

WHAT WOULD OUR LIVES BE LIKE
IF OUR DAYS AND NIGHTS WERE
AS IMMERSSED IN NATURE
AS THEY ARE IN TECHNOLOGY?

- RICHARD LOUV
THE NATURE PRINCIPLE



MEANDERINGS

Spring is my favorite time of year, especially this year



As spring touches the meadows, fields, and woods of southern Illinois, it's easy to feel the weight of the challenges around us. Whether it's concerns about how little land is conserved in our state (less than 5%), uncertainty at a national level and its ripple effects in conservation funding, or simply the fast pace of change in our communities, it can be hard to know where to focus our energy.

But thanks to you, we remain steady in our commitment—to protecting natural spaces, supporting local farms, restoring prairies, improving water quality, and creating places where people and nature thrive together.

Conservation is a long game. It requires persistence, creativity, and the belief that small actions, over time, lead to lasting impact.

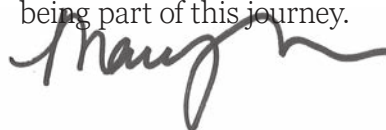
Even in difficult times, there is reason to be hopeful. We see it in the partnerships that come together, the farmers who steward their land with care, the volunteers who restore native habitats, and the prairies that bloom again after years of restoration. Progress may not always be easy, but it is always possible.

Now, more than ever, local families are asking for our assistance. Precious prairie lands are at risk for development, yet landowners are asking if we'd like to conserve them. Others have requested to meet with us to better understand how conservation can help with their family plans and desire to transfer the land to the next generation.

None of this happens without a community of people who care.

Whether through advocacy, hands-on work restoring lands and creating trails, sharing your inspiring photographs, or supporting conservation efforts in other ways, there's a role for everyone. Together, we can ensure that our region's farms, prairies, rivers, and open spaces remain healthy, resilient, and full of life—for today and for the future.

Spring is a season of hope. This spring, I want to thank you again for being part of this journey.



Mary Vandevord, President & CEO

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Our Children

and All of Us Urgently Need Conserved Lands

The average American spends 93% of their time indoors and more than seven hours looking at screens daily. Time spent outdoors has been declining since the 1970s, and the effects are staggering. Studies show that lack of outdoor activity and access to nature contribute to mood disorders, reduced attention span, decreased cognitive functions, and loss of connection to other people. This is especially true for teens and children.

Access to nature within 10 miles of home is crucial for encouraging people to get outdoors. Yet, in southern Illinois, many people lack access to spaces that encourage and welcome outdoor activity, like hiking, walking, kayaking, fishing, and hunting. Special places that could become public conservation areas are being lost to poorly planned development and competing land uses. In fact, less than 3% of land is open to the public for recreation.

Conserving land for public access is one of the simplest and most effective ways to ensure that children, teens, and adults

have access to the physical and emotional benefits of nature. Parks and trails offer a place to run, play, and explore, free from screens and distractions. Whether skipping rocks or fishing in a nearby stream, hiking in the woods, or enjoying a sunny afternoon in a local park, these experiences are essential to children's growth and community well-being.

Preserving public spaces—especially those close to where people live—ensures that all children throughout the Metro East and Southern Illinois region, have a safe, welcoming place to connect with nature. When we ensure that every child has access to green space, we help level the playing field, allowing children to experience the physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits of time spent outdoors.



As a community-supported land trust, Heartlands Conservancy is working throughout southern Illinois to create more publicly accessible conservation areas. Federal conservation programs, like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Recreational Trails Program, and Community Forest Program, have been critical for creating public lands in our region and nationwide.



You're not crazy.

There are fewer butterflies than when you were a kid.

Butterflies are special. Few other insects inspire the same level of poetry, songs, and art.

Gentle and beautiful butterflies have long been a part of communities in southern Illinois. They help pollinate our flowers and crops. Their caterpillars eat plants, keeping them from overgrowth, and are food for many birds and other animals.

