

KSNPC Latest News:

- ◆ KSNPC’s metal art display is on exhibit during the month of April at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, 600 College Street, Elizabethtown. The art display features vivid photographs from KSNPC’s book, *Kentucky’s Natural Heritage*, which celebrates biodiversity in Kentucky. Contact Rachel Ray (270) 706-8507 for more information.
- ◆ Pollinators in trouble! The Xerces Society continues to sound the alarm on Page 3.
- ◆ The Archer Benge State Nature Preserve in Whitley County is our 61st state nature preserve and the eighth on Pine Mountain. The preserve in the Laurel Fork Watershed was named after two very special people. Leslie Isaman contributes this article on Page 4.
- ◆ Learn about the Limestone/dolomite prairie. Vegetation Ecologist Brian Yahn reports on this vanishing community on Page 7.

In This Edition:	
Sundew Meadow – A Unique Remnant of Pre-settlement Kentucky	2
Our Native Bees are in Trouble	3
Farewell to Greg Abernathy	3
Archer Benge State Nature Preserve Dedication	4
Kentucky’s Least Wanted Plants	6
In the Spotlight: Limestone/dolomite prairie	7
Land Protection Report	10
Director’s Notes	11



Dwarf crested iris, Metcalfe County
~ KSNPC photo by Brian Yahn



Sundew Meadow

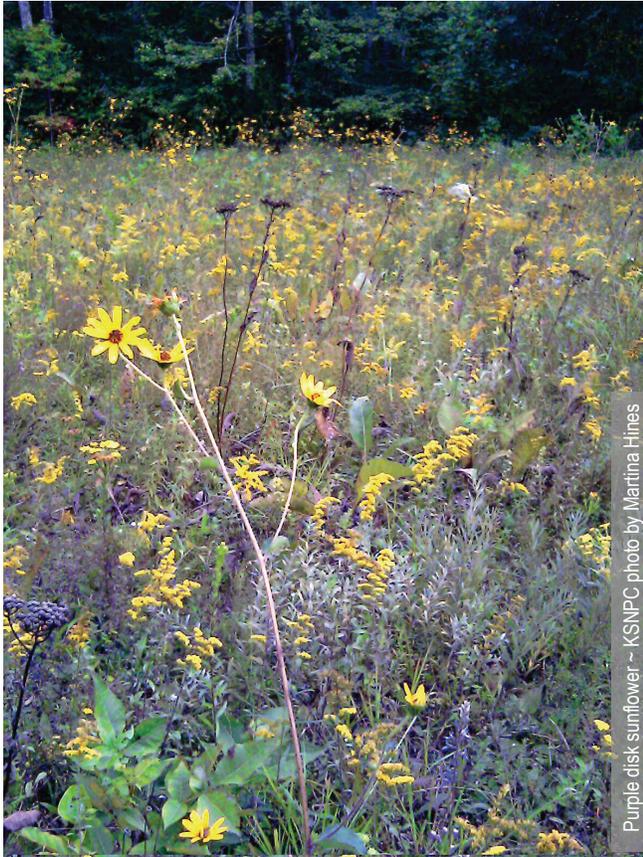
By Martina Hines, Ecologist

One would think that, with all the new technology available to us, identifying natural areas would be easier than ever – and, in part, it is. Thanks to high resolution aerial imagery, we are now able to remotely estimate the maturity of forest tracts, distinguish certain types of native grasslands from non-native grasses, and even determine the species of some trees. Not only can we see the trails and erosion caused by livestock; on some imagery, we can pick out individual cows. However, not everything is discernible with remote imagery. Very small communities with a closed or nearly closed canopy are impossible to see on even the highest resolution imagery available in Kentucky today.

When biologists surveyed a forested area in southcentral Kentucky a few years ago, it was by pure luck that they found a truly unique community. The forest itself seemed rather boring. It was young and held few species of interest. However, one small section was maintained as an open border strip by one of the landowners. It was here that commission biologists discovered a remnant native grassland with vegetation of an unusual composition. It was not a typical representative of a native prairie, or any other grassland community known to occur in the state. Instead, it held a unique mix of species characteristic of dry grasslands, as well as species strongly associated with wetlands. Repeated visits resulted in the discovery of six rare species, including the only extant state record of spoon-leaved sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), a carnivorous plant not seen in the state for over 100 years! Thanks to the enthusiastic support of the landowner, this site is now a registered natural area, known as Sundew Meadow.

