

# Annual Update



*Be a Force for Nature*

December 2019

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to protect 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**

FTFC has had a busy 2019 as we turned ten years old. Throughout the course of the year the FTFC Board, members and numerous volunteers found a number of ways to celebrate the mission in our Ten-for-Ten events. Please check in with us at our website <https://www.ftfc.org> as well as on Facebook. Bookmark the site now so you can keep up with FTFC activities and news.

The Fort Thomas Forest Conservancy is an all-volunteer organization and we would love to add you to that list. Please consider getting involved. We love people who make things happen. This coming year will be an exciting year. Our annual report reflects just how busy we have been, but also hints at the vitality of 2020. Our mission is to preserve and protect our green space as well as educate the public in what they can do to make Fort Thomas a desirable place to live as well as be a model for others. We can't do it all, but if each of us does a little then we can accomplish great things. We encourage everyone to be a force for nature.

## **Officers and Board of Directors**

Chuck Keller, Chair  
Stephanie Graves, Vice-Chair  
Ginny Gesenhues, Treasurer  
Sidney Thomas, Director  
Larry Holladay, Director  
Mark Leopold, Director  
Trisha Schroeder, Director  
Jason Weier, Director

## Properties and Easements

We are acquiring easements in Tower Park in 2020. These easements follow the major creeks that begin behind the amphitheater and near the basketball courts and also includes the large creek that straddles Tower Park and Carmel Manor. The transition should be complete in the first quarter of 2020.

We surveyed the Hill property and the Hubbard easement and installed conservation markers around the perimeters.

The Hubbard easement continues to develop into a focal point for many of our outreach programs. We are excited with its transformation into an environmental experience center. We now have two bee hives that will produce Hubbard Honey. The bees found in the studio in 2017 have been married to another hive and they are busy producing honey and pollinating plants throughout town. Volunteer Rick Stegeman is the beekeeper and has prepared some interesting and fun presentations for visitors of all ages. A composting project is also on the property run by volunteer Mary Ellen Millar. We became one of the founding members of the fledgling Harlan Hubbard Legacy group that includes an alliance of museums, colleges, collectors, and friends working to preserve Hubbard's work and philosophy.

We have committed part of our River Road property to compost the city's leaves. Our goal is to turn those leaves into compost for use in the parks, our properties, and to sell back to residents. It takes time to make quality compost so don't expect it anytime soon.

We continue to work with Highlands High School to develop a natural laboratory and classroom in the Crawford preserve behind the field house. We are excited for students to learn more about the natural world and look forward to hearing about their studies.

## Events

FTFC celebrated its ten year anniversary by hosting a number of events in honor of that. Here are a few of them:

Fort Thomas Passport Program - We developed the urban trails for this city program.

Earth Day was May 5 and continues to be the largest Earth Day celebration in NKY.

Independence Day Parade. We won the float award for the second year in a row. Plan to be a part of it in 2020.

Maple Syrup making in March. Tricia walked us through the process and even tapped some trees in the park.

Forest Bathing Event on August 25 in Tower Park led by Tricia Schroeder was a chance to stop, breathe in, and focus on the natural world.

Social Meet Ups organized by Sidney Thomas were a fun way to socialize at a local establishment and business supporter, Grassroots and Vine.

April Wildflower Walk with John Homer is always a hit as a large group examined the varieties of native flowers in Tower Park.

Native Garden Work Days occurred throughout the year.

Hubbard Studio Hours held several themed events on the 3rd Saturday of the month, March through October. This is a chance to visit a hidden gem in the city. Events included sessions about our bees, a flower stamping, and an author visit.

Participating in the Independence Day Parade - and winning First Place.



Farmers Market events are partnered with the Natural Start Preschool to provide interesting and educational activities for children.

Art Around Towne was a fun way to socialize and to get visitors to participate in a fun nature activity.

We hosted several Hubbard Studio Tours for schools and groups at the studio that focused on nature, art, and sustainability.

The Mushroom Walk in Tower Park was hosted by Michele Wright.