Nationwide, many butterflies are facing extinction. In Illinois, seven are listed as threatened or endangered. The Monarch Butterfly was recently proposed as a threatened species in the United States because of dramatic population loss.

Butterflies are a crucial, joyful part of life as we know it.

But a recent study published in *Science* illustrates what many people in southern Illinois have noticed for a long time - 1 in 5 butterflies have disappeared in the U.S. over last 20 years.

What's causing their rapid decline? Three major things:

Haphazard development has broken up and paved over meadows and prairies that butterflies need for food and reproduction. **Extreme heat and drought** are drying out their remaining habitats and plants they need. Lastly, **pesticide use has increased** over the last two decades, especially in the Midwest, which has significantly impacted butterflies and other insects like native bees.

The good news? It may be possible to reverse this trend.

Because insects like butterflies can reproduce rapidly, their species has the potential to recover more quickly than other animals that reproduce at a slower rate, like black bears.

Conserving and restoring natural habitats will ensure butterflies continue to have the plants and spaces they need to survive. Prairies, marshes, and forests are all important for butterflies and other pollinators.

If you have a yard or open space, incorporating native flowers, grasses and trees, as well as using less or eliminating pesticide in your home garden will help provide safe spaces for caterpillars and nectaring butterflies.



Monarch Caterpillar

"Butterflies used to reproduce on the native plants that grew in our yards before the plants were bulldozed and replaced with lawn. To have butterflies in our future, we need to replace those lost host plants, no if's, and's or but's. If we do not, butterfly populations will continue to decline with every new house that is built."

*- Douglas Tallamy,
American entomologist and author*

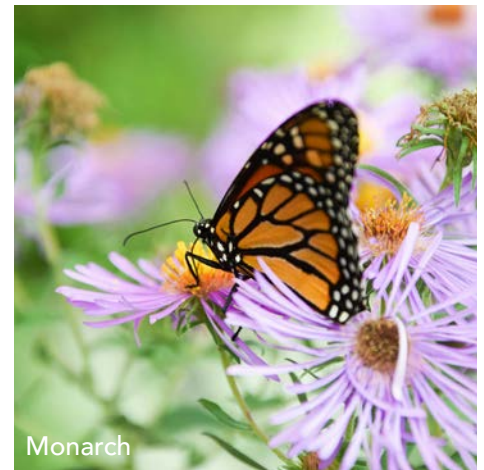
Farms can help, too. Many farmers in southern Illinois are incorporating pollinator habitats as part of healthy soil and water management. The bonus is that the butterflies, bees, and other insects they attract help pollinate crops and create natural pest management.

Cities and villages can also play an important role in this effort. Towns can update ordinances to encourage butterfly meadows and native plant landscaping. Some local towns, like Edwardsville and Carbondale, already require city-owned properties to incorporate native plants in the landscaping. Rainwater basins, which are typically covered in lawn, can be converted to native wildflowers that support butterflies.

Together, we can all take action to help reverse the loss of butterflies in southern Illinois.



Tiger Swallowtail on Bluebells



Monarch



Butterfly Tagging with HeartLands Conservancy in the Exploration Garden



It Really is Easy

Native Plants Bring Conservation to Your Home

Ronda Latina has a stunning garden at her home that uses Illinois native plants.

Having received her Conservation@Home certification several years ago, Ronda wishes that more people knew how easy they are to grow.

“They take care of themselves after a couple of years,” Ronda said, and **“[Heartlands Conservancy] and other**

organizations or members can help with plant choices and sources.”

She also recommends another resource, the HLC Native Plant Sale. Through the plant sale, Ronda adds one or two new plants each year and diversifies her garden. Not only does she love the plants, but she also enjoys the “myriad of pollinators” attracted to her garden, as well as seeing “the finches [who come] to snag a snack” or the

“ornate box turtles courting under some fragrant sumacs.”

