



2014: 55 Years and Counting!

Winter 2014
Newsletter

Over the past year, River Fields has focused on projects that safeguard our environment, history and cultural heritage for future generations. From preservation of important African-American history to the protection of 2,200 acres forever through conservation easements, River Fields works for environmental sustainability and permanence of land conservation in the Ohio River Corridor and its surrounding watershed.

Air, water, and soil quality are preserved through land conservation. These are just some of the ways that River Fields continues to make a difference in the life of our community, our nation and our planet.



Reasons We Conserve Land:

PUBLIC HEALTH — River Fields' land conservation projects protect the tree canopy and wetlands, critical natural filters for our air and water. It limits what can happen to only healthy land use activities. Land conservation also created Garvin Brown Preserve where children can safely run, play and experience the wonders of nature.

ECONOMY — River Fields advocates for smart development. Unplanned suburban development can reduce the loss of fertile farmland, driving small farmers out of business, reducing our access to local food, and hurting the public need for fresh, local food.

QUALITY OF LIFE — River Fields encourages a sense of place and community through preservation of places that are unique to the Ohio River Corridor. Every day we work toward this goal.

Children learning about cultural history at Wolf Pen Branch Mill Farm
Photo by Joe Abel

the last half-century, River Fields has made a tremendous impact on Louisville and the surrounding region.

Why River Fields Matters

For 55 years, River Fields has protected, preserved and enhanced the natural and cultural resources, including the agricultural and scenic resources, on both sides for the Ohio River between Westport and West Point, Kentucky for the benefit of the public. Throughout



Garvin Brown Preserve at Dusk
Photo by Rosalind Streeter

Without River Fields:

- Caperton Swamp would not be a 29-acre wetland Metro Park, protected by deed restrictions established when River Fields gave it to the metro government. Prior to River Fields acquisition, this property was a boat repair facility and restaurant.
- There would be a 100-barge fleeting facility at the head of Six Mile Island in Indiana.
- There would have been at least 12 houses on stilts where Garvin Brown Preserve is today.
- The Wallace Farm, home of Henry's Ark, could be subdivided.

Without River Fields, West Point, Kentucky might look very different:

West Point, founded in 1776, is one of the oldest towns in Kentucky and has a long history as a frontier settlement. It was attacked by Native Americans, became a fort during the Civil War, and was a frontrunner of nearby Fort Knox. Fort Duffield, the largest earthwork fort built in the Civil War, was an important Union stronghold due to its position west of Louisville on the Salt River.

- There would be a granite quarry next to Fort Duffield.
- There would have been a sand and gravel company with barge off-loading on the south side of West Point.

Without River Fields' preservation along River Road, Metro Louisville's Scenic Byway:

- There could have been a two-story, glass and steel, used car lot on River Road between Zorn Avenue and Mockingbird Valley Road. *Instead*, River Fields purchased this property which is still green space today!
- There could have been a strip mall on River Road at the intersection of River Road and Mockingbird Valley Road. *Instead*, River Fields purchased this property which is still green space today!
- There could have been condos lining parts of River Road and the Ohio River, blocking portions of the public's visual access of the Scenic Byway and the Ohio River. *Instead*, River Fields purchased some of these properties or advocated through the planning process that these developments be denied, which they were.
- River Creek Subdivision would be 30% more dense. *Instead*, River Fields advocated that the subdivision reduce the number of lots being developed.
- RiverPark Place would be a denser development with massive buildings.
- The only remaining "green" corner of Blankenbaker and River Road might have been developed.
- Some of the green space close to the mouth of Goose Creek could have been developed.

What River Fields Does: Uncover New Invasive Species and Federally Endangered Species

When possible, we promote scientific research and discovery in our land conservation projects. During a site visit on the new shoreline property, one of the ecologists noticed an unfamiliar grass, a Chinese plant species that until now was not known to have grown in Kentucky. This particular plant has been identified in only a few places nationwide. Now, anyone involved with a federally funded construction project will need to search for this invasive species.

A similar but different public benefit took place, thanks to a landowner's desire to conserve her farm. In 1998 the federally endangered species, Running Buffalo Clover, was discovered during a study at Wolf Pen Branch Mill Farm. Federal agencies had declared that this rare species was no longer present in Jefferson County; therefore, it could not be

knowingly destroyed during any construction project. Since then, all construction projects in Kentucky receiving federal funds must look for Running Buffalo Clover!

What River Fields Does: Protects Green Space – Step by Step!

Two More Properties Conserved This Year!

With the help of a historically most generous and public-spirited donor, River Fields has purchased additional important land in the Ohio River Corridor! This expanded acreage happened in two real estate transactions, which expanded three open space lots that River Fields has kept green for fifteen years. This purchase doubled the size of that area, creating a larger green buffer for Metro Louisville's only Scenic Byway at the corner of the historic Croghan House, the home of the nephew of General George Rogers Clark.

