

# Woods & Waters News



One Hill In Peaks Mill | Not Just Any Tree Will Do | Business Partner Spotlight

*Friends and neighbors gather for an easement celebration—tree planting on the land of Mark Roberts & Betty Beshoar.*

## One Hill In Peaks Mill

Betty Beshoar and Mark Roberts always wanted to live in the country and moved to their land on Elkhorn Creek over 30 years ago. They love the views of the Elkhorn Creek landscape, the frogs that leap into the pond as they go by, and walks in the woods. Now they have partnered with the land trust to ensure that over 57 acres of their land will be wildlands forever.

Much of the upland has been cleared in the past and Betty and Mark have worked to plant native trees and remove invasive plants to restore the habitat. The forest on the slopes is older and in the spring it is covered with wildflowers. The discovery of Braun's rockcress, federally endangered, in the woods rising along Elkhorn Creek was a surprise. This and every other population of this plant is important because it is so rare.

Betty and Mark have been land supporters from the early days of the land trust.

Mark writes:

*Today it seems that exploitation of the land—mining, logging, building, paving—takes precedence over any other value. As individuals, we can feel powerless. But there is one thing we can control and that is the future of this one small piece of the natural world.*

*We can create a place where nature gets to rule. A place where trees can live to maturity; where the Braun's Rockcress can exist unthreatened. We can set aside one hill in Peaks Mill that will always have wildflowers in the spring, be green in summer, colorful in the fall and quietly sheltering wildlife in the winter. One hill that will take carbon dioxide from the air and filter water as it wends its way to the Elkhorn Creek on to the Kentucky River*

*We get to do this because we have the Wood & Waters Land Trust.*



### Haiku Contest

The haiku last year were stunning—so inspiring of the writers to share their ideas, their insights and mind's eye view of nature. So we are doing it again.

Children and adults are invited to send haiku—see our website for guidelines. Selected haiku will be read at our poetry reading event next year. We will feature entries from last year and this year on our Facebook page and Instagram feed in February.

Send in your haiku—we love them!



## Not Just Any Tree Will Do

Recent studies have focused on understanding the connections between native species, especially native trees. Compared to non-native trees, trees native to a region host significantly higher numbers of insects and other animals. In one study, native trees produce 35 times more caterpillars than non-native trees. And since we know it takes a chickadee over 6,000 caterpillars to grow a brood of 5 chicks, native trees are clearly important.

For instance, nationwide, native oaks can provide habitat for 517 butterfly and moth species! Non-native trees and shrubs many fewer. Studies have shown wildlife from areas with native plants are healthier and more abundant. The tree that looks so serene from your window is humming with activity!

Why don't animals eat alien plants? It takes many (many) years for all these inter-species relationships to develop. Native insects adapt to the chemical composition of plants – often in a very specialized way. For example, there are insects that only eat skullcaps and West Virginia white butterflies (photo to the left) almost exclusively lay eggs on toothworts.

There are many generalist animals, certainly white tailed deer do not seem that picky sometimes, but on the whole our natural systems are connected through complex relationships.

*Reference: Bringing Nature Home by Douglas Tallamy*

## Business Partner Spotlight: Earth Tools

For the third year in a row Owenton-based Earth Tools, Inc is providing invasive species removal on land protected by WWLT and other important conservation lands in our watershed. In 2018 the Bluegrass Restoration Crew logged 895 hours removing garlic mustard, bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, winter creeper, privet, and other non native pest plants. To date in 2019 the crew has worked over 500 hours. Typically, the crew works 6-8 weeks in the spring and 6 weeks in the fall.

Earth Tools administers the crew and provides the work as a community service. Without active invasive management, lands protected in perpetuity would degrade in conservation value over time as invasive plants displace native plants. "We believe in the mission of WWLT and we are happy to help safeguard the ecological integrity of easement properties with this service," said Earth Tools owner Joel Dufour.

Thank you, Earth Tools!





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**Join WWLT**, a non-profit organization protecting the forested lands and riparian areas in the lower Kentucky River watershed and promoting sustainable land use in the region for the benefit of present and future generations. To join, complete and mail this form, along with your check to the above address.

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