

all right so welcome everybody i am so excited to have everyone here today and this is a really special time because this is a kickoff of our seminar series so we're really really excited about this we'll have some a mixture of local people as well as um national and regional and global um folks that will be presenting and we're going to try to do at least one a month and um you know we're going to try to mix it up as much as we can and we want to really give an idea of the breadth of one health and this is very timely because wow i don't know if you guys know this but this week there have been so many different one health events going on webinars especially and workshops for example national science foundation has been hosting workshops started last week but definitely this week and then the national academies of science engineering and medicine have been putting on webinars all week and i've been attending or at least while i'm doing other things attending as many of these as like as i can and i will tell you that one of the major themes that are coming out of of these um events is that everybody is finally recognizing that we have got to consider every single part of of the uh every single portion of one health we have to look at the environment the animals the plants and the humans and it was it's been pointed out that we've all often just

focused on the human aspect  
but and we're ignoring all of these  
other  
um portions and we can't  
do that anymore and if you look at um  
the image here  
i know my you're not seeing my pointer  
but um the very central part of that  
if any if we don't take care of any one  
of these circles out here  
the intersections of any of them and  
especially that center one  
are going to collapse so we have got to  
realize that we have got to  
focus on each one and make sure that  
each one  
is maintaining its health so that that  
intersection  
remains healthy and um that  
has been a strong message that has been  
brought out in all of these  
um webinars and workshops that i've been  
uh taking part in this week so it's  
pretty exciting that we're starting to  
see that with that we need to diversify  
and that we need to be bringing in  
um all you know people who  
fall into all of these areas so that we  
can work together and we  
we have got to be working together so  
super important  
um we i just want to point out that we  
finally have an email account that  
you can get to from our website or or  
you can write down here  
if you want to contact us so that's  
going to streamline things a little bit  
better and hopefully we won't miss as  
many emails  
and i think that's all i have for  
announcements  
um yes so without further ado  
um all right so today  
we're kicking off our series with well i  
think this is so appropriate with uh  
brad collett  
um brad is an associate professor in the  
department of plant

sciences with a faculty appointment to  
the school of landscape architecture  
his research interests include landscape  
performance  
specifically watershed stewardship  
through low impact development and  
sustainable planning and design  
in the context of professional practice  
probably many of you know brad because  
of the tennessee river line and you saw  
the recent announcement regarding the  
joining of tva  
and ut as partners in the river  
tennessee river line  
but i also suspect that many of you are  
not entirely certain what the  
tennessee river line is and what it's  
all about  
or how it even relates to one health  
so because brad is a one health scholar  
and we had this timely announcement  
and we're starting the seminar series we  
thought that this was a  
perfect thing to kick it off with so  
without further ado  
i'm going to turn it over to brad  
and thank you for doing this very good  
well thank you  
uh for the opportunity to be here deb  
and into the  
all the leadership in the one health  
initiative  
we're truly humbled to be kicking off  
this series i love the diagram that you  
had at the very beginning i think that  
it's so appropriate not only  
for our own work but also to the  
tennessee river line as we think  
about landscapes very broadly and about  
how we engage them and how we are  
stewards  
of them because of the ways that they  
affect our health  
um as well and so really appreciate the  
opportunity  
uh to share this vision as you mentioned  
it is very timely we've had a lot of  
great

um and exciting announcements to share  
and i'll touch on some of those here  
in um in my talk as well so can  
everybody see my screen that i've now  
that i'm now sharing got some heads  
nodding okay very good  
so um one of the things  
one of the parallels i think uh between  
one health and the tennessee river line  
is that it is  
in fact an initiative that's made  
possible by partnerships and by many  
different  
people uh we're working in areas of  
expertise that allow  
this project to uh to be successful and  
to  
to move forward and so as dev mentioned  
one of the great partnerships that we've  
just been able to  
announce is that the tennessee valley  
authority  
has become a principal partner of the  
tennessee river line along with ut  
knoxville  
and so that is a transformative moment  
for our initiative the investments that  
they've committed to make in the project  
will allow us to accelerate our progress  
towards  
what started as a student's vision and  
is now becoming  
a transformative pro regional project  
that  
will touch the lives of millions of  
people um and for generations to come  
and so we're truly excited about that  
um we're also uh working  
well you know within the ut shield if  
you will  
um uh we also kind of go to the next  
level partnerships the the school of  
landscape architecture is a partnership  
unto itself  
it is an intercollegiate program that is  
shared between  
the herbert college of agriculture and  
the college of architecture and design

