

Advocates For the Oak Ridge Reservation

136 West Revere Circle, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

www.discoveret.org/aforr/ or www.aforr.org

NEWSLETTER – January 2010

The results of 10 years of AFORR effort came to fruition in Year 2009 with successful outcomes in three areas that we have emphasized since inception: Area 4 of the Horizon Center (formerly ED-1), the area encompassed by ED-3, and land-use classification at the former Clinch River Breeder Reactor site.

Area 4 - Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR) and Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP) have worked for over nine years to preserve Area 4 of Horizon Center. This tract comprises approximately 52 acres that were conveyed to Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee (CROET) by the Department of Energy (DOE) for economic development, including about one and one half miles of the popular North Boundary Greenway. Area 4 is surrounded on three sides by the East Fork Popular Creek Natural Area and on the west side by the North Boundary Greenway and the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement (BORCE). Area 4 is isolated from the developed part of Horizon Center by East Fork Popular Creek and the surrounding natural area. AFORR has argued that Area 4, due to its isolation and the requirement for three bridges spanning Bear Creek for access, should not have been included in the Horizon Center (see enclosed map).

After numerous meetings with DOE and CROET spanning several years, CROET agreed to donate Area 4 and adjacent North Boundary Greenway property to AFORR or another conservation organization for preservation in perpetuity. Legal arrangements for transfer of the land to Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation are underway. The plan is for Greenways to subsequently transfer the land to the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, which will manage the land for wildlife, conservation and recreation.

This ecologically important tract of land provides a natural corridor for movement of wildlife between the BORCE and the remainder of the DOE Reservation, and provides a home for numerous wetland/bottomland plant and animal species. Conservation-minded individuals should be appreciative of CROET and DOE for making this precedent-setting land transfer possible.

ED-3 - DOE's proposed transfer for economic development of the tract called ED-3 was the action that compelled Dev Joslin to organize a group of Advocates For the Oak Ridge Reservation. The proposed transfer of ED-3 was viewed as another piecemeal property transfer in the absence of a comprehensive review of environmental impact required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The original ED-3 included land on the North side of Bear Creek Road, land on the South side of Route 58 and land on both sides of Blair Road. This was a total of about 550 acres. In addition DOE showed a proposal in late 2008 that added an additional 170 acres to ED-3 on Bear Creek Road for mixed use development. After much criticism by AFORR and others, and the prospect of a NEPA lawsuit, DOE's original plan for ED-3 was shelved, until recently. At the urging of AFORR, DOE prepared a Habitat Assessment (HA) for ED-3 in October of 2009, and in that document they reduced the land transfer acreage to 219 acres, 217 acres of this lies on the south side of Route 58 and runs from Flannigan Road (the new haul road) to just west

of the K25 visitor overlook. In addition, two acres are located on the northeast corner of Route 58 and Blair Road. Most of ED-3 is a forested system that is recovering from past intensive use (residential area for the war-time K25 construction community).

Since the release of this HA, DOE released the Environmental Assessment (EA) for "The Transfer of Land and Facilities within the East Tennessee Technology Park and Surrounding Area, Oak Ridge, TN". This document includes all of K25 plus ED-3. The ED-3 land stayed as it was shown in the HA. The land on the North Side of Bear Creek Road, including the 170 acre addition, and the land on both sides of Blair Road (except the one acre tract) were considered non-development areas. The EA covers 5,000 acres of which 1,800 acres (mostly K25 buildings) can be transferred for mixed use development. This includes ED-3, 218 acres. The balance of the 5,000 acres are 1,500 acres for Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement (BORCE), 50 acres for DOE operations and 1,650 acres classified as Non-Development land and retained by DOE. AFORR and other conservation organization representatives were assured by Gerald Boyd (Oak Ridge Site Manager) in a meeting on July 31, 2009 that no further economic development land transfers are being contemplated by DOE.

Given that the proposed ED-3 transfer is predominately previously disturbed land, and no further economic development land transfers are contemplated, the proposed 218 acre transfer can be considered a reasonable compromise between development and conservation. Comments on this EA are due by January 29, mailed to Susan Cange, DOE Oak Ridge Office, P.O. Box 2001, Oak Ridge, TN 37831 or submitted by e-mail to cangesm@oro.doe.gov.

