

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 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