and so we're also talking about two different institutions or you know a joint institution now but the institute of agriculture and uh ut knoxville and uh so that's that's a really exciting uh part of this narrative and the story we do this work in collaboration with an external partnership the tennessee riverline partnership is a consortium of volunteers in organizations and agencies that at the state federal and local levels tribal levels as well and we're very fortunate to now be working with a full-time team as well as continued support from students in our school and um you know one of the things that i'll touch on later on is how we definitely want to broaden involvement in this initiative to other disciplines complementary disciplines around the university as well i'm going to break my presentation down into maybe three major pieces um one is to talk a little bit about the vision's origin which i've already kind of alluded to and then talk about what the vision for the tennessee river line is and then finish by talking about some of the outreach work that we've done already and the things that we've learned um along the way and so we'll use that as an outline for our time together but this project began as i mentioned earlier as a student's vision i taught a class and i teach a class every fall called the tennessee river studio which is a design studio in the school of landscape architecture and that brings the creative minds and

capacities and ideas of  
of our young people to to bear on the  
further development of this project but  
in 2016 it hadn't even been  
been proposed yet and so we were in the  
process of just learning about the  
tennessee river and this group of 12  
students  
and i went on a transformative trip as a  
part of our research approach to this  
studio and we drove from knoxville to  
paducah  
along the tennessee river 652-mile reach  
over the course of the five days and it  
was the things that we saw and the  
people that we met  
and the experiences that we had along  
the way that then  
motivated what has become the vision for  
the tennessee river line and so  
here are some of the pictures from this  
trip that we've we've taken  
annually but you know things that really  
moved us about the value of the river  
um the beauty of the river the the  
cultural importance of the river  
the economic value in terms of uh  
recreation economies and quality of life  
in our communities  
the way the communities engage and have  
their own story and unique relationships  
with the river  
as well the unique story that tva is  
to our region and puts the region on the  
international map  
as a leader in regional thinking and  
innovation  
and infrastructure so there was a lot of  
things that made an impression  
uh on the students in terms of the value  
of the tennessee river  
we met with people whose lives are  
shaped by the river and whose work  
shapes the river as well so farmers that  
are working  
uh thousands of acres of river bottom  
lands that  
are drawing water for irrigation but

also are vulnerable to main stem flooding aquatic biologists that are shepherding and stewarding the health of the ecosystems of the river including the reintroduction of sturgeon into the main stem ecosystem communities rural communities in particular that are looking to the river as an important piece of their economic future in industries along the river including the inland navigation system and barging as an important dimension of what what makes the river work and what what it um engages and makes it economically productive for the region too we also saw the threats and vulnerabilities of the river on on these trips and in 2016 meeting with farmers that are losing acres of land to riverbank erosion the response of of uh kind of a traditional functional response of of slapping a bunch of rock on the riverbank to to affect that problem is not really great for um uh ecosystems and and uh the habitat that the river provides microplastics is a significant challenge to the river uh water quality in our integration of urban systems so things like energy production and waste management and stormwater management all affect the quality and health of this resource and the health of us as a result as well as the fact that um you know much of the river is not is not visible um it's difficult to access because of limited public access points and that renders these threats invisible to folks who would otherwise

be perhaps compelled to advocate or to  
to change that trajectory as a result  
and so  
it was the synthesis of those things the  
the value that the students saw on the  
river  
the importance and recognizing how it  
shapes uh people's lives but also the  
threats and vulnerability  
of the river that's compounded by a lack  
of access or what researchers would call  
the extinction of experience  
that compelled us to put this vision  
forward for  
for the tennessee river line that again  
was proposed in 2016  
we work with the partnership and  
community partners and  
our principal partners to continue  
cultivating this  
into what it is today so that brings us  
to the second part of  
of my talk which is what is the vision  
for the tennessee river line  
and i think this again is another  
parallel to the one health initiative  
and how it challenges us to think about  
and understand um  
systems at a synthetic level this  
project challenges us to think about our  
landscape in a different way that  
you know perhaps if we're thinking about  
park space we always would think about  
the national park or the green park or  
the the  
land-based park whereas this project  
challenges us to think and recognize  
our rivers our blue ways our streams and  
tributaries  
as a part of our open space and as a  
part of our landscape as well  
and so the river is part concept is an  
important piece of this  
and let's unpack what what are the  
different pieces of that system well  
first is of course the river itself it's  
652 miles long from knoxville  
to paducah but this is this is a vast

landscape this is 470  
000 acres of water surface that is  
reservoirs and river reaches  
that spans and touches four states and  
32 counties so that's a significant  
amount of  
of area that is publicly accessible  
uh and that is continuous as uh as a  
body of water and so 470 000 acres  
of landscape that is engaged on a  
day-to-day basis for  
a range of different um activities  
whether it's  
on the on the water or along the water  
uh it's an important landscape  
for a diverse communities as well as  
diverse  
activities and how this becomes a social  
commons for us  
it's also not unprecedented um distance  
travel on the river so  
uh people have swam the rivers reached  
they floated the river's reach  
they've done the entire river in one  
trip or they've done it in sections as  
somebody would do on the appalachian  
trail the individual  
on the right hand side is jamie barnes  
he and ian finch  
uh paddled much of the tennessee river  
when they were retracing the trail of  
tears  
so a 1300 mile trip from western north  
carolina to oklahoma  
the tennessee river is the water route  
for the trail of tears and so distance  
experiences is not unprecedented either  
we want to make that easier but there is  
existing use so  
when we talk about the river line we  
talk about it as  
a continuous water trail from knoxville  
tennessee to paducah kentucky that  
offers these  
you know really kind of sublime natural  
experiences as really as well as really  
sublime  
infrastructural experiences if you've

