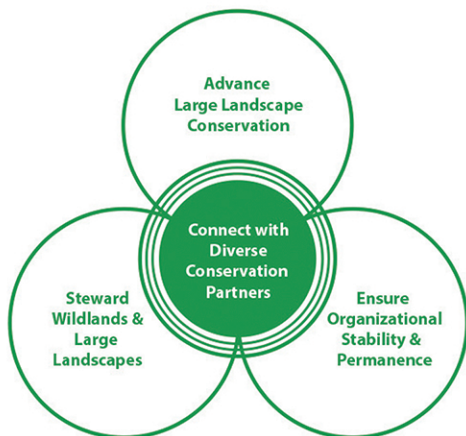
**17** KNLT completed our 2025 Strategic Plan outlining a set of ambitious but attainable goals and strategies that will accelerate the pace of our efforts. Our plan addresses biodiversity loss and climate change while contributing to the just transition of the region. KNLT will work with diverse partners to chart a path to a more equitable, environmentally-sustainable and economically resilient future. Our goals are outlined here:

**Goal I: Advance Large Landscape Conservation** by accelerating the pace and impact of our wildland protection efforts and broadening the geographies where we work.

**Goal II: Steward Wildlands & Large Landscapes** by ensuring ongoing management and exploring additional actions that will permanently protect the conservation values inherent in our lands.

**Goal III: Ensure Organizational Stability & Permanence** by bolstering structure and capacity, increasing awareness of our work and expanding our outreach efforts.

**Goal IV: Connect with Diverse Conservation Partners** by broadening our network to enable us to advance conservation in the Commonwealth and beyond. 





## Conservation for People & the Planet

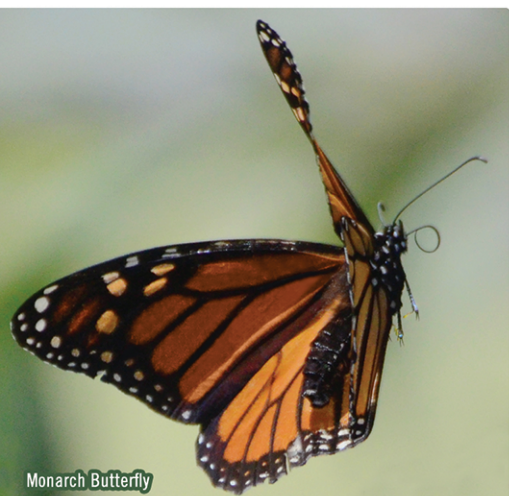
Great Eastern Trail - Pine Mountain Section

17 Kentucky Natural Lands Trust has a science-driven and community-minded approach to conservation. Our projects simultaneously conserve biodiversity, make the region more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and improve the economic and public health of local communities. Over the last year our conservation projects have added outdoor recreation assets

and safeguarded watersheds that supply regional drinking water.

Along Pine Mountain in Harlan and Letcher counties, KNLT continues to secure lands along the planned route of the Great Eastern Trail, an 1,800-mile hiking trail from New York to Alabama. Over the last year, the trail extended further south and now passes through KNLT preserves. More than 60 miles of Kentucky's 110-mile section are now complete.

In Bell County, KNLT expanded our Colson-Fitzpatrick Preserve further protecting the Cannon Creek Lake watershed. The lake is the primary water source for Bell County and a portion of Harlan County and is a popular recreation area. Our preserve secures the viewshed and buffers the proposed route of several planned regional trails. &



Monarch Butterfly



Wildlands of Central Appalachia

## Kentucky Natural Lands Trust by the Numbers:

**17,000+** acres  
directly purchased  
& protected

**38,000+** acres  
purchased & protected  
with our help

Your support can help keep Kentucky wildlands forever wild for the plants, animals and people who depend on them. Join KNLT in protecting, connecting and restoring wildlands. Visit [KNLT.org](https://www.knlt.org) to donate and learn more about how you can get involved.

*Together we can help protect the  
land that we love! Maiden Radio*

## Kentucky Natural Lands Trust

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flap: Great Eastern Trail ~ Greg Abernathy, KNLT \* Monarch Butterfly ~ Richard Hurd, CC