



## Bluegrass Forever Green: The Roots of Bluegrass Tomorrow

**By: Bobby Clark, Sustainable Business Ventures and Bluegrass Tomorrow Board Member. Bluegrass Forever Green is a partnership between Bluegrass Tomorrow and Bluegrass Greensource focusing on Conservation, Preservation and Sustainability, with our precious Bluegrass soils as its centerpiece.**

**Based on models from the Green Umbrella in Cincinnati and the Louisville Sustainability Council, Bluegrass Forever Green** shares information and best practices while focusing on maximizing the collective impact of regional governments, organizations, non-profits, educational institutions and businesses in central Kentucky dedicated to environmental sustainability and improving quality of life and economic development in our Bluegrass counties as an end product.

Bluegrass Forever Green focuses on local foods, clean water, energy, outdoor recreation & green spaces, waste & recycling and transportation. At the center of sustainability in the Bluegrass Region, unique to the rest of the world, are our precious bluegrass soils and agriculture industry, including the Equine industry.

There are many groups and initiatives already supporting sustainability in Central Kentucky like: Bluegrass Bike Hike Horseback Water Trails and Kentucky River Water Trails Alliances; Kentucky Sustainable Business Council; Empower Lexington/Green Infrastructure; and the Bluegrass Youth Sustainability Council to name a few.



Bluegrass Forever Green has hosted summits on October 30, 2014 and November 11, 2015 which were supported by our sponsors Kentucky Utilities; Stites & Harbison; Synergy Home; Sustainable Business Ventures; CDP Engineers; Kentucky Sustainable Business Council; Edible Louisville & the Bluegrass Magazine; City of Sadieville; and the Nature Conservancy. The 2015 Summit included a session with the sustainability directors from UK, Transylvania, Berea College, Centre College, ECU and KCTCS.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvVuiw3YZBI>**

A 2016 Summit is also being planned, as well as a stand-alone summit on trails and greenways in the region with so much already going on, including the extension of the Legacy Trail from Fayette into Scott County, for horses, bikes hiking. A similar planning project connecting Woodford, Franklin and Owen counties to Fayette and Scott in cooperation with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails Conservation Assistance Program. And, a Scenic Kentucky River Trails and Greenways project in cooperation with RTCA and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Landscape Agriculture program. Many other counties in the region are involved with extensive trails and greenways planning as well. Again, Bluegrass Tomorrow and Bluegrass Forever Green will act as the connector.

In analyzing the Green Umbrella in Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky and the Louisville Sustainability Council (LSC) as the models for organization, we learned that the Green Umbrella brings together businesses, nonprofits, governments, educational institutions and individuals to help Greater Cincinnati be recognized as one of the top 10 most sustainable metro areas in the nation by 2020.



Individual members and representatives of Member Organizations participate Green Umbrella Action Teams that brings together people who share an interest in a particular environmental topic: Energy, Waste Reduction, Transportation, Land Management, Water, Local Food and Meet Me Outdoors.

The Louisville Sustainability Council is a public private partnership that works to engage and collaborate with the community, and facilitate the achievement of Louisville's sustainability goals. The LSC improves health and quality of life in the community by identifying gaps and creating community action to close them and coordinates regional sustainability efforts by hosting events, connecting partners, collecting and providing data, and facilitating community action teams.

Like LSC and the Green Umbrella, Bluegrass Forever Green has adopted the Collective Impact framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. Wikipedia defines Collective Impact as a commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration.

The concept of collective impact hinges on the idea that in order for organizations to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large-scale, they need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal. The approach of collective impact is placed in contrast to "isolated impact," where organizations primarily work alone to solve social problems. Collective impact moves away from this, arguing that organizations should form cross-sector coalitions in order to make meaningful and sustainable progress on social issues.



The Bluegrass Forever Green mission is to further the goals of Bluegrass Tomorrow, a coalition of business, education, farming, development, and preservation interests dedicated to developing a regional unified vision focusing on education, land use, job growth, and quality of life innovations for the central Bluegrass Region of Kentucky, which leads to an environment that develops creative talent and where young professionals and entrepreneurship thrive.

Bluegrass Forever Green has established the following Action Teams: (1) Green Economy; (2) Local Food; (3) Land, Outdoor Recreation, Nature and Water; (4) Energy: Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy & Green Buildings; (5) Waste Reduction and (6) Community Engagement & Education. Membership levels and corporate partner opportunities are also being developed by the steering committee and action teams.

Bluegrass Forever Green needs volunteers to join the working groups so please reach out to Bobby Clark, [sbvclark@gmail.com](mailto:sbvclark@gmail.com) and visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BluegrassForeverGreen/>