ever been through a lock  
on a boat try it in a kayak  
it's an incredibly it's just amazing  
it's really difficult  
to put into words and it's something  
that's uh that's possible to do  
so another dimension of this riverous  
park is  
of course the public lands that are  
immediately next to  
the tennessee river so there are 700 000  
acres of national parks state parks  
wildlife refuges tva  
developed and undeveloped recreation  
lands local parks  
as well that become gateways  
to and from tennessee river experiences  
and they offer unto themselves unique  
experiences whether it's hiking or  
biking  
road biking mountain biking wildlife  
watching or  
cultural experiences and interpretation  
um as well and so these are all  
again gateways to and from uh  
the tennessee river and uh this is from  
a trip that we had back in october with  
uh the folks our friends out in roane  
county  
we had a hike with the county executive  
out on thief neck island and he took  
us to the original settlements and  
showed us homestead foundations and  
cemeteries and  
so it was a really great kind of  
marriage of of these ideas  
and of course the wildlife this is a big  
part of the river story  
uh right now with migration seasons  
sandhill cranes  
and that sort of thing and that's an  
important part of activity on the river  
too  
um river communities are an important  
dimension of this river park four states  
as i mentioned 32 counties more than 40  
incorporated cities and towns some of  
which are mapped

and labeled here again each of which  
having their own unique relationship  
their own unique story  
of um of the tennessee river  
that adds richness and diversity to uh  
to the experience so  
let's think as we do across one health  
let's think synthetically about this  
landscape  
we'll combine the uh the water  
the public lands the communities and we  
have a 1.2 million acre park more than  
twice the size of the great smoky  
mountains  
that is threatened and connected by the  
tennessee river and so this is a really  
important piece of  
uh the tennessee river line's vision and  
that that project or that concept  
functions  
regionally at the 1.2 million acre scale  
but also functions locally  
and how for example here in knoxville  
we go to great expense to connect park  
spaces with greenways but if we would  
just  
think about the river as a connected  
space as a trail  
we would have instant connections  
between the urban wilderness and lake  
shore park  
and concord park all the way out into  
the county as well  
so we want to be thinking about this  
this opportunity  
this concept across a range of different  
scales and thinking across different  
scales makes it accessible  
to a range of different users so the  
daily user someone who's in town who  
just wants to get on the river for an  
afternoon or for a day  
or maybe even as part of their exercise  
routine maybe as part of their commute  
or your weekend user um someone who  
would do  
you know 50 miles 100 miles at a time  
perhaps on the river but you know

maybe over their lifetime do the entire reach or your hero user someone who might travel from around the country or around the world to have these experiences in one continuous trip and those folks are using uh infrastructures that may already be in place but what we're starting to see a lot of is that in uh powered by this concept communities are ready and anxious to make investments and new infrastructures of experience that not only provide for water access but that connect communities to uh to the river as well so we celebrate uh and we talk about richness and diversity in a range of different ways we'll talk about a really important dimension here in just a little bit but we want to celebrate that diversity of communities but we also want to be thinking about what are the things that thread this project together as something of significant scale as something of significant um you know generational project really what's going to bind it together across geography and across time and those are our guiding principles um and you see them listed here we have them expanded on in some of our literature that's online but you know whether it's here in knoxville or in paducah or whether it's 2020 or whether it's 2050 safety will always be paramount resource conservation and stewardship will always be important diversity equity and inclusion will always be a guiding principle of this project it might look different because of the time or because of technology or because of the opportunities of a place but we want to be tethered to these guiding principles as we move

this project forward so  
there's an image of what the project is  
but i think another important aspect of  
of of this work is what the project does  
and just as we can't reduce  
the appalachian trail to a walk in the  
woods or we can't reduce the blue ridge  
parkway to a scenic  
drive we also can't reduce tva to just  
dams there's much much more into that  
system  
we can't reduce the tennessee river line  
to a recreation project  
it's a comprehensive project with  
strategic intentions across  
multiple dimensions so beyond its  
continuous system of paddling hiking and  
biking we talk about how the river line  
seeks to celebrate the beauty diversity  
and history of the river in the river  
valley  
connects people and communities to each  
other into their heritage into the  
tennessee river as a landscape  
and also catalyzes new investments in  
economic opportunity  
public health and ecological stewardship  
so  
let's talk about celebrating for a  
minute um  
we'll we'll also talk about diversity in  
an ethnic and a racial way  
uh later on but an important part of the  
river system story is that it's the most  
aquatically biodiverse river system  
in north america um and so that's  
something worth celebrating that's  
something worth stewarding and something  
worth  
educating people about as a part of the  
the importance of a project um  
like this and and one of the things that  
we've seen with regards to connecting  
people  
uh to the landscape is that even if  
you've lived in east tennessee and if  
you lived in knoxville you do you live  
and