To effectively protect this site it is important that we learn more about its history and ecology. Biologists are intrigued by what causes species of such varying habitat requirements to grow in the same place. And, what factors prevented this native community from disappearing in a highly agricultural landscape, at a location that has obviously been disturbed.

To start with, let's take a closer look at the conditions at this site. Sundew Meadow is located at the eastern most extent of the Highland Rim, a region that historically supported millions of acres of prairie. The site is also located fairly close to two other physiographic regions, the Knobs and the cliff section of the Cumberland Plateau. Consequently, the flora in this area could be influenced by three different physiographic regions. Indeed, many species at Sundew Meadow are closely associated with only one of the three regions, and their discovery at this site extends the known range for several species.



Purple disk sunflower ~ KSNPC photo by Martina Hines

A closer look at specific habitat conditions at Sundew Meadow reveals that it is located on level ground above a well developed hardpan. A hardpan is a water-impermeable layer in the lower soil horizons that blocks water from draining, resulting in parched conditions in winter and spring. However, in the summer, with hotter temperatures and less rainfall, the soil above this hardpan rapidly dries out, creating what biologists refer to as xero-hydric (dry-wet) conditions. These unusual hydrologic conditions explain

the unique strange mix of wetland and prairie species at Sundew Meadow.

What might seem puzzling is the fact that Sundew Meadow is by no means undisturbed. It has been logged and bush-hogged repeatedly. Instead of disappearing, however, the community apparently thrived. Any open (non-forest) plant community depends on repeated, regular disturbance events to prevent woody vegetation from shading out sun-loving grasses and forbs. Historically, this area might have been a xero-hydric flatwoods, a treed area with enough openings in the canopy to allow light to reach the ground. Disturbance might have included

a combination of fire and grazing. During hot summers when the ground becomes excessively dry, this community would have been very susceptible to wild fires and fires deliberately set by Native Americans. Without fires and big animals to graze these grassy areas, a different disturbance mechanism was needed to maintain the meadow community. While most of the site developed a close canopy forest, by bush-hogging a wide border strip on his property, the current landowner and probably others before him, had inadvertently helped maintain the meadow community. Had any of them decided to apply herbicide, sow non-native species, plant some kind of crop at the site, or simply do nothing over an extended period of time, the community would likely have disappeared. Even grazing by livestock would have severely impacted the site, primarily through the spread of exotic species. Biologists have spent much time surveying the surrounding landscape without finding a similar site. It seems the existence of Sundew Meadow is really due to one main factor: luck!





Native Bees in Trouble

By Ellis Lauder milk, Invertebrate Biologist

Our native bees are in trouble! They play a vital role in pollination and while we may not think about it very often we are dependent on them and other insects to pollinate our food crops. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation has established a Bumble Bee Conservation Initiative. For information on this initiative, how to create and manage habitat for bumble bees, which plants are attractive to bumble bees, and how to participate in their citizen science project, please visit their website at:

<http://www.xerces.org/bumblebees/>

At least two species found in Kentucky, the rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) and American bumble bee (*B. pensylvanicus*), are becoming increasingly rare all across their ranges. KSNPC and the Xerces Society are now looking for populations of these species. For information about the rusty patched bumble bee, including a downloadable pocket-sized identification guide, and how to report observations to the Xerces Society should you see one, please visit:

<http://www.xerces.org/rusty-patched-bumble-bee/>

A Farewell to Greg Abernathy

By Deborah White, Lead Botanist



Greg Abernathy will be sorely missed at KSNPC as he transitions into working with the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust. Greg is widely known as a talented GIS professional – one of those people that have artistic design sense and a working knowledge of science, a rare combination. Maps are a work of art when Greg is finished and he has an extraordinary creative ability to communicate using graphics. He was instrumental in the commission’s biodiversity book project as he designed many of the graphics and also had the tenacity to work through the detailed editing and revision process that greatly improved the project. Greg has created so many other projects - our travelling biodiversity display, conservation lands mapping, large forest tract mapping, the much used “then and now” map of Kentucky’s land use, kiosk displays, and on and on. He has greatly enhanced our outreach efforts by creating our website, newsletter and Facebook presence and making them appealing. In addition, he has promoted the commission’s work on conservation with many organizations including university, government, non-profit groups by working with their staff on projects or giving presentations about our work. All of the staff benefitted from his ideas and abilities. His contribution to our program has been amazing - we’re just glad that he will still be working on conservation in Kentucky.





