



# Annual Update 2022

[www.ftfc.org](http://www.ftfc.org)

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## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to preserve and conserve the natural areas that contribute to the vitality and unique character of Fort Thomas through land preservation, responsible stewardship, and the promotion of community awareness, understanding, and enjoyment for present and future generations.

## **A Note from the Chair, Chuck Keller**

We bounced back from the pandemic with some vigor. Our group of volunteers had a busy year. Unfortunately, we lost two important board members in 2022. Mark Leopold retired from his position at Northern Kentucky University and his seat on the FTFC board. Even though he plans to build a house on his rural Kentucky farm and enjoy the quiet of rural life, he still oversees the Land Protection Committee. Trisha Schroeder stepped down from the board due to family commitments. She is still involved in the Earth Day committee and plans to present outdoor education opportunities for families like her Groundhog Day event.

The past year was a growing year for us and we invite you to grow with us. We are an all volunteer organization so we encourage you to become a dues paying volunteer member. There are some exciting things coming in 2023 and we would love to have you along. Our annual report reflects some of the behind the scenes work as well as highlights of our public outreach. We want to preserve and celebrate the natural heritage of Fort Thomas but we cannot do it alone, but if each of us does a little then we can accomplish great things. We encourage you to be a force for nature.

## **Officers and Board Members:**

The current board consists of:

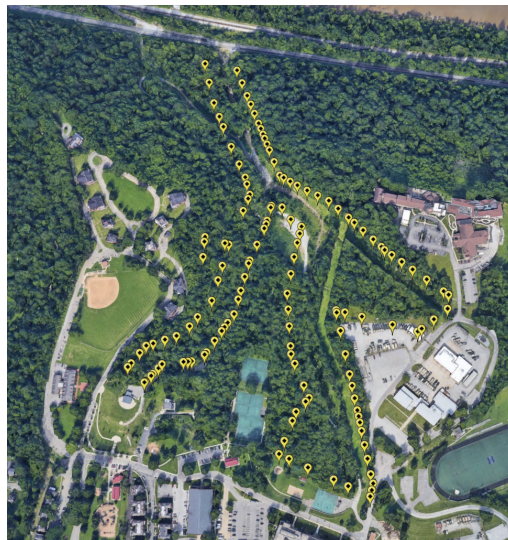
Chuck Keller, Chairman  
Ginny Gesenhues, Treasurer  
Nan Genther, Secretary  
Gale Beaubien

Margie Cunningham  
Paul Gray  
Alexandra McIntosh  
Sidney Thomas  
Dave Wormald

1.) Three new members were elected to the FTFC board in 2022:  
Alexandra McIntosh  
Nan Genther  
Gale Beaubien

## Land Protection Properties and Easements

This is why we exist - to protect our natural heritage. We assumed the 17+ acre conservation easement in Tower Park. It is a large green space that runs to the Ohio River. This easement protects the streams and surrounding area and gives us an opportunity to use the space to educate the public about the value of conservation. Protecting stream areas insures healthy forests and streams not only in our community but also the Ohio River since so many of our community's streams eventually make their way to the river.



Map of Tower Park Easement

This brings our total easement holdings up to 18.382 acres on three parcels (Tower Park, Carmel Manor, Hubbard property) and we own 24.8274 acres (River Road property and Hill property combined).

The Eradicator Squad, lead by Steve Fanthorp, has been busy removing a number of invasive species. They have focused most of their efforts in Tower Park although this year we needed

their skill at the Hubbard Studio and Nature Preserve to remove some trees that posed a threat to the structure. The crew has removed much of the invasive honeysuckle in a large section of the Tower Park easement. Highlands High School students and community groups volunteered for eradication throughout the year. The improvements from their hard work is noticeable. Of course there is still much to do, so volunteers are welcomed and valued.

The Hubbard easement remains our environmental experience center. The studio's restoration continues but its magical and inspiring character remains. The studio opens to the public on the third Saturday of the month. Check the Facebook page for specific events.