live right next to the river your whole life that's not a guarantee that you've actually been out and experienced it and we hear people on some of the paddle trips that we've led um in our early programming and they're like you know man this this is incredible one i didn't know that you could do this two um i've wanted to do this but i just haven't had an opportunity so this is a great moment for me or um and i also say when are we gonna do it again um and so you know we hear quotes like this all the time and it's really inspiring to keep uh keep our work moving forward um of course when we're talking about projects of the scale um in import advocating for the project to leadership the catalyst story is really important the outdoor industry is actually a larger percent of our national gdp than oil and gas production combined um billions of dollars of spending millions of jobs created and that includes some of our uh niche activities within the project trails themselves our economic engines we're excited to work with another one health scholar charles sims he's going to help us develop an economic impact study specifically for the tennessee river line uh here in the next uh the next few months so that's exciting and and to be able to share this resource and in to benefit from the same proximity to populations that makes the great smoky mountains national park the most visited park in the park system the tennessee river line would benefit from that same proximity you know again we're partial to the great smoky mountains we love it

um i would argue that it might not be the best quote  
park in the system but it's the closest park in the system and  
the riverline might not offer the quote best the distance paddling  
but it will be the closest distance paddling experience for many people that  
uh  
live in the southeast the midwest and the mid-atlantic as well  
and that's really important in particular for rural communities  
that again are looking to their natural resources as a renewable and a resilient way of building  
their economic future and as a way of thinking about quality of life  
for for their residents  
as well and so there are great examples on the river already of how communities have leveraged  
public space open space landscape as a way of building  
economies and attracting investments such as  
the city of chattanooga has already done very specifically however with regards to health  
we look at tennessee alabama kentucky and mississippi  
we're champions in some things but public health indicators is not one of them  
in fact we're routinely in the bottom 10 if not the bottom five  
in some cases holding the top spots when it comes to  
uh poorest performers for obesity chronic illnesses and mental distress as well  
and so we talk about the riverline as being an important infrastructure for public health when it comes to  
uh physical health and thinking about okay so how are we  
using energy and how can we be through active lifestyle activities

healthy lifestyle activities  
um kayaking is you know near the top of  
this matrix of of common  
uh outdoor sports when it comes to  
burning calories per hour swimming  
hiking etc  
biking here at the top as well so  
you know we i think we all on this call  
understand some of these uh  
these relationships uh one of the uh  
other things is you know the  
origins of our discipline of landscape  
architecture is actually in social  
reform for  
public health olmsted who's quoted here  
was advocating for the national parks  
and advocating  
for central park as a public health um  
strategy um and so this is in some in  
many ways returning  
to our roots as a discipline in doing  
this work  
we also have to recognize that not  
everybody has equitable access to these  
benefits  
um to landscape and to the public health  
benefits that they offer  
and so these these become important  
priorities for us as an initiative to  
think about how do we break down  
barriers to experience barriers to river  
access  
um so that we can share these benefits  
with with our diverse communities as  
well  
public health economics all contribute  
to of course  
quality of life and in  
a roundabout way or even in more direct  
ways communities  
are recognizing quality of life as  
important  
to their own economic vitality and their  
own economic health  
businesses know that they need to be  
located where  
they can attract and retain top talent  
they also understand that that top

talent is making living choices based on the quality of life that the communities offer and so there are direct correlations here between a system like the tennessee river line and economic development in very traditional ways as well lastly with regards to catalyzing um by being out on the river we see it in a very different way than we do if we're zipping by it on kneeland drive or going over it on alcoa highway we see of course the beauty of the river but we also start to see things that we might start to ask questions about um and wonder why there's so much trash at the mouth of first creek or why there's so much shoreline erosion really throughout the river's reach and why do we keep just piling limestone on on the river's bank without really any consideration to the ecosystems that could be integrated into this infrastructure and so it's through that increased awareness and experiences we're excited that we're already seeing evidence of communities and generations of river stewards excited and energized through what they see and experienced on the river and willing to pitch in and in affect its health um into the future as well and so some examples of things that we've already seen happening and we'll continue to see as well so um those are you know again what the what the riverline is what how it performs and what it does uh the final piece here that i think i'm still good on time i want to share is some of the outreach work that we've done

in the past two years we've always recognized that um in in planning or in many things in life it's important to bring your constituents your stakeholders into the process of making so that we're planning and designing with and that we're not planning and designing for people and so that was the strategy behind the pilot community program that was really the first public launch and announcement of the riverline vision for many of the communities that received uh the application to join this program it was the first time they might have heard about the riverline vision and um so we were pleasantly surprised to receive applications from 17 communities that represented 1.2 million people to this program and we ultimately had the capacity to work with five we selected five that were representative of size and capacity of communities that we felt were you know typical around the region and we worked with them to develop a three-day program that included these four main elements that were to do two main things one is to allow communities to provide us feedback to this vision and help us see the vision through their eyes but also it was an opportunity to initiate discussions and dialogues within their communities about what their relationship is with the river today and what that relationship might be or could be in the future based on what the aspirations and opportunities or threats and challenges might be as

