

# 3,000-acre Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement celebrated

BY ELLEN ROGERS

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The U.S. Department of Energy hosted a ceremony Wednesday commemorating arrangements for nearly 3,000 acres of Department of Energy land on the Oak Ridge Reservation to be placed into a conservation easement which will be managed by the state of Tennessee.

Held at the Horizon Center Communications Building, the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement event was attended by Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation commissioner Betsy Child, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Executive Director Gary Myers, Oak Ridge Vice Mayor Tom Beehan, DOE Oak Ridge Operations office manager Gerald Boyd and local community leaders.

"We are really proud of what

has finally occurred here," Boyd said. "I thank TWRA, TDEC, DOE and the city [for their efforts]. This has been a very worthwhile endeavor."

TWRA will manage the land in accordance with a management plan developed jointly by the TDEC and TWRA with input from the public. The agreement enables DOE to assist in paying for natural resource damages at the Lower Watts Bar reservoir caused by DOE's activities on the Oak Ridge Reservation.

The land, located on the western end of the 33,749-acre reservation, has served more than 50 years as an undeveloped buffer for the former K-25 uranium enrichment facility.

"We're looking forward to managing these 3,000 acres," said Myers. "It's got unique species, river bluffs and wet

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Lynn Freeny/Special to The Oak Ridger  
Gerald Boyd, Department of Energy Oak Ridge Office manager; Betsy Child, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation commissioner; Tom Beehan, Oak Ridge vice mayor; and Gary Myers, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency executive director, celebrate the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement project on Wednesday at the Horizon Communications Center Building.

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### Beverly Majors/Oak Ridger staff

Karen Watson makes handbags in memory of her daughter who died in 1994. The money from Britt's Bags goes for research.

that.' "

And, do that she has.

The bags come in many colors but all have two things in common: The money from the sale goes to research and each has a small picture of Britt with her "big purse" on the tag.

Britt was born April 5, 1974, and began losing her eyesight about the age of six. The Watsons did what most parents would do at that point.

"We took her for an eye  
Councilwoman Jane Miller  
said, "Trends show that employ-

had received a medical research paper from a doctor in Boston," Karen said. That was the first time the Watsons heard the words 'Batten disease.'

Tests at Duke University Medical Center confirmed their fears: both of their youngest children had the disease. Kristin did not.

Batten disease, neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis, was first described in 1826. It is thought to be one of the most common neurodegenerative diseases and is still an unsolved mystery. Named for

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