



Photo by Andrew Kung/Andrew Kung Group

## 2019 Annual Newsletter



### RIVER FIELDS

What fun we have had celebrating River Fields 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary—six decades of service, conservation, preservation, and advocacy, and so many acres of conserved land preserved forever. This newsletter documents just a few of our many successes and gives you a taste of what the first year of the seventh decade will hold. We are happy you are a member of the River Fields “crew.” Thank you for rowing with us together so we always move forward.



Garvin Brown Preserve, celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Thanks to your support,** we have great plans for next year---a very important natural resources easement in Southwest Jefferson County, further protection of an important African-American neighborhood, public enhancement of one of our new properties overlooking the river, and the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Garvin Brown Preserve.

*Continued on page 4*



### Welcoming New Trustees and Officers

**Logan Ormerod**, Realtor with Kentucky Select Properties, has been elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees of River Fields. At age 27, Mr. Ormerod is the youngest Chairman in River Fields’ history, representing a new generation of leadership for River Fields and our community. A graduate of Vanderbilt University, Mr. Ormerod also serves on the boards of Gilda’s Club Louisville and Farmington Historic Home. About River Fields he says, *“Our work is impactful, meaningful, and much needed in our time. We work tirelessly to preserve, protect and enhance the Ohio River corridor, one of our community’s greatest assets.”*

*Article continued on next page*

### **You Make a Difference!**

Please consider a monthly recurring gift that is automatically deducted -- this process is painless and really makes a difference for our project planning purposes!! You can do this by visiting <http://riverfields.org/> donate and choosing “Show my support by making this a recurring donation.”

## Welcoming New Trustees and Officers

### (continued)

**David Fannin**, who joined the Board in 2018, has been elected Vice-Chairman. An attorney whose professional career has spanned more than 40 years in Louisville and in Florida, he most recently served as Interim CEO and General Counsel for New Directions Housing Corp., a non-profit provider of affordable housing in Louisville and has served on the Board of the Center for Non-Profit Excellence.

### **Two New Trustees with planning and preservation leadership background elected to the board this year:**



David Morgan receiving a Land Hero Award in 2006, with Meme Runyon

**David Morgan**, now retired, served as Kentucky State Historic Preservation Officer and Director of the Kentucky Heritage Council from 1984-2006. During his tenure, he navigated funding crises, shifting political priorities, and five governors on both sides of

the political aisle by fostering an entrepreneurial approach to address challenges and change.

A Centre College graduate, he earned an MS in Historic preservation at Columbia University. Morgan has served on boards of numerous local, state and national organizations. He is the recipient of the Ida Lee Willis Memorial award in Historic Preservation, Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, National Trust for Historic Preservation President's Award and Centre College's Distinguished Alumnus Award.

**Charles Stewart** is one of four Trustees of the Stewart Home School in Frankfort, Kentucky and with his three siblings continues the tradition of the nationally known school's remarkable past, extending its dynamic mission into the future, serving disabled individuals who want to continue to learn. He is knowledgeable and passionate about history, land use planning and conservation. He is also the Secretary of the Board of the Frazier History Museum, a Board Member of the Ida Lee Willis Foundation, and serves on the Franklin County Planning Commission, its former Chairman.

## 60 Years-Unique Among Conservation Groups

*Written by Ben Miles, Conservation Consultant and former Executive Director, Shasta Land Trust, California*

In the world of conservation, 60 years old makes you no spring chicken. River Fields started working to benefit the Louisville region before most similar conservation groups were ever contemplated much less formed! River Fields formed eleven years before the federal government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created, and over a decade before well-known national non-profits such as the Trust for Public Land, the National Resources Defense Council, and Greenpeace.

The Olmsted Parks Conservancy has been doing great work for Louisville's parks for a long time, but they were formed thirty years after River Fields. River Fields was already in its fourth decade when two now-prominent Kentucky land trusts were formed in 1995: Bluegrass Land Conservancy and the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust. Between 1998 and 2003 the land trust movement gained steam nationwide, with over 300 local land trusts formed during that period. Meanwhile, River Fields was celebrating a half century of successes before the turn of this century.

The visionaries that founded River Fields in 1959 were ahead of their time, and their foresight and persistence has benefited our communities in so many ways. The support of local members has helped River Fields continue to do good work and be a leading innovator in our field.

## Teamwork to Save Historic West Point

Written by Gary Masterson, Chairman, Concerned Citizens United of West Point

### **“We certainly would not have prevailed without Meme Runyon and River Fields help and guidance.”**



About 2003 a new Mayor in historic West Point thought having a large rock quarry in the city was a great idea. Some of the West Point citizens did not agree and formed a group called “Concerned Citizens United of West Point” to oppose this rock quarry. We asked River Fields for help: they immediately responded by helping us find Hank Graddy, a well-known environmental attorney. Over the next six years we filed three lawsuits against the city and raised \$100,000 in our effort to oppose the Quarry. During that time, River Fields helped us become a 501-c3 Corporation, donated \$10,000.00 when we needed funds and stood with us during some early dark days when the same company proposed a sand & gravel operation on the Ohio River west of the town. River Fields leaders and supporters requested, were granted and attended a public meeting of the US Army Corp of Engineers. Eventually the permit for the industrial sand and gravel operation was denied. A lawsuit was successful when a judge determined zoning for the quarry could not be traded for the company promising future payments to the city. Mr. Graddy said this set a precedent in the courts for future challenges to zoning and much of our success can be traced to a hard headed group of citizens.