well and so the activities that were designed the constituencies that we engaged in this process were very helpful for us as an organization but also very productive for the communities um unto themselves uh as well so here are some of the images from the outreach activity that we did with our five communities back in 2019 and of course you know breaking down barriers unto ourselves this uh paddle trip in paducah was the first time that most of the people that were on the trip with us had ever been out onto the water and so of course they're more inclined to do it again because they understand what goes into it and that it is safe and and what are the best practices that allow us to share the river space with industry and in motorized watercraft for example of course to appreciate the the beauty of the place and the landscape but more importantly to just build a constituency around this project when uh uh to carry that forward so you know we met with more than 600 people uh through 2019 all of whom's voice was brought into this conversation about how the riverline moves forward and i'm not going to go through a lot of the data in in detail but just wanted to show one thing that we thought was really interesting you see the highest amount of interest in terms of how people might use the river line the highest percentage was people that wanted to get on the river for just a day right for just an afternoon but when we asked the question of how do they use the river today you'll notice that canoeing and kayaking was

one of the lowest responses and so there's a mismatch there's a latent demand of people wanting to get out onto the resource but they're not doing it and we needed to understand why um and so that was a big part of our research uh how would they like to improve their river experiences um again a lot of people experience the river today by hiking or biking or walking along it so you know you're that's going to drive your choice to i'd like to have more of that but you also see things like water quality habitat establishment shoreline stability showing up here and some of the top the top responses as well we share this data back to our community partners you can find our reports online at [tnriverline.org](http://tnriverline.org) and we use this data with our students again to engage them in innovating our land grant mission bringing their thoughts and ideas to bear on the opportunities and priorities that those communities shared with us that they otherwise wouldn't have access to design and planning ideas and so the ideas that the students were coming up with were truly place driven truly data driven and really innovative and creative this project i think actually has some real legs it's kind of a tactical opportunity where communities that don't have a lot of resources but maybe if they could just get something on the grounds that could start a conversation and build demand that could then lead to grants and more permanent investments this roamer project

of kind of sparking ideas and having you know kind of this catalyst infrastructure before it would maybe move on to the next community and start that conversation again and then this community um is better positioned to make investments um as well uh other student was interested in paducah you know thinking about diversifying that shoreline that was again very heavily armored um and and functional from an economic standpoint but not functional socially or ecologically and so diversifying and getting more performance out of that um as well we shared these these visions with our partners back in january of 2020 so that was what about five six years ago and um was really i think very proud moment for us to see the the energy and excitement that the communities were seeing from the students ideas and how they saw those could could move them forward speaking of moving forward that 652 to you model of engagement was very productive as a pilot but we realized we needed a more indefinite framework for collaboration um again across generations how do we um build relationships how do we align efforts how do we provide capacity to our community partners and so that was the motivation for the river towns program that was designed and launched in 2020 we recruited new applications we received 22 we enrolled 15. those 15 are mapped here they actually represent 35 cities and counties so that's close to half of the total number of cities and counties on the river we will continue to enroll communities in this program over time

as long as there's interest um and so that we can eventually get to 100 participation uh around the river's reach um in this program the announcements for joining was was truly exciting we did this in october um and we allowed the you know the communities were announcing in their own way what um uh them joining becoming a part of the river line as a part of this river towns program it's designed to first build awareness local capacity and interest through programming that then leads us to a second stage where we're focused on vision discovery and investment at the local level that that will lead to local water trails and then when you finish the second stage you earn the river to town's designation and you moved into a stage that's focused on enhancement promotion and further connecting to um to the communities as well so some real great strategy built into um into this work and and what happens is when you have a lot of local water trails like here in knoxville and in loudoun county and roane county being developed in in a way that's again aligned with with ideas and principles then you start to see some real connectivity happen over time that these individual efforts then network to create the much larger system and the continuous experience as well in order to be um a part of this program the communities have agreed to certain reporting inactivity requirements across these five benchmarks so for example in 2021 we have 15 communities

we will also have 15 river animation events which are paddling events we also have 15 river stewardship events and the communities are responsible to plan along with our support those types of activities so you can again see how we're scaling up through through this type of a program another important priority as we wind down here is diversity equity and inclusion as i mentioned earlier um there's an an asymmetry of access and appreciation of benefits of outdoor recreation um and in our own outreach work um we recognize that there's opportunities to reach the diverse segments and underserved segments of our population as well and so this was an important topic of conversation at our summit our keynote speaker is continuing to work with us to develop a diversity equity inclusion action plan for the tennessee river line because we see this as a real opportunity for us to do you know i call it the 80 20 factor you know you can reach 80 percent of your population was maybe twenty percent of your effort but it's gonna take eighty percent of your effort to reach that last twenty percent um we would like to help our communities and to do programs on our our own that are reaching that twenty percent that otherwise don't feel included or don't see themselves represented in the way that recreation is projected and marketed um as well and so this is again important this was an important conversation that we've had and we'll continue to have um we just did release our 2020 annual reports um and so if you go to our website you

