

Becoming a J.E.D.I. Master:

Toward Inclusive River Spaces and Outdoor Recreation



Session

Sunday, November 21, 2021
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Our nation's history casts a shadow over river and recreation spaces for people of color. This session outlines how the Chattahoochee RiverLands and Tennessee RiverLine intersect this history, and engages attendees to discover how their projects can use J.E.D.I. principles to establish inclusive river spaces in the southeastern and beyond.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand visceral histories and other contemporary conditions that are barriers to river spaces and healthy lifestyles for people of color
2. Learn fundamental principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion related to outdoor recreation and river spaces
3. Learn practical, actionable strategies and tactics to engage people of color and underserved communities as partners and participants in recreation programs and projects
4. Understand how two regional projects - Chattahoochee RiverLands and the Tennessee RiverLine - and their community partners intersect these conditions and are putting these principles and strategies into action
5. Identify barriers to outdoor recreation, inclusive river spaces and inclusive engagement in attendees' communities and practices
6. Identify strategies and partners to overcome barriers to outdoor recreation, inclusive river spaces and inclusive community engagement





Gerry James, *Founder, Explore Kentucky and Together Outdoors Coalition Lead*

Gerry is an Air Force vet, social artist, public health advocate, photojournalist, paddlesports instructor and founder of Explore Kentucky, a Black-owned social enterprise dedicated to inspiring Kentuckians and visitors to engage in an active lifestyle fueled by outdoor adventure. Gerry is Outdoor Recreation Roundtable's Together Outdoors Coalition Lead, a cross-sector collaborative learning space for organizations and individuals who share a commitment to making the outdoors a more welcoming, safe, and enjoyable place for people of all races, ethnicities, abilities, faiths, identities, genders, orientations, and backgrounds. Gerry uses a creative placemaking approach to advance inclusive outdoor recreation principles, invigorate citizen stewardship of natural environments, promote environmental literacy, and sustainable tourism. He is a founding member of Kentucky Rural - Urban Exchange and the American Canoe Association's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiatives.



Nans Voron, *Senior Associate, SCAPE Landscape Architecture*

Nans is a Senior Associate at SCAPE and an advocate for excellence in community and stakeholder engagement, for which he brings particular expertise in addressing social and environmental justice through design. Nans leads several large-scale urban design and planning projects for SCAPE and has also played a key role in developing the firm's exhibition design efforts. He is currently project manager for the Chattahoochee Riverlands Greenway Study, a 100-mile trail system running through the Metro Atlanta region; the Hayward Shoreline Master Plan in the Bay Area; and for the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's (CPRA) 2023 Coastal Master Plan.



Cathy Barnard, *Board Member, Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy*

Cathy is a branding and communications consultant and an advocate for conservation and inclusive access for public lands. She serves on the board of the Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy (CNPC), the official Friends group of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA). CNPC supports park initiatives and promotes stewardship of natural and cultural resources for CRNRA's 15 park units along 48 miles of the Chattahoochee River in Metro Atlanta. A longtime National Park Service volunteer and certified Master Naturalist, Cathy is a member of the stakeholder advisory group for Chattahoochee Riverlands and Johns Creek's Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee.



Brad Collett, *Associate Professor, University of Tennessee School of Landscape Architecture*

Brad is an Associate Professor in the University of Tennessee Department Plant Sciences and School of Landscape Architecture. His teaching, research and creative activity center on regional water resource stewardship through landscape planning and performance. Brad was a 2016 U.S. Fulbright Scholar to Slovenia, and is a licensed landscape architect. He is Director of the Tennessee RiverLine. This regional consortium collaborates with UT Knoxville and TVA, as well as UT students and the Tennessee River Studio under his leadership, to realize the transformative, multi-generational vision for North America's next great regional trail system.



Dr. Carolyn Barske Crawford, *Director, Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area*

Dr. Carolyn Barske Crawford is the director of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area - a National Park Service funded program housed at the University of North Alabama. Her work with the MSNHA is focused on preserving, protecting, and interpreting the natural, cultural, and historical resources of northwest Alabama. She also partners on recreation projects related to trail development, outdoor education, and park expansions in the six counties of the MSNHA and across the region. Crawford holds a Ph.D. in US History from UMASS Amherst.

Projects/Initiatives



Together Outdoors + Explore Kentucky Initiative

The Together Outdoors Coalition, administered under the auspices of Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR), provides a cross-sector collaborative learning space for outdoor recreation manufacturers, retailers, service providers, land managers, grassroots organizations, and other stakeholders to advance inclusion and diversity throughout the recreation economy. We're focused on the following:

- **Education:** 7-month curriculum for cross-sector collaborative of 70+ coalition members from around the outdoor industry on topics such as history of access, marketing and media, recruitment and retention, grants/partnerships, and accountability.
- **Searchable Database:** Together Outdoors aims to produce a high-quality searchable database for organizations and individuals who wish to advance their knowledge related to recruiting, retaining, and reactivating diverse outdoor participants, regardless of their level of pre-existing knowledge.
- **Inclusivity Campaign:** Establishment of best practices and branding centered around the Together Outdoors logo will strive to show businesses, spaces and places working on creating self and welcoming outdoor experiences for all, especially to help increase participation of underrepresented groups in outdoor recreation by creating informed and inclusive organizations and field locations like businesses, campgrounds, marinas and trailheads.
- **Measurement:** Collecting and publishing field research to measure the impact of the Together Outdoors education series and collective education network on a coalition member's organizational practices (e.g. around workforce development, advertising, vendor selection, etc.) and how underrepresented groups experience the outdoors.
- **Improved Field Impacts:** Reduced concerns of underrepresented participants that outdoor recreation at certain field locations is unsafe, exclusive, or discriminatory

As the Explore Kentucky Initiative enters its 9th year of existence, we're focusing on experiential education programs, including a partnership with Frankfort Independent School District to develop an after school immersive stand up paddleboard program, broadening the reach of outdoor festivals like the Bluegrass River Run and Totally Tubular Tubeathon, as well as launching a statewide outdoor recreation passport program.

