



Jefferson County Conservation District

2023

Annual Report

2023 Annual Report
Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District
4233 Bardstown Road, Suite 100-A
Louisville, Kentucky 40218
(502) 499-1900
www.jeffcd.org



Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District



Welcome

As I read through the following Annual Report, I'm reminded of the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District's influence in our community and the need to expand our outreach efforts. Serving the largest and the most developed county in the state poses challenges that our District has not dealt with in the past. We're mindful that we need to provide the same services to traditional agriculture that we always have, while being innovative in growing our programs to assist the city lot owners and urban agriculturalists.

From administering the County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP) to our Rain Barrel Workshops the District strives to provide financial, technical, and educational assistance to promote natural resources conservation to all residents of Jefferson County. You also may see our supervisors tabling at local events such as the Paristown Garden Show, the Kentucky Waterways Alliance Film Festival, speaking at a neighborhood association meeting, or the Louisville Library How-to Fest. We enjoy getting out in the community speaking on the merits of using native plants in your landscape or distributing free soil test vouchers, let us know if you'd like the District to speak to your organization or group.

In a time of historic wildfires, droughts, and flooding, all intensified by climate change, it's more important than ever to ensure that landowners are conserving and protecting our natural resources of soil, water, and native vegetation, particularly tree canopy. As with all things, education is key. The District's partnerships with Louisville Grows and Farmington Historic Plantation has developed accessible Outdoor Education Centers in the Portland Neighborhood at Louisville Grow's Healthy House and off Bardstown Road at the Farmington Historic Plantation. The District is hosting our Rain Barrel Workshops this year at these locations and we hope to develop additional classes and workshops. Thank you for your continued support and we hope to see you soon!

Sustainably yours,

Sarah Beth Sammons, Chair
Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

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About



History

The Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1944 as a local governmental agency responsible for promoting the wise use and management of our slowly renewable natural resources. Our boundaries are those of Jefferson County. We are one of 121 soil and water conservation districts in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Structure

The Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District is a member of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and is part of Area 4 in the Southeast Region. Area 4 consists of Jefferson, Bullitt, Marion, Nelson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Washington counties.

Mission

The mission of the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District is to conserve Jefferson County's natural resources by coordinating financial, technical and educational assistance that help both rural and urban communities implement sustainable solutions.



Our Supervisors



**Sarah Beth
Sammons**

Chair



LaToya Bryant

Vice-Chair



Eli Levine

Treasurer/Secretary



Gilman Bagga
Supervisor



Austin Clark
Supervisor



David Kaelin
Supervisor



Valerie Magnuson
Supervisor

**Special
Thanks to
our
Advisors:**

Nathan Lind
USDA-NRCS Urban
Conservationist

Kimberly Bartley
KY Division of
Conservation

Kurt Mason
USDA-NRCS Urban
Conservationist -
Retired

Mike Farmer
Former Chair

Thank you for your service.



Jennifer Chappell

2017 - 2022



Rebecca Trueman

2019 - 2022



Jasmine Gatti

2019 - 2022

Our Team



Paul Borntraeger
Soil Technician



Geri Johnson
Administrative Secretary



Madeline Marchal
Soil Technician
Sept. 2021 - Feb. 2023



Resource Concerns

01 Soil Health

Minimize erosion and improve soil quality and function

02 Clean Air

Improve air quality

03 Water Quality & Management

Decrease contamination to surface and ground waters and improve water management

04 Stream Health

Improve water quality of streams and reduce streambank erosion

05 Land Preservation

Preserve green space, increase conservation easements, and address issues connected to urban sprawl

06 Native Plants

Expand native habitats and decrease the prevalence of invasive species

07 Tree Canopy

Improve forest composition and increase the tree canopy density

08 Wildlife Habitat

Improve habitat connectivity and availability of food and shelter for wildlife, specifically for threatened and endangered species

09 Sustainable Food Production

Increase accessibility to farming and farming practices that promote yield increases and sustainability

10 Climate Change

Implement and promote activities that are adaptable to the effects of climate change

Programs



Urban Conservation

The District aims to educate residents on how they can improve their soil and water quality through the practice of urban agriculture and local food production. Our programs includes our Urban Soil Health Initiative, Urban High Tunnel Initiative, and Urban Water Health Initiative.