Clinch River Breeder Reactor site - On November 11, 2009 the TVA Board approved the Watts Bar Reservoir Land Management Plan. This approval finalized a long difficult process. Revision of the previous plan started 6 years ago and was published as a draft in May 2005. No further work was done on the plan until the TVA Board approved an overall land use policy, which was accomplished in Nov. 2006. TVA then revised the Plan /EIS according to the new policy and issued it August, 2007. AFORR and TCWP submitted comments and met several times with the Watts Bar Team and TVA management. We recommended the 4.2 mile Clinch River riparian area be preserved as ZONE 3 (Sensitive Resource Management) instead of the recommended $\frac{3}{4}$ mile 48 acre area. We also recommended a substantial increase in the Grassy Creek Habitat Protection area. TVA listened to our arguments, toured the site and revised the Plan/EIS to protect all of the riparian area (4.2 miles, 172 acres) as ZONE 3 and increased Grassy Creek Habitat Protection from 98 acres to 266 acres. The balance of the 1178 acre site (749 acres) will be held by TVA for Project Operations (see enclosed map).

This Plan/EIS provides a good balance and leaves the previously disturbed breeder site open for TVA projects. It also provides a good buffer zone which supports wildlife and is made up of high quality upland forest habitat and some bottomland forested areas.

ADVOCATES FOR THE OAK RIDGE RESERVATION

ANNUAL MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010

Advocates For the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR) will hold its Annual Meeting on Thursday, January 28 at 7:00 PM in the Midtown Community Center (Wildcat Den) 102 Robertsville Road, Oak Ridge, TN.

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS (President and Executive Director of the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation) will speak on the topic "Forever Green Tennessee". Her presentation will highlight the need to restore the Tennessee Real Estate Transfer Tax which, in the past, has provided funding for acquisition of lands of environmental and scenic importance. In 2003, 2008, and 2009, funds generated by the transfer tax were re-directed to help mitigate State budget shortfalls. Public support is needed to ensure that this conservation funding mechanism is reinstated this year. The transfer tax generates approximately \$20 million per year to help keep Tennessee green and beautiful. Tourism is the second largest industry in Tennessee, employing 181,000 people and contributing 13.4 billion to our economy and \$1 billion to our local sales tax revenues. One of the top tourist attractions in Tennessee are our State Parks and it is short-sighted not to reinstate this land acquisition program in order to expand the environmental tourism industry. This fund is needed to save incredible scenic attractions that are at risk, including exceptional tracts at Rocky Fork, Bluffs at Scott's Gulf, Cummins Falls, The Big Trees at Virgin Falls, The Big Trees at Warner Parks, Mississippi River Bluffs, The Fiery Gizzard Trail, Segments of the Cumberland Trail, Short Mountain, and more. This tax represents only .07% of Tennessee's \$29 billion budget. Shamefully, Tennessee ranks 50th nationwide in environmental spending.

Kathleen Williams has served as President and Executive Director of the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation since 1997. At the foundation she launched "State Park Connections", a small grants program that has awarded more than 164 small grants totaling \$267,704. Her work through the Foundation has helped preserve over 10,000 acres that conserve beautiful Tennessee natural resources. Under her leadership, the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation was recognized by the Tennessee Conservation League and the National Wildlife Federation as the 2003 Conservation Organization of the Year and the 1999 Conservation Educator of the Year. In addition Kathleen received the 2004 Mack S. Prichard Award from the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club and was named the 1996 Land Conservationist of the year and the 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award from Greenways for Nashville. Prior to her work at the Foundation, Kathleen was the Director of Tennessee Greenways Program for The Conservation Fund from 1995-1998. In this capacity she initiated greenway projects across the state and developed the Governor's Bicentennial Greenways Program. Kathleen successfully lobbied for the "State and Local Parks and Recreation Partnership Act of 1991," which resulted in more than \$15 million per year for state parks, state forests, city and county parks, wetlands, and cleaner water. Because of this funding bill, over 240,000 acres have been set aside in Tennessee for land conservation.

For more information contact Frank Hensley at 865-250-1158.

