

Harrison County Community Foundation

The Nature Conservancy Blue River Project Fund

The Blue River teems with life from dazzling darters and lethargic Hellbender salamanders to the silent sentries of the river, freshwater mussels. The Nature Conservancy's mission is to conserve the lands and water on which all life depends. We work in a variety of ways to ensure future generations can enjoy the same quality of life in Harrison County that we do. We achieve conservation results by:

- Managing nature preserves with special plants and animals by purchasing and/or accepting gifts of land in areas that we have determined to have high biodiversity
- Planting over half a million tree seedlings in the watershed, many of which will shade Blue River and prevent erosion from the river banks
- Partnering with watershed groups, sewer districts, water utilities and health departments to educate homeowners about the importance of septic system care to prevent contamination of drinking water and local streams, including Blue River
- Building a trail system throughout the Harrison County Glades that offers scenic hiking options to residents and visitors
- Managing private forest land near nature preserves and within the Blue River watershed to model sustainable forest management
- Encouraging the adoption of best management practices both in terms of forestry and agricultural pursuits by working with landowners to reforest riparian areas along Blue River and its tributaries and implement forest stand improvement
- Augmenting freshwater mussel populations in Blue River by growing large numbers of baby mussels in a lab setting for release into Blue River
- Surveying rare habitats to document new plants and animals, such as cave surveys that turn up new species of cave bugs and plant surveys that document new county records
- Controlling invasive species that threaten Harrison County's native trees, wildflowers and animals
- Studying changes in the Blue River fish and mussel populations to understand changes in habitat and water quality