Urban Soil Health Initiative

Work with urban gardeners in establishing healthy soils and educate residents on different techniques to keep plants growing in their soils year-round



Urban High Tunnel Initiative

Connect growers with NRCS EQIP program, assist them to apply for the cost share, and provide technical assistance on production and irrigation once the tunnels are operational



Urban Water Health Initiative

Increase public awareness and knowledge of Urban Water Conservation and Protection measures

Urban Soil Health Initiative



Overview

The Urban Soil Health Initiative is an educational initiative that reinforces a better understanding of why it is critical to build healthy soils throughout our community. Our urban soils play a key role in our environment's ability to maintain its health as Louisville's population continues to increase.

Solutions

Educate residents on techniques to keep plants growing in their soils year-round, something urban gardeners do not traditionally do and lack the understanding of why it should be done

Assistance

Workshops and educational resources on vegetable cultivation, soil testing, cover crops, native plant pollinator gardens

Cost Share

- Free soil testing vouchers in partnership with the Jefferson County Extension office
- Free seeds for native pollinator gardens and cover cropping
- 80% (max \$100) of the costs associated to create native gardens



Highlights



The District works with urban gardeners in establishing healthy soils that help to meet their objectives. These objectives could include healthy crop production, increasing soil organic matter, improving biological diversity within the soil, reducing soil compaction, improving internal soil drainage, capturing nitrogen, filtering runoff, suppressing weed growth, improving soil moisture use efficiency and reducing soil erosion.

cover crop seed	soil test vouchers	native landscape
22 community gardens	645 nutrient	34 native gardens planted
6 urban farms	165 lead	50 signs distributed



Native Landscape Cost Share



New this year: To support the 2022 Revised Weeds Ordinance allowing residents to maintain “managed natural landscapes”, we have created a cost-share program to help amplify greenscapes in Louisville. Individuals, community centers, community gardens, schools, non-profits, and businesses are all eligible. The goal of the program is to reduce the financial barriers for establishing and expanding native plants gardens and to diversify the areas in Jefferson County that contain such gardens.

A flyer for the Native Landscaping Cost-Share Program. The flyer has a green and purple color scheme. At the top, it asks "Are you interested in starting a Native Plant Garden or expanding an existing one?" and includes a QR code with the text "Apply Here:". Below this is the URL "https://bit.ly/nativeplantpower". The main title is "Native Landscaping Cost-Share Program" with the application deadline "APPLICATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15th". It lists eligible entities: "Schools | Community Centers | Community Gardens | Individuals | Non-Profits | Anyone can apply!". A small image of yellow flowers is shown. At the bottom, it states: "This program offers reimbursement cost-share funding at 80% up to \$100! Landscape design assistance available for approved applications." There are two photos of native plant gardens: one with yellow flowers and one with a stone path and various plants.

Urban High Tunnel Initiative



Overview

High tunnels, also called hoop houses, make growing vegetables possible year-round in Jefferson County without the use of heat. The structure is an enclosed polyethylene, polycarbonate, plastic or fabric covered structure that protects crops from wind, excessive rainfall, and cold temperatures and extends the growing season in an environmentally safe manner. The District has helped place over 50 high tunnels in Jefferson County in the last five years.

Solutions

Aid high tunnel owners with the financial and technical barriers that exist for maintenance and high tunnel improvement

Assistance

This program prioritizes maintenance costs that contribute to functional, well-operating high tunnels that seek to increase productivity

Cost Share

Up to \$600 depending on age of the high tunnel



Highlights



As a commitment to keeping fresh food accessible in our communities, the District earmarked \$7200 to help high tunnel growers cover the cost of materials and labor for stretching plastic, ventilation, hardware, or replacing posts or ribs, lumber, and doors, as well as projects such as heating systems, micro-irrigation, and water catchment systems.

participants	grants	materials
8	\$2018	\$497



Program Spotlight



In April of 2023, the District teamed up with Grow Appalachia to reinforce the structure and replace the plastic on the main body and both end walls of the high tunnel and replace the water catchment materials. Thanks to an in-kind donation, Grow Appalachia covered the remaining cost of the repair. We are proud to have Grow Appalachia as a partner for this important program.



Urban Water Health Initiative



Overview

Louisville is a water rich community and although preservation is not our utmost concern, we must continue to develop multi-faceted strategies that prioritize the protection of our water.

