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Nashville's Sustainability Outlet

Interview with Mekayle Houghton, Executive Director Cumberland River Compact (April 2020)

Q: What are you are working on as part of the Mayor's Sustainability Advisory Committee?:

A: Co-chairing the Natural Resources Committee to make sure that Nashvillians have clean air, abundant freshwater and plenty of open space

Q: How/ why did you become passionate about sustainability?:

A: I have always felt the moral imperative to live sustainably. Before curbside recycling, as a tweener in the 1970s, I stockpiled newspaper in my closet for monthly trips to the recycling center. My sustainable streak was reawakened as a mother of 4 boys who loved frogs more than anything. I grew to fear a world without biodiversity and feel enormously fortunate that my profession aligns with my values.

Q: What is your top sustainability tip for others?:

A: Welcome nature into your life...convert a turf lawn to native plants, stop fertilizing, save your leaves to rebuild your soil. I am delighted by what lives in my city yard....skinks, snakes, rabbits, praying mantis, finches.

Q: What is your vision for a more sustainable Nashville?:

A: Nashville has amazing natural resources. How many other cities have a swimmable downtown river and our abundant supply of fresh water. With just a little more effort prioritizing the environment, we can have a healthy environment and a healthy economy. I see a sustainable Nashville where people are willing to invest a little more in keeping our environment healthy, our old trees intact, our stormwater out of the neighborhood streams and our food local.

Q: How are you celebrating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day?:

A: Celebrating Earth Day with the [City Nature Challenge](#), social distancing and looking forward to celebrating with friends in 2021.