The best part for Ronda, however, is the sense of community. **“There aren’t that many [other native plant gardeners], but when I find one, we have a great time comparing notes.”**

Ronda would love to see more people join the Conservation@Home program and expand the pollinator habitats of southern Illinois.

Getting Started:

3 Ways to Start Incorporating Native Plants into Your Home Landscape

1 | Start with Native Wildflowers

Native flowers like purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, and butterfly milkweed are excellent choices for adding color, attracting pollinators, and supporting local wildlife. Begin by planting a few of these species in a garden bed or along the edges of your lawn.

2 | Replace Non-Native Shrubs with Native Varieties

Replace common ornamental shrubs with native options like wild hydrangea, spicebush, or serviceberry. These native shrubs are low maintenance, provide food and shelter for birds, and have stunning seasonal blooms. They are also drought-tolerant once established and better adapted to the local climate. Native shrubs often have deep roots, helping with soil erosion and water retention.

3 | Create a Pollinator-Friendly Space with Native Grasses

Add a variety of native grasses, such as little bluestem or switchgrass to your landscape. These grasses provide structure, create movement in the garden, and are fantastic at supporting pollinators and wildlife. A small patch of native grasses can be a great way to start without overwhelming your landscape. Plant grasses in groups for a more natural look and to help control wind and water erosion. By incorporating native plants, you’ll have a more sustainable, low-maintenance landscape that supports wildlife.



Volunteering in nature

lifts the spirits of
a generous couple

According to Ron and Crystal Stout, two of our incredible volunteers: "the natural world, the goodness of people, and your own capabilities" are what you can learn as a volunteer.

The Stouts started volunteering with HLC through the Tree Stewards training program. "It sounded like a wonderful opportunity to learn and to meet others who care about the environment like us."

Now, a year later, they have become an invaluable part of conservation. **"There are kind and friendly people in this group who genuinely care about nature and who are happy to share their knowledge with others. We also enjoy helping the environment and saving native species,"** they said.

And help the environment they have! In 2024, the Stouts volunteered with HLC 24 times for a combined total of 64 hours. That's almost three straight days of making southern Illinois a better place for water, wildlife, and the community.

They even recently spent their wedding anniversary volunteering at Poag Sand Prairie, removing invasive honeysuckle from the prairie. **"We love spending time together, and a volunteer work day just happened to fall on the same day... It's uplifting to be in nature and brightens our day knowing that there are so many compassionate people out there who care and feel the same way we do... [it] goes to show that any day is a good day to volunteer."**

We are grateful to the Stouts for sharing their love of nature with the community.

Any day is a good day to volunteer.

-Crystal Stout

Returning Soon: Conservation@Home

We are excited to announce that Conservation@Home, which was paused due to the pandemic, is restarting this summer. Conservation@Home helps southern Illinois residents and businesses support local wildlife and clean water by incorporating environmentally friendly practices in their own yards.

More information will be available soon.

Trout Hollow Hill Prairie
Before Stewardship began



Trout Hollow Hill Prairie
After Stewardship began



Restoration Begins at Trout Hollow Hill Prairie

Trout Hollow Hill Prairie in Monroe County is one of Illinois' last remaining hill prairies. Hill prairies are found on steep, rocky bluffs where native prairie grasses and wildflowers thrive in full sun. Without active stewardship and periodic prescribed fire, eastern red cedars have invaded the prairie. The cedars have shaded out native flowers and grasses and decreased habitat for the wildlife that depend on the prairie, like badgers and ornate box turtles.

This winter, we took a critical first step in restoring Trout Hollow by beginning to remove the encroaching cedar trees. Although native to Illinois, these trees spread aggressively in fire-suppressed landscapes, casting wide shade that suppresses prairie plants and

reduces biodiversity. Clearing the cedars allows sunlight to reach the ground, giving native grasses and wildflowers a chance to recover.

