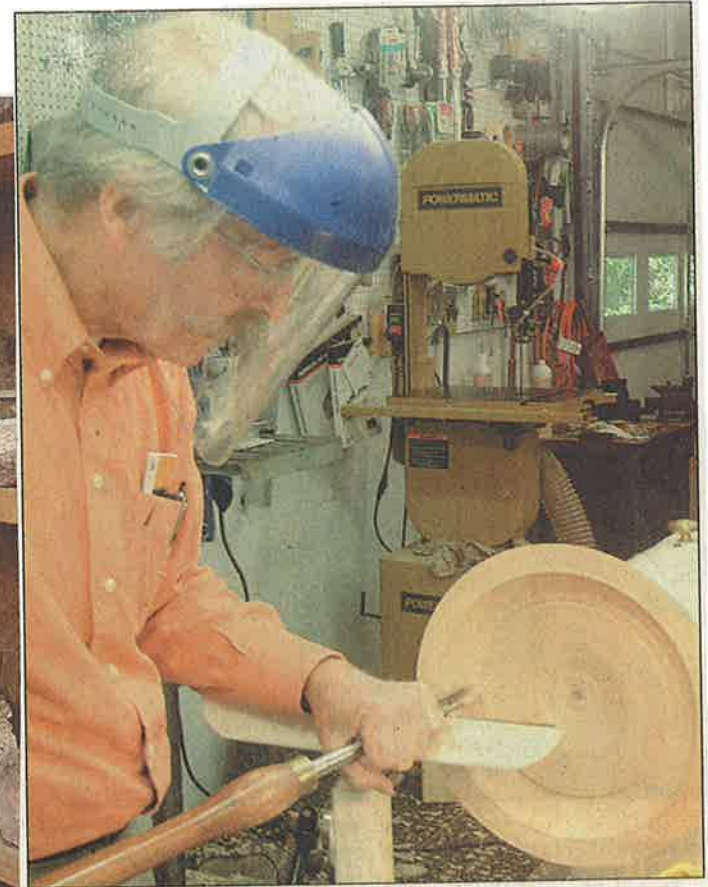
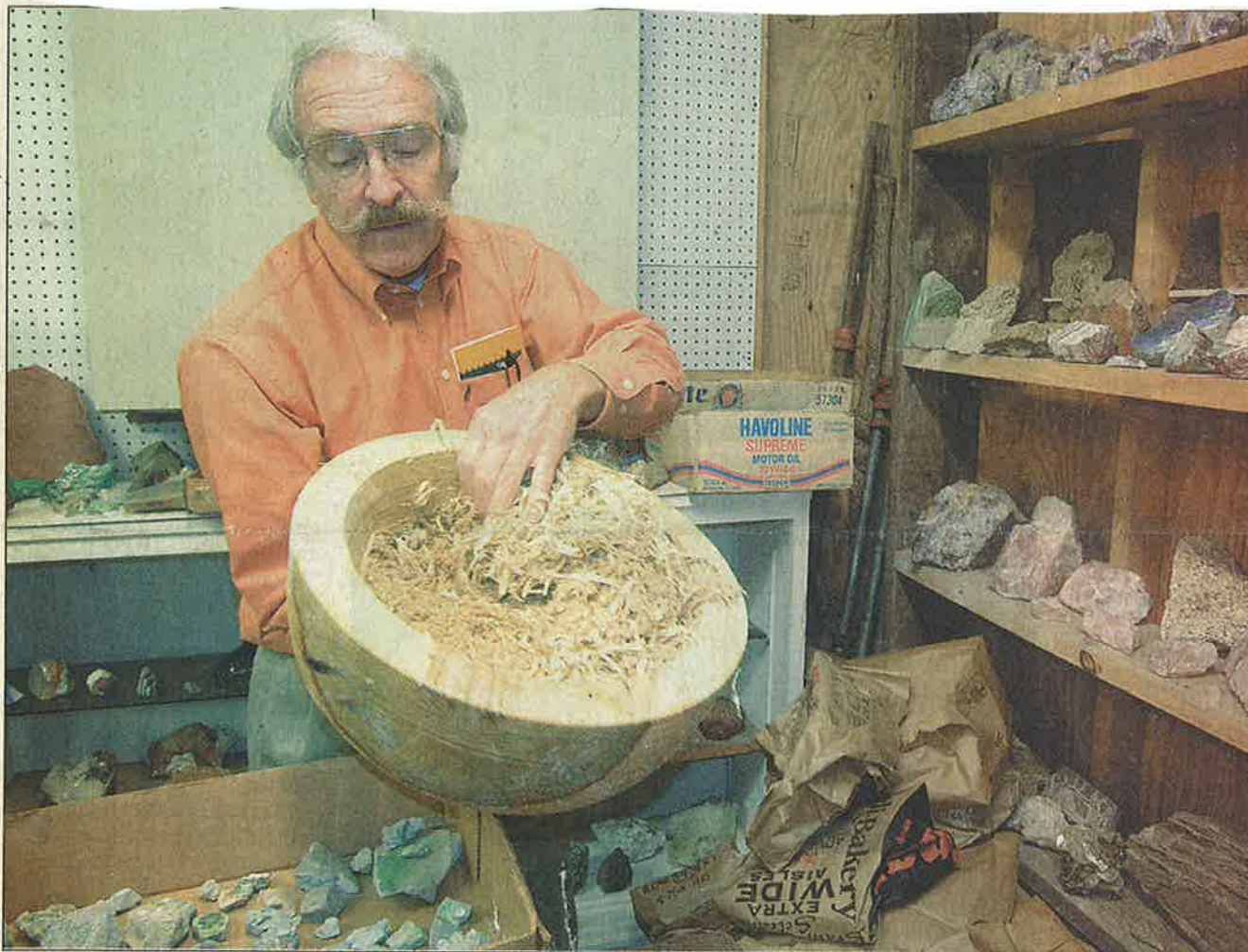