The Hubbard Studio Fundraising Event at Headspace Event Center raised funds for the continued restoration of the studio.

The Natural Ornament Making Event on December 17 allowed families to make holiday tree ornaments from natural materials.

## **Membership**

As a member, you are an active participant in an organization that protects, preserves, conserves, and educates your neighborhood and your city for future generations to enjoy. You are invited to be active in the following:

- \*Social Activities
- \*Educational Opportunities
- \*Environmental Opportunities
- \*Civic / Community Pride
- \*Community Leadership
- \*Invitation to Exclusive Events
- \*Member Discounts

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.

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:

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

Annual memberships are available for an Adult at \$35, for an Adult + 1 at \$50, a Family at \$60 and a Student for \$15. Members will receive an FTFC window cling along with a letter stating your donation to be used for income tax purposes. We will email a letter annually to request your renewal.

We can't thank everyone enough for making this a memorable year. Here's a summary of our major events. FTFC volunteers are the best!  
- Sidney Thomas, Membership Director

**May 5 Earth Day 2019:** We partnered with the city to host this event. We had an estimated 3,000+ visitors. We showcased area nature opportunities, held demonstrations and activities, showcased nature oriented vendors and environmentally oriented vendors. Local chainsaw artist, Chris Rust, unveiled his snake sculpture in the Model Native Garden. Earth Day 2020 is scheduled for Sunday, April 26 at the Mess Hall in Tower Park.



**May 23 Native Garden:**

There are now two chainsaw sculptures in the garden created by local artist, Chris Rust that are worth a visit.

Volunteers like Brandon helped maintain the beds and paths.

We would love to add you to the list of volunteers.



**July 4 Independence Day parade:** FTFC entered a float and once again won First Place for the Most Original Float award. It was a group effort led by members Jan Jolley, Erika Peter, and Andrea Burkhardt. It was a hot day but we had lots of fun!



## Harlan Hubbard Studio and Nature Preserve



We continue to restore the building where the Conservancy was founded. The pollinator garden had a successful second year. Plants are multiplying and attracting more pollinators. The honeybees that we found in the building are safe in two hives in the woods. It will become an educational focal point as well as a honey producer.



**Studio Hours:** We will open the studio on the third Saturday of the month from 10:00 - 1:00 for those who want to get in touch with nature, or to meditate, paint, create music, or pursue other creative endeavors. The community is invited to use the space in a creative and environmentally sound way.

**Visitors:** We have also hosted numerous private tours as well for visitors from around the country as well as those interested in our mission. We are moving toward becoming the environmental experience center that we envision. Check the calendar at [ftfc.org](http://ftfc.org) for updates.

### Outreach:

#### **Education:**

Mark Leopold, Dave Wormald, Chuck Keller, and Colleen Epperson walked the Crawford and Hill properties behind Highlands High School discussed creating an outdoor education center and how FTFC can partner. This project will create an outdoor learning area for students to learn about the environmental sciences.

**Passport:** We entered a partnership with the Recreation Department and the city to create a passport activity for city. In addition to encouraging residents to visit local businesses and events, it encourages people hike our wooded trails. We created a series of urban trails. You can pick up your Passport Program 2020 at the Recreation Department in the Armory Building in Tower Park. The program will be unveiled at Earth Day 2020, April 26.

**Museum:** Board members, Trisha Schroder and Linda Rankin, refreshed the display room in the city museum next to the Model Native Garden. Stop by to visit. It's a gem for the city and for FTFC.

**New Leaders:** We added a new member to the board, Ginny Gesenhues is the FTFC Treasurer. She brings new energy and valued perspectives to our leadership. Sidney Thomas joined the board and oversee membership and the Hubbard Studio. We also added new active members for committees and they are the ones who make things happen. Rick Stegeman, an experienced beekeeper, is the latest to join us as the beekeeper.

## Website

We are excited about the new features like the calendar and news updates on the website. And it's easy now for people to become members or to renew. We can't do everything that we do without your help, so please become a member. It's easy and we make it fun. Visit us at [www.ftfc.org](http://www.ftfc.org).

## Contact Us



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