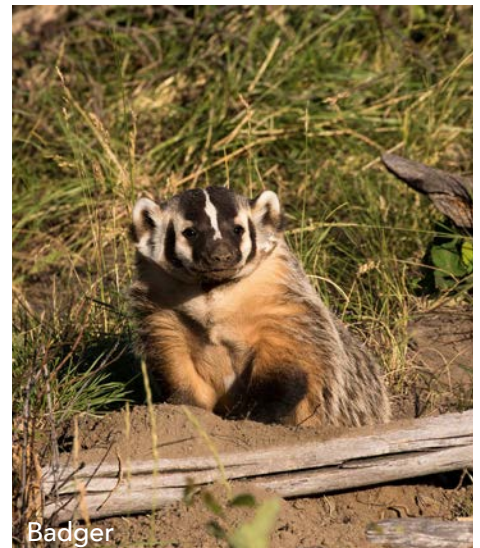
Restoring this site is a slow yet intentional process. Steep slopes on the bluff make the work physically demanding, and careful removal of cedars from the prairie footprint is necessary to give the historic seed bank a chance to rebound.



Eastern Wood Pewee

Each step we take brings the prairie closer to its original size, improving habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

As restoration continues, there will be opportunities for volunteers to get involved. If you'd like to be part of this effort, sign up for our volunteer email list to stay updated on upcoming events: heartlandsconservancy.org/volunteer/



Badger

Is Conservation right for you or someone you know?

There are many ways to conserve farmland and natural areas in southern Illinois. Conservation agreements, for example, enable the land to continue to be privately owned and conserved as either a working farm or a natural resource, such as woods or prairies.

If you are interested in conserving land, contact Land Conservation

Manager Anna McAtee, at anna.mcatee@heartlandsconservancy.org or call her at (618) 566-4451 ex 23.

Learn more about land conservation options on our website: heartlandsconservancy.org/land/



Growing a Legacy:

Historic Monroe County Farm Conserved Forever

Conservation Agreement

The preservation of the Wittenauer farm was made possible through a conservation agreement.

Agreements like this preserve the land as a working farm or open space. The landowner retains ownership and can continue farming, grazing, hunting, managing, and enjoying the land.

Depending on the terms, farm-related structures can be built or replaced.

If you are interested in a conservation easement or finding out more information, email Anna McAtee, our Land Conservation Manager at anna.mcatee@heartlandsconservancy.org or call 618-566-4451 ex 23.

Farmland in southern Illinois has some of the most productive soils in the world. Over the past twenty years, however, tens of thousands of farmland acres have been converted to development.

Thanks to the forward-thinking of Delbert Wittenauer, 600 acres of farmland in Monroe County will remain as a farm forever.

Five generations of the Wittenauer family have farmed their Monroe County land near Waterloo and Valmeyer. For centuries, the high-quality soils have made them excellent for production. The Waterloo property also neighbors a farm that was preserved in 2014. The two farms together total more than 1,500 acres of protected farmland and historic woods.

Beyond farming, preserving this land absorbs rainwater, keeps picturesque views from the bluffs, including from nearby White Rock Nature Preserve, and preserves critical travel paths for wildlife like deer, bobcats, and turkeys.

"I feel such great satisfaction with our accomplishment of establishing our conservation [agreement]," Delbert said. "It just makes me feel content and warm inside to know our farmland that supported many and brought much joy will be intact for years to come."



Federal Conservation and Clean Water Programs Help

Federal conservation and clean water programs are critical for southern Illinois farms, waters, and communities. Long-standing programs like Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Nonpoint Source Pollution Grants under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act have helped thousands of southern Illinois farmers and landowners.

Farmland is Critical for Clean Water

Three-quarters of Illinois land is farmland. Beyond growing food, fiber, and fuel, agricultural lands provide places for rainwater to absorb. Crops take up some of the rainfall, and the rest soaks into the soil.

