

# Jefferson County Conservation District

2022

Annual Report

2022 Annual Report  
Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District  
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# **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 will help both rural and urban communities implement sustainable solutions.



# Our Supervisors



**Jennifer Chappell**

Chair

**LaToya Bryant**

Vice-Chair

**Becca Trueman**

Treasurer/Secretary



**Eli Levine**

Supervisor



**David Kaelin**

Supervisor



**Jasmine Gatti**

Supervisor



**Sarah Beth  
Sammons**

Supervisor

**Special  
Thanks  
to  
our  
Advisors:**

**Greta Stevenson**  
UDSA-NRCS  
Supervisory Natural  
Resources Manager

**Kimberly Bartley**  
KY Division of  
Conservation

**Kurt Mason**  
USDA-NRCS Urban  
Conservationist -  
Retired

**Mike Farmer**  
Former Chair



# Our Team



**Madeline Marchal**

Soil  
Technician



**Geri Johnson**

Administrative  
Secretary



**Erin James**

Environmental  
Educator

# Welcome

To say that I'm proud of this organization is an understatement. This isn't the dusty old Conservation District of yesteryear! Staff and Supervisors alike have been turning the Conservation District into a well-oiled machine, allowing for more programming, better advocacy, and stronger partnerships.

These pages are packed with information about our organization. Before you take a deeper dive, here are my favorite highlights:

- With the help of sustainability advocates, we were able to update Louisville Metro's property maintenance code to allow for native plants to be grown without penalty in Jefferson County. Whether you call it no-mow, yardens, or whatever, we're excited to see Louisville grow wild, especially with the help of our new Native Plant Cost-Share program starting in the coming year
- We've secured over half a million dollars in funding to help establish more high tunnels in Jefferson County over the next 3 years
- Former high tunnel recipients can now apply for our High Tunnel Maintenance Cost-share, so we can ensure the longevity of these powerful producers
- Ag producers can now apply to receive CAIP funding through our office, providing valuable funds to help producers improve and diversify their current farming operations
- We're continuing to build out and utilize our demonstration spaces at Louisville Grows and Farmington Historic Plantation

Later in 2022, residents of Jefferson County will be electing three new Supervisors to join our board. We're excited to add new voices and fresh energy to fuel our momentum.

I'll be resigning from the Board at the start of the year as I embark on my journey as Councilwoman for Louisville Metro's District 15. While I won't be on the frontlines of conservation anymore, I will be able to advocate and partner with the Conservation District on a greater level once I take my seat. Honestly, I feel like a helicopter parent preparing to drop my kid off at college, but I'll be looking in my rearview mirror knowing the Conservation District is in exceptional hands. I can't wait to watch what's next. I hope you share in that excitement.

Sustainably yours,

Jennifer Chappell, Chair  
Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

# 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 Agriculture Conservation Initiative

Our District's Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative (UAC) launched in the fall of 2016. The program aims to educate residents on how they can improve their soil and water quality through the practice of urban agriculture and local food production. The program includes our Urban High Tunnel Initiative, Urban Soil Health Initiative, and the Urban Agriculture Coalition.



### 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 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 Agriculture Coalition

Create an equitable and resilient food system by supporting and expanding home and community-based food production and distribution, providing agricultural education and resources, and restoring the relationships between our gardens and their communities and ecosystem

# 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.

### Solutions

Requires no heat or fans, thereby reducing the energy footprint required by traditional greenhouses. There is a more efficient use of water, reduction on pest issues, and an opportunity to utilize the biology of the soil to improve growth and production.

### Assistance

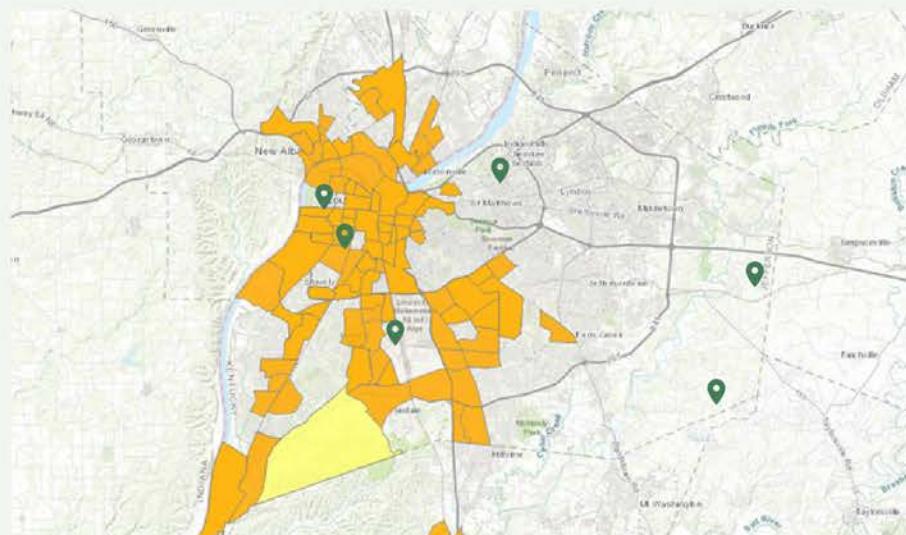
We work with growers interested in building a tunnel helping them to connect with the NRCS EQIP program, apply for the cost share, and then provide technical assistance on production and irrigation once the tunnels are operational.