Solutions

Mitigate stormwater runoff through programming and workshops to increase community awareness and knowledge of Urban Water Conservation and Protection measures

Assistance

Supporting growth of the urban tree canopy through our annual tree giveaway to Jefferson County high school and elementary school students

Providing education on water conservation as well as technical installation skills during rain barrel workshops

Cost Share

- Free tree seedlings
- Rain barrel workshop participants receive a rain barrel and rain recycle kit



Highlights



Rain barrel workshops educated Jefferson County residents on the importance of mitigating stormwater runoff pollution and taught them how to install their own rain barrel. One of our favorite programs is our annual tree giveaway to Jefferson County high schools and elementary schools. We worked with Seneca High School FFA students to bag the trees and prepare them for distribution.

rain barrel workshops	tree seedlings distributed	rain barrels distributed
2	900 seedlings	25
	22 schools	



Program Spotlight



We were excited to be able to once again partner with Seneca High School FFA students to assist us with bagging 900 tree seedlings. Varieties this year were flowering dogwood, red shumard oak, white pine and button bush. Big thanks to teachers Kristan Wright and Bethany Mattingly and their students!



Outreach

- Floyds Fork DRO
- Garden Swap
- Tree Giveaway - 900 trees
- Louisville Grows Tree Planting
- KWA Wild and Scenic Film Festival
- Louisville Grows Healthy House Seeds and Starts
- Cultivating 502 newsletter
- Urban Ag Coalition tree pruning
- Urban Homesteading Workshops
- How-to Festival
- Farmington Historic Plantation Annual Plant Sale
- Paristown Garden Show
- Fern Creek High School Greenhouse and Garden
- Farmington Historic Plantation Rain Barrel Workshop

Speaking Engagements

- Crescent Hill Community Council



Financial + Technical Assistance

The programs offered through the District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provide financial and technical assistance to landowners to install Best Management Practices on their property.

Installed practices on private lands included: organic initiatives, hoop house construction, fall and winter cover crops, fescue conversion, riparian buffers, livestock watering systems, sinkhole protection, rotational grazing systems, native grass establishment, critical area plantings, tree plantings, filter strips and heavy use area protection.

Technical assistance provided to the public continues to be the benchmark service offered through the District office.

Private property owners were provided direct technical assistance throughout the fiscal year.

Technical Assistance

- Sediment and erosion control
- Plant adaptability
- Pond construction and management
- Sinkhole remediation
- Soil health management
- Soils evaluation for urban development
- Streambank and slope stabilization
- Surface and subsurface drainage
- Watershed management
- Wildlife habitat
- Invasive species

Conservation Programs

- Agricultural Districts
- Conservation Reserves Program (CRP)
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)
- Grassland Reserves Program (GRP)
- Heavy Equipment Loan Revolving Fund
- KY Soil & Water Cost-Share Program
- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Wetland Reserves Program (WRP)

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)



The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) through the USDA-NRCS has funded projects in Jefferson County for the past five years totaling \$401,909 in grant funding.

Urban High Tunnel Initiative

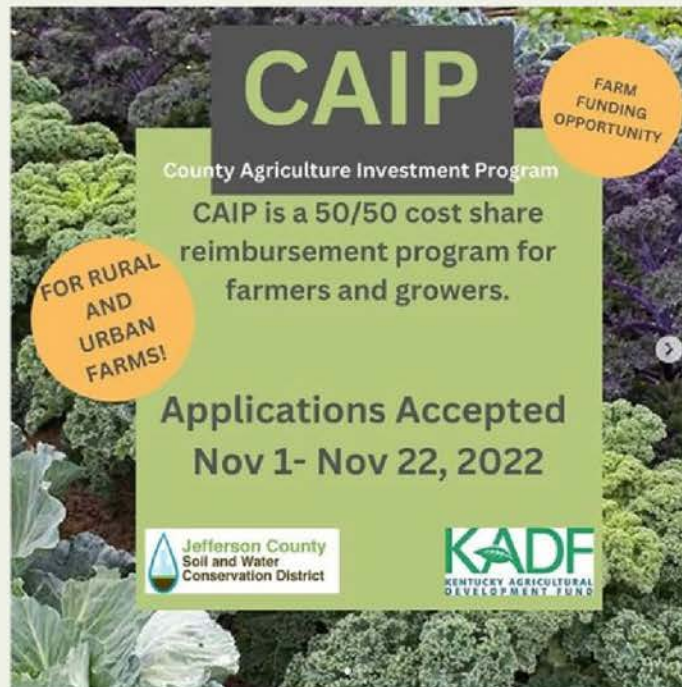
A total of **\$573,015** has been made available to build **60 high tunnels** in Louisville's Downtown, South and West neighborhoods. This initiative seeks to promote food security for residents, improve the soil quality through targeted growing of specific plants or crops, and improve the quality of health in growers and residents.