The second purchase was twice as large as the earlier acquisition. This newly conserved land runs between the Ohio River and River Road. You will hear more about this important green space property in the future. It will also be preserved forever, thanks to the generous additional donation by the donor as a Stewardship Endowment Fund was provided for each. This donor is quite a Conservation Champion!



Families learning about land conservation and local history at Wolf Pen Branch Mill Farm
Photo by Joe Abel

Coming Soon! First Conservation Easement in the Country Estates of River Road National Register District

Two visionary and philanthropic landowners in the nationally significant National Register Historic District, *The Country Estates of River Road* are donating an easement to preserve their historic house and grounds forever. While this easement is not yet complete, we will announce its completion early next year!

Regional and National Recognition Partnering to Provide State-Wide Leadership in Conservation and Preservation

Through its leadership in the Kentucky Land Trusts Coalition (KLTC), River Fields partners with other Kentucky land trusts to elevate professional expertise in land conservation best management practices. In the past, the KLTC has focused on fundraising, stewardship and development. This fall, River Fields coordinated a well-attended professional development seminar led by noted national consultant, Marc Smiley, on board governance.

Road Widening – River Road and US 42

River Fields played a key role in monitoring and negotiating road widening projects.

- 1) The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is widening US 42 and will take a portion of the Wallace Farm conservation easement that will result in a loss of about 1,200 linear feet along the road. River Fields and the Wallace family are working with KYTC on a plan to replace the trees that will be lost.
- 1) The City of Louisville is completing the widening of River Road to Zorn Avenue, impacting some of River Fields' property in front of Ramada Inn. We support the project because it will create a parkway entrance to the Scenic Byway portion of River Road from Zorn Avenue. The city has offered compensation for the cost of mitigation and landscaping. Any funds left over will be put into a newly created Property Fee Stewardship Endowment.



Wallace Farm at Dusk
Photo by Dave F. French

The Importance of Conservation Easements - Two Federal bills in Congress

Representatives voted on two bills that would make the conservation easement tax incentive permanent. The first, the "America Gives More Act," passed in July with a strong non-partisan vote. The second, the "Supporting America's Charities Act," was voted on in early December. This bill required 67% of the vote to become law. It fell 15 votes shy of making these and other tax incentives for charity donations permanent. Meme Runyon has been instrumental in lobbying for the passage of these bills. The Land Trust Alliance recruited Ms. Runyon as one of a select group of land trust leaders with excellent lobbying skills, knowledge of Washington, D.C. politics, and connections to Kentucky's senators and representatives.



Marea Clark, Shaun Duncan, and Bea Rosenberg (former and current RF Trustees) enjoying "A Celebration in the Country" with Louise Gardner
Photo by Ralph Homan

"A Celebration in the Country" at Gingerwoods

River Fields' annual fundraising event took place in September at Gingerwoods, previously the home of the historic Greencastle Baptist Church. The Wallace Farm, preserved forever by a conservation easement, surrounds Gingerwoods. This 600-acre working farm, permanently preserved from development, is one of the largest in Jefferson County. The evening, chaired by Bea Rosenberg and Von Purdy, River Fields Trustees, was a huge success.

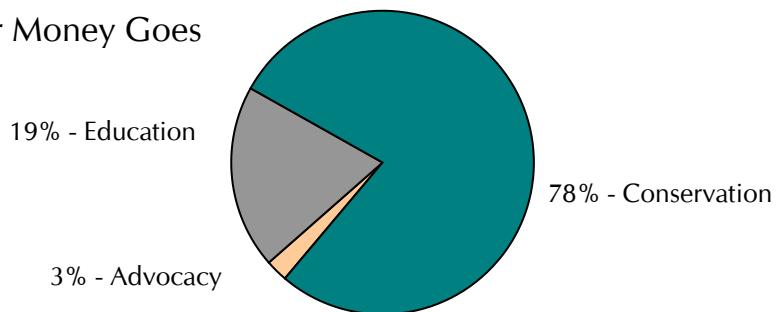
Enthusiastic Attendance of Educational Events

River Fields hosts annual educational walks on two of our conservation easements. The spring Wildflower Walks and Fall Color Walk are held at Wolf Pen Branch Mill. The Wolf Pen Branch Mill tour is one of the most beautiful properties in Louisville and home to an endangered plant species. The Edyamoor Tour leads visitors through an historic landscape from the 18th Century, and remnants of the early 20th Century Olmstead firm's plans for the estate are still visible. River Fields' educational events attract people from across the community. Both properties are preserved forever through the vision of the landowners - Conservation Champions - who gave easements to River Fields to monitor perpetually.

Where Your Money Goes



The Starks Building
455 South Fourth Street, Suite 990
Louisville, KY 40202-2525



Land conservation makes our lives better. River Fields makes our lives better.