
2020 ANNUAL REPORT



"We inspire and empower people to grow healthy urban & community forests in Tennessee."

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Friends and Members,

It is my pleasure to present this 2020 Annual Report. Quite frankly, the past year has been one full of challenges. But through it all, we've come through a better organization. We've repositioned and rebuilt a solid foundation that promises a brighter future. I'm so proud of how our board has worked together to make this possible. We've stabilized our finances, strengthened our programs, recruited new leadership, rebuilt partnerships, and brought on board a Partnership Coordinator with a background in nonprofit administration and a passion for trees. We're poised to fulfill our mission to inspire and empower people to grow healthier urban and community forests.

Our success both now and in the future is only made possible through the support of our members, program participants, donors, and people like you. Every day, the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council works to improve people's lives through community trees. But, the more people like you become part of our efforts, the stronger and more effective we can be.

If you are already part of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council family, thank you! If not, I hope you will join us!

Plant trees!

Neil Letson

A WORD FROM ASHLEY

Dear TN Tree Enthusiasts,

Today marks the end of my first month serving as the Urban and Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator with TUFC. I am truly honored to serve in this capacity, and I look forward to working and growing with all of you. I have spent the last month learning, listening, planting trees, meeting fabulous people, and preparing for an active and impactful 2021.

I believe humans have the amazing opportunity to change the world by sharing their unique gifts to work for the good of all, and I am committed to serving with enthusiasm and authenticity. I have no doubt that the TUFC can and will have a lasting impact in communities



throughout the state. However, I recognize the important role collaboration will play in achieving this.

I am inspired and energized by the numerous active tree organizations across Tennessee that are planting, educating, advocating and inspiring others. Your work is making a difference in the world. Thank you, truly. I am so glad to join your efforts, and I look forward to what we can accomplish together.

Thank you for your love of trees.

Ashley Kite-Rowland

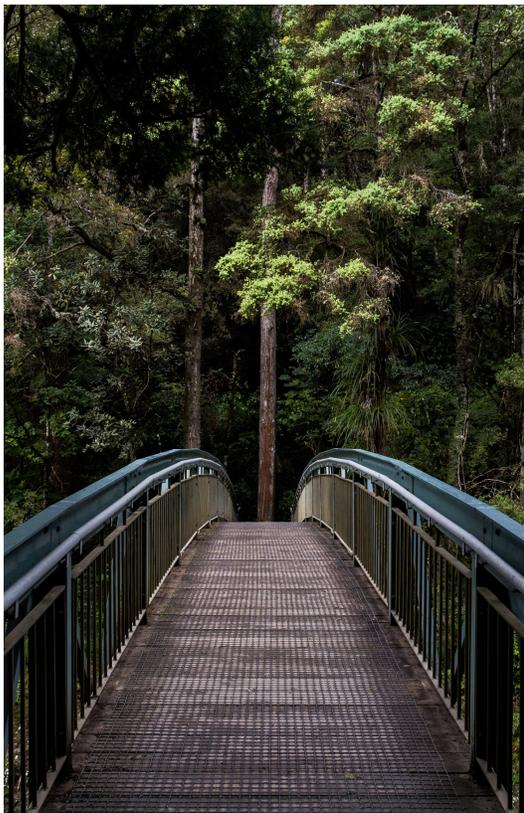


WHO WE ARE

The Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC) is the state's oldest statewide urban and community forestry nonprofit organization. It was formed in 1991 through the leadership and support of the Tennessee Division of Forestry. Over the years, the TUFC has developed into a primarily volunteer-based nonprofit with representation from every corner of the state. Our annual conferences, training workshops, and community programs help us fulfill our mission. Many of our programs (e.g. Certified Arboreta, Tree Sanctuaries, and Landmark, Historic, and Heritage Trees) facilitate people's engagement in their local community forest.

OUR MISSION AND OUR VISION

In 2020, the TUFC revised its mission statement to say, "*(we) inspire and empower people to grow healthy urban and community forests.*" This statement more accurately reflects who we are and affirms our vision that throughout every region of our state, each person in Tennessee will enjoy the full benefits of a vibrant, healthy and productive community forest .



WHAT WE DID IN 2020

2020 was a year of transformation for the TUFC. In many ways, it was a reset. Issues were addressed that threatened the TUFC's effectiveness; programs restarted; partnerships rebuilt; goals set; improved administration and oversight put in place; trust and credibility restored. Here are six of the most important accomplishments that we made.

