



Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Report 2026

Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves
*Celebrating 50 Years of Conserving
Kentucky's Natural Heritage*

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*This report is submitted to
the Governor and the
General Assembly as
directed by KRS 146 and
418 KAR relating to the
Office of Kentucky Nature
Preserves and the
Kentucky Heritage Land
Conservation Fund.*

Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board

Zack Couch, Chairman

Representing the Office of Kentucky
Nature Preserves

Hugh Archer, Vice Chairman

Representing environmental
organizations

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Representing the Department of Parks

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Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Thomas Ballinger

Representing League of Kentucky
Sportsmen

James (Jim) Cable

Representing Kentucky Department
of Natural Resources

Charlotte McCoy

Representing citizens of the
Commonwealth with experience in
land acquisition

Letter from KHLCF Chairman



Zack Couch
Chairman, Kentucky Heritage Land
Conservation Fund Board

It is with great excitement and gratitude that the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board provides this annual report.

Over the 36-year history of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF), we have funded the acquisition of nearly 100,000 acres in 70 counties. Because of this investment, Kentuckians and visitors alike have access to explore and enjoy our natural areas. Numerous state agencies and county governments have leveraged the KHLCF to provide local access for hiking, hunting, and fishing. Multiple colleges and universities have used the KHLCF to acquire areas for student research and education. All of this is the result of the General Assembly's investment in conserving Kentucky through the KHLCF.

This investment continues. A general fund appropriation of \$2 million in 2024 funded projects in Hardin, Trimble, Estill, Breathitt, and Jefferson counties.

Another general fund appropriation of \$6 million in FY28 will provide funding to further address the KHLCF project backlog.

Applicants submit multiple new projects for the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board to review and approve at each meeting. With each successful project, the goal of acquiring at least one property in each county and conserving over 100,000 total acres becomes a reality.

I hope this report inspires you to get outdoors and enjoy one of the many areas acquired through the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund.

With appreciation for your commitment,

Zack Couch

Chairman, Kentucky Heritage Land
Conservation Board

KHLCF Mission & Highlights

The KHLCF is the primary source of state funding for the purchase of natural areas and is committed to protecting and conserving our Commonwealth's precious natural areas for enjoyment by this and future generations.

The 1990 Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Act established the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF) to conserve Kentucky's natural beauty. Each property funded by the KHLCF is protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement or deed restriction. Priorities for property acquisitions including:

- natural areas that possess unique features such as habitat for rare and endangered species
- areas important to migratory birds
- areas that perform important natural functions subject to alteration or loss
- areas to be preserved in their natural state for public use, outdoor recreation and education

The fund is managed by the 9-member Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board. Revenue for the fund comes from the state portion of the unmined minerals tax,

environmental fines, sale of Kentucky nature license plates, and interest. License plate sales are one of the largest sources of revenue for the fund and though sales have been consistent for the past nine years, sales were only a third of what they were when they peaked in 2004. In an effort to increase KHLCF license plate sales, the board approved three new license plates that went on sale late 2025. For FY2026, license plate sales were over \$500,000, the highest they have been since 2012 when the previous plates were reintroduced.

Furthermore, one project consisting of 466 acres was purchased this year utilizing the \$2 million appropriated by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2025. Five more projects are in the process of being purchased using the same appropriation. The General Assembly has appropriated an additional \$6 million beginning next fiscal year which the board is excited to allocate for projects that have the greatest benefit to the Commonwealth.

Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund



Preserving Kentucky's Natural Treasures

KHLCF Projects and Acquisitions

The KHLCF board approved eight projects in FY2026 (denoted in the table below with an asterisk) bringing the total number of active projects to 18. One project was acquired in FY2026. This project was financed utilizing the \$2 million that the Kentucky General Assembly allocated to the KHLCF in FY2025.

FY2026 KHLCF Acquired Projects			
Project	Agency	County	Acres
Wolf Creek State Forest	Kentucky Division of Forestry	Breathitt	466