Together Outdoors

Coalition Field Guide



Presented by the Outdoor
Recreation Roundtable



Projects/Initiatives



Chattahoochee RiverLands

In the backyard of Metro Atlanta, the Chattahoochee River is an overlooked resource of extraordinary historic, economic, cultural, and ecological value. The Chattahoochee RiverLands is a vision to reunite the River with the Metro Atlanta Region and link suburban, urban, and rural communities into a continuous public realm that centers the River as a regional resource.

At its core, the RiverLands proposes a 125-mile uninterrupted multimodal trail that extends from Buford Dam to Chattahoochee Bend State Park. The RiverLands is more than a trail—it's a linear network of greenways, blueways, parks, and the destinations they create. The vision aims to bring people to the water's edge, promote continued stewardship and conservation, and reveal the subtle magic of the Chattahoochee to all. Altogether, the project encompasses a user base of 1 million residents living within 3 miles of the trail system. Beyond its physical footprint, the RiverLands vision builds on a decades-long legacy of social and environmental planning and activism.

Over two years, SCAPE led a large, multi-disciplinary team of experts and local partners to develop this vision, holding community and stakeholder engagement sessions with nearly 290 groups over seven counties through public forums, design charrettes, "river ramble" outings, and focus groups to solicit aspirations and experiences of the Chattahoochee.

The Chattahoochee River Greenway Study was commissioned by a joint Project Management Team consisting of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Trust for Public Land, Cobb County, and the City of Atlanta.

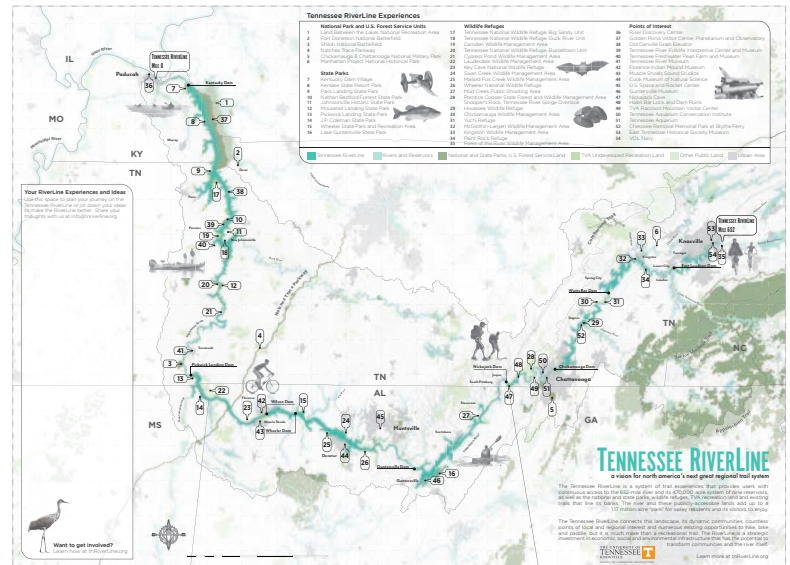


Tennessee RiverLine

The Tennessee RiverLine is a continuous system of paddling, hiking, and biking trails along the Tennessee River's 652-mile reach from Knoxville, TN, to Paducah, KY. First conceptualized by a UT School of Landscape Architecture student in 2016, this historic initiative was launched as a regional and local place-based strategy to promote economic development, enhance public health, increase equitable access to river experiences and cultivate new generations of river stewards. Its principal partners are UT Knoxville and Tennessee Valley Authority

46 cities and counties in AL, KY and TN have enrolled in the Tennessee RiverLine's Tennessee RiverTowns Program to date. The support and creative capacity offered through this innovative program by Tennessee RiverLine staff, with the invaluable insights, inspired effort, and ideas brought forward by each community, propels the vision forward and empowers participating communities of all sizes and means to establish their own reach of the Tennessee RiverLine. Over time, each community's effort and investment - driven by its unique opportunities, priorities, and relationship with the river - connects to become North America's next great regional trail system.

The Tennessee RiverLine is committed to its guiding principles of diversity, equity and inclusion, and establishing river experiences and spaces that are welcoming and accessible to communities typically undeserved by outdoor recreation opportunities. It puts this commitment into action through DEI programming and grant opportunities for river communities, as well as capacity building initiatives with community partners and organizations at local, state and regional levels. The Tennessee RiverLine is also committed to listening and learning about how it may most fully exercise these principles through its operation, programming and design initiatives.



Notes



Additional Resources

1. Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange Handbook - <https://www.kyrux.org/rux-approach>
2. Together Outdoors Initiative - <https://www.togetheroutdoors.com/>
3. Chattahoochee RiverLands Website - <https://chattahoocheeriverlands.com/>
4. Tennessee RiverLine Website - <https://www.tnriverline.org/>