01

Updated the
Arboreta Program

02

Rebooted Tree
Sanctuary Program

03

Developed a 3-Year
Strategic Plan

04

Renewed Partnership
with TN Division of
Forestry

05

Presented Awards of
Excellence

06

Hired Urban &
Community Forestry
Partnership Coordinator

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The TUFC is back and on sound footing. As an organization, we're better positioned to fulfill our mission and serve as one of the nation's leading and most effective urban and community forestry nonprofit organizations. We're ready to take the next step toward supporting community tree programs all across Tennessee.



01

UPDATED THE CERTIFIED ARBORETA PROGRAM

NEWLY CERTIFIED ARBORETA

17

RECERTIFIED ARBORETA

7

TOTAL NUMBER OF CERTIFIED ARBORETA IN TENNESSEE

84

The Arboreta program was reactivated and all applications were processed. Volunteer liaisons oversaw site inspections in each of Tennessee's three regions.



02

REBOOTED THE TREE SANCTUARY PROGRAM

18

Number of new Tree
Sanctuaries certified
in 2020

32

Total Number of Tree
Sanctuaries



The Tree Sanctuary program is one of the TUFC's most popular among homeowners. It allows individuals to be recognized for the diversity of trees they have in their home landscape. To be certified a Tree Sanctuary, applicants are required to submit pictures and a map of at least 10 tree species on their properties. Each tree must list its common and scientific name. Homeowners are also required to sign a healthy yard pledge, which includes no topping, using a certified arborist, and providing proper tree maintenance.

The Tree Sanctuary program began in 2016, but was suspended in 2019. The program was rebooted on June 30, 2020 with enhanced guidelines, new application deadline dates, and a streamlined application process.

03 3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



The beginning of 2020 found the TUFC at a defining moment of its history. Events over the previous two years resulted in the TUFC being weaker and less effective. Programs were suspended. Leadership was in transition and connection with the general public broken. A strategic planning process was completed to address these issues and redirect the TUFC back to its position as the state's leader in urban and community forestry. The result of this process was the development of a 3-year strategic plan designed to make the TUFC a sustainable and effective organization.

3-YEAR GOALS

- Adopt New Mission Statement
- Enhance Membership Benefits
- Grow Membership Base
- Improve Public Identity
- Improve Tree Board Connections
- Build Collaborative Partnerships Throughout the State
- Build Administrative Capacity
- Strengthen Executive Committee
- Develop Engaged Board
- Enhance Arboreta Program
- Grow Tree Sanctuary Program
- Reboot Annual Conference
- Increase Education & Outreach

04

TENNESSEE DIVISION OF FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP



Collaboration with the Tennessee Division of Forestry (TDF) is by far the TUFC's most important and valued partnership. Both entities have missions and programs that complement each other. By working together, the TUFC and TDF are more effective and efficient. This partnership allows both the TUFC and TDF to focus on what each does best while collaborating for the rest. As a result, the people of Tennessee are the true beneficiaries. Meetings with the State Forester and the TUFC resulted in an agreement that our partnership would provide:

- A Statewide Urban & Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator
- Statewide Urban & Community Forestry Communications and Outreach
- Support for the TAEP Tree Planting Program
- Urban & Community Forestry Program Data Management

05

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Each year, the TUFC's Awards of Excellence program seeks to acknowledge those unsung heroes who are making a difference in Tennessee's urban and community forests. These are people who lead by example through their service, talents, and abilities. In many ways, they show others how ordinary people can make a difference.

- Citizen Activist (Bill Bullock)
- Private Professional (Terran Arwood)
- Arboretum (Dogwood's Mac Post Arboretum)
- Tree Board (Goodlettsville Tree Board)
- Media (WKNO-TV Memphis)
- Government Employee (Rick Martin)
- Green Industry (Urban Earth)
- President's Award (Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe)



06

HIRED TENNESSEE URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR

Ashley Kite-Rowland was hired as Tennessee's Urban & Community Partnership Coordinator. This position is contracted through the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council to achieve objectives of both the TUFC and TN Division of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Program.

Ashley assumed this position in November, 2020 and was provided with office space with the TN Division of Forestry at Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville.

Ashley is a lifelong Tennessean. She grew up in East Tennessee, attended college in Middle Tennessee, and currently lives in West Tennessee. Ashley earned her B.S. in Cultural Anthropology from Middle Tennessee State University and M.S. from the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Her Master's thesis evaluated children's access to greenspace in the outdoor environments of Tennessee early childhood programs. Her research motivated her to work for green schoolyards, equitable distribution of greenspaces and larger more diverse tree canopies in Tennessee communities. She utilizes both macro and micro approaches to facilitate sustained change.

