

FRIENDS OF SHELBY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW





SHELBY PARK AND BOTTOMS THRIVES WHEN WE ALL CHIP IN!

The past year has proven to be one of renewal for many of us after a couple of unpleasant years of the pandemic. Shelby Park and Bottoms has been the beneficiary of the generous folks that love our park. The park was the recipient of 1669 volunteers, a 51% increase over 2021, and 3747 volunteer hours, a 52% increase over 2021! It has been truly heartwarming to witness the benevolence of our community and mutual love for the park and bottoms.

It is fun to drive around the city and see Shelby license plates and instantly have a connection with that supporter!! The ongoing financial support from plates, memberships, and other campaigns provide much needed funds to continue to improve the park.

One example of your contributions in action the new interpretive signs along the one-mile loop in Shelby Bottoms. These signs teach us all about the ecology and history of our park.

2023 is building on that energy and includes more opportunities for park goers of all ages, abilities, and interests. Check our monthly newsletter and online calendar for the outstanding list of park happenings – there is something for everyone. From Fridays by the River to the Recreation Open House to annual Ice Cream Social there are so many ways to connect with your neighbors and make new friends in the park.

On behalf of the Friends of Shelby Park and Bottoms board, we want to thank you for your continued support and involvement and know that you share our love for the park!

Brian Poynter

Friends of Shelby Board President

SHELBY NAVAL COMMONS

Since 2009, the former Naval Reserve Training Facility has sat vacant at the entrance to Shelby Park and Bottoms. This building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a unique treasure not only for Shelby but for the entire city of Nashville. Friends of Shelby is working to ensure the future of the building is active and community focused, serving Nashvillians as the re-imagined Shelby Naval Commons.

We believe this building can serve **Our Park** with needed amenities such as food service, restrooms, and recreation retail like kayak and bike rental. We believe this building can share **Our History** through preservation and interpretation of our local park and the building's history. We believe this building can provide **Our Community** with a place to gather and connect as neighbors on common ground. All of this will ensure that **Our Future** is focused on the people who live and gather here and the health of our community.

The revitalization of this building requires an investment of approximately \$8.5 million. This is no small feat, but we believe the time is now and the community is ready. It will take time and we are just at the beginning of this campaign, but the first goal has been accomplished: **Metro Nashville, Mayor John Cooper, and our City Council including District 6 Council Member Brett Withers have helped to secure the first \$2.5 million toward our goal.** This is the foundation upon which the campaign will be built!

The Shelby Naval Commons will be a new gateway to our amazing park and support our community.



Re-imagined north patio



Re-imagined Shelby Naval Commons, the Cumberland River, and Downtown Nashville

VOLUNTEERS MATTER

Volunteers are the muscle behind Friends of Shelby - they put in the work, get their hands dirty, and aren't afraid to break a sweat for the betterment of the park. In 2022, volunteers came out to support Shelby Park and Bottoms in droves! Whether removing invasive plant species, picking up trash, or painting shelters, volunteers were found working in the park year-round improving and maintaining the natural gem that is Shelby Park and Bottoms.

In 2022, we hosted more groups than ever before. From our corporate partners at Foundry Commercial to Scout troops from across the community, we are thrilled to help all our neighbors make an impact in the park. In June, with the help of our partners at Hands On Nashville, Friends hosted our largest volunteer group ever: 500 people helped assemble activity kits and supplies, clean windows and playgrounds, remove invasive plants and so much more.



2022 BY THE NUMBERS

- 3700+ volunteer hours
- 1600+ volunteers
- 83 volunteer projects
- 20 community events
- 1800 pounds of trash removed from the park
- 4 picnic shelters painted
- 35 trash cans built
- 400 Park Explorer kits packed
- 20 special events worked
- 6 acres of invasive species removed

Volunteers contributed the equivalent of over \$111,000 in labor hours.

PICNIC SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUE

Friends of Shelby raised funds in 2021 to help improve picnic shelters across the park. After completing the reconstruction of the Mission Shelter that year, we continued to fund maintenance projects in 2022. Projects included painting four shelters, so everyone can enjoy the birthday parties, family reunions, and time together!



RESTORE THE FOREST

The Restore the Forest program was created to address the harmful presence of invasive plant species in Shelby Park and Bottoms and work toward a holistic restoration of park habitat. This restoration will support our native plants and animals and strengthen the entire forest ecosystem. The program involves removing invasive plant species, keeping invasive species out once they are initially removed, and replacing them with native plants. The program is led by Friends of Shelby with the dedicated help of hundreds of volunteers.

After training 12 Invasive Removal Crew Leaders (IRCLs) at the end of 2021, we hit the ground running in 2022. We facilitated invasive plant removal volunteer events throughout the year. As our initial efforts cleared out parts of the forest, we began planting native tree species in cleared areas. Throughout the warm spring and summer months, we enlisted volunteers to help us water the newly planted seedlings.



