

Mill Creek Meanderings

Our Mission: To restore, protect, and connect the Mill Creek Watershed and its Local Communities

Director's

Comments

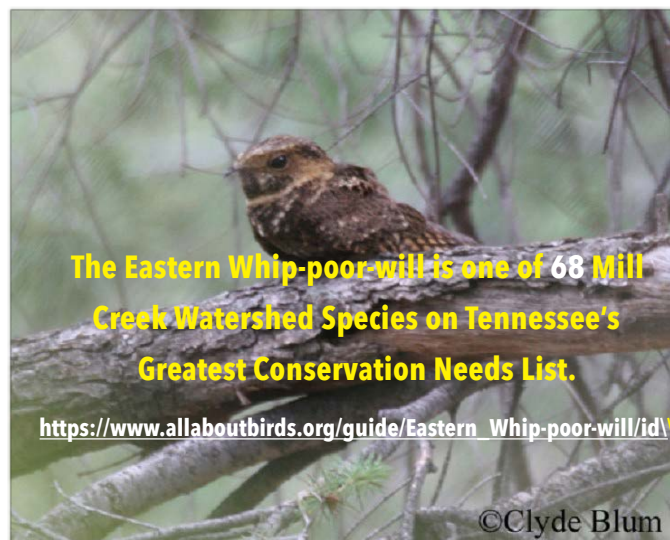


Covid-19 Reinforces Our Commitment to Sustainable Living Practices in the Mill Creek Watershed and Supports Similar Global Efforts

As with every other group or organization active in the year 2020, the Mill Creek Watershed Association (MCWA) found itself in a world utterly changed by a catastrophic global event brought on by a newly evolved respiratory virus now known colloquially as Coronavirus-2019 or Covid-19. We join the worldwide lament and grieve with those who have lost loved ones, and/or their livelihood and who now face an uncertain and difficult future. No words can avail us of our despair and sadness at this terrible catastrophe. However, we can find comfort in the possibility that our own humble efforts to promote a more nature-centered, interconnected and bio-inclusive approach to community development in our Mill Creek communities will help sustain global efforts of a similar nature that work to prevent an occurrence of this magnitude from finding us again in the future.

Several organizations including the One Health Initiative, the World Health Organization and ISGlobal are working diligently in multidisciplinary efforts to achieve optimal health outcomes based on the recognition of the interconnection between people, animals, plants and their shared environment.

Continued on P. 4



The Eastern Whip-poor-will is one of 68 Mill Creek Watershed Species on Tennessee's Greatest Conservation Needs List.

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Whip-poor-will/id/

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Steering Clear Quarterly Highlights

Metro Nashville's District 31 Beautification and Environment Commission Representative Jo Crowe, and Davidson County Commissioners John Rutherford, and Joy Styles joined our Cane Ridge Creek Cleanup with Cane Ridge Community Club Director, Twana Chick on Saturday, November 7th. Together, we pulled loads of trash from the creek and its buffer, made new friends on the council and had a great time!

The future is ours! That's the message from Nolensville High School Seniors Avery Noe and Jack Hoeffler. Read about their Green Nolensville project for Nolensville High's environmental club to carry on at <https://www.millcreekwatershedassociation.org/updates/green-nolensville>

The MCWA co-signed a letter with West Meade Elementary teacher Karen McIntyre to support a Green School's Sustainability Initiative!

Davidson County MCWA members rallied their Metro Council Members to support Bill BL2020-424, requiring additional public notice for Metro Nashville's Stormwater Management Committee variances.

MCWA Members joined the Tennessee Environmental Council at Grassy Branch Creek in Spring Hill, TN. Together, we worked with the Tennessee Environmental Council to help stabilize 110 Feet of stream bank to control erosion. This is a skill we can bring to our Mill Creek Watershed with future volunteers!

Kathleen, Caliopi and Gretchen helped Commissioners from the Town of Nolensville apply for EPA Technical assistance in a Smart Growth planning program, in consideration of a beautifully preserved Mill Creek via a "Green Corridor" through the town.