Ashley co-founded the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network and served on the TUFC's Board of Directors. She currently serves as the President of the City of Martin Tree Board and is an agroforestry enthusiast.

You can reach Ashley at 615-638-8027 or ashley@tufc.com

IMPACT STORY - GOODLETTSVILLE TREE BOARD ARBORETUM PROJECT

"In our first year as a tree board, we decided that an arboretum should be our first project. While the arboretum was a lot of work, it became a labor of love by our group and we now look forward to the community enjoying the Moss-Wright Arboretum for years to come."

-Chris Taylor (Goodlettsville Tree Board)



IMPACT STORY - MURFREESBORO COUPLE TURN BACKYARD INTO A TREE SANCTUARY



"We are really glad we applied (for Tree Sanctuary Certification). We value the plaque and what it stands for. Thanks for letting us know about the program."

-Richard & Kathryn Spry (Murfreesboro)

IMPACT STORY - MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES PARTNERSHIP

2020 marked the second year in a row that the TUFC annual conference was cancelled. This forced the TUFC to find other ways to deliver quality educational programming to its community tree audience. One result was a collaboration with the University of Tennessee Residential and Community Forestry Workgroup to provide a monthly webinar series featuring top experts on a variety of topics. The series proved to be a success, and it was agreed to make it a permanent offering. The two webinars presented during 2020 were:

- "Plant Disease in Urban Forests" presented by Dr. Alan Windham
- "Proactive Pest Management in Winter and Spring" presented by Dr. Frank Hale



Thank you for attending today's TUFC webinar!

The next TUFC webinar is 2/11/21: *Rethinking Trees*, presented by Dr. Paul Ries.

IMPACT STORY - COLLECTING WHITE OAK ACORNS



Due to a high demand for white oak tree seedlings, the Tennessee Division of Forestry's Nursery in Delano reached out for help in collecting acorns. They needed enough to grow 60,000 white oak seedlings. The TUFC recruited volunteers from across the state, and in a two-month period, collected enough acorns to meet the tree nursery's needs. Most of these white oak tree seedlings will be planted in both urban and rural landscapes throughout the state. White oak (*Quercus alba*) is one of the most important native hardwood trees in Tennessee. It is long-lived, valued by wildlife, and contributes to the state's economy.

IMPACT STORY - PHOTO CONTEST

The TUFC sponsored its first photo contest during spring. People of all ages submitted over 100 photos. Each photo attested to the beauty trees add to our state and to the passion people have for trees.

Winners of the Spring 2020 TUFC Photo Contest were:

- Children's Submission: Josie Holt
- "Tree Climbers" - by Justin Julian
- "Large Tree at Cheekwood" - by David Kumatz
- "Hemlock, Sycamore and Kentucky Coffeetree" - by Holley Roberts
- "Simple Things" - by Gem Lieser
- "Sycamores by the Wolf River" - by Jan Castillo
- "Cherry Blossoms" - by Ayesha Khan
- Honorable Mention: "Pine" - by David Kumatz





