

# KENTUCKY HEARTWOOD

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Dear Friends of Kentucky Heartwood,

After serving as Executive Director of Kentucky Heartwood for the past three years, I am stepping down from this position. This was a tough decision, but it is a good time both for me and for the organization as it embraces the next chapter.

Working alongside such a dedicated community of staff, volunteers, and supporters has been one of the greatest honors of my life. Together, we worked to protect the forests of Kentucky, advocating for the health of our ecosystems and amplifying the voices of those who cherish the natural world. I am particularly proud of the work we did alongside community members in Williamsburg to oppose the massive logging project in the Jellico mountains, and I will be watching the next stage of that fight in the coming months as the Forest Service issues its response to the community's feedback.

I am also proud of the new staff positions we have added in the last few years. Whitney Hamblin elevated our member outreach, website, and marketing materials, allowing us to engage more people than ever. That enabled us to hire Amethyst Muncy, Kentucky's first-ever attorney dedicated to public lands protection. Our longtime staff ecologist, Jim Scheff, and our dedicated board members laid the critical groundwork that motivated me to step into this role in the first place. I have learned so much about forest ecology from Jim, and I am excited to have some time off to think about how I can continue to put this vital knowledge to good use in service of our wildlands. I am endlessly grateful for the journey we have shared.

Kentucky Heartwood's mission to defend Kentucky's forests is more critical than ever, and I know the organization will continue to thrive under new leadership. The passion and commitment of our forest defenders is remarkable; we are still going strong after 32 years! I look forward to participating in Kentucky Heartwood's future successes as an active member.

Thank you for your trust, your collaboration, and your steadfast support of Kentucky Heartwood. I am forever grateful to have been a part of this remarkable journey with you.

With deep gratitude,



Lauren