Creekside Chatter

The Short-eared Owl ~ *Asio flammeus*

by: **Caliopi Anderson, Mill Creek Watershed Association**

The Short-eared Owl is named for its lack of ear tufts or horns that appear on some other owl species, like the Great Horned Owl. (By this naming trend, we might call ourselves the Less-hairy Primate.) Ornithologists, like Michael Perrone of the Cooper Ornithological Society, have tried to determine why some owls have tufts and some do not. In his article, Adaptive Significance of Ear Tufts in Owls, Perrone debates the purpose of the tufts: perhaps camouflage, perhaps to mimic the ears of predatory mammals such as cats. But ear tufts don't have an affect on an owl's acute hearing. Sound waves are caught by the owl's round, disk-like face and funneled to its ear holes, beneath the small tufts.



If you are (a Less-hairy Primate) looking to find a Short-eared Owl, you should grab a coat and hang out near an open field around dawn or dusk in the late fall or winter. According to a Cornell Ornithology Lab entry on the Short-eared Owl, these owls are most frequently sighted in the Southeastern US in the winter, as they swoop low and almost noiselessly over fields to hunt small birds and rodents. Short-eared Owls depend on wide open grasslands for their lifestyle. Not only do they hunt here, but they make their nests in dry areas of the ground, such as grassy knolls, if they can find good ground cover vegetation for protection. Short-eared Owl families experience habitat loss from developments that fragment the open lands they need to make their homes. The Short-eared Owl appeared on the list of common birds on decline on State of North American Birds Report by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative in 2014. According to the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, the short-eared owl is one of 47 Greatest Conservation Need Species birds who live in our Mill Creek Watershed. Although short-eared owl sightings within the Mill Creek Watershed are currently rare, as habitats improve, we hope to see them more often.

To learn more about the Short-eared Owl, and active conservation efforts, visit https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Short-eared_Owl/overview <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/twra/documents/swap/coa/MillCreekWatershedCOA2015TNSWAP.pdf>

MEET OUR MEMBERS: BRANT MILLER



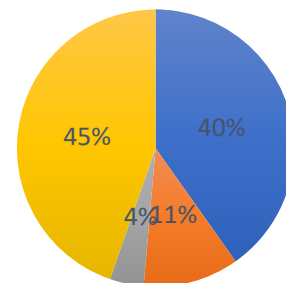
Brant and his wife, Patricia, are two of our most dedicated members! Brant recently retired from a three-decade career in Forestry and Wildlife Conservation. He was Wildlife Forestry Program Coordinator for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), and previously worked with the Tennessee Division of Forestry, the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska, and the Peace Corps in Honduras. Under Brant's forestry leadership, TWRA was awarded the Arbor Day Foundation's Forest Lands Leadership Award in 2014. This award

was the result of the restoration of 7,000 acres of West Tennessee bottomlands to native hardwoods. Brant is a founding member of the Tennessee Hemlock Conservation Partnership. This group of federal, state and private organizations and individuals has collaborated since 2010 to save thousands of acres of native Eastern hemlocks from destruction by the invasive insect pest, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, throughout eastern Tennessee.

Brant is also an award-winning bluegrass/folk musician and songwriter, with his recent album, "Roots, Rhymes & Branches," reaching #14 on the Folk Music Chart. His songs, many of which portray his love for nature, have been recorded by country, folk, and bluegrass artists in the U.S. and Europe. Brant was first-prize winner at the prestigious Chris Austin Songwriting Contest at MerleFest for "The Roadkill Bill," and has been a top-three finalist there eight times.

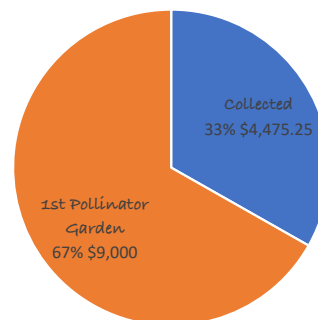
Brant and Patricia have organized several of our MCWA Weed Wrangles, tree planting projects, and fundraisers. They live with their three cats near Nashville, Tennessee, on five acres with over 300 trees they planted. They are also founders of Friends of Mill Creek Greenway in Nashville's Cane Ridge Community.