In all, more than 526 volunteers served nearly 1194 hours as a part of the Restore the Forest program. These volunteers removed invasive plant species from approximately 6 acres of forest on Beech Grove Hill and planted 239 native seedlings. IRCLs alone gave more than 150 hours to the program. We are deeply grateful for our community of volunteers – THANK YOU!!!

Beech Grove Hill area cleared of invasive plant species



MAKE NASHVILLE PARTNERSHIP

2022 brought Friends of Shelby another unique and impactful partnership. After receiving donor funding to help reduce trash, Friends of Shelby got to work building new wooden trash can holders. Thank you to Nate Lelek and Make Nashville for creating a template, cutting the wood, and working with volunteers to assemble the bins. With help from the Shelby Maintenance crew, they are now installed across the park.

We partnered again with Make Nashville to design, cut, and laser engrave a one-of-a-kind wooden medal for the winners of the Full Belly 5K.



PARK IMPROVEMENTS

IN 2022, FRIENDS OF SHELBY INVESTED MORE THAN \$88,000 TOWARD PARK PROJECTS. WITH THE HELP OF IN-KIND DONATIONS AND SERVICES, AN ADDITIONAL \$80,000 WAS INVESTED IN IMPROVING PARK FEATURES THAT OUR NEIGHBORS USE EVERYDAY!



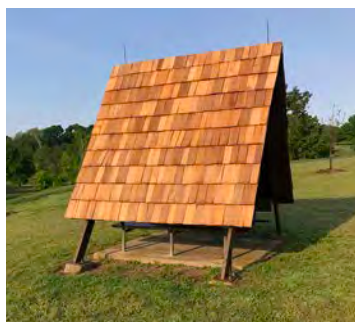
COMMUNITY CENTER BASKETBALL COURT

The rehabilitation of the basketball court behind the Shelby Park Community Center has brought a new energy to this area of the park. From the moment the paint dried, neighbors from across the community were playing together. Friends of Shelby donors like you, along with grants from the Predators Foundation and Sessions Paving, funded all new surface pavement, court striping, and two new top-of-the-line hoops.

SMALL INVESTMENTS GO A LONG WAY

Golf Course Improvements

After being damaged in the 2020 tornado, many areas of the Shelby Park Golf Course remained in disrepair. In 2022, Friends of Shelby worked with Shelby Golf Maintenance to repair and restore this lightening shelter and to create new signage for the course.



Historic Improvements

Whether you call it the spaceship or the mushroom, the shelter for the former spring-fed water fountain in Lillian Hollow is unique! Dating back to the opening of Shelby Park in 1912, it was designed by then Park Board Chairman E.C. Lewis, chief engineer of the recent Centennial Exposition. While it is no longer safe to sit under the shelter, it is still an eccentric beauty to behold. In 2022, Friends invested in improved safety fencing, which we will stain this year and finish with interpretive information.



COMMUNITY CENTER SIGN

In 2022, the Shelby Park Community Center finally got a building sign! Friends of Shelby is so glad to be part of helping this vibrant community space get the recognition it deserves.

TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Following the 2021 trail assessment project, Friends of Shelby has been working to address issues through advocacy, volunteerism, and investment. In 2022, the Ecology Trail boardwalk was repaired and extended to bridge the beaver lodge that had caused the bridge to collapse on one end. Now accessible, again, this bridge helps park visitors access Hidden Pond.



TREE PLANTING

Along with our partners from the Nashville Sheriff's Office, Nashville Tree Conservation Corps, and Root Nashville, Friends of Shelby planted more than 400 trees in 2022!

In 2022, we built an online map to track both trees planted and park areas that need new trees. We shared this technology with Inglewood Elementary for their 5th grade class to use to map tree planting locations on their campus.



INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

One of the most exciting days of the year was the day the new Shelby Bottoms interpretive signs were installed around the Nature Center one-mile loop. Eight signs in all teach about the ecology, history, and culture of one of the most unique environments in Middle Tennessee – Shelby Bottoms!

Designed with the help of Delevante Creative, and with funding help from you, the signs are now a template for continued interpretive opportunities across the park.

Right: Interpretive sign at the Cumberland River Overlook

Below: Interpretive sign in the meadow along the one-mile loop near the observation deck



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Throughout the year, Friends of Shelby hosts and participates in numerous events and activities designed to celebrate the park and engage park users. These events introduce new and existing users to opportunities, teach community members about the Park and Bottoms, and bring neighbors together to share the peace, fun, and wonder provided by this common space.

In March 2022, the inaugural **Shelby Recreation Open House** brought out more than 500 community members to explore all the fun activities offered throughout the park. Friends of Shelby and the Shelby Community Center hosted over 30 park partners who shared information and offered fun activities and giveaways. Throughout the day, we played games with Gnash, T-Rac, Booster, and everyone who joined in at this joyful celebration of Shelby!



The second annual **Shelby Ice Cream Social** drew more than 200 visitors to the Shelby Bottoms Nature Center. This back-to-school event celebrated the Nature Center and Shelby Bottoms, and featured free Pied Piper ice cream for kids, nature crafts, and music.