Perhaps our most significant accomplishment in 2022 was the Compost Project. We partnered with the City of Fort Thomas four years ago to turn the collected autumn leaf collection into valuable compost. Under the direction of Tim Mattingly and Kevin Barbian from the city, that rich compost is now available **free** to the public to use in their landscapes as a valuable soil enhancement. It is located behind the Natural Start Pre-School in Tower Park. It is free and self-serve. Take as much as you wish. We are making more.

We continue to work with the city and residents to preserve more of our forests. And we continue to meet with residents interested in placing a conservation easement on their property to protect and and forever. You don't have to be an expert to get involved. If you are interested, please contact us for more information.

## Events and Outreach

We continue to develop events that appeal to many ages, interests, and skill sets. The joy of being an all-volunteer organization is that our volunteers are so talented and eager to share their passions, interests, and knowledge.

Thomas More University's English Department and majors volunteered with us for their annual day of service in October. They were a great help with putting the garden to bed, removing invasive species, as well as cleaning up debris along the streams and trails.



We again presented at Johnson Elementary School s annual STEAM event. It's always exciting to meet with families to explain our mission, to present the value of our forests, and to explain the value of volunteer opportunities for families. We were able to offer opportunities like:

Earth Day

Groundhog Day family activity

Volunteer Days in the Native Garden and Eradication

Studio Hours at Hubbard Studio and Nature Preserve

Artist in Residence Program

Art Sale and Hubbard Studio Fundraiser

Member Appreciation Evening at the Studio

Thomas More University Day of Service

Member Field Trips



Above: Students from Thomas More University on their annual day of service.



Side: Inside Rumpke recycling center on a field trip.



## Membership

A note from Sidney Thomas, Membership Chair

The FTFC is an all-volunteer organization and it is vital to our success to continually maintain and grow our membership with people concerned about the importance of protecting our environment. Your annual membership dues help to purchase needed supplies to remove invasive species from our forests, plant and maintain an educational Model Native Garden at Tower Park, create signage for our properties, provide education materials and disseminate information regarding our mission. Most importantly, your contribution goes toward maintaining the requirements of a conservation easement, such as land surveys and insurance needed to permanently protect our forests.

We currently have 70 memberships with a total of well over 150 members. Our goal for 2023 is to grow our memberships to 125. We can only do this with your help. The importance of continually growing our membership is to ensure that we have people who are dedicated to protecting our natural areas in Fort Thomas for future generations. Each member brings a unique set of strengths that are crucial for a nonprofit to not only thrive but to be widely supported by a variety of people. And we all do a little work then we can do big things.

Members are encouraged to be active in social activities, educational and environmental opportunities, community pride, community leadership. Members are invited to exclusive events. Become an integral part of preserving our community for future generations.

Along with your annual dues, we strongly encourage you to become involved in one of our committees. This is your opportunity to showcase your special skills and work with others who share your interests. Not only are these groups a great deal of fun, but you will feel a great sense of accomplishment by giving back to your community. We are seeking volunteers for the following committees:

- \*Land Protection
- \*Earth Day
- \*Harlan Hubbard Studio and Nature Preserve
- \*Model Native Garden
- \*Education Outreach
- \*Invasive Specie Removal

We encourage you to be a force for nature and become a member today by visiting [www.ftfc.org](http://www.ftfc.org).

## Finances

Ginny Gesenhues, FTFC Treasurer, has prepared a chart to report our finances for 2022. We are on a good financial footing and we strive to be good stewards with membership finances.

