



Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning

2023-2025 Strategic Plan

Final Draft – 2-13-2023

Introduction

Strategic planning offers a framework to help make the most of volunteer time, staff expertise, donor resources, and community support for a non-profit organization like the Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP). Founded in 1966, TCWP has a long history of protecting and advocating for wild places and waters in East Tennessee and beyond. As the organization continues to gain additional exposure, support, and influence, this strategic plan provides direction to increase capacity and manage sustainable growth into the future. The framework created by this plan will be carried out in a series of annual plans of work that will help the organization carry out its mission and support the work of the staff, Board, and volunteers.

Vision Statement - The vision of TWCP is:

Wild places and waters in Tennessee and beyond are preserved for today and tomorrow.

Mission Statement - The mission of TWCP is to:

Preserve wild places and waters through protection, advocacy, stewardship, and education.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been developed by the TCWP Board of Directors in order to guide the organization’s work over the next three years:

Goals	Objectives
<p>Goal 1: Healthy Organization <i>Ensure organizational capacity that supports and promotes viable and effective strategies to achieve our mission</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a long-term financial plan supporting staff and operational expenses including developing fundraising goals, evaluating revenue and expenses, and determining appropriate membership dues categories and rates 2. Implement the new strategic plan, prioritizing short- and long-term actions and reviewing the plan at every Board meeting 3. Refine our staffing component – review position descriptions, develop succession strategy, and identify future staffing needs with an eye towards building capacity 4. Create financial policies that define roles and limits, implement a new investment strategy, and result in effective donor recruitment and retention 5. Pursue additional grant opportunities to support program activities 6. Define guidelines for Board recruitment, training, and retention; create Board member orientation manual, further define staff/board roles & relationships 7. Maintain, engage, and grow the membership; develop written member policies 8. Recruit, train, and retain capable volunteers who can help advance the mission 9. Create a communications strategy; review and update branding (name, logo, webpage) to raise the visibility of the organization and promote ourselves more

<p>Goal 2: Advocacy</p> <p><i>Develop and sustain partnerships, strategies, and programs that inform and influence the public, community leaders, and policy-makers</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate and influence government policy-makers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local – Encourage TCWP members to be involved and develop connections with local government entities including the City of Oak Ridge (City Council, Parks and Rec, EQAB), and Anderson, Morgan, and Roane Counties b. State – Schedule face to face meetings once each year with representatives of select state agencies including TWRA and TDEC c. Federal – Schedule Face-to-face mtg with NPS-BSF/Obed/Manhattan 2-3 times per year and new outreach to Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials 2. Maintain membership and active involvement in state-wide advocacy organizations such as the Tennessee Conservation Voters and the Primacy Group 3. Maintain Partnerships with like-minded partner organizations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assign a Board member to serve as a liaison to partner organizations, including AFORR, UT Arboretum, etc... b. Take time annually at monthly board meeting to consider opportunities for new partner relationships. 4. Advocacy Communications <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Newsletter- Produce 6 newsletters a year with content that encourages TCWP members to take advocacy actions b. Electronic communications – Maintain active website and Facebook page to communicate needed actions c. Target audiences – Produce communications directed to targeted audiences to bring awareness and encourage specific actions
<p>Goal 3: Education</p> <p><i>Educate and inspire people about the wonders, necessity, and vulnerability of wild places and waters</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide members and the public with a comprehensive view of environmental issues through newsletter issues, website, local media outlets 2. Reach more audiences by providing resources that direct people to website, seminars, and outings 3. Conduct outings in nature to provide an immersive experience of the wonders of the natural world 4. Collaborate and promote educational events with partner organizations 5. Keep information about issues and outings up to date and relevant 6. Develop networking opportunities for new people and families to engage with TCWP
<p>Goal 4: Stewardship</p> <p><i>Conduct and support stewardship activities that protect, conserve, or restore wild places and waters</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain current programs and activities for invasive plant management, trail maintenance, litter cleanup 2. Partner with other groups doing stewardship events, connect with other groups that want to be active 3. Identify and prioritize prospective sites (e.g., rails to trails and blueways) for stewardship projects 4. Assess seed collection/plant propagation opportunities 5. Hold outings to show public stewardship opportunities 6. Get more kids and young people involved in stewardship activities 7. Identify new opportunities for restoration and protection 8. Develop a citizen-science program

<p>Goal 5: Protection <i>Support the legal and long-term protection of wild places and waters</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify needs and opportunities for land acquisition for long term protection in East TN 2. Identify needs and opportunities to promote the use of conservation easements in East TN 3. Create a fund to support protection of wild places and waters 4. Develop and maintain strategic partnerships (landowners, state & national parks, etc.) 5. Support financial efforts to acquire and protect wild places and waters 6. Update the Obed River vulnerable properties plan
--	---

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic initiatives are specific areas of focus for the organization during the time covered by the plan. In this plan, two significant strategic initiatives are put forth, succession planning and capacity building. In order to achieve the TCWP objectives, it will be necessary to build additional capacity and to manage the upcoming transition to a new Executive Director.

- **Capacity Building** is about finding ways to get more things accomplished – it pertains to the group’s ability to deliver its mission more effectively now, and in the future. Capacity building is an investment in future sustainability and effectiveness of TCWP. Growing capacity may require changes to the way the organization has been run in the past, additional allocations of time and resources, and the dedication and determination of the leadership. One key consideration for TCWP will be to explore more effective use of committee structures to carry out the TCWP mission.
- **Succession Planning** is necessary to create an orderly process that seamlessly transitions between the current executive director and the next one. This may involve cataloging existing activities to facilitate knowledge transfer and documentation.

During the course of implementing this plan, the Board commits to continually monitoring and assessing progress toward fulfillment of these goals and strategic initiatives.

Conclusion

This plan was developed by the Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning Board of Directors with facilitation assistance from Insightful Nature LLC (www.insightfulnaturellc.com).