State Highlights in Conservation: Kentucky

Profile of State Program(s)

**Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund:**
The Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF) was created in 1994 in order to fulfill the funding requirements of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Act of 1990. Revenue is generated through a portion of the unmined mineral tax, environmental penalties and from the sale of environmental license plates. Revenue is divided among the Nature Preserve Commission, Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, the Division of Forestry, the Department of Parks, and the Wild Rivers Program.

In March 2013, HB 281 was signed into law. It enables non-profit land trust organizations to apply for land acquisition funds from KHLCF. Land trusts are required to provide a 1:1 cash match.

**Kentucky Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements:**
The Kentucky General Assembly established Kentucky’s Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (PACE) in 1994. Initial funding was provided through a $10 million state bond issuance paid by tobacco settlement funds. Once bond proceeds were spent, the program received a $400,000 annual appropriation from the state. However, since 2007, the program has received little to no state funding.

PACE gives the state the authority to purchase agricultural conservation easements in order to ensure that lands currently in agricultural use will continue to remain available for agriculture. Donors of conservation easements are eligible to receive federal and state income tax and estate tax benefits.

Local Financing Enabled

In Kentucky, financing options for parks and open space include general obligation bonds, property taxes, and the occupational license tax (income tax); there are no local sales taxes. Counties and municipalities in the state generally do not seek voter approval for bond issuances. The legislature may levy property taxes for park expansion/improvements or purchase of development rights (PDR) after submitting a public referendum to voters. A petition or resolution may be initiated by voters or by the County/Urban County Council.

Local Programs Included

No county-level conservation finance measures have been approved by voters in Kentucky. For more information on municipal measures in the state, visit www.landvote.org.

Federal Partnerships

Federal agencies and programs that have conserved land in Kentucky include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Section 6 Grant
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. National Park Service – LWCF Stateside
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

The Conservation Almanac

A comprehensive database of land conservation and public conservation funding in America, the Conservation Almanac provides a context for assessing impacts of conservation and the growing conservation finance movement. The Almanac offers information on public dollars spent and acres conserved, details on local, state, and federal conservation programs, and geospatial mapping of conserved land.

Almanac data collection efforts focus on land conserved using public dollars; contributions funded by private and non-governmental organizations are not tracked comprehensively. Federal data is complete from 1998-2017. State and local data is complete from 1998-2011. In the tables and charts below, acres are allocated to each program proportionate to the size of the contributions to each acquisition. For example, if an acquisition had two contributions, and each program contributed equal dollar amounts, each program receives 50% of the acres. If you have questions or want to provide updated information, please contact Jessica Welch at jessica.welch@tpl.org.

www.tpl.org
www.conservationalmanac.org
State Conservation Report
Kentucky

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The data in the Conservation Almanac track the impacts of public spending on land conservation. Created by The Trust for Public Land, the Conservation Almanac brings those data together along with state policy profiles, current conservation finance news, and an interactive map, to provide a powerful online tool.

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