

IN ALL SEASONS

THE RIVER FIELDS 2025 IMPACT REPORT





FRONT COVER IMAGE OF
WOLF PEN BRANCH MILL FARM
BY **JOHN NATION**

INSIDE COVER IMAGE OF
WOLF PEN BRANCH MILL FARM
BY **JOHN NATION**



MISSION

River Fields protects, preserves, and enhances the natural, cultural, agricultural and scenic resources on both sides of the Ohio River between Westport and West Point, Kentucky, for the benefit of the public.

VISION

All people in our region revere and enjoy the Ohio River Corridor's natural and cultural environment.



JIM HAYNES
PRESIDENT, RIVER FIELDS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear River Fields community:

I'm honored and proud to continue to serve as chair of this hardworking, high-energy Board of Trustees. We had a wonderful year at River Fields -- thanks to the hard work and generosity of so many.

River Fields could not protect the special places you love, like Garvin Brown Preserve, without your support. Ninety-five percent of River Fields's support comes from individuals. Your donations support a small team with outsized impact.

And we're pleased to share this report with you to show you what we were able to achieve with your gifts. Thousands of acres conserved forever. Nature preserves open to the public every day of the year. Teenagers in foster care engaging with natural and cultural heritage. A strong voice of opposition speaking out against development proposals that harm us all. And so much more.

That's why I am here to thank you for your support this year as we celebrated our 66th anniversary.

I'm excited about this report, because it's an opportunity to tell you just how much we accomplished this year, thanks to you. Thank you for your support -- it made all the difference in the world for us in 2025, and we are excited to bring you even more ambitious plans in 2026.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Haynes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JAMES HAYNES, PRESIDENT,
RIVER FIELDS BOARD OF TRUSTEES



KRISTIN FAUREST
PRESIDENT AND CEO, RIVER FIELDS

Greetings, River Fields friends!

We had a fantastic year – and you helped us get here!

I'm passionate about beautiful places, whether it's a historic building, an old family farm, or a riverside wildflower meadow. And I know that once they're gone, they're gone forever. That they are vulnerable and in need of protection. Protection that only you, our community, can help us provide.

Without you, we couldn't ensure

that 2,300 natural and beautiful acres of woods, farm, wetlands, meadows, and shoreline stay open and protected, forever. We wouldn't be able to maintain 65 acres of public land along River Road or continue to acquire new conservation easements on beautiful cultural landscapes that face threats of development. We couldn't engage with our decisionmakers to advocate for sustainable, thoughtful planning. And we wouldn't be able to offer engaging and fun educational opportunities that spark a love for

nature and culture at all age levels.

Your continued support makes us a healthy, historic, and resilient community. Thank you, and please enjoy this report knowing that you helped make it real.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Faurest". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

KRISTIN FAUREST, PH.D., PRESIDENT AND
CEO, RIVER FIELDS

ABOUT US

River Fields makes an outsized impact with a compact staff, an active working board, and devoted community partners and volunteers.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Jim Haynes, Chair

Becky Brown, Vice Chair

Robert Griffith, Secretary

Bea Rosenberg, Treasurer

TRUSTEES:

Arnita Gadson

David Morgan

Jim Moyer

Chris Nation

Von Purdy

Charles Stewart

Eric Towell

Suzanne Whayne

COUNSEL:

W. Thomas Halbleib, Stites and Harbison

TRUSTEES EMERITI:

Hunter G. Louis

Kenneth Moore

Bob Kulp

HONORARY TRUSTEES:

Laura Lee Lyons Brown

Sallie Bingham (1937-2025)

STAFF:

Kristin Faurest, Ph.D., President and CEO

Owen Ronald, Advocacy and conservation counsel

Tina Adams, Administrative assistant

Jonathon Raley, Development consultant

John Mahorney, JEM Creative

Graphic design consultant

WOLFPEN BRANCH MILL FARM
BY **JOHN NATION**



HOW WE SERVED IN 2025

PROTECT:

Once a natural or cultural treasure is destroyed, it's gone forever. Being a thoughtful and dedicated steward is a sacred duty entrusted to us. In 2025, we:

- Stewarded, in perpetuity, 2,300 acres of meadow, farm, forest, shoreline, and historic structures in conservation easements in Jefferson, Oldham, and Shelby Counties.
- Added acreage to our fee simple lands at River Road and Blankenbaker Lane.