Some rainwater will flow from the field into the nearest streams, rivers, and lakes, especially if it has rained so heavily that the soil can't absorb it fast enough. When water leaves farm fields and flows onto other properties or in creeks, it is called "runoff."

When water runs off of fields, it carries loose soil (erosion) and chemicals, like fertilizers and pesticides. These chemicals get into the creeks, rivers, and lakes and can kill fish and the wildlife that eat those fish. It can also cause toxins to build up in the water, harming humans.

The good news is that there are things farmers can do (and are doing) to help. Using cover crops during the winter protects the soil when there are no crops on the fields. Other practices like pollinator habitat (i.e. buffer strips), grassed waterways, and small basins can slow down and absorb water while also keeping soils healthy.

Without these programs, and many others like them, many family farms may find it too costly to protect their soil and water resources. As a result, more chemicals and soil will make their way into streams, lakes, wells, and rivers, causing health issues for wildlife and humans.





Reducing Stress one Trail at a Time

**Do you enjoy walks
in the park, hikes
through the woods,
or biking on the
trail systems in
southern Illinois?
If so, your physical
and mental health
are benefiting.**

Walking outdoors can significantly reduce your risk of chronic illnesses, such as heart disease and diabetes. Studies show that having access to nature and green space close to home reduces stress and anxiety.

But beyond your well-being, trails create other benefits you may not immediately consider.

Walking and biking lead to less traffic congestion, lower vehicle emissions, and better air quality. When designed well, connected trail networks provide safer travel options for people with limited mobility. Trails also attract visitors who spend money at hotels and restaurants, contributing significantly to local economies.

Recognizing that trails are critical to people's health, Heartlands Conservancy and the Illinois Public Health Institute are helping Jackson County and Southern Seven Health Departments with strategies to enhance trails, biking, and walking. The goal is to make it easier to bicycle and walk in southern Illinois communities.

Trails are Possible Because of Federal Funding



Trails in the Metro East and Southern Illinois are treasured community assets. Many communities have benefited from economic development spurred by regional bicycle trails and hiking trails.

Many of these trails have only been possible because of federal funding through programs like the Recreational Trails Program, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, RAISE/ BUILD, Transportation Alternatives

Program, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grant programs. These programs are critical to increasing the region's and nationwide access to trails.

To find out more, contact Scott Dunakey, Community Planning & Policy Manager, at scott.dunakey@heartlandsconservancy.org or call (618) 566-4451 ex 15.

An Unbelievable Turtle Discovery



This fall, an exciting discovery unfolded at Knoll Family Wildlife Sanctuary when Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) graduate student Deja Johnston and her research team with Dr. Richard Essner confirmed the presence of a small population of ornate box turtles. As a state-threatened species in Illinois, these turtles need healthy prairies to survive. While previous surveys had found only a few individuals, these new findings suggest that Knoll supports a thriving population.

“Many didn’t believe we would find any ornate box turtles here, but we identified six unique individuals - all adult females,” Deja shared. One discovery in particular stood out to her: **“The excitement of finding our first turtle was amazing. When we discovered her, she was eating on prickly pear. She was not eating the fruit, but the pad. I was surprised because of how much fruit was available.”**

Ornate box turtles rely on sand prairies with plants like little bluestem, blackjack oak, and

prickly pear cactus. These habitats are increasingly rare due to habitat loss and being broken up by development. Deja’s research is shedding light on these turtles’ movement patterns, helping to inform conservation strategies. **“By understanding their home range, we’ll have a better idea of the area needed for this population to survive and grow,”** she explained.

Protecting and managing sand prairies benefits the turtles and supports the broader web of life that depends on this disappearing ecosystem.

How to Help the Sand Prairies - and the Turtles, too

The Knoll Family Wildlife Sanctuary was preserved in 2023 to protect its rare sand prairie and sand savanna habitat. Just down the road, Poag Sand Prairie features a similar wildlife habitat. With less than 2,500 acres of sand prairie left in the state, these preserves provide refuge for species that depend on open, sandy prairies.