Today, West Point has a Revitalization Committee that is taking advantage of our history and location by promoting tourism in our area. A National Park Service Planning Grant for the “John Muir 1000 Mile Walk to the Gulf Trail” starts January 1, 2020. The first phase starts at Louisville Loop at Watson Lane and goes through West Point to Elizabethtown. Two other major Walk, Bike, and Paddle trails will go through West Point-the existing Lewis & Clark Road Trail and proposed the National Park Service “Ohio River Recreation Trail” first phase runs from Portsmouth, Ohio to West Point on the Ohio River. We certainly would not have prevailed without Meme Runyon and River Fields help and guidance.

## Why is West Point Important?

West Point, at the mouth of the Salt River, is one of the oldest towns in Kentucky. The first settlers arrived at the mouth of Salt River in 1776. James Young, the city’s founder, was one of the investors that built the original turnpike that connected Louisville and Nashville, Tennessee. West Point has a rich military history also. When the Civil War broke out, the Union Army invaded Kentucky and erected a fortification on the hilltop overlooking West Point and the mouth of the Salt River. It was named Fort Duffield and its purpose was to protect Louisville from attack by Confederate forces as well as to defend the huge supply base at West Point. This historic site is open year round for visitors and is reached via a quarter mile hiking trail. West Point is also home to one of the few remaining Rosenwald Schools which are historically significant as reminders of the contributions of Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the Tuskegee Institute to rural African American education in Kentucky and 14 other southern states.



Fort Duffield

(Continued from page 1)

Thanks to the much-improved economy we have seen a big “uptick” in the number of real estate development proposals in 2019. As a result, your River Fields team has spent more time on advocacy this year, a huge change from the relative quiet in development proposals from 2009 to 2018. (Land conservation still accounts for two thirds of programming expenses and activity). The proposals have had potential impact on the properties that River Fields owns, the conservation easements it holds, and the community’s quality of life. Here are a few examples:

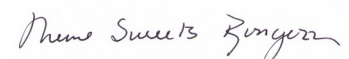
- “The Breakers of Prospect” a 72- lot subdivision planned for the remaining 45 acres of the historic Sutherland Farm has demanded a lot of River Fields leadership and attention. (See follow up article, page 5)
- Developers have proposed a multi-family housing development on the River Road Scenic Byway in the James Taylor neighborhood, an historic residential subdivision originally developed for Prospect’s African American community. If approved, the proposal would set a very dangerous precedent for the neighborhood & for the Scenic Byway. (See below for more information on this.)
- A subdivision of 173 homes is planned on 200-acre farm that abuts a pristine conservation easement held by River Fields which has the potential to have a devastating impact on the conservation values the easement protects.
- The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is planning to demolish and rebuild the historic Goose Creek Bridge on River Road. (See article page 5.)

River Fields’s advocacy will make a huge difference in these land conservation challenges and any other development proposals in the river corridor. Because of your support and the support of others like you who value River Fields’s work:

- Garvin Brown Preserve is preserved as open agricultural space and open daily for the public to enjoy.
- Ten other properties in the river corridor are owned by River Fields and protected from development.
- There is no cement plant between Beargrass Creek and Zorn Avenue
- There is no industrial quarry nor a sand and gravel plant in historic West Point (See article page 3)
- There is no cement plant on the 150-acre historic farm in the Country Estates of River Road

The list goes on and on, but the point is THANK YOU for the honor of being able to accomplish this and so much more. This is significant and meaningful work that protects the health and wellbeing of the community and places we love. We do this together.

Thank you for being on our “crew!”



## **We promise to continue to keep you tuned in to these important proposals!**

### **Proposed multi-family housing on River Road**

River Fields is working closely with the James Taylor/ Jacobs School Neighborhood Association to monitor a proposed multi-family housing project within that neighborhood and directly on River Road. The neighborhood and River Fields are opposed to it because the neighborhood’s goal is to remain a single-family neighborhood. This is a very dangerous proposal because if approved, it introduces multi-family housing to River Road and that allows for future landowners on River Road to re-zone and build multi-family. Kentucky zoning law protects a neighborhood against up-zoning unless a precedent has already been approved. There have been two neighborhood meetings. The developers have assignments to accomplish before a public meeting is set.

