

The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices



News Articles:

[Tennessee State Parks Offer Ways To Make Mother's Day Special](#)

[TDEC Celebrates Completion of Tennessee's First Brownfield Remediation Grant Project](#)



The Importance of Pollinators

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What are pollinators?

The main pollinator most people think of is the honeybee, but a TON of other critters are pollinators too. This includes other insects like butterflies, wasps, and more than 3,500 different types of bees.

What do pollinators do?

Pollinators visit flowers for food. As they feed, they brush against flowers' reproductive parts and deposit pollen. The plant then uses the pollen to produce fruits or seeds. Many plants can't reproduce without pollinators!

Why are pollinators important?

Flowers turn into fruits or seeds, which are many of the things we eat! According to the USDA, about 35% of the world's food crops depend on pollinators to reproduce. That's ONE in THREE bites of food you eat. The number of pollinators has been declining due to things like habitat loss, disease, parasites, and environmental contaminants.

How can you help pollinators?

You can do several things to support pollinators, even in your own yard!

- Plant native plants. In Tennessee, we have an abundance of beautiful native plants. Check out your local botanic garden or garden center and talk with them about what to plant in your area.
- Include a variety of flower sizes, shapes, colors, and heights, like goldenrod, aster, black-eyed Susan, and milkweed.
- Even common herbs can be great for pollinators. Dill provides a great spot for caterpillars to eat and make cocoons.
- Don't use pesticides in your garden. Healthy gardens support beneficial insects and naturally reduce pests!

Check out Tennessee Department of Transportation's Pollinator Program for great K-12 resources!

Resources: USDA, Science, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Go Green With Us Program: A Commitment to Conservation

By: Kelsey Davis

The Go Green With Us Program is a partnership between Tennessee State Parks and the public to protect and preserve the parks through resource conservation, sustainable operations, and waste reduction. Launched in 2015, the program has evolved to encompass all aspects of sustainability, with a mission to ensure environmentally friendly practices across all park operations. Every year, the Go Green Recognition levels are announced on Earth Day in recognition of the efforts that parks implement year-round that support our environment. Parks are evaluated and recognized at different levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, and new this year - Diamond) based on their implementation of the program. This year, TN State Parks had 21 parks reach Diamond – the highest level. The full results for the 2024 program year can be found to the right



Endangered Species Day

By: Mark Valencia

Endangered Species Day, held each year on the third Friday in May, is a time to recognize and protect the incredible diversity of life around us. This year, Tennessee designated the eastern hellbender salamander as an endangered species. This giant aquatic salamander, affectionately known as the “snot otter,” relies on clean, flowing streams to survive and is now at risk due to habitat loss and pollution.



Tennessee is also home to some of the rarest freshwater mussels in the world, like the Rock Pocketbook, Fatmucket, and Purple Lilliput. These unsung heroes filter our rivers, keeping them clean and healthy.

This May 17th, celebrate our unique wildlife by exploring a local stream, supporting a conservation group, or learning more about the vital role these species play. Let's work together to protect Tennessee's natural treasures.

By: Crystal Warren

Office of Sustainable Practices is offering a two-part webinar series focused on paint spraying efficiency. These webinars are geared towards businesses who perform spray paint activities as part of their routine operations.

Webinar #1: Waste Reduction & Efficiency in Paint Spraying

Topics covered in the Webinar include:

- Safety issues in paint facilities.
- Proper selection of liquid spray equipment and the correct setup and efficiency of various spray guns.
- Spray equipment covered will be gravity, pressure feed, electrostatic, airless, and air-assisted airless
- Proper maintenance and cleaning of equipment.
- Common coating defects that result from poor spray application techniques and methods to reduce or eliminate them.
- The future of training the next generation of painters using 3D virtual reality.

[Register Here](#)

Webinar #2: Energy Efficiency in Paint Spraying

- Date Coming Soon



Small Business Environmental Assistance Corner



By: Ginna McWhirter

Celebrate National Small Business Week from May 4 – 10! The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) takes the week to recognize the critical contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners. The SBA is celebrating by holding a free two-day virtual summit and awards to recognize the hard work, ingenuity, and dedication of small business owners. Attend a virtual event here.

We have a correction to share from last month's Catalyst article! We mentioned that as a very small quantity generator of hazardous waste (VSQG), you must notify the Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM). Correction: you do not have to notify the DSWM if you are a VSQG. However, if you need an EPA ID as a VSQG for things like waste manifests, you will need to submit a notification to DSWM to get that EPA ID number. Have questions? Contact SBEAP or reach out to the Division's waste audit team at 615-532-0780 or Solid.Waste@tn.gov.

Recipe of the Month

Did you know you can eat the stems of broccoli? Don't toss them out! They can be turned into a delicious broccoli salad using this often discarded part of the vegetable. Try the recipe here!



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[TDEC Grants and Programs](#)

[Tennessee State Parks Mother's Day Events](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

[Paint Spraying Webinar](#)

[TDOT Rural Planning Initiative](#)

[Grants.gov](#)

Conferences, Workshops, & Training Opportunities:

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[Tennessee Environmental Network Show of the South \(TENSOS\)](#)
Chattanooga, TN
May 14-16, 2025

[ReFED Food Waste Solutions Summit](#)
Seattle, WA
June 23-25, 2025

[Drive Electric Momentum Summit 2025](#)
Middle Tennessee State University
June 24, 2025

[Tennessee Sustainability Conference](#)
Gatlinburg, TN
August 20-22, 2025



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