

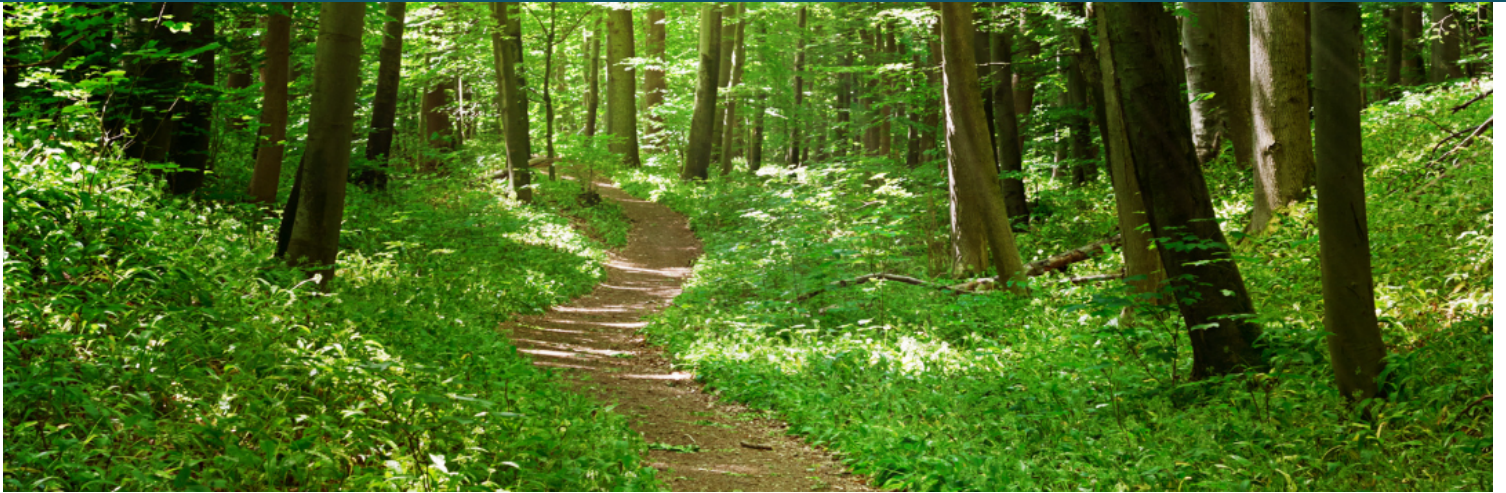
The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices



Preserving Tennessee: The Power of Land Trusts



Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that help private landowners and communities preserve land for future generations. Conservation efforts can range from enrolling a property in a voluntary program to placing a conservation easement on the land. While each approach is unique, all limit certain types of development to protect the land's natural, agricultural, and scenic values.

Conserved lands provide lasting public benefits. They help maintain clean water, safeguard wildlife habitat, support healthy forests, and reduce air pollution. Protecting working farms also preserves Tennessee's agricultural heritage and ensures that productive farmland remains intact.

For landowners interested in conserving their property, several trusted organizations in Tennessee can help identify the best option based on personal goals and long-term vision.

- [The Land Trust for Tennessee](#) has protected more than 137,000 acres across 76 counties, conserving everything from family farms to ecologically important forests. They also offer monthly events and

volunteer opportunities for those who want to engage in conservation, even without owning land. Their [March event at Glen Leven Farm](#) provides a chance to explore conservation in action. The organization also partners with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to [support farmers seeking to protect working lands](#).

- [TennGreen Land Conservancy](#) connects people to Tennessee's natural spaces through conservation easements, habitat restoration, and strategic land acquisitions. They regularly host [public events](#)—such as guided hikes and community conservation days—to inspire involvement and support for their mission.

TDEC Sustainable Practices Summer Internship



The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) is excited to offer an outstanding summer internship opportunity with our Office of Sustainable Practices (OSP). This internship provides college students with hands-on experience in sustainability initiatives, exposure to current environmental challenges facing Tennessee, and the chance to support research, policy development, and outreach efforts.

We are seeking a student with strong customer service skills who can assist with marketing and communications related to sustainability outreach. Proficiency in Microsoft Office is required, and experience with design software is a plus.

This internship will follow a hybrid schedule with both remote and in-person work based out of Nashville. Applications for [all TDEC summer internships](#) are open until March 17. [Learn more about the Office of Sustainable Practices Summer Internship](#).

Smart Yards: A Sustainable Approach for 2026

Smart
Yards



Healthy
Landscapes

Clean Water

Whether you have an acre of land or just a balcony, the Tennessee Smart Yards program can help you design outdoor spaces that conserve resources and protect the environment.