KHLCF Active Projects			
Project	Agency	County	Status
Lily Mountain S Tract	Estill County Conservation District	Estill	Pending Owner Approval
WKU Tract	Western Kentucky University	Hart	Pending Owner Approval
Robertson Co. Donation	OKNP	Robertson	Pending Owner Approval
Jim Scudder Addition	OKNP	Hardin	Pending Owner Approval
Logan Hubble L Tract	Lincoln County	Lincoln	Reviewing appraisals
Logan Hubble R Tract	Lincoln County	Lincoln	Reviewing appraisals
Carter/Greenup Donation	OKNP	Carter/Greenup	Pending Owner Approval
Floyd's Fork Additon	Floyd's Fork Conservancy	Bullitt	Waiting on signatures
Green River Donation	OKNP	Green	In progress
The Heron Rookery at Banklick Creek*	Kenton County Conservation District & Banklick Watershed Council	Kenton	In progress
Chained Rock/Reese Tract*	Parks	Bell	Obtaining appraisal
King Come Preserve at Kingdom Come State Park*	Parks	Harlan, Letcher	Waiting on approved contract to be returned to Real Properties
River Bend Addition to Big Rivers WMA*	KDFWR	Union, Crittenden	Expected to close in 2027
Oceana Mead Addition to Kentenia State Forest*	KDF	Harlan	Drafting land contract
Camp Burnamwood Tract*	OKNP	Estill	Conducting timber cruise
Trooper Lake Phase 2*	City of Elizabethtown	Hardin	In progress
Lickskillet Tract*	Issac W. Bernheim Foundation	Bullitt	Working on MOA

*** properties approved in FY2026**

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Allen	Carpenter Cave Conservation Area	14.30	Private with Conservation Easement	16	22
Ballard	Axe Lake Swamp State Nature Preserve	311.99	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	2	1
Ballard	Boatwright Wildlife Management Area	1432.81	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	2	1
Barren	Brigadoon State Nature Preserve	91.88	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	9	23
Barren	Mutters Cave State Natural Area	108.28	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	9	23
Bath, Fleming, Nicholas	Clay Wildlife Management Area	813.65	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	27, 28	72, 74
Bell	Kentucky Ridge Forest Wildlife Management Area	3504.51	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Kentucky Division of Forestry	29	87
Bell	Kentucky Ridge State Forest	288.24	Kentucky Division of Forestry	29	87
Bell, Harlan, Letcher	Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail	2590.62	Kentucky State Parks	29	87
Boone	Big Bone Lick State Historic Site	228.52	Kentucky State Parks	20	60
Boone	Boone County Cliffs State Nature Preserve	75.42	Boone County Fiscal Court	11	66
Boone	Dinsmore Woods State Nature Preserve	104.52	Boone County Fiscal Court	11	66
Boone	Gunpowder Creek Nature Park	125.91	Boone County Fiscal Court	11	66
Boyle	Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site	511.95	Kentucky State Parks & Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	12	54
Breckinridge	Breckinridge County Wildlife Education Area	25.19	Breckinridge County Fiscal Court	5	10
Breckinridge	Yellowbank Wildlife Management Area	1331.15	Breckinridge County Fiscal Court; Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	5	10
Breathitt	Wolf Creek State Forest	466.00	Kentucky Division of Forestry	30	84
Bullitt	Apple Valley Glades State Nature Preserve	60.36	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	38	49

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Bullitt	Knobs State Forest and Wildlife Management Area	2035.93	Kentucky Division of Forestry; Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	38	49
Bullitt, Jefferson	Jefferson Memorial Forest	669.79	Louisville Metro Government	10, 33, 37, 38	26, 28, 37, 38
Bullitt, Nelson	Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest	773.87	Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest	14, 38	49, 50
Caldwell, Christian	Pennyryle State Forest	200.62	Kentucky Division of Forestry	3	8
Calloway	Blood River Seeps State Nature Preserve	192.49	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	1	5
Calloway	Fort Donelson National Battlefield (Fort Heiman Unit)	179.80	U.S. National Park Service	1	5
Campbell	Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area	137.88	Campbell County Conservation District	24	67
Campbell	St. Anne Woods and Wetlands Research and Education Center	146.49	Campbell County Conservation District	24	68
Carter	Carter Caves State Resort Park	100.50	Kentucky State Parks	18	96
Carter	Olive Hill Lake Conservation	214.83	City of Olive Hill	18	96
Carter	Tygarts State Forest	255.04	Kentucky Division of Forestry	18	96
Christian	Bob Overton Conservation Area	54.82	Private with Conservation Easement	3	16
Clark	Civil War Fort at Boonesboro	25.38	Clark County Fiscal Court	28	73
Clark	Lower Howards Creek State Nature Preserve and Heritage Preserve	423.59	Clark County Fiscal Court	28	73
Crittenden, Union	Big Rivers Wildlife Management Area and State Forest	6730.58	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Kentucky Division of Forestry	1, 4	12
Cumberland, Metcalfe	Marrowbone State Forest and Wildlife Management Area	1955.63	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Kentucky Division of Forestry	15, 16	21
Daviess	Adkisson Greenbelt Park	22.41	City of Owensboro	8	7, 13
Daviess	Yellow Creek Park	1.43	Daviess County Fiscal Court	8	13
Estill	Lily Mountain Nature Preserve	565.87	Estill County Conservation District	30	91