Funding available

The installation of 60 high tunnels will create new, healthy food availability in the critically needed areas and positively impact many Historically Underserved individuals by not only providing fresh food on underutilized land but creating a sustainable way of life for approximately 60 producers and their families.

Applications can be submitted at any time, however, applications are only approved once during the fiscal year. Contact the District at admin@jeffcd.org / 502.499.1900

County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP)



applications funded

19

funds distributed

\$27,556

investment areas

10

CAIP provides Kentucky agricultural producers cost-share assistance on practices that increase net farm income and opportunities to try new, innovative technologies or systems that improve farm efficiency and productivity.

The program is made possible by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund through the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement & The Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The District administered the program this fiscal year for the second time for Jefferson County.

State Cost Share

Funding for practices will be approved by the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission as funds are available. Approved applicants are reimbursed at a 75% cost share rate for installing practices up to the maximum amount allowed per applicant per year.

The Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program through USDA-NRCS provides funding to help landowners address existing soil erosion, water quality and other environmental problems associated with their farming or woodland operation.

This program allows funds to be administered through conservation districts with priority given to animal waste related problems. This program contains best management practices that include rotational grazing systems, alternative watering systems, heavy use feeding areas, sinkhole protection, grassed waterways, and vegetative critical areas, just to name a few examples.

Scholarships + Awards

\$2150 in awards and scholarships

- Kentucky Forestry Leadership Program
- Conservation Writing and Jim Claypool Art Contest
- Louisville Regional Science & Engineering Fair

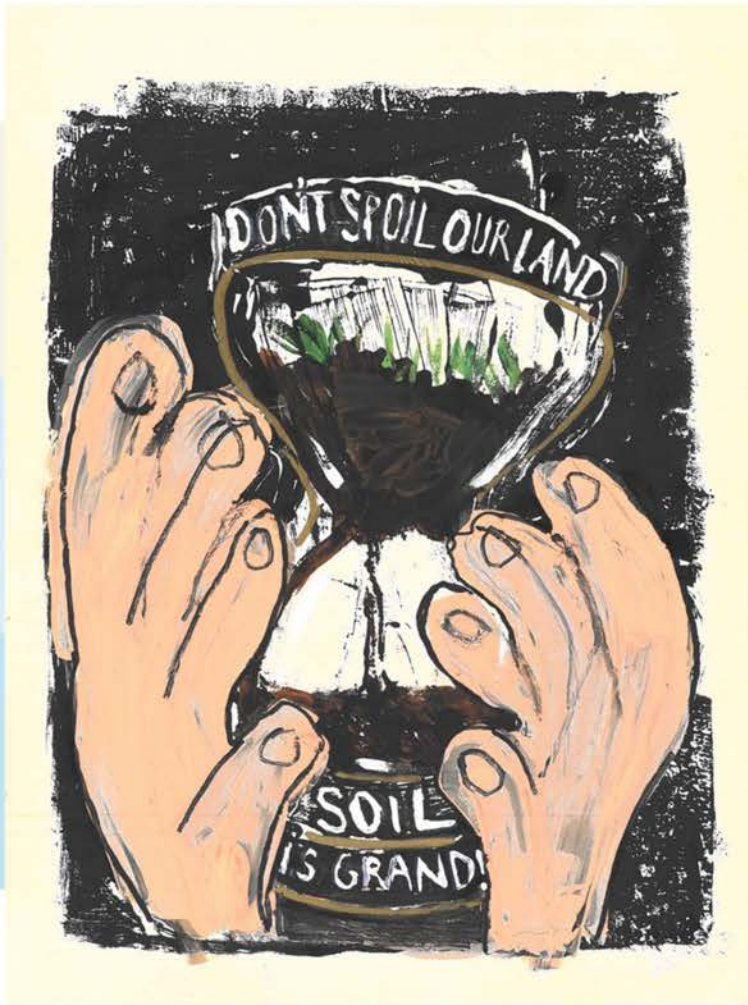
Kentucky Forest Leadership Program Scholarship



The District provided a full scholarship for Lydia Tate to attend the Kentucky Forest Leadership Program. The program is a week-long program providing hands-on learning to high school students. Lydia enrolled in the Forestry track where students learned about tree and plant identification, forest evaluation and management, soil and water quality and fire management in Kentucky's forests. At the end of the program students made a presentation to a "landowner" with their observations and recommendations. Congratulations Lydia!