can you can check that out  
perhaps if you're on a mailing list  
you've already received notification  
about that but  
document some of the things that we were  
able to accomplish last year  
and i returned to kind of where we began  
this idea of being powered by  
partnerships  
the investments that tva and ut have  
made in this project will allow us to  
expand um our reach in different in  
different disciplines around the  
university and so  
have your eye open in the next few  
months for  
a request for proposals for some seed  
grant opportunities we really want to  
bring  
a range of different disciplines into  
this discussion  
we'll be approaching some people  
specifically because we have specific  
needs but also we want to  
open a very broad appeal to see what  
opportunities  
our scholars see for themselves and work  
like this  
as well and so that's something to be uh  
be attentive to  
um we're powered by partnerships again  
we're very grateful to our principal  
partners and those  
who do this for all who seek to  
experience the tennessee river for  
generations to come  
we don't do this work because it's easy  
we do this work because it's important  
and we do this work because we have  
great partners and we know the legacy  
that a project like this could leave for  
uh for a university for a region and for  
for the people that call it home as well  
and so  
with that i've reached the end of my  
prepared remarks and i'd be happy to  
answer any  
questions or have any discussion that

people feel  
compelled to to offer  
thank you mark that was wonderful and um  
for anybody who has a question just  
unmute yourself and ask it or you can  
type it into the chat as well  
do you have any paddling trips coming up  
in the next six months  
that's a great question we uh we  
absolutely do um we're in the process of  
working with our community partners to  
get those scheduled  
um there are three uh  
river towns program uh participants here  
in our region so roane county  
loudoun county and knoxville are all in  
the program  
and when those are scheduled we will be  
sure to promote them  
uh through our social media channels and  
our website as well  
we also were just having conversations  
with our staff this morning about  
um you know it would probably be later  
in this you know the third quarter when  
most of these events are going to happen  
from  
a paddling event anyway but um  
we have uh resources to uh and to want  
to collaborate perhaps with uh  
our outdoor programs uh unit here at ut  
to maybe uh schedule a paddle trip for  
students and faculty um to get out on  
the river  
uh here before the end of the semester  
as well and so uh  
we'll be sure to share that opportunity  
if that comes together i think that that  
would be  
that would be really great yeah that'd  
be wonderful  
also are you considering it all putting  
together a guide  
that might document what we have right  
now in terms of where can we  
camp on the river or what's a good  
access for  
supplies or anything like that sure

that's a really great question  
also um we're in the process right now  
of working with tva and  
collaborators at ut chattanooga to  
complete what we're calling our  
comprehensive  
amenity gap analysis so tva actually has  
already started this  
clay gary is our con our primary contact  
there has been a great partner to the  
project for the last two years and in  
our last many years actually and he  
actually was able to  
steer their tva's own internal  
inventory of their recreation assets  
which go across the region  
to begin on the main stem and so we've  
got a great start  
with those with that mapping where we're  
going to work with our community  
partners to bring a bit more resolution  
to those  
resources so for example we do know  
and have a map of where the campsites  
are but we don't know  
if there's potable water we don't know  
if it's primitive camping or you know we  
want to develop the additional  
attributes  
before we begin promoting that we have  
visions  
of maps and user guides and mobile  
applications and planning tools  
that will help us promote and also help  
people navigate  
this landscape safely in the future  
there are a couple questions in the chat  
all righty  
uh the so identity so  
other so tom asked a question here about  
good uh for existing public river access  
um tva actually has an adventure guide  
already  
and if you go to some of our local  
outfitting partners like riversports  
they also have  
kind of tear-away maps that show river  
reaches that

are accessible where where launch points  
are  
and that sort of thing as well so those  
would be great resources to know  
in the very short term what's out there  
a question here how do we engage martin  
methodist  
if ut were to acquire that that's a  
really excellent question  
um i would will be honest and say that i  
don't know  
much about the academic programs uh that  
are at martin methodist but  
i think that this would be um a great  
opportunity to  
continue growing this initiative to the  
ut system  
um not just here on our campus but you  
know we're already  
working with ut chattanooga but martin  
methodist  
ut martin would be great opportunities  
to build relationships and and show what  
we can do together that we can't do by  
ourselves  
through that is the presentation  
available online  
yes it will be it's very i gave a very  
similar presentation at our  
riverline summit and all of those  
sessions will be posted  
uh to our website in the very near  
future um  
and i think that i'd be willing  
certainly willing to share this with deb  
who can  
share the slides with uh with the  
community as well  
yep we can post a link to it from our  
website yep  
uh karen's offering some feedback here  
with regards to  
laminating we definitely want our  
resources to be durable  
there's some great examples of maps  
that's the business i think actually  
has gone out of business but uh their  
maps are are waterproof and marketable