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Fayette	Floracliff Nature Sanctuary	63.31	Floracliff Nature Sanctuary	28, 34	73
Fayette	Raven Run Nature Sanctuary	365.09	Lexington/Fayette Urban County Government Parks and Recreation	34	73
Fleming	Park Lake Mountain Nature Preserve	821.11	Fleming County Fiscal Court	27	72
Fleming, Nicholas, Robertson	Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park	866.71	Kentucky State Parks	27	70, 72
Fleming, Robertson	Shorts Goldenrod State Nature Preserve	228.00	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	27	72
Franklin	Cove Spring Park	96.99	City of Frankfort	20	56, 57
Franklin	Feindel Conservation Area	14.72	Private with Conservation Easement	20	56
Franklin	Julian Savanna State Nature Preserve	42.43	Private with Conservation Easement	20	57
Franklin	River Cliffs State Nature Preserve	210.20	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves & Private with Conservation Easement	20	57
Franklin	Rockcross Hills State Nature Preserve	84.17	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	20	57
Franklin	Swallowfield Conservation Area	72.20	Private with Conservation Easement	20	56
Fulton, Hickman	Obion Creek Wildlife Management Area	1637.89	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	1, 2	1
Garrard	Tom Dorman State Nature Preserve	911.11	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	22	55, 80
Garrard, Lincoln	Logan Hubble Park	122.94	Garrard County Tax Admin	21, 22	80
Graves	Terrapin Creek State Nature Preserve	98.60	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	1	2
Grayson	Lone Oak Barrens State Nature Preserve	33.64	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	5	18
Green	Glenview Heritage Land	168.09	Green County Fiscal Court	9	24
Green	Wyatt Jefferies Woods Park	57.14	Green County Fiscal Court	9	24
Hancock	Jeffreys Cliff	239.56	Hancock County Fiscal Court	8	14

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Hardin	Eastview Barrens State Nature Preserve	119.21	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves; The Nature Conservancy	10	18
Hardin	Jim Scudder State Nature Preserve	172.66	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves & Hardin County Fiscal Court	10	25
Hardin	Springhouse Barrens State Nature Preserve	54.08	Private with Conservation Easement. HLCF funds were used to place KNP easement on the property.	10	18
Harlan	Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve	1631.88	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	29	94
Harlan	James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve	347.80	Pine Mountain Settlement School	29	94
Harlan	Kentonia State Forest	762.99	Kentucky Division of Forestry	29	94
Harlan	Martin's Fork State Natural Area	1624.41	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	29	87
Harlan	Stone Mountain Wildlife Management Area and State Natural Area	1025.79	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves; Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	29	87
Harlan	Hi Lewis Pine Barrens State Nature Preserve	426.18	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves & Kentucky Natural Lands Trust	29	94
Harrison	Griffith Woods Wildlife Management Area	391.35	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	27	70
Hart	Frenchmans Knob Preserve	65.87	Hart County Fiscal Court	9	24
Hart	Green River State Natural Area	426.14	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	9	24
Hart	Hidden River Cave	10.14	City of Horse Cave	9	24
Hart	Upper Green River Biological Preserve	1619.14	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves & Western Kentucky University	9	24
Henderson	Green River State Forest	404.29	Kentucky Division of Forestry	4	11
Henderson	John James Audubon State Park	664.27	Kentucky State Parks	4	11
Henry	Drennon Creek State Nature Preserve	328.96	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	7	47