Conservation Writing and Jim Claypool Art Contest



1st Place artwork by Stella Sexton,
Norton Elementary

Theme

Take a Hike
Navigating the Trail

Art

- 1st Stella Sexton - Norton
- 2nd Julian Heidinger - St. Matthews
- 3rd Brennan Phillips - Dunn

Writing

- 1st Emily Weigel - Eastern
- 2nd Caleb Wilson - Eastern
- 3rd Andrew Greene - Eastern



Congratulations Art and Writing Contest Winners!

Excerpt from first place writing contest essay by Emily Weigel:

Our world is finite. Humans have been neglecting their use of natural resources for thousands of years, dating back to the Agricultural Revolution about 10,000 years ago. We cannot afford to continue this cycle for another 10,000 years because we will run out of many valuable resources. One of those many resources is soil, however, soil is often a resource that humans take for granted the most because they believe it to be "everywhere". It's not...

Louisville Regional Science & Engineering Fair - Special Award

Each year, the District sponsors a special award at LRSEF to reward and recognize area middle and high school students' excellence and achievement in the Environmental Sciences Division. The District has a strong interest in recognizing students who study soil, water and related natural resources and LRSEF provides a perfect opportunity to do just that.

1st place

Carson Baker
Ballard High School

Project: The Cloud

2nd place

Tyler Head
Saint Francis of Assisi, Louisville

Project: Exploring Above-Ground Allelopathy in Pinus Strobus

3rd place

Leia Lukas
Valley High School

Project: What happens in an Aquaponic garden that causes it to grow, and how does it compare to soil and hydroponics?

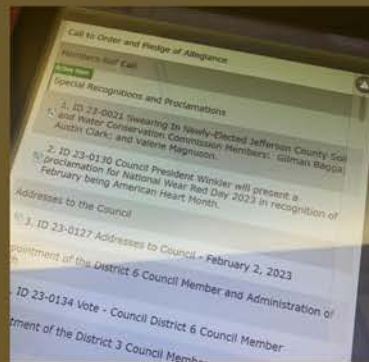
LRSEF



2023 winners of the Conservation District's Special Award clockwise from left to right: Carson Baker, Ballard High School; Tyler Head Saint Francis of Assisi, Louisville; Leia Lukas, Valley High School. Congratulations!



