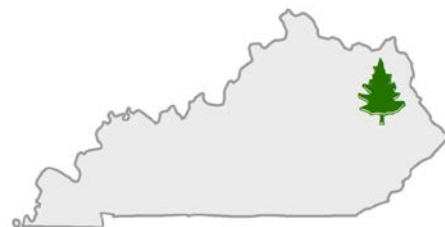




Kentucky: Triplett Creek

The Partners

Public and private lands partners include the US Forest Service Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, the Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Rowan County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Northeast Rowan County Firewise Council.



The Project

A large part of the Triplett Creek Watershed is classified as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) with many private homes immediately adjacent to National Forest lands. Wildland fire frequency and size have increased over the past 20 years, in part due to major weather events that damaged the forest and subsequently increased fuel loads. Partners have been taking steps to decrease fire hazards and increase fire resiliency in this watershed. For instance, Daniel Boone National Forest has completed 1,000 acres of timber stand improvement each year for the past five years and local communities have used the state's Firewise program to create defensible space and structure protection around 34 structures as well as to construct firebreaks on 60 acres within the watershed. However, additional conservation treatment to reduce fuel loads and improve forest health on public and private lands as well as additional homeowner education is needed. This project provides opportunities to increase awareness and engage local landowners in creating fire resilient communities while continuing to address forest health and hazardous fuels issues on public and private forest land in the area. Forest improvement activities in this watershed have the added benefit of increasing or restoring habitat for rare species such as Prairie Dock, Rattlesnake Master, Borer Moth, and the Eastern Hellbender.





The Benefits of Additional Resources

Additional resources will be used to accelerate timber stand improvement activities on public land, increase private landowner participation in NRCS conservation programs in order to address forest health and wildlife habitat resource concerns, and increase homeowner awareness of fire and forest related issues. A key component of the project is a jointly funded Natural Resource Specialist that will be responsible for public outreach and education regarding FIREWISE, fire safety measures, wildlife habitat improvement, timber stand improvements, water quality, and opportunities for landowners to participate in NRCS programs. The partnership also plans to establish demonstration sites that will model best management practices in fire safety and forest management and to host field days for local landowners.

The partnership anticipates that this outreach will lead to increased participation in NRCS conservation programs in a watershed where interest has historically been low. Outreach efforts and financial assistance to private landowners are expected to lead to 90 new conservation plans, 6,300 acres of improved wildlife habitat, 4,500 acres of more fire resilient forest, and 2,700 acres treated to improve water quality.



Daniel Boone National Forest will achieve multiple objectives through additional mechanical vegetation manipulation. In addition to reducing hazardous fuel loads, wildlife will benefit through successional habitat and edge feathering as well as species-specific canopy and mid-story removal. DBNF will achieve additional environmental benefits through treatment of invasive species and implementation of prescribed fire. These practices improve wildlife habitat by enhancing timber stand practices, creating woodland openings, and restoring grassland. Associated road maintenance efforts will improve firefighter access to the communities in the watershed as well as decrease the amount of sediment that runs off roads into local streams.

How will you measure success of this partnership?

Success of this program will be gauged by increases in homeowner participation in Firewise activities, decreases in hazardous fuel loads, improvements to wildlife habitat, and a move from Fire Regime Condition Classification of 3 or 2 toward condition class 1 across the watershed.