IMPACT STORY - TUFC:WEST TENNESSEE CHAPTER

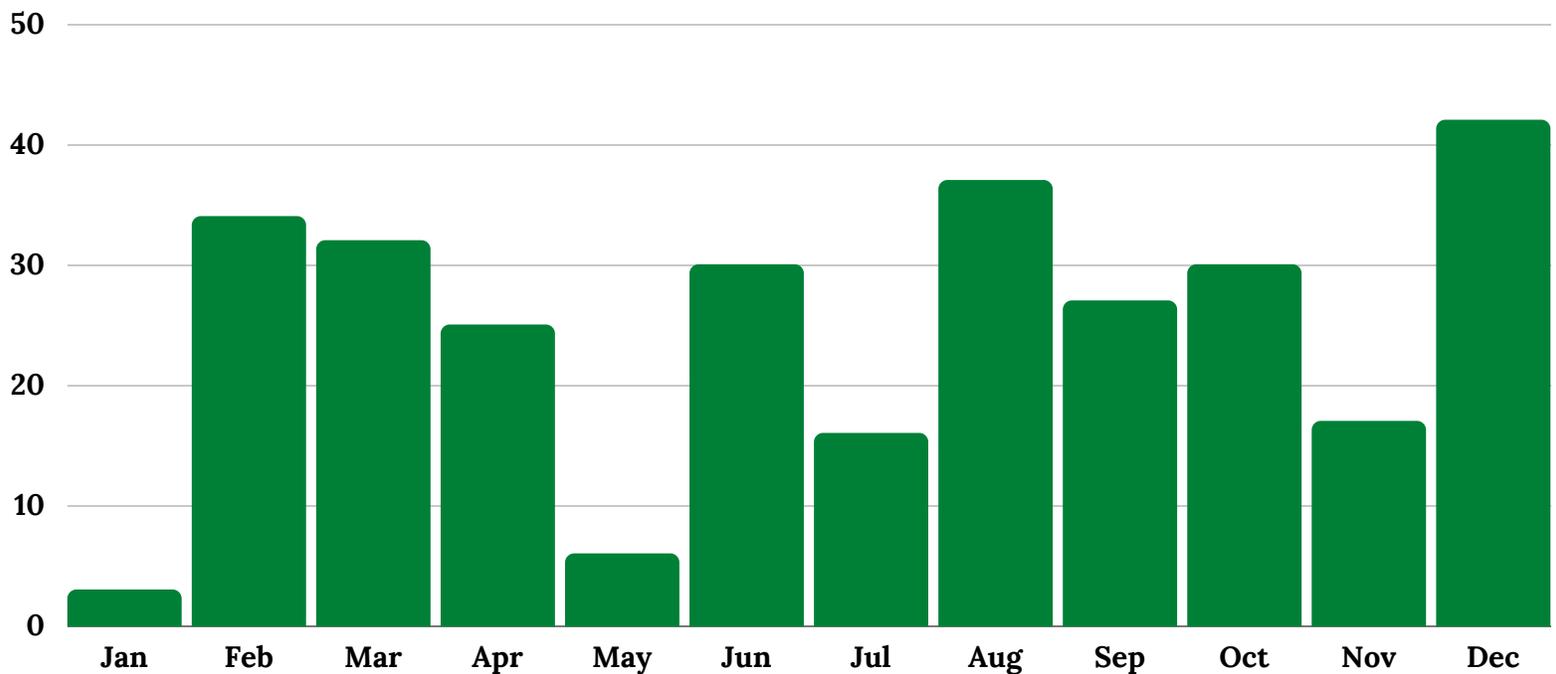
The citizen urban foresters in the West Tennessee Chapter performed exceptionally well under the COVID19 restrictions from our county this past year. During 2020, our volunteers participated in 20 community contact events. Several of our chapter volunteers continue to sponsor arboreta and many more diligently assist the sponsors of others. Our membership and volunteer committees have implemented a number of online resources for our members. These are being heavily utilized and are greatly appreciated. The Center of Excellence at Memphis Botanic Garden, staffed by chapter volunteers, has assisted sponsors to re-certify 3 arboreta, certify 6 new sites, and are actively working with 10 additional locations for state recognition. The chapter's website, wtc-tufc.org, and Facebook page provide links to the TUFC website, volunteer events and news, urban forestry education, and an interactive community for members and others who share our mission.

- Jim Gafford
President (TUFC-West Chapter)

COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA IN 2020

TUFC aims to facilitate communication among Urban Foresters, Tree Boards and Tree Enthusiasts throughout the state. This year we developed webpages dedicated to identifying TN Urban Foresters and Tree Boards and sent out numerous newsletters regarding our organization, resources and educational opportunities.

Facebook Page Likes: +299 in 2020



TUFC's utilization of social media aligns with our mission of inspiring and empowering the development and maintenance of healthy community forests. Our posts seeks to educate, connect, and mobilize citizens while raising awareness of the numerous active tree oriented organizations across the state and opportunities to be involved.

Finance Report (1 Jan to 31 Dec)

Income: \$29,786.86

Expenditures: \$27,395.39

Net Revenue: \$2,391.47

\$ 14,957.71

End-of-Year Balance

(12/31/2020)



Awarded Grant Funds from the TN
Division of Forestry from
November 15, 2020 to June 30, 2021

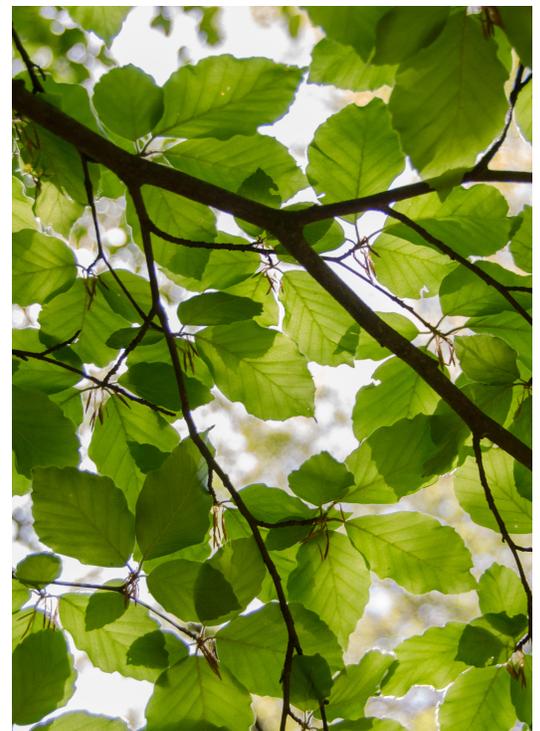
AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2021

