

## Volunteers Work to Restore Area Damaged by the Good Friday Tornado in Murfreesboro

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*submitted to John McFadden, Tennessee Environmental Council 1/25/10*

The EF-4 tornado that ripped through Murfreesboro on April 10, 2009 created a 23.5-mile path that caused an estimated \$34.5 million in damages, caused 42 minor injuries, 7 critical injuries, and two fatalities. In its devastating path was the Stones River Trail of the Murfreesboro Greenway System. Following the removal of debris and downed trees from the greenway and river corridor, we were left with more than 1,700 linear feet along the river trail that was stripped to the ground.

On Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 262 volunteers came to the site to plant native trees and shrubs in the area. By the weekend's end, we met and exceeded our goals for planting. We were very grateful to partner with groups including the Tennessee Environmental Council to make this day possible.



Volunteers working to restore riparian zone

Restoration began in the spring with streambank stabilization. The City of Murfreesboro worked with a local contractor to plant native grasses by using a coconut mat cover. The grasses established well and created a great start for planting trees and shrubs in late fall. The City of Murfreesboro purchased a variety of native trees. The Urban



City Staff helping out the volunteers

Environmental Department Planted 75 trees that were approximately 2" caliper, and purchased many small trees in 1 gallon containers in anticipation of volunteer help. The missing element was native shrubs, and the Tennessee Environmental Council volunteered to purchase them at \$20 each from Nashville Natives, a \$1000 donation. With 50 shrubs in 3-

gallon containers, we now had a variety of strong natives that would take hold in the riparian corridor.



Planting along the river bank

Friends of the Greenway purchased extra shovels and tools for volunteers that couldn't bring their own. Several of the people living in homes across the river from the workday site, many of whom suffered major damage during the storm themselves, worked with the Friends group to create a hospitality station for volunteers. They brought an incredible supply of food and drinks, creating an even more positive atmosphere and keeping workers fueled. Volunteers came representing several groups including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Stones River Watershed Association, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Middle Tennessee State University, Friends of the Greenway, the City of Murfreesboro, and more. Families came, people who use the greenway often, and several people who said they had tried to volunteer after the storm, and were glad to have the opportunity to do hands-on labor.

This restoration project is important to quality of the Stones River and the surrounding environment. Through this project, 75 large trees, 3,000 small trees, and 50 large shrubs – all natives – were planted. We were overwhelmed and grateful for all of the support, and proud of the work that was accomplished. Thanks to everyone for making it possible!



Volunteer with native shrub purchased by Tennessee Environmental Council