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# NORTH KNOX

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PHOTOS BY ED MARCUM/NEWS SENTINEL

What once may have been part of a log in the woods is gradually turning into a bowl on the lathe at **Bob Collier's** shop at his home in Powell.

For **Bob Collier**, Powell resident who helped form the Beaver Creek Watershed Association, the idea of conservation extends to his choice of hobby, woodturning. The wood he turns into bowls is available off the ground, and if a piece doesn't work out, it becomes firewood. In the workshop, Collier is holding a partially turned bowl filled with shavings to help the drying process.

# LEARNING *from the* LAND

A champion of numerous environmental efforts, Dr. Bob Collier says outdoor classrooms can get kids interested in conservation early

BY ED MARCUM  
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If a chunk of wood splits apart before Dr. **Bob Collier** can put it on the lathe at his Powell home and turn it into a bowl, there's no problem.

He makes sure it is not wasted.

"It just becomes a piece of firewood," he said.

And to replace it, all Collier needs to do is pick up another piece of wood off the ground somewhere.

Woodturning is a hobby that fits well with the idea of conservation, and it gets you outside a lot — a couple of ideas that Collier said he finds very appealing.

These interests have led him to take key roles in environmental efforts in Powell and beyond:

■ Collier helped form the Beaver Creek Watershed Association, a citizens group concerned about water quality in the 86 acres making up the watershed, which extends through Karns, Powell, Halls and Gibbs.

■ He helped develop the Halls Outdoor Classroom, which is vacant land next to Halls High School that has been turned into an area for students to study the environment firsthand.

■ Collier helped develop the Halls Marsh, which is an area behind the Knox County library on Emory Road in Halls that has nature trails through a wetland.

■ He and his wife donated land for the Powell Branch library to be built, including an area that is a wildlife refuge made accessible with walking trails. Bob Collier said the couple have about 12 more acres near the library they plan to donate for additional refuge space.

■ He is involved in efforts to develop outdoor classrooms at Brickey-McCloud Elementary School and at Powell High School.

■ He serves as a nature guide for school groups visiting Ijams Nature Center in South Knoxville.

■ He conducts nature training sessions for guests at the Swag Country Inn, built next to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in western North Carolina.

■ Collier and his wife are avid bird-watchers, and he writes a column on bird-watching for the Halls Shopper-News.

Collier's involvement in most of these efforts grew out of his involvement with the Beaver Creek Watershed Association.

Knox County formed the Beaver Creek Task Force in 1999 to look at water quality and environmental issues in the Beaver Creek watershed, and in 2002, the Beaver Creek Watershed Association citizens group spun off from this.

"**Bob Braid**, a retired engineer, was president, and I was vice president," Collier said. "We got together this group of interested citizens, and we met about twice, three times a month, and we hammered out the watershed association."

Collier decided to develop his own role in this.

"I was always interested in nature, natural resources and conservation, so I just made myself a sort of liaison with the school board, TVA and Hallsdale-Powell (Utility District),"

he said.

The Halls Outdoor Classroom was a result of these affiliations. In 2004, Collier and **Ruth Anne Hanahan** of the University of Tennessee Water Resource Center started discussing the idea of having outdoor classrooms at Knox County schools.

"We really think the place to start with conservation and plain old sustainable living — you know, not pouring your motor oil in the drain — starts with the kids," he said. "Plus, we wanted the enjoyment of teaching them about birds and critters and stuff."

There were four lots of flood-prone land behind Halls

See **COLLIER** on NS2