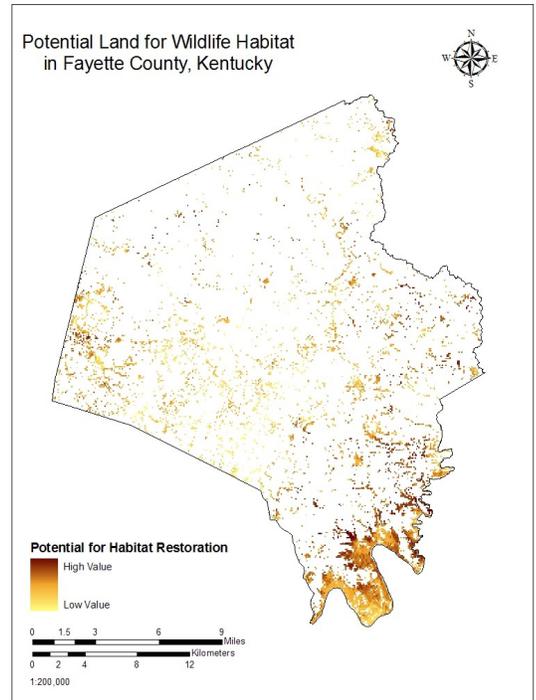


Improving Habitat for Native Wildlife in Fayette County, Kentucky

The University of Kentucky Natural Resource Conservation and Management Fall 2010 Capstone Course

- ◇ The protection of native wildlife habitat in the Inner Bluegrass Region would provide numerous ancillary benefits, including the slowing of urban sprawl, improved water quality, and the provision of a more sustainable natural ecosystem.
- ◇ Residents of the region are already concerned with environmental quality issues and are motivated to find solutions. Thus, it appears current social conditions are ripe to address the addition of wildlife habitat to local and regional planning.
- ◇ To assess the current condition of wildlife habitat in Fayette County, the team conducted numerous interviews with local experts and completed an extensive literature review. Through these processes, a suitability analysis, survey, and education materials were conceived and created.
- ◇ The suitability analysis of Fayette County (see right) highlights areas that would be most suitable for habitat restoration.
- ◇ A survey was administered to the Fayette County public to assess opinions regarding wildlife habitat. Analysis of results shows resounding support for native wildlife habitat improvement and creation in the region.
- ◇ To foster public interest in wildlife, a handbook and brochure were created to inform the public about how planting native plant species on their property, referred to as wildscaping, could have positive ramifications for native wildlife populations.
- ◇ From the results of the suitability analysis, survey, and educational materials, the team developed recommendations for actions that should be taken to improve habitat for native wildlife in Fayette County (see be-



Landscape Planning

- 1) Lexington Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) should plan and promote the creation of native wildlife habitat in their Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) LFUCG should begin a regional planning process with surrounding counties that focuses on preserving lands for wildlife habitat restoration.
- 3) LFUCG should encourage wildscaping in the Westmoreland neighborhood.
- 4) LFUCG should implement a fee that is used to improve native wildlife habitat in Central Kentucky.



- 5) LFUCG should buy land or land easements with the express purpose of preservation for planned wildlife habitat restoration.

Education and Outreach

- 1) LFUCG and UK Cooperative Extension should distribute the wildscaping educational materials (how-to guide and brochure developed with this report) to stakeholders in Fayette County to promote habitat creation in an ecologically altered landscape.
- 2) LFUCG should dedicate a day to wildscaping, on which a wildscaping demonstration is conducted or a "wildscape home tour" is given.
- 3) UK Cooperative Extension and the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service should publish a how-to guide for rural landowners that demonstrates how to convert unused farm land and fence rows to suitable wildlife habitat, such as grassland and woodlot areas.
- 4) LFUCG and/or UK Cooperative Extension should offer a free or low cost wildscaping consulting service and/or interactive instructional web page that allows for online wildscape design.
- 5) The University of Kentucky and LFUCG should partner to convert current landscaping to wildscaping.
- 6) Fayette County should adopt a wildscaping certification program.

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