

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**UNITING TO CREATE A GREENER NASHVILLE THROUGH THE ARTS**  
*Nonprofits and friends join forces to present an art exhibit and fundraiser  
in April to benefit a threatened East Nashville Park.*

NASHVILLE, TENN. – February 15, 2022 – When a devastating tornado blew through Nashville in March of 2020, neighbors quickly joined forces with the **Nashville Tree Conservation Corps** to replant trees in **Lockeland Springs Park**, a tiny neighborhood park in East Nashville. What began as an effort to restore tree canopy in the neighborhood has evolved into a story about resilience and sustainability that can empower other neighborhoods to explore similar pursuits.

“We want to inspire Nashville neighborhoods,” shared Judson Newbern, president of **The Chestnut Group**, a society of plein air painters striving to protect natural and historic landscapes in Middle Tennessee, “to preserve their trees and parks by harnessing the synergy found in Nashville’s creative nonprofit community to achieve goals.”

The goal that has united numerous nonprofit organizations is **to secure, expand and reinvigorate Lockeland Springs Park**. When Nashville Tree Conservation Corps volunteers were replanting trees in the small metro park, it was discovered that six acres of land they assumed was part of the park was actually land that was available for development. Opportunity knocked when a couple from Chicago bought the property and agreed to sell four of the six acres to Metro Parks if the funds could be raised. The four acres are immediately adjacent to Lockeland Springs Park and would expand the park to connect into the larger Shelby Park and Bottoms.

A coalition of neighborhood volunteers, local nonprofits, the statewide TennGreen Land Conservancy, and the national Trust for Public Land organization came together to meet the fundraising challenge to acquire the 4-acre property and convey it to Metro Parks. The deal carried a price tag of \$1.6M, including an endowment for its ongoing stewardship. The Trust for Public Land helped the neighborhood raise half the money quickly, and Metro agreed to match the other half.

With similar environmental missions to preserve landscapes in Middle Tennessee, **The Chestnut Group is partnering with the Nashville Tree Conservation Corps and Friends of Shelby Park to host an art exhibit and fundraiser slated for April 7<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> at the Shelby Bottoms Nature Center**. The Chestnut Group artists have been creating plein air paintings of scenes in Lockeland Springs Park and other Middle Tennessee trees and wildlife to sell at the show, generating money for the cause. Friends of Shelby Park & Bottoms is playing a central role as host to make the event possible. Close to half of the proceeds from art sales and donations will support the organizations’ efforts to remove invasive plant species and restore native forests, and to create an operational endowment for the newly formed “Friends” organization for Lockeland Springs Park.

**Mayor John Cooper** will speak at the show's opening reception and Patron Party event on April 6 to recognize those involved in securing these new acres and calling attention to the importance of land preservation and protective tree measures. The art show provides supporters with a way to take home a piece of art that captures a snapshot in time of this fragile urban green space that has been reinvigorated through the collaborative efforts to protect this community park, mitigate tree loss, and increase green spaces – and support local artists! This art show proves when neighbors work together, they contribute to something that can directly benefit the community in many ways. By gaining a broad-based support from Nashville's sustainability and conservation foundations, government, and corporations, we are able to leverage the long-term success of this park and others like it throughout our city for the greener good.

The public is invited to the Shelby Bottoms Nature Center to this outstanding Art Exhibit & Sale, April 7-10. For more information on the show and the show schedule, please visit:

<https://www.friendsofshelby.org/artshow>

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- To learn more or to get involved in some of these exciting conservation projects, please visit The Chestnut Group. <https://chestnutgroup.org/>

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**The Chestnut Group**

The Chestnut Group is a society of plein air painters, now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year, who paint to protect ecosystems and landscapes in Middle Tennessee. More than 200 members meet regularly for paint-outs and events to support land conservancy. For more information, please visit <https://chestnutgroup.org/>, or contact President Judson Newbern [judson.newbern@gmail.com](mailto:judson.newbern@gmail.com) or Operations and Marketing Consultant, Suzannah Green at [Suzannah.green@yahoo.com](mailto:Suzannah.green@yahoo.com)

**Lockeland Springs Park Art Show**

The “Speaking for the Trees/Lockeland Springs Park Art Show & Sale” will be staged at Shelby Bottoms Nature Center and open for sales to the public **April 7-10**. The art show is intended to raise funds for tree canopy restoration and invasive species removal, and to help form an operational endowment for the newly organized “Friends of Lockeland Springs Park.” Key event organizers include The Trust for Public Land (TPL), [The Chestnut Group](#), [Nashville Tree Conservation Corps](#) (NTCC), [Friends of Shelby Park and Bottoms](#), and the Metro Tree Advisory Committee (MTAC). Mayor John Cooper will introduce the event at a Metro-centric opening reception on April 6, celebrating the transfer of the four newly acquired acres as property of Metro Parks from The Trust for Public Land (TPL) acting on behalf of the Lockeland Springs neighbors. For more information, please visit: <https://www.friendsofshelby.org/artshow> and <https://chestnutgroup.org/event-page/speaking-for-the-trees-lockeland-springs-park/>

Additional information found here:

<https://www.lockelandspringspark.org/>

<https://lockelandsprings.org/parks/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LockelandSpringsPark/>