Please Join AFORR or Renew Your Support

Name _____

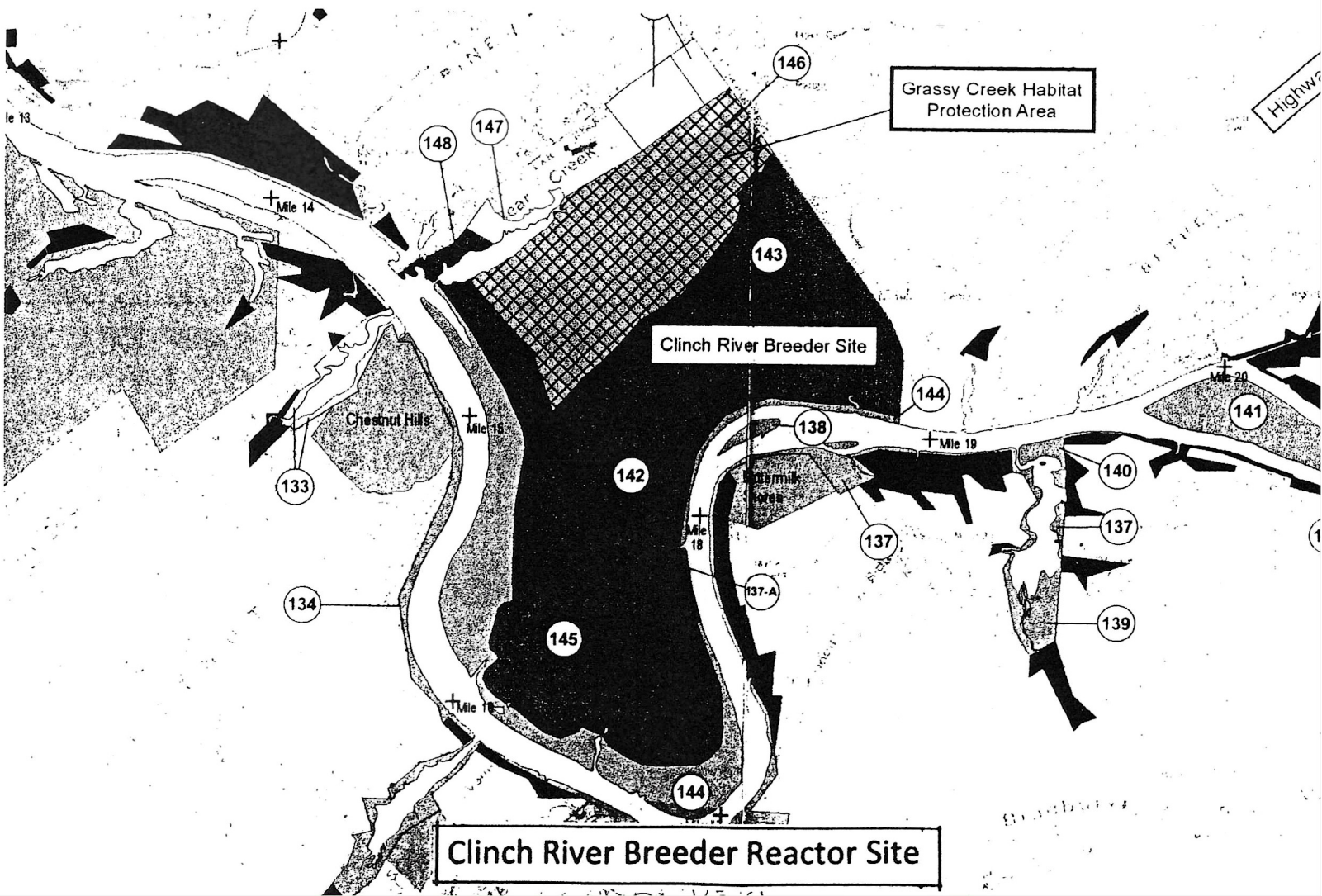
Address _____

Phone Home _____ Cell _____ Email _____

Membership Level: _____ Individual (\$15/yr) _____ Family (\$20/yr)