## The Breakers of Prospect that would overlook Garvin Brown Preserve

River Fields requested that the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) review the eligibility of the remaining 45 acres of the historic Sutherland Farm for the National Register of Historic Places. The SHPO wrote a strong letter of determination saying it was definitely eligible. Therefore, although the Planning Commission approved the plans for the Breakers of Prospect, there is a Section 106 process that has begun because a US Army Corps of Engineers permit is required for construction. Additionally, the Sutherland Homeowners Association has filed a lawsuit which is making its way through the court system. [www.gilezanteam.com/featured-developments/the-breakers-at-prospect/](http://www.gilezanteam.com/featured-developments/the-breakers-at-prospect/)

## The Demolition and Rebuild of The Historic Goose Creek Bridge



Goose Creek Bridge

For a year your River Fields team has been working with transportation officials and the SHPO, Craig Potts, to manage and mitigate the plans to demolish and rebuild- not rehabilitate the historic Goose Creek Bridge. This project is among a dozen in Louisville that are part of former Governor Bevin's program "Bridging Kentucky." See [bridgingkentucky.com/](http://bridgingkentucky.com/) Such a project requires significant tree removal, workers parking, a lay down yard, etc. River Fields is using its expertise in the Federal law Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act to attain the best outcome for the public and the Scenic Byway. We are also working with the City of Indian Hills to accomplish the same goals for the charming "Stonebridge" on Stonebridge Road off Blankenbaker Lane.

## Perpetuity & Easement Defense

### "Forever is a long time."

In the iconic Disney film *The Fox and the Hound*, Big Mama tells Tod, "Darlin', **forever** is a long, long time. And time has a way of changin' things." When River Fields accepts a conservation easement to protect important land or historic resources, we commit to upholding those protections **forever** – which is a long, long time – and we are solemnly prepared to monitor and respond to all the changin' that can take place.



Conservation easements are "perpetual easements," legal documents that are recorded at the courthouse and 'run with the land.' They are intended to last **forever**. At least once every year, River Fields monitors each conservation easement property, and diligently checks the conditions on the ground to make sure that the resources that are supposed to be protected are still in good shape. Unfortunately, on occasion we find violations – instances where landowners have created conditions that impair the values the easement is meant to protect.

River Fields is legally committed to enforce our easements, so when we find a violation we immediately work to leverage our expertise and partnerships to remedy the situation and restore the resources (if necessary). Whether a violation is large or small, River Fields has promised our community and the government that we'll protect all of the resources conserved by our easements. Our commitment to perpetual conservation means we always respond to violations professionally and comprehensively.

## River Fields

"Louisville is often characterized as a community with a high quality of life-a good place to live, work, play and raise a family. For 60 years River Fields has contributed to Louisville's quality of life by preserving, protecting and enhancing one of our community's outstanding natural resources-the Ohio River. Known for its scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, River Fields works year in and year out to balance the diverse needs of our segment of the Ohio River and its neighboring environs."-Hunter Louis, *President, The Louis Partnership, long-time River Fields' Trustee and former President*

"While interning with River Fields, I gained a greater appreciation for preserving historical land, and learned a great deal about the value and complications of conservation easements. Protecting land from future development increases quality of life, both technically and intrinsically. Aesthetic value of the land, and water movement, infiltration, and quality are all affected by future development. Because of this, the vision of River Fields is one that I wholeheartedly believe in and is essential for my generation and for the ones that follow. The multiple easements they have established within the last 60 years is admirable, and the staff's passion for current projects was contagious and a great learning experience for me to be a part of!"-Madison Ashley, *2019 summer intern, Senior, Miami University, Ohio, age 21*

### River Fields Board of Trustees

Logan Ormerod, **Chairman**

David Fannin, **Vice-Chairman**

Edwin Perry, **Secretary**

Bea Rosenberg, **Treasurer**

Betsy Bennett      Hunter Louis

Lee Cory             David Morgan

Arnita Gadson       Von Purdy

Robert W. Griffith   Charles W.  
   Stewart

Robert E. Kulp      Jane Townsend

#### **Counsel**

Tom Halbleib

#### **Trustee Emeritus**

Kenneth W. Moore

#### **Honorary Trustees**

Sallie Bingham

Laura Lee Brown

## Celebrating "Sixty Years Young"

On Friday October 11th at Gingerwoods, River Fields' celebrated our 60th Anniversary of protecting and promoting the Ohio River and it's lands! We honored all of our past Land Heroes. Guests enjoyed fresh, local food from Kathy Cary, entertainment from Carly Johnson, live painting with local artists and an exciting bourbon toss! You can view more images from the event on our Facebook page.



Event guests enjoying the bourbon toss



John Dowds, Steve Wilson, Laura Lee Brown, Jana Dowds



Artist Lynn Dunbar live painting at the event



Bill and Brooke Feather

All event photos by Ralph Homan

Copyright 2019 River Fields, Inc.

1201 Story Avenue, Suite 215

Louisville, Kentucky 40206

Phone 502.583.3060 | Fax 502.583.3285

[info@riverfields.org](mailto:info@riverfields.org)



· Sound Finances  
· Ethical Conduct  
· Responsible Governance  
· Lasting Stewardship