Yearbook



2023 Garden Swap and Rain Barrel Workshop

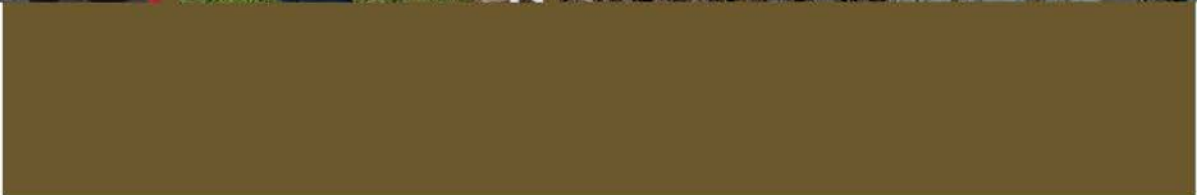
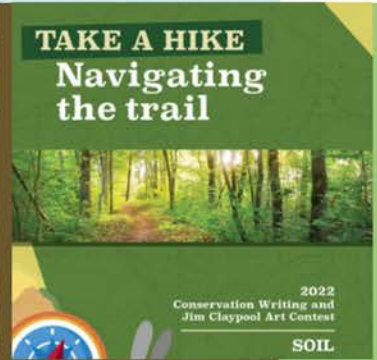
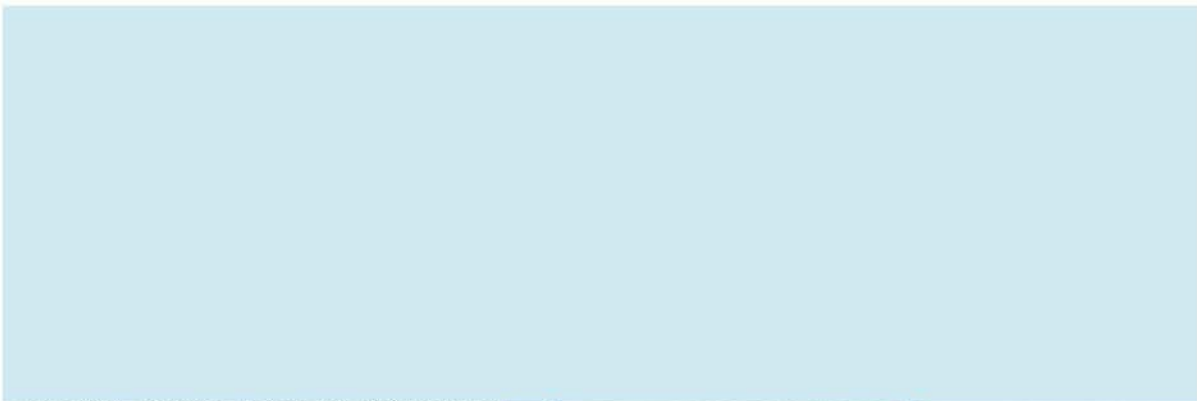
Meet fellow gardeners, swap plants and tools, and get your own rain barrel!

5/27
10:30a-1:00p
Farmington Historic Plantation
3033 Bardstown Road

 jeffcoswcd
 @JeffCountySWCD

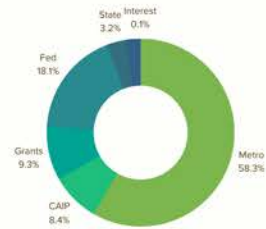
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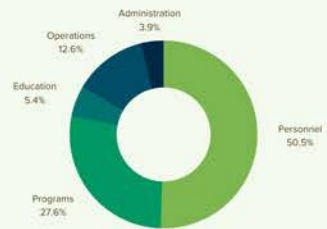


Financial Overview

Total Revenue	Metro	\$141,500
	CAIP	\$20,500
\$242,661	Grants	\$22,500
	Federal	\$43,906
	State	\$7,875
	Other	\$6,106
	Interest	\$274



Total Expenditures	Personnel	\$83,271
	Programs	\$45,523
\$164,880	Education	\$8,837
	Operations	\$20,814
	Administration	\$6,433



Partners

Thank you to all of our conservation partners!

Local

Americana Community Center
Air Pollution Control District
Beargrass Creek Alliance
Common Earth Gardens
Floyds Fork Environmental Association
Jefferson County Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County Farm Bureau
Jefferson County Public Schools-Community Schools Program
Jefferson County Public Schools-Seneca High School

Jefferson Memorial Forest
Lots of Food
Louisville Free Public Library
Louisville Grows
Louisville Metro Parks
Louisville Nature Center
Metropolitan Sewer District
The Food Literacy Project
Wild Ones Louisville

State

NKY Association of Conservation Districts
KY Association of Conservation District Employees
Kentucky Waterways Alliance
KY Department of Agriculture
KY Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources

KY Division of Conservation
KY Division of Forestry
KY Division of Water
KY Waterways Alliance

Regional

National Association of Conservation Districts- Southeast Region
Salt River Watershed Watch

National

National Association of Conservation Districts
USDA Farm Services Agency
USDA National Resources Conservation Service

Acknowledgements:

The District would like to acknowledge the support of Louisville Metro's Dept. of Economic Development. We would also like to recognize the KY Conservation Partnership: KY Dept. for Natural Resources Division of Conservation for the support and advice of Field Representative, Kimberly Bartley; the KY Soil and Water Conservation Commission; the KY Assoc. of Conservation Districts and the USDA-NRCS for the technical assistance and professional services provided to Jefferson County.

Get Involved



Donate

<https://bit.ly/37Z2FU0> or visit jeffcd.org



Volunteer

admin@jeffcd.org or visit jeffcd.org



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Questions



Address

4233 Bardstown Rd., Suite 100-A Louisville, KY 40218



Telephone

502-499-1900



Website

www.jeffcd.org