GOAL 4: Increase Environmental Education

The goal of the Environmental Education Action Group is to increase environmental awareness among all community members.

Teaching people about the environment encourages them to appreciate nature and its complex and vital functions. This is especially important in the Clinch River watershed, which is renowned for its globally significant biodiversity. People who learn about their relationship to the environment are more likely to conserve natural resources and energy.

This Action Group aims to educate both children and adults who live in the Clinch River watershed. They are working to empower local citizens with knowledge about environmental issues so that they will support sustainable businesses, act to restore the local environment and improve public health.

Ongoing and Future Actions

A. Continue to organize an annual educational symposium for educators and the public in the Clinch River Valley counties and an annual Youth Summit.

B. Continue installation of educational signage at access points along the Clinch River.

C. Gather stories about the history of the Clinch River to incorporate in educational materials. This will include oral histories to be collected at annual symposium and other CRVI events.

D. Develop an education program to teach students about water sources and quality.

E. Develop an Ecological Center on the Clinch River to serve as a hub and referral center for the many environmental and cultural learning opportunities in the region.

Completed Actions and Recent Successes

• **Fall 2017:** The Feasibility Study for the Ecological Center was completed by SCALE and is available on the website www.clinchriverva.com.

• **Spring 2017:** Teach the Clinch, a curriculum guide for educators in the local communities, was published and is available in either print or digitally at www.teachtheclinch.com.

• **Spring 2017:** The Annual Youth Summit was held on March 11th, 2017 in Lebanon and the 5th Annual Environmental Symposium was held May 13th, 2017 at St. Paul Elementary School.