

# Extension Motivates Career Exploration

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 University of  
**Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment

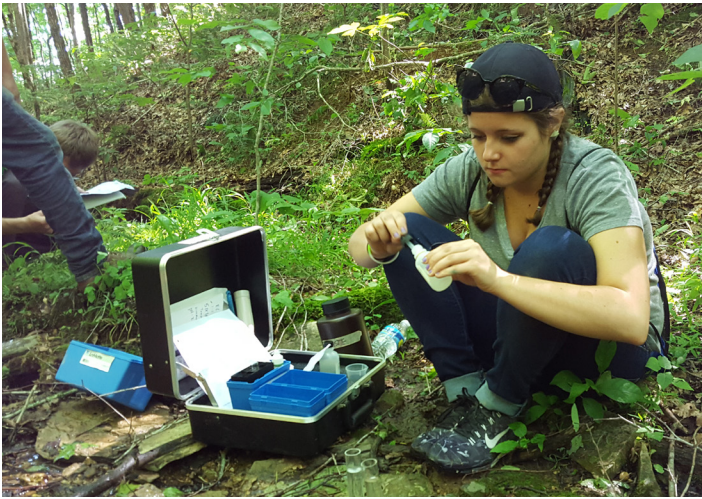


## Kentucky Forest Leadership Program Advances Skills in Natural Resources, Entomology, Water Quality and Wildlife Management of High School Students

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*It starts with us*



*KFLP participant measures water quality.*

The Kentucky Forest Leadership Program (KFLP) educates high school students about the importance of Kentucky's environment and natural resources. The week-long, residential program offers three different areas of concentration: forestry, wildlife, and entomology to provide participants an in-depth learning experience. Each year KFLP attracts up to 30 students. Students from 12 different Kentucky counties as well as student from North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas attended in 2018.

KFLP is a collaborative effort of the University of Kentucky (UK) departments of Forestry and Natural Resources and Entomology, the Kentucky Division of Conservation, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry. The educational program is managed and administered by the UK Department of Forestry and Natural Resources.

As a result of the KFLP program, participants:

- understand the importance of Kentucky forests and natural resources as well as the management and conservation of these resources,
- interact with natural resources professionals and learn about academic programs and careers in this field, and
- develop team building and leadership skills while working in resource management teams.

The students choose an area of concentration, and are expected to work on a team with students who have chosen alternate areas of concentration,

simulating a team of natural resource professionals. The team is responsible for designing a sustainable resource management plan for an 80-acre parcel of Kentucky land.

After completing the program, students have a great understanding of:

- different aspects of resource management are interconnected,
- how dependent Kentucky is on its forests,
- the college and career opportunities in natural resources, and
- their personal responsibility for the environment.

Program assessments and evaluations include pre- and post-testing as well as summative evaluations. Based on the combined results from 2016 to 2018, students had an overall gain of 42% in knowledge regarding the environment, natural resources and natural resources management. From evaluations students reported what they thought was the most important idea they will take home from KFLP which included: "there are so many different aspects to resource management and they are interconnected"; "we are a part of the environment and must act responsibly"; "just how much we depend on our forests". To date more than 500 high school students have attended KFLP and more than 35% of those students indicated they were interested in pursuing a career that involved working within the natural resources realm.

Educating Kentucky's youth about our natural resources is critical to the future of our environment and economy. Programs like KFLP provide participants a greater understanding about the environment and the importance of managing and conserving our natural resources.

**During 2018, over 20,000 youth gained understanding of the ecosystems in nature, 15,612 used their skills to conserve natural resources, and 7,012 engaged in a community project related to natural resource conservation.**