

COLLIER

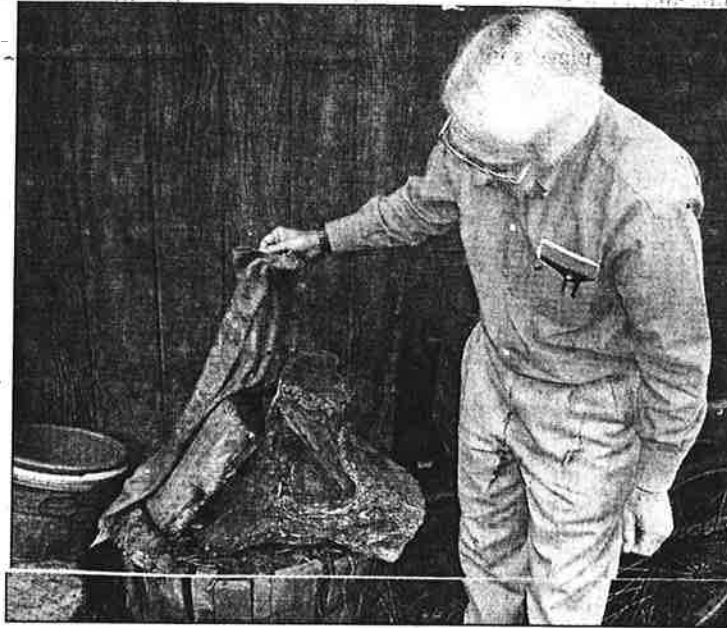
from NS1

High School that Collier, Hanahan and Halls High teacher **Mike Blankenship** successfully lobbied to get the Knox County school board to acquire from Knox County, and that became the Halls Outdoor Classroom in early 2005.

"It's a work in progress," Collier said.

Hallsdale-Powell Utility District supplied materials for a bridge to reach the property from across a stream and donated used utility poles to build fences. TVA awarded a grant to buy wetland plants that AmeriCorps volunteers and students from Halls middle and high schools planted.

The plan is to "build walkways through there and have different kinds of habitats and birdhouses, and they'll take classes over there from the high school and middle school and teach them about all sorts of things — get the kids outdoors and show them a spider, show them a lizard, show them a weed," Collier said.



ED MARCUM/NEWS SENTINEL

Bob Collier, who helped develop the Halls Outdoor Classroom, where students can study different plant and animal habitats, said nature is fascinating. Outside the woodshop at his Powell home, he lifts the cover on a piece of sassafras root he plans to make into a bowl. "I'm going to split it because I think there might be some interesting grain in there," he said.

The eventual plan of the watershed association is to develop a greenway system that would link all these outdoor classrooms and wildlife areas, and would extend through Karns, Powell,

Halls and Gibbs, Collier said.

Bob Collier's interest in nature came early, and, particularly with his donation of land for the Powell library, it has come full-circle.

"My dad was a fisherman,

and we camped a lot. We were always outdoors," Collier said. "My brother is a biologist, and I guess I'm an applied biologist. I would call being a surgeon an applied biologist."

But what really cemented his fascination with nature was getting to visit the farm of his grandmother Stella Moore Collier.

"I guess she was my most influential person, because I would come out here and spend weeks during the summer — go crawfishing, fishing in the creek, looking for snakes," he said.

"I have pictures of her house when Emory Road was just gravel," Collier said.

Across Emory Road from this setting, in present-day time, sits the Powell Branch library. Bob Collier still gets to enjoy his grandmother's farm, because he and his wife live on it now, and the acreage they donated across the road for the library and wildlife area allows other people to enjoy it, too.

The Beaver Creek Watershed Association has a Web site at www.beavercreekwatershed.org.

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