Protecting adult ornate box turtles is key to the conservation of their species. That means ensuring large, connected prairies remain free from threats like habitat loss, development, vehicles, and illegal collection.

If you’re interested in helping or learning more, there are opportunities to volunteer to help restore the sand prairies

and we host walks at the prairies throughout the year. Sign up for our monthly volunteer enews to be notified of upcoming dates in the volunteer section of our website.



The Power of Planned Giving for Long-Term Conservation

Legacy giving is one of the most impactful ways to ensure that the prairies, woods, and farms you care about are protected long after you're gone. When you

leave a legacy gift to our land trust, you are investing in the preservation of natural spaces, wildlife habitats, and the beauty of southern Illinois.

Gift planning empowers you to provide long-term support, protecting land for future generations, while meeting your own personal, financial, and philanthropic goals. Gifts through your will (bequests), annuities, life insurance policies, and gifts of real estate are all creative ways to

include HeartLands Conservancy in your plans, while also providing you and your heirs with some incredible tax advantages, like:

Income Tax Deductions

Many planned giving strategies, like charitable remainder trusts and charitable lead trusts, may lead to income tax deductions in the year the gift is made.

Estate Tax Reduction

Charitable bequests may help reduce the taxable value of an estate, potentially lowering estate taxes.

Capital Gains Tax Avoidance

Donating appreciated assets (like real estate or securities) may avoid capital gains tax on the transfer.

Whether through a bequest in your will, naming us as a beneficiary, or creating an endowment, your legacy can play a crucial role in shaping the future of our region's environment.

Every gift—large or small—helps preserve the rich heritage and scenic landscapes of southern Illinois.

Your legacy gift ensures that the land we love will be protected for generations to come.

To learn more and explore options for legacy gift planning, contact Mallory Ketcherside, Director of Donor Relations, at (618) 566-4451 ex 10 or email at mallory.ketcherside@heartlandsconservancy.org.

Cash-Free, Tax-Savvy Ways to Give Donor-Advised Funds (DAF)

Tax Advantage: Contributions to a DAF are tax-deductible in the year they are made, offering donors immediate tax relief with the added freedom to distribute their donations over time.

Flexibility and Control: Donors can recommend grants to multiple charities at their convenience, ensuring they have control over when and where their donations go.

Investment Growth: Funds in a DAF can often be invested, allowing your donation power to potentially grow tax-free before being granted, maximizing the difference your gift will make.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)

Easy and Tax-Free: QCDs allow you to donate directly from your IRA to a charity, avoiding income tax on the distribution amount.

Meet RMD Requirements: QCDs count toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year, helping you fulfill

IRS obligations while supporting causes dear to your heart.

Avoid Penalties: Donations made through QCDs are not subject to the 10% early withdrawal penalty, making it a tax-efficient giving strategy for those over 70½.

These giving vehicles empower you as the donor to leverage your giving in a way that feels right to you while having a catalyst impact on the organizations and causes you care about.

Learn more about ways to give online at: heartlandsconservancy.org/support/

Upcoming Programs

To register for the upcoming programs, visit our event calendar at heartlandsconservancy.org

Third Thursdays: Group Bike Ride with The Cyclery (St. Clair Co.)

April 17, May 15, June 19, July 17 departing at 6:30 pm

Join us and The Cyclery and Fitness Center of Shiloh this Spring and Summer for a group bike ride on the trails. The group will meet at Swansea Conservation Park Pavilion and depart at 6:30 pm. No need to register, just bring your bike and helmet.

Native Plant Sale at Clinton Hills Conservation Park (Swansea, IL)

Sat, April 26, 12 - 3 pm

Join us for our Native Plant Sale where several varieties of native plants will be available for purchase.

Birding Walk at Carlyle Lake (Carlyle, IL)

Sat, May 18, 9 am - 10:30 am

Join us for a walk at Carlyle Lake to learn about the birds that call the area home.