Income \$4,477.25



- Clean Streams Grant
- Riparian Buffer Tree Grant
- Donations
- Green Nolensville

Short Term Goals



Water Quality Program:

We look forward with great anticipation to beginning an MCWA-sponsored water quality testing program. Member, Micah Hargrove, a landscape architect with Hargrove Design Studio, acquired more than 100 testing kits from partners at the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. We're preparing training aids, and working to coordinate volunteers from a variety of locations along the creek so that we can plan our first testing events.

Legislative Update - Advocacy for a Clear Future:

*We achieved a major September 2020 legislative victory on a Metro Nashville site plan for a 7/11 gas station at the corner of Burkitt Road and Nolensville Pike requiring diversion and re-routing of a Mill Creek tributary. Thanks to the MCWA's intervention, with comments developed and presented by Dr. Dennis and Micah Hargrove, Nashville's Metro Water department was convinced to work with the designers on a plan that doesn't re-route the stream and doesn't require a variance.

*Dr. Dennis, Brant Miller, and other concerned citizens took the initiative to comment regarding the National Fish and Wildlife's considerations for delisting the Nashville Crayfish from the endangered species list. Although we don't have the ultimate decision on the delisting, our strong voices were heard!

Calendar

**2nd Wednesday of each month in 2021: Monthly Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m. via ZOOM.
Request attendance at MillCreekWatershedAssociation@gmail.com**

Next Meeting, February 10, 2021: 6:30-7:30 p.m. via ZOOM

Sponsors & Donors:



Donate Now at MillCreekWatershedAssociation.org
Bank Squatter \$25.00
Toe Dipper \$50.00
Creek Walker \$100.00
Stream Walker \$250.00
*Stream Glider \$500.00
**Mill Creek Conservation Society \$1000.00



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Director: Dr. Kathleen E. Dennis
Secretary/Treasurer: Gretchen Anderson

Advisory Council: Kevin Key
Pam Owen

Directors Comments, continued:

Application of this concept to global community health has been found in many aspects of public and animal health programs worldwide for many years. This approach has become more important in recent years as human populations have expanded, and this expansion is accompanied by shifts in land use, climate change, and a variety of other environmental disturbances. This has resulted at times, in particularly stressful interfaces between human populations, including the collection of diverse wild animals brought to markets and sold under unsanitary and stressful conditions. These are hot spots for the development and transmission of new pathogens and diseases known as zoonotic disease or zoonoses. Covid-19 is an example of one such zoonotic disease. A major goal of recent global community health initiatives is to eliminate stressful and unsanitary markets and curb the potential for the development of zoonotic disease.

While these global efforts are essential for alleviating the challenges of zoonotic disease, local efforts addressing the importance of the interconnectedness of our natural communities are every bit as important to help spread the message and to work together towards the development of more bio-inclusive communities. Education, advocacy and hands-on efforts help to promote and create local sustainable environments that preserve and protect our local shared ecosystems and natural resources. This includes working with developers, builders, community leaders and educators to inform and assist efforts to develop more sustainable and equitable communities. Indeed, communities that support native plants and animals, promote and preserve local biodiversity, and create sustainably just communities for all are essential for the future health and wellbeing of the planet. The mission of the MCWA promotes these ideas, and living through this pandemic calls us to recommit our efforts toward just, sustainable, bio-inclusive communities along the banks of our stream.

<https://www.isglobal.org/en/healthisglobal/-/custom-blog-portlet/salud-planetaria-y-covid-19-la-degradacion-ambiental-como-el-origen-de-la-pandemia-actual/6112996/0>

<https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/index.html>

https://www.who.int/health-topics/sustainable-development-goals#tab=tab_1