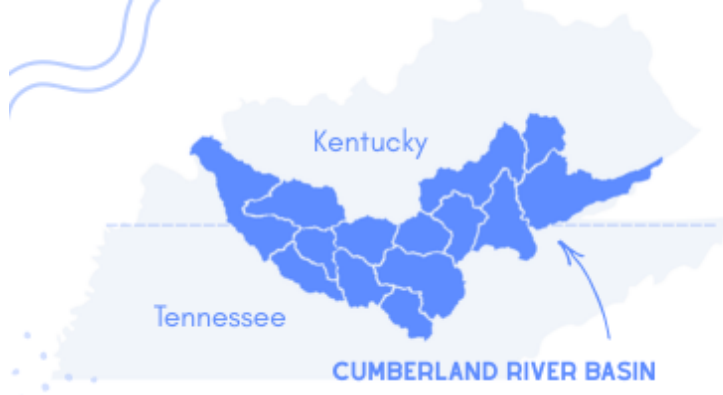
Take their free, [self-guided certification course](#) to learn how to incorporate sustainable landscaping based on their nine core principles:

- Right Plant, Right Place
- Manage Soils and Mulch
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Water Efficiency
- Fertilize Appropriately
- Manage Yard Pests
- Reduce Stormwater and Pollutants
- Provide for Wildlife
- Protect the Water's Edge

To search the native plant database, explore Smart Yards across Tennessee, or sign up for the program's newsletter, visit the [UT Extension Tennessee Smart Yards webpage](#).

Looking for hands-on learning? Montgomery Bell State Park is offering a [Create Your Own Compost Bin workshop](#) on March 14—perfect for getting started with recycling yard waste and improving soil health.

Cumberland River Compact: River Friendly Farms



RIVER FRIENDLY FARMS WITH THE CUMBERLAND RIVER COMPACT

The [Cumberland River Compact](#) (CRC) was established in 1997 and 30 years later continues their mission of working on the root causes of urban and rural water pollution. They seek to reduce pollution impacts through stream restoration, rethinking urban infrastructure, partnering with farmers, and providing education and engagement.

One way the CRC works with farmers is through their free River Friendly Farm certification, for which they are currently taking applications. The certification recognizes producers who use practices that regenerate soil and protect water. The submitted application and river friendly practices are reviewed and verified, and the certification is either granted or placed under review for future consideration. CRC works with farmers to achieve the benchmarks necessary to receive the certification, as the goal is to improve soil health and water quality. If you're interested in exploring more, visit their website on [River Friendly Farms!](#)

Embracing Zero Waste at Home

As Tennesseans, we take pride in our state's natural beauty. One of the most impactful ways to preserve our landscapes is by adopting a "Zero Waste" lifestyle. It simply means rethinking our purchasing habits to keep as much as possible out of landfills.

Going zero waste starts with the "Zero Waste Hierarchy": prioritize Rethink, Reduce, and Reuse before reaching for the recycling bin. At home, you can begin by conducting a simple [Waste Audit](#) to identify what you throw away most. Small shifts, like using the [Smart Food Storage Guide](#) to extend the life of your groceries or [starting a backyard bin](#) can make a large impact.



To explore zero waste resources, visit the Office of Sustainable Practice's [Zero Waste TN resource hub](#), or check out this [Zero Waste Webinar](#) hosted for Tennessee's annual Zero Waste Day, on October 27th.

Sustainable Recipe

Scrap wraps are a simple and creative way to reduce food waste by using leftovers already in your fridge. Whether it's extra veggies, last night's protein, or small amounts of sauces and spreads, almost anything can be repurposed into a tasty wrap. This approach not only saves money but also helps cut down on the amount of food tossed out each week. Scrap wraps are quick to assemble and endlessly customizable. Try this easy [scrap wrap recipe](#).



News Articles

[Pathways to Better Walkability in Tennessee](#)

[WATCH: Operation Hero's Hill A brownfield redevelopment success story](#)

[BRAG project will turn former brownfield into housing for veterans](#)

[WATCH: TDEC combats Winter Storm Fern at the State Emergency Operations Center](#)

Get Involved

Volunteer

[Tennessee State Parks: Week Wrangle](#)

Statewide

March 7th

[Land Trust for Tennessee: Glen Leven Farm Stewardship](#)

Nashville

[Tennessee Environmental Council Volunteer Events](#)

Statewide

Events

[Free Workshop: Living Sustainably in Nashville](#)

Nashville

March 7th

[Lunch & Learn with NewTerra Compost](#)

Chattanooga

March 11th

[Composting 101: Create Your Own Compost Bin](#)

Burns

March 14th

[Tennessee Tree day](#)

Statewide

March 21th

Tree Reservation Deadline: March 8th

Receive Funding

[TN Department of Health: Healthy Built Environments](#)

Deadline: March 13th

[Trail Accelerator Grants](#)

Deadline: March 15th

[Jeff Roth Cycling Foundation 2026 Community Grants](#)

Deadline: March 25th

[T-Mobile Hometown Grants](#)
Deadline: March 31st

[Civic Experiment Grant Program](#)
Chattanooga
Deadline: March 31st

[West TN Community Impact Grants](#)
Deadline: March 31st

[Waste Tire Resue Project Grants](#)
Deadline: April 15th

[Tennessee Environmental Education Association: Mini-Grant for Teachers](#)
Deadline: September 1st

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Law Enforcement Grant](#)

[TDOT Litter Grant Program](#)

[TDEC Grants and Programs](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

[Grants.gov](#)

Have something to share in *The Catalyst*?

With an audience of 40K subscribers, we're looking for content that helps Tennessee residents learn more about sustainability and take action.

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