TENNESSEE URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL GOALS

- Recruit board members with diverse backgrounds and unique skills
- Reboot annual conference
- Identify and prioritize educational programs and activities
- Provide regional educational workshops
- Provide monthly educational webinar series
- Document policies and procedures
- Develop and implement fundraising plan
- Strengthen administration of Arboreta Program
- Strengthen partnership with Tennessee Division of Forestry
- Strengthen partnership with TUFC-West Chapter
- Facilitate network communication among state's certified arboreta, tree boards, and municipal foresters
- Increase membership and member engagement

SHARED GOALS WITH TENNESSEE DIVISION OF FORESTRY

- Complete survey of statewide urban & community forestry efforts
- Increase social media engagement
- Produce annual report of statewide urban & community forestry efforts
- Update contact list of community forestry partners
- Assist with coordinating 2020 TAEP inspections
- Serve on 2021 TAEP ranking committee
- Engage in community outreach



THANK YOU! WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.



- Douglas Airhart
- Arbor Care of East Tennessee, LLC
- Pan Awsumb
- Baddour Parkway Arboretum
- Claire Barnett
- Charles Batey
- Lewis Bausell
- Neil Bell
- David Blaylock
- Louis Boykin
- Lee Bridges
- Jim Brooks
- Iris Buhl
- Bill Bullock
- Clarksville Parks & Recreation
- Jim Cortese
- David Creagh
- Cumberland River Compact
- Michael Davie
- Robert Davis
- Jeff Dennis
- Rebecca DePriest
- Dan Deshon
- Joellen Dimond
- Janet Dowlen
- Deborah Foehring
- Jim Gafford
- Bill Gallops
- Thomas Garner
- Steve Garrett
- Sarah Goralewski
- Ralph Graham

-
- Chaz Griffith
 - Cyd Hamilton
 - Johnny Hill
 - Dallas Holland
 - Clark Hooser
 - Wes Hopper
 - Kevin Hoyt
 - City of Jackson
 - Kathy James
 - Sharon Jean-Philippe
 - John Kelley
 - Bo Kelley
 - Kevin Key
 - Kasey Krause
 - Ashley Kite-Rowland
 - Kay Lait
 - Kim Lane
 - Randall Lantz
 - Josiah Lockhard & Associates
 - Mark Mangone
 - Dottie Mann
 - Martin Tree Board
 - Susan McKnight
 - Memphis Botanical Garden
 - Austin Merriman
 - Patricia Miller
 - Ann Mills
 - Travis Morgan
 - Flo Moore
 - Murfreesboro Parks & Recreation
 - Candice Nash
 - Sarah Nowicki
 - Janice Oliver
 - Sandra Oxford
 - Roxi Phillips
 - Chloe Poole
 - Paul Ries
 - Jim Rouhan
 - John Runyan
 - Brinna Sallee
 - Judi Shellabarger
 - Linda Smith
 - Lynn Stenglein
 - Betty Stephens
 - McNeil Stringer
 - University of the South
 - UT/TSU Extension
 - Village Trees, LLC
 - Demetrios Volgas
 - Diane Warwick
 - Carol Watkins
 - Andrew Weda
 - Thomas Welborn
 - Christy Williams
 - Jeff Winzenried



HOW YOU CAN HELP



Become a TUFC member



Volunteer your time



Participate in our programs



Sponsor or Donate to a Program

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Andrew Bell
- David Cook
- Michael Davie
- Joellen Dimond
- Barry Elizabeth Edgar
- Mark Folis
- Jeremy Goldsby
- Chaz Griffith
- Wes Hopper
- Sharon Jean-Philippe
- Ashley Kite-Rowland
 - (term ended in October)
- Neil Letson
- Josiah Lockard
- Nancy Murphy
- Jaime Nunan
- David Vandergriff

Ex Officio

- Diane Warwick
 - Tennessee Division of Forestry
 - Urban & Community Forestry Program Coordinator



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