

2024 Highlights



Cumberland Mountain



Yellow-throated warbler

Kentucky Natural Lands Trust is grateful to our supporters and partners for an impactful year of protecting, connecting and restoring wildlands.

Here are a few highlights:

- Protected 2,500 acres of wildlands to safeguard biodiversity, mitigate climate impacts and support communities
- Expanded into Virginia with a new preserve on Cumberland Mountain
- Stewarded wildlands along Pine Mountain with a state partner
- Grew the KNL team by adding three mission-critical staff positions



View from Chained Rock – Pine Mountain

Protecting the Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor

Kentucky Natural Lands Trust's primary conservation geography has expanded to the Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor. In 2023, our efforts grew beyond Pine Mountain to include Cumberland Mountain to the southeast. This geography is an important conservation region within a continental scale wildway that spans from Alabama to Canada.

KNLT projects in the Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor safeguard forests and freshwater systems that are globally significant and vital to sustaining all life on Earth. These projects add landscape connectivity that increases regional resilience. They also provide access

to nature for local communities and contribute to the new outdoor economy unfolding in the region.

This year, we have had several important conservation successes. Of note is our expansion into Virginia with the establishment of the Stone Branch Preserve. The 100-acre preserve in Lee County on the north face of Cumberland

Mountain safeguards forest habitat at the headwaters of the Powell River, a tributary of the Tennessee River. This is our second preserve along the mountain after years of assisting on numerous partner-led projects.

On Pine Mountain we have been adding to our efforts in Bell County, KY. Late last year KNLT safeguarded the tract that provides trail access to the iconic overlook

at Chained Rock, and this year we worked with two landowners to protect an additional 200+ acres on the north face of Pine Mountain. The tracts adjoin Pine Mountain State Resort Park and wrap around the city of Pineville conserving their viewshed. These newly protected wildlands add to over 13,000 acres of contiguous conservation lands.

In Harlan County, KNLT expanded our Salt Trace Gap Preserve to 2,820 acres with multiple projects and another 250+ acres pending. The preserve is within the original conservation plan for Blanton Forest, the old growth forest project that launched KNLT nearly 30 years ago. This area of Pine Mountain now has over 7,500+ acres of conservation lands.

Additionally, KNLT partnered on projects throughout the Commonwealth that helped protect 1,650+ acres of wild places from Boone County to Marshall County.



American black bear

Collaboration is Key in Large Landscape Stewardship

Over the last two years, Kentucky Natural Lands Trust has partnered with the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves (OKNP) to treat Eastern hemlocks against an invasive pest that threatens the survival of the species. The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is a tiny insect that feeds on hemlock needles, weakening and often killing the tree. The insect is disrupting entire ecosystems across the eastern United States.

Eastern hemlocks are a keystone species in the forests of Central Appalachia. Their health is vital to sustaining rare species habitat and safeguarding headwater streams that provide drinking water to local communities.

Since the launch of this partnership, KNLT has assisted OKNP with treatment of 15,000 Eastern hemlocks across 125 acres of Eastern Kentucky wildlands. Trees in Blanton Forest and Bad Branch State Nature Preserves as well as six KNLT preserves were treated.

KNLT is grateful to the funders, researchers, and boots-on-the-ground teams who made this partnership a success. This type of collaboration is key to stewarding large landscapes and protecting the biodiversity and communities of Central Appalachia.



Hemlock woolly adelgid



Eastern hemlock



Growing the Team to Grow our Wildlands Mission

In our 2025 Strategic Plan, Kentucky Natural Lands Trust recognized that to increase the pace and impact of vital conservation efforts we must invest in our organizational capacity. To achieve this, we have welcomed three members to the KNLT team this year, each in newly created positions that will strengthen and advance our mission.

We hope you will join us in celebrating these new additions to the team. Megan Naseman, Administrative Specialist, applies her organizational talents and creative problem-solving skills to bolster KNLT's essential operations. Megan Falce, Outreach Coordinator, brings her environmental education background and her knowledge of Appalachian culture and natural heritage to broaden KNLT's community partnerships. Jess Slade, Conservation Manager, lends more than a decade of professional experience with natural areas management and horticulture to the Conservation Team.

By strengthening our organization in the office, in our communities, and in the field, KNLT is positioning itself for protecting and stewarding even more wildlands, long into the future.



Megan Naseman



Jess Slade



Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor

Kentucky Natural Lands Trust by the Numbers:

19,000+

acres directly
purchased & protected

40,500+

acres purchased &
protected with our help

Your support will safeguard biodiversity, stabilize the climate and support communities today and for generations to come. Visit KNLT.org to donate and learn more about how you can get involved.

“KNLT’s work is guided by science and energized by creativity and wonder.”

~ Arwen Donahue, author & illustrator



Kentucky Natural Lands Trust

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back: Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor ~ Jennifer Honeycutt
flap: Outreach event ~ Will Major