- Cleaned up debris and damage from the historic floods in April that impacted all of our lands along River Road.



- Developed a master plan for Garvin Brown Preserve, envisioning boardwalks, viewing platforms, enhanced plantings, and stronger connection with the river.
- Initiated a longterm renaturalization plan for our River Road lands to remove invasives and replace them with pollinator-friendly native wildflowers and grasses.

- Started work on our USDA-funded Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) for Garvin Brown, creating a management plan for implementation over three years.
- Established Garvin Brown Preserve as a Monarch Waystation.



- Proudly attended the Ida Lee Willis Preservation Awards in Frankfort to see our previous CEO, Meme Runyon, receive the 2025 award.

- Co-sponsored a series of Ohio River island cleanups with the Ohio River Way and Kentucky Waterways Alliance.



ADVOCATE:

We speak out for decisions and plans that ensure future generations will take joy in our shared natural and cultural heritage - just like we do. In 2025, we:

- Worked constructively with business owners along River Road to help them improve and expand their services while at the same time respecting the landscape character and ecology of the River Road Scenic Byway.
- Consulted with Metro decisionmakers on visioning for open spaces along River Road, the

River Road Rightsizing project, the Louisville Loop, and the Belvedere revitalization.

- Served as a consulting party to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet for mitigating negative effects of the I-71 widening project.
- Spoke up against a planned data center in Oldham County and a 100-home subdivision on fragile karst land along Covered Bridge Road.
- Contributed to and endorsed the new Ohio River Restoration Plan sponsored by the bipartisan Ohio River Basin Caucus; serve as a member of the Healthy Waters Coalition to advocate for its funding by Congress.
- Served on the Kentucky Land Trusts Coalition executive committee, strengthening its mission of protecting natural areas, cultural resources, and working lands.
- Allied with Kentucky Waterways Alliance and others to oppose harmful state legislation stripping away clean water protection.
- Fought against demolition in the historically-Black neighborhoods of James

Taylor and Jacob School.

EDUCATE:

In the end, we protect what we love, we love what we know, and we know what we're taught. That's why we teach. In 2025, we:

- Partnered with Home of the Innocents to provide a series of seven outdoor education programs to teens in foster care.



- Tripled the free programming we offer our members, such as paddling trips with River City Paddle Sports, a monarch butterfly adventure, and a giant tree scavenger hunt.
- Hosted three interns from the University of Louisville's CEEM program at the

Speed School of Engineering, mentoring them in wetlands research at Garvin Brown Nature Preserve.

- Shared the River Fields story to groups across our community like Beckham Bird Club, Mockingbird Valley Preservation Alliance, the 2025 Bingham Fellows, the Kentucky Land Trust Coalition, and the Kentucky chapter of the American Planning Association.
- Presented about River Fields at Confluence, a conference jointly organized by Kentucky Waterways Alliance, Environment Institute, and the Ohio River Way.
- Kept our public engaged and informed on everything that matters with “The Current”, our new bimonthly newsletter.



- Served on the Kentuckiana Underground Railroad Project.
- Worked with 8th grade art students at Noe Middle School for a community service project.

I've never felt that Wolf Pen Branch Mill Farm “belongs” to me, in the conventional sense. Even before I decided, years ago, to put the 420 acres of blessed open space in eastern Jefferson County, Kentucky, into conservation easements, preserving it from development even after my lifetime, I felt the wild fields and thin woods had long since belonged to the creatures that have always lived there.

SALLIE BINGHAM (1937-2025), PHILANTHROPIST AND CONSERVATIONIST

If we take care of the world of the present, the future will have received full justice from us. A good future is implicit in the soils, forests, grasslands, marshes, deserts, mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans, and in the good things of human culture that we have.