May 2022 was for **Seniors in Shelby!** Friends of Shelby and partners including the Shelby Community Center, Shelby Bottoms Nature Center, Tennessee Wildlife a Resources Agency, Bike Fun and BCycle hosted learn-to-play pickleball, fishing, walks in the park, and learn-to-ride activities.



Friends of Shelby loved participating in the second annual **Shelby Park Community Center trunk-or-treat**. Over 500 kids attended this year and over 150 sat down with us to create trick or treat bags. It was such fun to see so many people enjoying a night with neighbors.

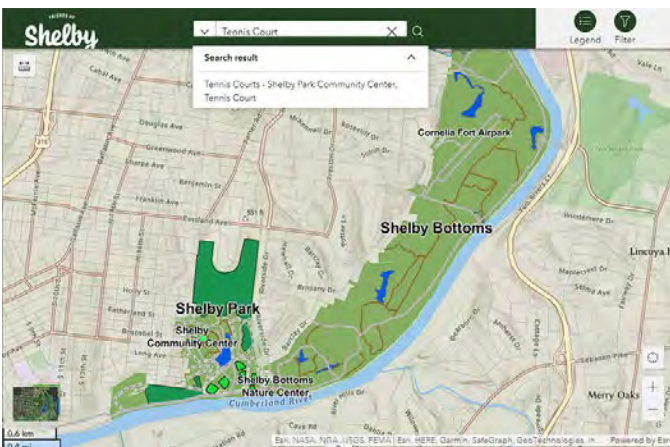




In 2022, Friends of Shelby and our community partners spent more than 70 hours providing programming for 100+ students in their classrooms and in our park as part of the Park Explorers Program. We are excited to continue and expand this work in 2023 to other schools and more students, so that more young people feel welcome in our park and are excited to explore everything Shelby has to offer.

ACCESS AND OUTREACH

In addition to community events, Friends of Shelby worked on several projects this year that help make the park more accessible by sharing information about park facilities and activities with the public.



PARK EXPLORERS

After being approached by school leaders from Inglewood Elementary with the goal of connecting students with environmental science curriculum, Friends of Shelby began to develop the Park Explorers program. The program aims to encourage young people to seek the wonder, peace, and fun that parks like ours have to offer!

In the spring of 2022, Friends of Shelby along with our community partners Cumberland River Compact, Metro Water Services, and the Shelby Bottoms Nature Center, visited second grade classes to bring educational park programming into the classroom. Since then, we have continued this partnership, regularly visiting second grade classrooms with our community partners and providing education about the creatures and features of Shelby Park and Bottoms, from birds and bats to stormwater runoff and erosion. Additionally, we hosted these classes for field trips in Shelby Park and Bottoms.



We put our mapping skills to use and created the first **Shelby Park and Bottoms online interactive map**. This map allows users to zoom into different areas of the park, click to get information about trail mileage, hours of operation, and contact info.

Our **monthly newsletter** goes out to more than 4500 neighbors near and far to provide updates on projects, nature news, and upcoming events.



SPECIAL EVENTS



FRIDAYS BY THE RIVER

East Nashville Beer Works partnered with us once again to convene the Fridays by the River beer garden series for a second year. Hundreds of folks came out each Friday for the spring and fall series with food trucks, live music, and great beer.

We love the feeling of hanging with neighbors under the big oak trees around the Riverview Pavilion. Not only are we having a great time, but the event helped raise more than \$16,000 for the park!

CORNELIA FORT PICKIN' PARTY

The Cornelia Fort Pickin' Party continued to grow in its sixth season. Friends of Shelby welcomed over 2400 community members to eat good food, listen to good music, and enjoy the splendor of summer nights in Shelby Bottoms together.

Mark your calendar for the 2023 series: May 20, June 10, July 22, and August 26.



MUSIC CITY HOT CHICKEN FESTIVAL

The 16th annual festival on July 4, 2022 was one for the books. The heat of the day was surpassed only by the heat of our uniquely Nashville chicken. We are thankful for all the attendees, vendors, sponsors, and the committee who make it possible. Join us this year in East Park!





SHELBY RACE SERIES

The 2022 race series was such fun! We love when fundraising meets recreation meets East Nashville! With one race per month from September through November, the Shelby Race series offers a variety of ways to get fit and give back!

The **Golden Pheasant Triathlon** was sold out for the third straight year, and we saw some of the best costumes to date. This kayak, bike, run is a great way to try out a triathlon.

The **Nashville Ultra** took runners across 50 miles of Nashville's greenways, starting and ending at the historic Cornelia Fort Airpark in Shelby Bottoms. Now in its 16th year, the event is not for the faint of heart. A portion of proceeds go to support the park.

On Thanksgiving weekend, Friends of Shelby welcomed more than 400 runners for the third annual **Full Belly 5K and Fun Run**. With a turkey leading the way, the fun run kicked off the morning with a loop of Lake Sevier. Runners and walkers alike then took part in the 5K through the park to support Friends of Shelby and the Martha O'Bryan Center food bank.

Thanks to our event partners: Nashville Troop 3, Cumberland Kayak, and Walk Bike Nashville.