### Cost Share

The District has raised additional funds to match the cost share provided by USDA-NRCS' EQIP program to reduce the cost of a high tunnel for urban residents as the tunnels can be more expensive to install in an urban area.



# Highlights



52 high tunnels have been constructed in Jefferson County since the launch of this program in 2016. A network of over 50 growers connected through their shared experience using this production system has been formed.

METRO DISTRICTS

5

CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT GRANTS

\$ 15,204

FOOD INSECURE  
NEIGHBORHOODS

1



# High Tunnel Workshop



The District partnered with Grow Appalachia and Common Earth Gardens to host a two-day high tunnel installation workshop. Participants learned how to construct a high tunnel from start to finish.



# 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.



# 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

- 17 Community gardens
- 6 urban farms

## SOIL TEST VOUCHERS

- 873 Soil Nutrient
- 185 Lead

## COVER CROP WORKSHOP

- 50 Participants



# Cover Crop Workshop



The District was thrilled to support the 7th street community garden with cover crop seed. Over 50 gardeners showed up to renew their garden plots and receive cover crop seed. The workshop educated gardeners on how and why cover crops are used. Some participants regularly use the practice of cover cropping, but for many it was a new concept and they were excited to try it in their own plots.



# Urban Ag Coalition



## Overview

In 2016, the District helped to form the Urban Ag Coalition. The Urban Ag Coalition is a collaborative working group of growers, community advocates, and representatives of local organizations. The Coalition's mission is to create an equitable and resilient food system by supporting and expanding home and community-based food production and distribution, providing agricultural education and resources, and restoring the relationships between our gardens and their communities and ecosystem.

### Solutions

The Coalition manages a website dedicated to providing resources on home and community food production, accessing green spaces, sharing events and other resources and access to other growers.

### Assistance

The Coalition is open to any and all members of the community and holds a monthly meeting every fourth Thursday of the month from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm.

### Learn

- Projects, events, and volunteer opportunities at gardens, farms, and orchards
- Opportunities for collaboration among different organizations and community members
- Discuss major urban agriculture needs in the city and work together to fill those needs through special UAC projects

URBAN AGRICULTURE  
COALITION

LOUISVILLE

# Highlights



## ORCHARD BRIGADE

**3** Fruit pruning workshops

## HOW-TO FESTIVAL

**15** Presentations  
**3,000+** Plant giveaway

## URBAN AG TOUR

**4** urban farms and  
community  
gardens



# Financial and 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)



2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
\$85,265	\$147,734	\$65,581	\$78,354.10	\$80,735

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) through the USDA-NRCS has funded projects in Jefferson County for the past five years totaling \$457,669 in grant funding.

# **Invasive Species Management in Louisville Urban Spaces**

A total of \$216,178 has been made available to reduce invasive plants and improve wildlife habitat for birds and small animals species across 116,398 acres of Metro Louisville and lands adjacent to the Louisville Loop and the Ohio River.

## **\$92,565 available**

The Funded conservation practices include those that remove invasive species and plant native habitat; brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, and conservation cover.

Applications can be submitted at any time, however, applications are only approved once during the fiscal year. Contact the Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District @ [admin@jeffcd.org](mailto:admin@jeffcd.org) / 502.499.1900

# County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP)



APPLICATIONS  
FUNDED

9

FUNDS DISTRIBUTED

\$37,493

INVESTMENT AREAS

7

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 first 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.

# NACD Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant

The District was awarded the 2021 NACD Urban Agriculture Grant. This grant helped us to intensify our outreach by adding a full-time Conservation Educator to our staff and create permanent, outdoor teaching and demonstration spaces at Louisville Grows, Farmington Historic Plantation and install Pollinator Lifecycle Gardens at Minors Lane Elementary, Westport Middle School and Central High School.