—WENDELL BERRY

Garvin Brown is an incredibly special place because it gives children and adults a place to explore and discover new things.

—ALLISON K., MANUAL HIGH SCHOOL HONOR SOCIETY STUDENT, ON WHY SHE CHOSE NATURE PROGRAMMING AT GARVIN BROWN FOR HER COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

“Our experience at Garvin Brown Preserve, guided by River Fields, showed us how nature, community, and education connect. We helped improve the preserve, proving River Fields truly develops young environmental leaders. Dr. Kristin Faurest’s guidance was key, highlighting how engineering and conservation work together to protect our environment. Your support will help to continue this vital work, fostering a love for nature in future generations.”

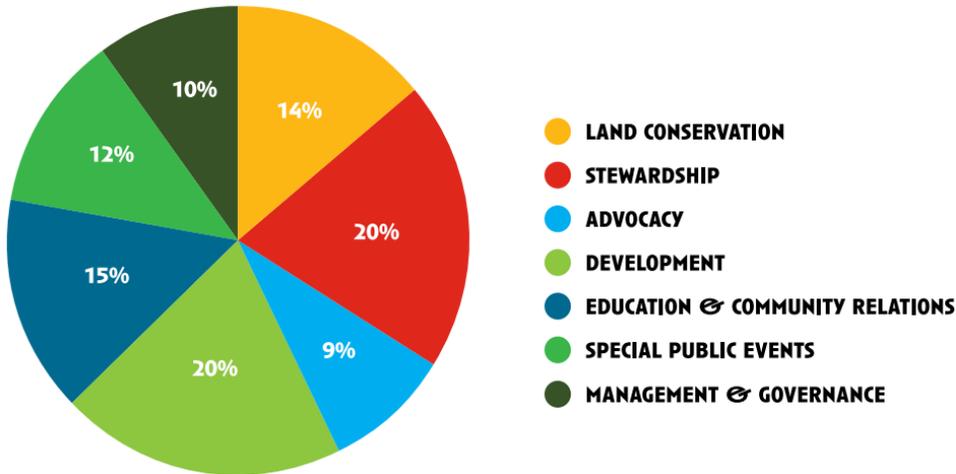
—ARUNA NATH, 2025 INTERN, UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE SPEED SCHOOL

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

River Fields's expenditures for 2025 were: **\$491,479**

We received no public taxpayer funds in 2025 - nearly everything we do is made possible by the generosity of our members. Here's how we allocated our funding in 2025.

BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURES:



What could be more precious than land? We will come and go, but land will always be here. So, let us help save it when we have the opportunity. River Fields gives us the opportunity!

—LAURA LEE BROWN, HONORARY TRUSTEE,
RIVER FIELDS

Over this past year you have gone above and beyond to be a good educational partner with the Home. I love the exposure our youth are getting and the care you take into planning and running these events. We are so grateful to work with you!

—STEVE COWART, ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR,
HOME OF THE INNOCENTS



SUPPORT RIVER FIELDS

We are 95% member-supported. Support River Fields by:

- *Making one-time or monthly donations to support our operations or designated projects*
- *Honoring or remembering a loved one with a gift to River Fields*
- *Donating stock or other financial assets*
- *Remembering River Fields in your will or trust*



RIVER FIELDS: A VOICE FOR THE RIVER

Since our founding in 1959, we have grown to be the largest and oldest river conservancy on the 981-mile stretch of the Ohio River.

THE RIVER FIELDS PROMISE TO OUR COMMUNITY

We are permanently committed to:

- *Protecting scenic views and stewarding lands along the Ohio River Corridor through 2,300 acres of conservation easements and 65 acres of publicly-accessible natural space on the river*
- *Advocating to decision makers for a long-term vision for sustainable land and water usage in our community*
- *Supporting historic preservation of cultural landscapes*
- *Educating and engaging the public in all the above*

Learn more by visiting riverfields.org or by contacting us at info@riverfields.org.



YOU CAN MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION HERE:

<https://riverfields.org/donate/>