Clean Water, Bright Future (Edwardsville, IL)

Thurs, May 29, departs at 9 am

Join us for a tour of recent water quality and soil protection projects in the Indian Creek Watershed in Madison County. Examples include Richards Woods stream riffles and farm practices.

Cactus Blossom Walk at Knoll Wildlife Sanctuary

Thurs, June 5, 9 am - 10:30 am

The prickly pear cactus is found in the sandy soils along the Mississippi River and at Knoll Family Wildlife Sanctuary in Edwardsville. We hope that peak cactus bloom time will be happening during this walk.

Prairie and Woods Walk at Kingsbury Park District Nature Preserve (Greenville, IL)

Thurs, June 26, (evening)

Join us on a guided walk through the prairies and woods surrounding Governor Bond Lake in the Greenville area.

Exploration Garden Meadow Walk (Swansea, IL)

Fri, July 11, (time TBA)

Summer is a great time to see the meadow in bloom. Join us for a walk to see flowers, bees, butterflies, and birds that use the meadow at the Exploration Garden in Clinton Hills Conservation Park.





I am delighted to share Heartlands Conservancy's Annual Impact Report for 2024.

This past year was an incredible showing of how the community can come together and take personal action for conservation.

During the summer of 2024, over 850 people from across the world came together to save one of Illinois' last remaining prairies. Thanks to incredible efforts from the community, the 15-acre Trout Hollow Hill Prairie was officially preserved at the end of August 2024. Restoration and prairie expansion work began in December and will continue.

Saving the prairie was more than just an effort to save a rare prairie. It inspired hope and action for the special places of our region, state, and country.

In the meantime, in an incredible display of generosity, compassion, and foresight, Delbert and Sandy Wittenauer preserved their historic family farm in Monroe County, IL. The nearly 600 acres of important farmland will remain as agriculture and forests thanks to their action to preserve it. Heartlands Conservancy will visit the property every year to ensure the land is still preserved as intended.

Each acre preserved is a step in the right direction. When 2024 began, only 6% of land in the southern third of Illinois was conserved. With a goal of 20%, we're making some progress, increasing land protected (by us and others) to 7% at the end of the year.

Stories like the Trout Hollow Hill Prairie and Wittenauer Farm give me hope that we'll reach that goal eventually. When the community comes together, conservation happens!

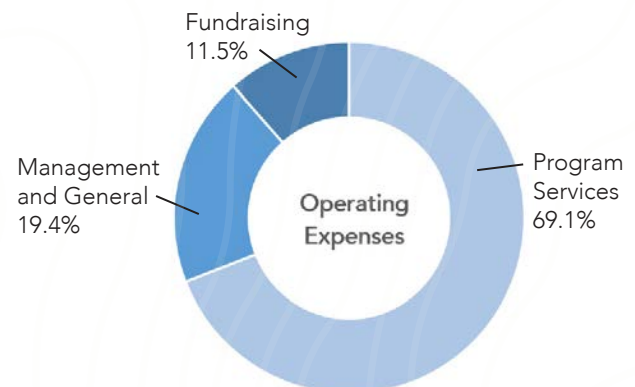
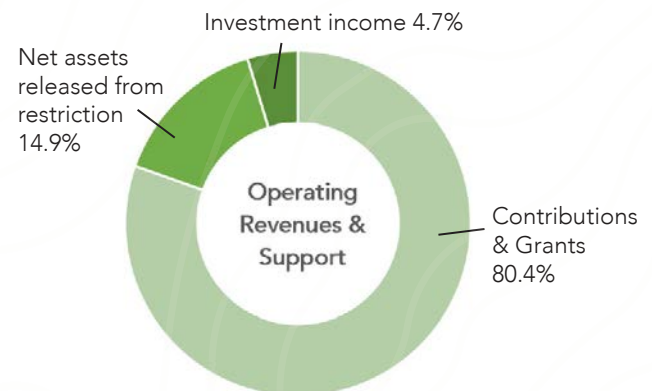
With gratitude,