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Henry	Kentucky State University Environmental Education Center	305.99	Kentucky State University	7	47
Henry, Owen	Kentucky River Wildlife Management Area	533.26	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	7, 20	47
Hickman	Obion Creek State Nature Preserve	198.72	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves & Murray State University	1	1
Hickman	Three Ponds State Nature Preserve	528.25	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	1	1
Hopkins, Muhlenberg, Ohio	Peabody Wildlife Management Area	33981.61	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources & Western Land Services & Patriot Coal Corporation	3, 4, 5	4, 14, 15
Jefferson	McNeely Lake Park	26.79	Louisville Metro Government	38	29, 37
Jefferson	Putney Pond and Woodlands	24.36	City of Prospect	6	48
Jefferson	Rolleigh Peterson Educational Forest	112.67	Louisville Metro Government; Kentucky Division of Forestry	36	36
Jefferson, Bullitt	The Parklands of Floyds Fork	332.84	Louisville Metro Government & The Future Fund Land Trust	36	36
Jessamine	Camp Nelson National Monument	58.51	U.S. National Park Service	22	55
Jessamine	Jessamine Creek Gorge Nature Preserve	267.49	Jessamine County Fiscal Court	22	55
Kenton	Morning View Natural Area	223.05	Kenton County Conservation District	17	78
Larue	Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park - Boyhood Home Unit	224.97	U.S. National Park Service	14	24
Larue	Larue County Environmental Center	215.90	Larue County Fiscal Court	14	24
Larue	Thompson Creek Glades State Nature Preserve	105.91	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	14	24
Laurel	Sinking Creek State Natural Area	301.00	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	21	71, 85

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Laurel	Whitley Branch Wetland Restoration Project	75.57	City of London	21	90
Letcher	Bad Branch State Nature Preserve	1192.94	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	29	94
Letcher	Lilley Cornett Woods	543.03	Eastern Kentucky University	29	94
Lewis	Crooked Creek State Nature Preserve	693.47	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	18	96
Lincoln	Bouteloua Barrens State Nature Preserve	260.16	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	21	80
Lincoln	William Whitley House State Historic Site	81.32	Lincoln County Fiscal Court	21	80
Livingston	Livingston County Wildlife Management Area	873.13	Livingston County Fiscal Court	2	3
Livingston	Livingston County Wildlife Management Area and State Nature Preserve	778.73	Livingston County Fiscal Court	2	3
Logan	Baker Natural Area	66.16	Logan County Conservation District	32	16
Marion	Marion County Wildlife Management Area and State Forest	1293.14	Marion County Fiscal Court; Kentucky Division of Forestry; Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	14	51
McCracken	Perkins Creek Nature Preserve	80.56	City of Paducah	2	1
McCreary	Rock Creek State Natural Area	89.92	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	25	52
McCreary	Cumberland Falls State Resort Park	119.88	Kentucky State Parks; Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	25	52, 82
McCreary, Wayne	Little South Fork State Natural Area	3281.95	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	15, 25	52
Menifee	Broke Leg Falls	14.82	Menifee County Fiscal Court	28	74
Metcalfe	Dry Fork Gorge	79.97	Metcalfe County Fiscal Court	16	21
Monroe	Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site	16.93	Kentucky State Parks	16	21
Nelson	Town Creek Greenway	13.22	Kentucky State Parks; City of Bardstown	14	50

KHLCF Purchased Properties 1995-2026

KHLCF Purchased Properties FY1995-2026					
County	Project	Acres	Agency	State Senate District	State House District
Nicholas, Robertson	Blue Licks State Park State Nature Preserve	54.12	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	27	70, 72
Ohio	Highview Hill	255.50	Ohio County Fiscal Court	5	14
Ohio	Ohio County Park Nature Area	115.45	Ohio County Fiscal Court	5	14
Oldham	Morgan Conservation Park	227.59	Oldham County Fiscal Court	6	59
Powell	Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve	515.93	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves & Powell County Fiscal Court	30	91
Powell, Wolfe	Natural Bridge State Resort Park	471.00	Kentucky State Parks	30	89, 91
Powell, Wolfe	Red River State Natural Area	754.33	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	30	89, 91
Pulaski	Buck Creek Nature Preserve	35.20	Pulaski County Fiscal Court	15	71
Pulaski	Dr. William H. Martin State Natural Area	459.20	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	15	85
Pulaski	Frances Johnson Palk State Nature Preserve	238.66	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	15	85
Pulaski	Hazeldell Meadow Preserve	39.35	Pulaski County Fiscal Court	15	71
Shelby	Clear Creek Park	27.02	Shelby County Fiscal Court	7	58
Shelby	Shelby Trails Park	75.79	Shelby County Fiscal Court	7	58
Simpson	Flat Rock Glade State Nature Preserve	98.59	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	32	22
Taylor	Clay Hill Memorial Forest	146.53	Campbellsville University	16	51
Taylor	Tebbs Bend Nature and Recreation Area	172.14	Taylor County Fiscal Court	16	51
Warren	Crumps Cave Research and Education Preserve	2.01	Western Kentucky University	16	19
Warren	Lost River Cave Valley	2.02	Warren County Fiscal Court	32	17
Whitley	Archer-Benge State Nature Preserve	2229.68	Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves	25	82