FORT THOMAS FOREST CONSERVANCY, INC	
2022	
<b>INCOME</b>	
Donations	2,946.00
Donation - Artist in Residence	500.00
Donation - In Kind	300.00
Memorial Donations - K McIntosh	3,110.00
Earth Day	375.00
Memberships/Sponsorships	5,790.00
Interest Income	0.84
Tee Shirt/Hoodie Sale	20.00
Miscellaneous	4.25
Total income	<u>13,046.09</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Earth Day Supplies/Materials	229.36
Eradicators/Native Garden	699.02
Licenses	10.00
Harlan Hubbard Studio Event Expense	300.00
Harlan Hubbard Studio Maintenance/Upkeep	91.88
Harlan Hubbard Studio Tree Removal	1,312.50
Harlan Hubbard Studio Artist in Residence	500.00
Insurance	2,046.16
Legal	239.66
Membership Events	147.74
Membership - Land Trust Alliance	300.00
Miscellaneous	158.89
PayPal/Squarespace Fees	430.20
PO Box	166.00
Postage	84.71
State Annual Fee	25.00
Website Maintenance	412.50
Total Expenses	<u>7,153.62</u>
Net Income	<u>5,892.47</u>

## Harlan Hubbard Studio and Nature Preserve



The studio and preserve is located in the center of Fort Thomas and is open to the public on the third Saturday of each month from March to October. We generally have a theme for each day. It might be a craft, historic presentation, an event with writers, artists, or people of interest to our members. We also held a members only event in the fall as well as hosted special gatherings for artists and schools. Please understand that this is on private property so it is open either by appointment or on the third Saturday. Announcements are generally made on the Facebook page and/or via membership email.

The studio is the hub of FTFC since this is where the organization was founded and it has a strong nature centered history created by its builder, Harlan Hubbard, often called the Thoreau of Kentucky. We often hold board and

committee meetings in this charming space.

Unfortunately, the bees on the property did not survive. The beekeepers were stumped as to the cause so we will take a break this upcoming year as we study our options.

We also had to remove a handful of trees that posed a threat to the historic studio as well as to neighbors. The eradicator squad cut up the felled trees that were expected brought down by a professional and then we gave away the wood to members. We hope that visitors learn the principles of good land management from these experiences.

This was the first year for our Artist in Residence Program. The first artist was Brad Davis, a highly praised and talented area artist. Artwork that he created throughout the year will be featured in a show and sale. Brad is such an approachable artist and is willing to chat about his art. His work will be on display at the Behring-Crawford Museum along side of many Hubbard paintings. Proceeds from the program support the further restoration of the studio.



Artist Brad Davis paints at the Hubbard Studio

## Model Native Garden

The garden is located in Tower Park next to the city museum. It rests atop what was once the hospital for the Army which explains the stone walls (foundations) and rocky soil.

The garden is located in Tower Park next to the city museum. For those who don't know, the garden rests atop what was once the hospital for the Army which explains the stone walls (foundations) and rocky soil. The gardeners usually meet every Tuesday morning to address the needs of the garden. You are welcome to join them any time!

Under the leadership of Marcia Fanthorp, the garden continues to be a magical place to visit. The gardeners (Amy Roberts, Pam Thomas, Nan Genter, Sandy Boothby, Susan Compton, and Rhianna Baxter) have been busy collecting seeds and wintering them in a boxed winter bed that you will see at the top of the garden.

Volunteers cleared and prepared the garden for the season. Students from Thomas More University spent their annual Day of Service in garden and we are full of gratitude for their labor.

We plan to use compost from our partnered program with the city in the garden to demonstrate the value of composted leaves in the landscape.



## Eradicators

Under the direction of Steve Fanthorp a dedicated group of volunteers have been removing invasive plant species from the Tower Park easement. Eradication is an important part of forest restoration. This group (Alan Goforth, Bob White, Doug Greer, Eric Rixon, Robert Thomas, and Tom Nurre) have opened some areas of the forests that allow light to penetrate to the forest floor with hopes of regenerating native growth. They are responsible for eradication within the park easement area.

In addition, this group conducts periodic chainsaw safety classes and invasive eradication workshops for residents.



If you would like to volunteer send us a note at [ftfcky@gmail.com](mailto:ftfcky@gmail.com).



## Get Involved

You don't have to be an expert to get involved. We learn together and that's the beauty of the Fort Thomas Forest Conservancy. We all want to preserve our natural heritage and that underlying motivation runs through everything we do. We hope you get involved because we would love to have you. Feel free to contact us at [ftfcky@gmail.com](mailto:ftfcky@gmail.com).