Mary Vandevord

President & CEO

SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL REPORTS

OPERATING REVENUES AND SUPPORT			2024*	2023
Grant Revenues	\$	718,404	\$	2,308,522
Contributions		654,013		373,439
In-Kind Contributions		496,963		1,368,267
Dues and Registrations		36,179		43,792
Investment Income		64,687		70,950
Administration - Grants		110,178		156,597
Miscellaneous Income		15,030		16,243
Net assets released from restriction		365,963		147,437
Total Operating Revenues and Support	\$	2,461,417	\$	4,485,247
OPERATING EXPENSES			2024*	2023
Program Services	\$	1,315,003	\$	3,367,336
Management and General		370,205		408,133
Fundraising		218,950		227,331
Total Operating Expenses	\$	1,904,158	\$	4,002,800
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			2024*	2023
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$	409,836	\$	344,827
Investments		697,972		671,830
Accounts Receivable		859,712		797,774
Land		2,408,321		2,254,987
Capital Assets, Net		48,132		87,671
Other Assets		5,118		3,434
Total Assets	\$	4,429,091	\$	4,160,523
Accounts Payable	\$	398,063	\$	658,633
Loans Payable		142,266		146,082
Deferred Revenue		768,972		407,822
Lease Liability		41,071		76,184
Other Liabilities		54,122		38,502
Total Liabilities	\$	1,404,494	\$	1,327,223
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions		2,065,091		2,064,902
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions		959,506		768,398
Total Net Assets	\$	3,024,597	\$	2,833,300
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	4,429,091	\$	4,160,523



*2024 figures are unaudited at this time



HeartLands Conservancy tracks the impact of our work in southern Illinois through several targets. These metrics may evolve as data becomes available or unavailable. HeartLands Conservancy recognizes and celebrates that our organization is not responsible for moving all these goals forward on its own. Many groups, governments, and organizations contribute to conservation progress in southern Illinois. Together, we all make a difference.

Increase the land conserved in southern Illinois from 6% to 20% by 2040.

How we worked toward this target in 2024:

- 645 new acres added in 2024 for a total of 11,072 acres conserved in southern Illinois.



10% increase in community tree canopy of communities, especially in STL Metro East communities with low-tree canopy, by 2040.

How we worked toward this target in 2024:

- 710+ trees planted in Metro East communities in 2024.



50% of people have access to a natural area, high-quality park, or trail within 1 mile of home in town and within 5 miles in rural areas by 2040.

How we worked toward this target in 2024:

- New Trout Hollow Hill Prairie preserve
- Richards Woods & William C. Drda Woods Plans
- Enhancements to Exploration Garden and Signal Hill Outdoor Classroom



Complete and implement a water quality strategy for every watershed in Madison and St. Clair Counties to improve water quality and reduce flood impacts.

How we worked toward this target in 2024:

- Completed: Madison County Stormwater Master Plan & Portage des Sioux Watershed Plan
- Installed: Clean Water & Erosion Control Practices in the Highland Silver Lake Watershed, such as farm ponds, basins, and creek stabilization.





THANK YOU

You make conservation possible!

2024 was a year of remarkable strides for conservation in southern Illinois. Thanks to dedicated supporters, more land in southern Illinois has been protected from haphazard development, more of our region's waters have been safeguarded, and more family farms and wildlife habitats are thriving.

As we look ahead to the remainder of 2025, we recognize there are still many challenges ahead. The work continues, as we face ongoing threats to our natural resources and ecosystems. But with your continued support, we remain hopeful and determined to rise to these challenges.

We thank all of our partners for their incredible contributions in 2024 and invite you to visit our website to see the

full list of those who made this year's achievements possible. Together, we will keep moving forward, stronger than ever.

Full listing of 2024 partners available online at heartlandsconservancy.org

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Donors with consecutive support 2020-2024

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