_____ supporting (\$50/yr) _____ Additional contribution

Mail to: AFORR, c/o Hensley, 136 West Revere Circle, Oak Ridge, TN 37830



**LOCATION OF AREA 4
AND NORTH BOUNDARY
TRAIL PROPOSED FOR
TRANSFER**

Bear Creek

East Fork of Poplar Creek

Exclusion Area
Natural Area 47

Access Road

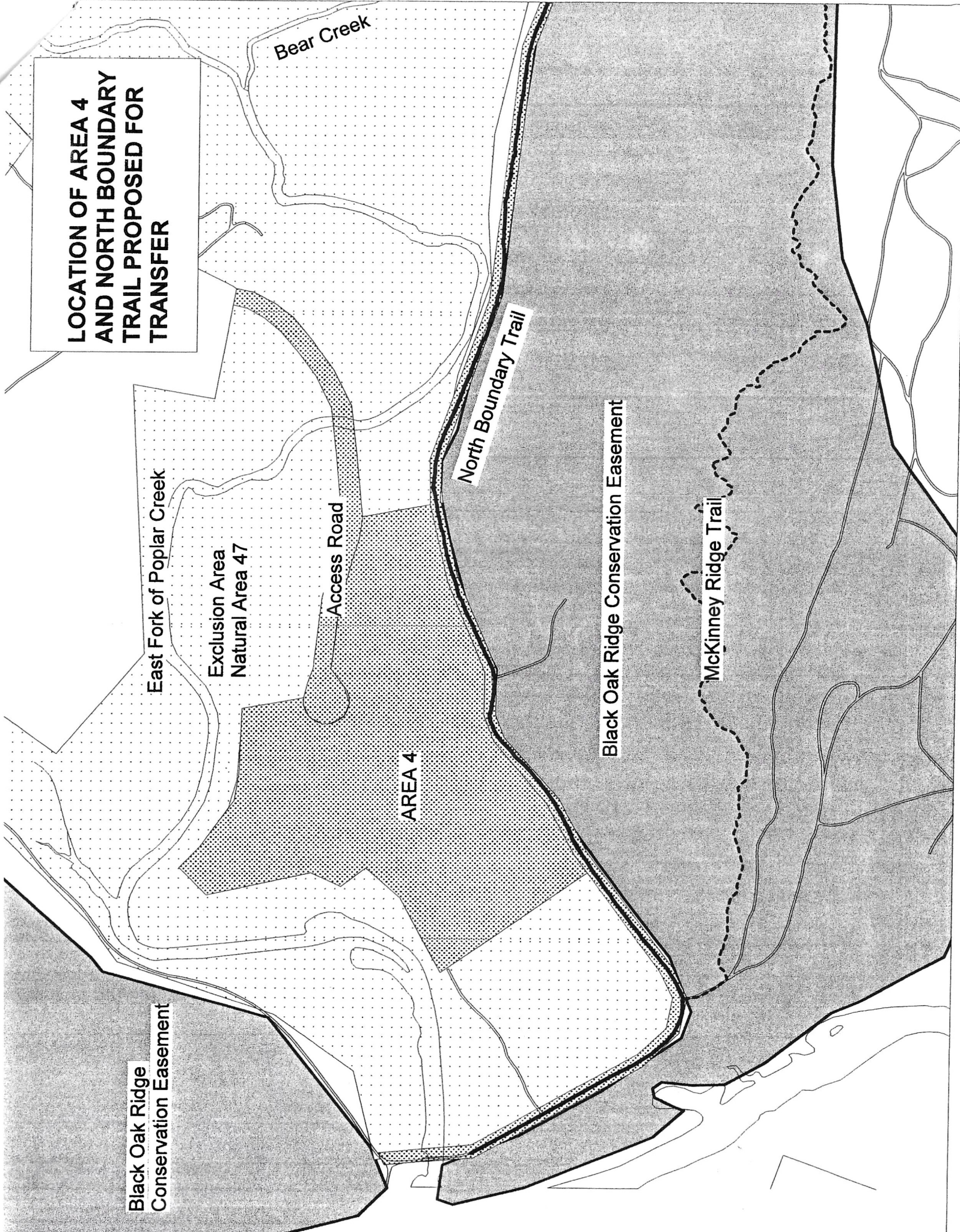
AREA 4

North Boundary Trail

Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement

McKinney Ridge Trail

Black Oak Ridge
Conservation Easement



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7:00 PM

Midtown Community Center (Wildcat Den)

102 Robertsville Road, Oak Ridge, TN.

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

President and Executive Director of the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation

Forever Green Tennessee

THE PUBLIC IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND

(details inside)

RESERVATION (AFORR)
C/O Frank Hensley
136 Revere Circle
Oak Ridge, TN 37830