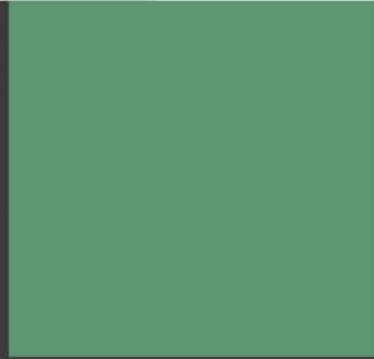
The District thanks our partners Louisville Grows, Jefferson County Master Gardeners, Farmington Historic Plantation, JCPS who helped us to realize these spaces.

## Louisville Grows

The demonstration garden at Louisville Grows' Healthy House gets a new compost bin, raised beds, mulch/weed barriers, plants and a rain barrel. This space will be used to host workshops and special programming.



Installing raised beds at Louisville Grows demonstration space.



### Farmington Historic Plantation

The District partnered with Farmington Historic Plantation and the Master Gardeners to design a space to teach about the most useful agricultural practices for our Urban growers and to discuss the history of agriculture in Kentucky as well as the contributions of the unpaid labor of the enslaved and indigenous populations to lead to that success.

Making a place to facilitate conversations about agriculture in a historically accurate and culturally relevant way is critical to moving urban agriculture forward.

### Minors Lane Elementary, Westport Middle School and Central High School

Raised bed gardens were installed at three area schools to introduce K-12 students to the foundations of growing during the school year and ensure a garden they can access during the summer to provide the opportunity for a full year of conservation education.

# Awards

- Conservation Writing and Jim Claypool Art Contest
- Louisville Regional Science & Engineering Fair
- Master Conservationist



# Conservation Writing and Jim Claypool Art Contest



1st Place artwork by Kana Kawasaki, Bowen Elementary

## THEME

We All Need Water

## ART

- 1st Kana Kawasaki - Bowen Elementary
- 2nd Brennan Phillips - Dunn Elementary
- 3rd Koda Rudolph - Norton Elementary

## WRITING

- 1st Amanda Irizarry - Eastern High School
- 2nd Josi Hofmeister - Eastern High School
- 3rd Savannah McKnelly - Eastern High School

## REGIONAL ART WINNER

- Kana Kawasaki - Bowen Elementary

# Louisville Regional Science & Engineering Fair - Special Award

Each year, the District sponsors a special award at LRSEF to reward and recognize area middle 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

**Amina Albarqawi**  
Nur Islamic School

**The Impact of Aquaponic and Soil Systems on the Growth of Radish Plants**

## 2ND PLACE

**Jacob Quinn**  
Saint Francis of Assisi, Louisville

**Seeing The Effects That Antioxidants Have On Bio Fuel Raw Material**

## 3RD PLACE

**Johanna Hawley**  
Saint Francis of Assisi, Louisville

**Does the Sinuosity of Streams Affect Erosion?**

# Master Conservationist Award

The Master Conservationist Award is the highest recognition award presented to landowners by a local Soil and Water Conservation District for individual land stewardship efforts. Less than two percent of private landowners or farmers are recognized as Master Conservationists. To qualify for this award, the landowner must have completed over ninety percent of their soil and water conservation plan for the land under their control. In doing so, almost all, if not all of their land-based natural resources are protected from serious degradation and are managed for sustainability. Their conservation practices and management techniques are those to be modeled and are often emulated by others seeking to achieve similar levels of success.

We congratulate 21st Century Parks for their conservation accomplishments and for being a good steward of the land.



Aaron Boggs, Director of Horticulture and Natural Areas, The Parklands of Floyds Fork, accepts the award for 21st Century Parks.

# Outreach

- Weeds Ordinance Revision
- Louisville Earth walk
- University of Louisville Sustainability Fair
- Garden Swap
- Tree Giveaway - 900 trees
- Louisville Grows Tree Planting
- KWA Wild and Scenic Film Festival
- Food Literacy Project Nature Walk
- Louisville Grows Healthy House Seeds and Starts
- Farmers markets
- Cultivating 502 newsletter
- Kentucky Conservation Conversations podcast
- Urban Homesteading Workshops
- How-to Festival

## Speaking Engagements

- The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- KACD Annual Conference

# Legislation Support

**DEADLINE!!! 2/22**

*Tell Your  
Councilmember...*

## Vote for Native Plants!

Revision of the Louisville  
Weeds Ordinance (§156.052 D)

### WHY NATIVE?

NATIVE PLANTS ARE ESSENTIAL  
TO HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS!