as well do you see  
any future opportunities for focus on  
disadvantaged communities  
absolutely i would i would offer that  
this is  
perhaps going to become one of our  
highest priorities that's  
the work that we do centrally as an  
organization as well as the work that we  
do  
through our communities and with our  
communities  
will be focused on uh social justice and  
environmental justice that will be a  
layer of our gap analysis too  
not only to understand where there are  
access points in public lands but also  
where is there a  
mismatch between  
census tract data and other things that  
we can overlay on that that would  
suggest you know not always going after  
the easiest wins but where are the most  
important wins  
and providing equitable access will  
will definitely be a priority driving uh  
those choices for us in the future  
hey brad thanks for your talk it was  
awesome it's very close to my heart i  
was  
born and raised in chattanooga and went  
to vet school up in knoxville  
um i'm actually studying microplastics  
and fish pathology down in florida  
right now um and so i i feel like  
anecdotally  
uh maybe optimistically there's this  
idea that  
you know if you uh if you increase  
access you also increase pollution but i  
feel like sometimes  
when we increase access people have more  
of a sense of ownership and stewardship  
kind of follows that  
um so i'm just curious if you have an  
idea um  
about what do you think is the most  
important way

to like engage new stewards of the river  
sure yeah that's a really great question  
you know  
this uh one of the partners i didn't  
mention specifically  
that we've been it's been very important  
to our success has been the national  
park service we've been working through  
their rtca program  
for the last three years and they have  
of course a dual mission of both access  
and preservation  
or in in stewardship and so that's been  
something that we've talked a lot about  
with them  
i think that's what the data suggests is  
that  
if you're looking at a a community of  
paddlers  
of of doing the types of activity that  
we're talking about  
that that's generally an audience that's  
um  
is not going to be your core problem  
from from a pollution or or a shoreline  
damage  
you know there will be some of that and  
that we need to be a vigilant in our  
education efforts to talk about  
why it's important to access designated  
access points  
and so we're not causing some of the  
same issues that we aspire to  
to to to cure but i think it's just  
providing people with  
um with easy wins and very visible  
opportunities to engage and so for  
example uh  
keep the tennessee river beautiful as  
one is the only keep america beautiful  
affiliate that's  
attached to a landscape like like the  
tennessee river itself  
as opposed to a state or a county or a  
city  
and so we're working very closely with  
them uh  
to you know make it very easy for our

communities to get  
to do cleanups and to see um  
uh to see the landscapes of these kind  
of  
islands of floating trash and it's it's  
really kind of upsetting when you get  
into these coves and you see  
the tires and the bottles and the bait  
boxes and the coolers and everything  
that are out there  
i i think it just takes people you know  
getting out there and seeing it and  
knowing that  
this is not a one person problem this is  
this issue this floating mat of trash is  
a the  
product of a thousand different choices  
and if you just can  
can get people out to see that whether  
it's on a cleanup or  
maybe even you know you know when we  
talk about planning our  
our paddle event routes we of course  
want it to be scenic and safe but  
sometimes you want to take people by the  
by the trash stuff right so there's like  
let's go look at first creek and let's  
have a conversation about this  
um and let's talk about what we can do  
as a community to intersect it as well  
so you know just building that dialogue  
through visibility and use i think is  
really important  
yeah that's awesome thank you so much  
and thanks for your presentation yeah  
thank you  
i think virginia dale has her hand  
raised  
so hey brad this was a fantastic  
presentation  
and your effort over the years is quite  
impressive  
um i'm interested to know if you have  
any citizen science efforts engaged  
particularly to look at water quality  
because  
that could be a big concern um and that  
could really

advance your impact  
yeah it's great to see a virginia uh  
it's been a while since we our path  
lacrosse and i'm glad that you're on  
the call here today um that's a really  
great uh  
great point and when we had our summit  
back in january we talked about barriers  
to experience and one of the barriers  
was water quality  
and that could be a water quality  
perception or it can be a water quality  
reality and i think that we see  
both around the river's reach and  
we were also talking about whether it's  
paddling or in particular  
swimming in the river that  
that is something that is um  
you know mysteriously when you get out  
to the sand  
bar off of duncan marina it's a great  
place to swim but when you're when  
you're off of kneeland drive in downtown  
knoxville  
it's the same water um but it's  
perceptively  
polluted because well i mean and again  
that might be  
a reality as well with you if you have  
tributary streams and that sort of thing  
but  
what we've seen other projects do is  
engage citizen science as a really  
important way of  
of breaking down those barriers and so  
the chattahoochee river is a great  
example where they have  
multiple groups of people that are  
testing on a weekly basis  
and they're reporting out red yellow  
green  
you know swimming safety uh on the  
chattahoochee river which is affecting  
and driving  
uh increased utilization or or  
discouraging use  
if there's a if there's an issue and so  
i would say that