\*\*\*

INCREASE GROUNDWATER  
INFILTRATION, REDUCE FLOOD  
RISK, FILTER POLLUTANTS,  
MINIMIZE EROSION, SEQUESTER  
CARBON, SUPPORT WILDLIFE,  
IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH



Jefferson County  
Soil and Water  
Conservation District

The District supported the passing of the Updated Weeds Ordinance which will make it easier for people to plant and maintain pollinator gardens. This was a huge win for the city and opens up the opportunity for the District to provide additional programming. Prior to this ordinance change, plants over 10 inches tall were prohibited with the exception of trees, shrubs, and cultivated gardens.

# Yearbook



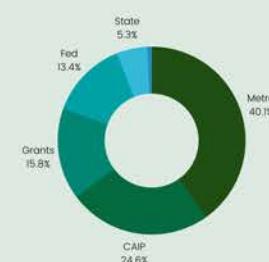


# Financial Overview

Total Revenue

**\$211,588.00**

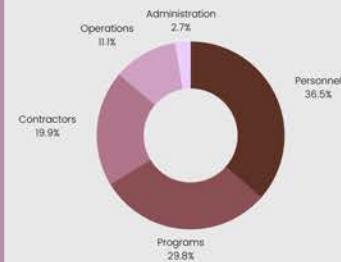
Metro	\$84,900
CAIP	\$52,000
Grants	\$33,500
Federal	\$28,290
State	\$11,280
Other	\$1,573
Interest	\$15



Total Expenditures

**\$217,437.00**

Personnel	\$79,275
Programs	\$64,812
Contractors	\$43,333
Operations	\$24,140
Administration	\$5,877



# 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

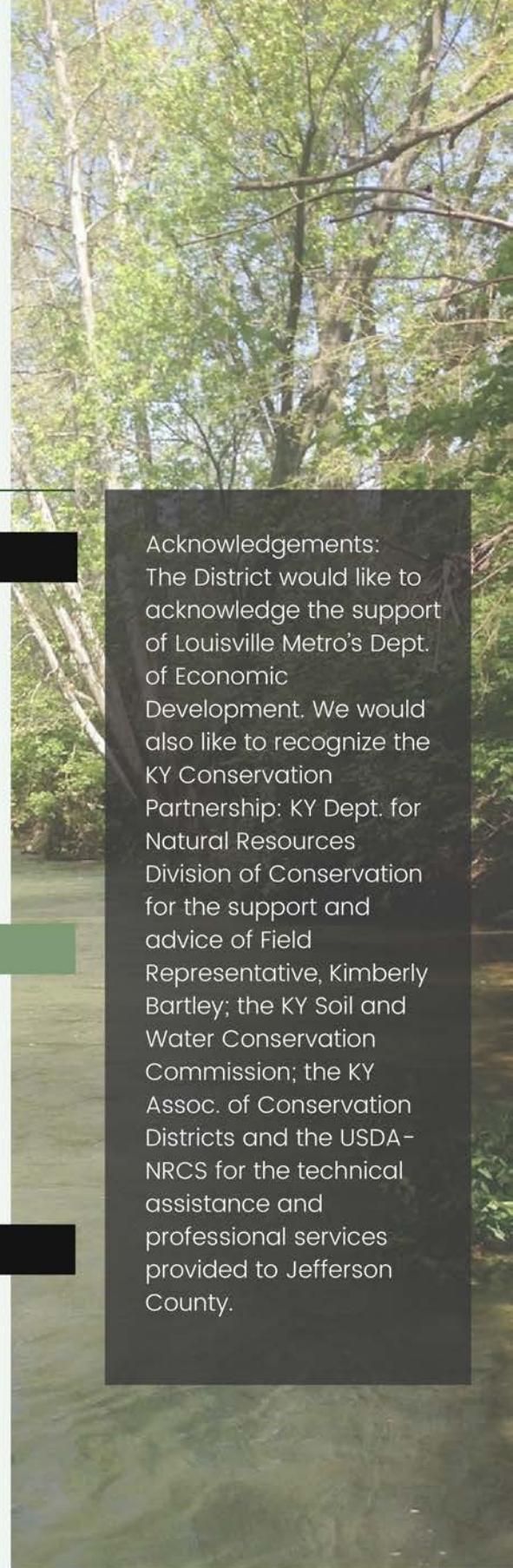
## Regional

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](http://jeffcd.org)



## Volunteer

[admin@jeffcd.org](mailto:admin@jeffcd.org) or visit [jeffcd.org](http://jeffcd.org)



## Follow

jeffersonKYSWCD on Facebook | jeffcoswcd on Instagram

# Questions



## Address

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



## Telephone

502-499-1900



## Website

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