that is absolutely something that we see  
in our future and we would be  
we would love to work with um partners  
who have  
uh in scholars who have interest and  
experience in those areas to  
to begin building a a pilot that we can  
then scale up to  
to a much larger scale as well but  
that's a really great question  
well i was going to say the harvey  
broome chapter of the sierra club has  
some  
active citizen scientist programs  
involved  
not focused on water quality so much but  
there are other activities within  
the east tennessee region that do have  
that effort  
okay excellent very good and i think  
that i've been contacted by  
by that group and would be would be  
great to learn more about what they're  
doing so thank you for that  
any additional questions  
i have a quick question and what's not  
really a quick question  
so in getting to this  
this um point what has been  
your biggest obstacle  
what has been our biggest obstacle i  
would say  
it has been in some ways disbelief  
i think that a lot of times when you  
come up when you put a big idea like  
this forward  
um you got a lot of people who have  
um you have a few people who have ideas  
about how it can work and you have a lot  
of people  
who have ideas about why it won't work  
um and  
i think that that has been one of our  
biggest challenges and  
and we've been very kind of strategic  
and trying to  
at a very grassroots level build  
awareness build partnerships

that have now kind of brought us to this milestone  
which is leading to a much more transformative  
way of operating this project it has been  
to this point you know very capable but but very part-time students that graduate after three years and faculty that have a hundred percent teaching assignments and and you know so uh this is gonna it's gonna be a game changer from that perspective um so the the kind of belief factor and has been a challenge and i think the other thing is that we're such a society of instant gratification that's um uh moving forward i think a challenge is going to be how do we keep the momentum going forward where are we where we're kind of the new shiny toy right now and um you know we're trying we've got some resources to do some demonstration projects and to show some visible evidence but but uh how do we how do we do that at scale in a way that makes it keeps people's attention um moving forward and i think in some ways that that won't be difficult but in very practical ways that there will be challenges that we experience as well thanks well it's a great project and actually there is a couple more questions here sure um one how um how can you get organized uh how can we organize more cleanups at first creek and second creek that so those are great questions i think that's there's a couple of things one is again to look to partnerships if you look to keep knoxville beautiful uh alana mckissick who's their executive

director i think is always looking for  
new spaces and projects um i think it  
would be great  
and and perhaps we've already done this  
but you know to have a campus  
adopt us uh creek program with student  
organizations with departments or  
colleges  
i would add third creek to that list  
it's right out right out my window right  
here and  
uh it actually is catching some  
attention from uh  
university leadership too and  
brainstorming you know some kind of bio  
blitz type of activities to  
you know again just get people into  
these spaces  
uh a lot of people uh again  
you know only see they might not even  
know first creek's there right because  
it's buried under  
an interstate or it's under shopping  
malls on broadway  
um but uh it's you know getting you know  
getting people out into that landscape  
and  
and uh recognizing that there's an  
opportunity that there's  
that there's a threat there as well so i  
think those would be  
a couple of couple of easy things to do  
um  
garrett ferry who's with uh ut facility  
services also  
is very aware and interested and has  
done a lot of work in our creeks  
he's got a big capital project just  
finishing up on second creek and  
has another one coming up on third creek  
too so  
some great synergies with existing  
efforts there already  
other full-time employment opportunities  
uh for recent phd grads  
um that's a great question we've we've  
been in a growth mode we  
we've hired a planning and design

manager a programming manager and we're going to be announcing i hope in the next week that we've hired our funding strategists and our grants manager as well um with regards to um [Music] kind of uh you know science or or things that that we could have post-docs and phds do i think that that's one of the things that we hope will maybe spin out of some of our seed grants that we push forward to identify new programs again so like the citizen science thing that's that's very relevant to what we're doing but would require something or somebody to really champion that um and so uh that would be something that i would love to see as an outcome of a seed opportunity that then grows into a much larger grant opportunity that could lead to full-time employment through through that type of work as well in the next two years we'll be also hiring a planning and design director which is we think important given the amount of effort that will be required to plan and think about these types of infrastructure investments in the landscape as well as as we move into stages of our river towns program that focus on those that type of work in addition to the lack of there are many counties that are out there that don't have a landscape architect or an architect in them and so that's again another way that we see alignment with this project and our land grants

mission the other full-time position  
that we have in our current budget as a  
communications director  
that will be important to celebrate and  
to help us connect with  
with other strategic partners  
all right great um so with that i think  
we're pretty much out of time  
i really really appreciate you doing  
this um  
and it's it's been wonderful really  
great presentation i appreciate  
everybody  
uh joining in today so  
you can go to uh the website for more  
information  
and um and i am  
have a good day  
English (auto-generated)  
AllListenableWatched