View from Pine Mountain at Archer Benge SNP
~ KSNPC photo by Brian Yahn

By Leslie Isaman, Administrative Specialist III

The commission dedicated its 61st state nature preserve during its quarterly meeting on March 14.

The newly formed Archer Benge State Nature Preserve was the result of partnerships with the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF), the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (KNLT), and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). But it was the unexpected donation from the estate of the late William Dennis Benge of Fort Wright, Ky., that made the project a reality. The acquisition resulted in the protection of 1,864 forested acres along Laurel Fork in Whitley County.

The Archer Benge State Nature Preserve is now the eighth state nature preserve on Pine Mountain. It protects a significant portion of one of the largest forest blocks in Kentucky. The new preserve supports globally rare species of plants, such as the rock harlequin; fish, such as the federally threatened blackside dace and Cumberland arrow darter; as well as a federally listed mussel.

The commission purchased the land from the KNLT, a nonprofit organization directed by Hugh Archer.

When asked about the purchase, Hugh had this to say, “KNLT purchased the land from the private landowner, paid for its first survey and cleared title issues. It was sold to the commission at a significant discount and supported by funds from the Indiana Bat Mitigation Fund, which is overseen by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

The estate of William Dennis Benge bestowed a generous \$202,000 donation upon the commission with the stipulation that the money be used to purchase exceptional land. His sister, Carol Johnson, and niece, Connie Johnson, attended the dedication in his place.

“My uncle felt very strongly about preserving land and wildlife habitat. He was an avid nature photographer and took action that would ensure permanent protection. He conducted extensive research and concluded that the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission was the best agency to achieve this goal,” Connie Johnson said during the ceremony.



“When it came time to choose a name for the new preserve, Archer Bengé was a custom fit,” said KSNPC director Don Dott. “We wanted to demonstrate our appreciation for the many years of hard work and success Hugh Archer has achieved in protecting natural lands on Pine Mountain. He has pulled together land deals I didn’t think were possible,” said Dott.

“We also wanted to honor the generous contribution of Mr. Bengé, who wished to see nature permanently protected for the benefit of Kentucky’s wildlife,” Dott added. The Bengé family encourages others to include donations in their wills and estate planning to help protect Kentucky’s rich natural heritage for future generations.



Back row standing, left to right: Donald S. Dott Jr., Carol Johnson, Connie Johnson and Hugh Archer.
Seated, left to right: Commissioners Adrian Arnold, Carl Breeding (signing Articles of Dedication), and Peter Brown.
~ KSNPC photo by Sara Hines



Kentucky's Least Wanted Plants

By Joyce Bender, Nature Preserves and Natural Areas
Branch Manager

The invasive shrubs Autumn and Russian olive were chosen as the 2013 Least Wanted Plants by the Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council (KY-EPPC). Every year since 2000, an invasive plant has been named "Least Wanted" to raise awareness of the threat it poses to native biodiversity. A poster is developed by Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest and KY-EPPC for that year's "winner." The poster also provides three native alternatives for planting by conscientious gardeners, landscape architects, and nursery growers. Copies of the poster are available for download at <http://www.se-eppc.org/ky/leastwant.htm> or by contacting the commission. If you are missing a poster between 2000 and this year, all previous years' posters are available at this link.

There may be gaps in the distribution data, so if you can provide locations within the counties not shown in green, please go to the EDD-Maps website at <http://www.eddmaps.org/southeast/report/index.cfm> and follow the instructions. Your help in tracking the extent of these invasive shrubs and other invasive plants provides a clearer understanding of their range and impact in Kentucky. The information you share will also be used to revise the KY-EPPC's list of invasive plants that are most harmful to Kentucky's native biodiversity.



Russian olive, John W. Randall, The Nature Conservancy

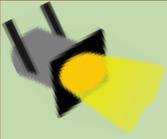


Autumn olive and, to a lesser extent, Russian olive shrubs are invading natural areas at an increasing rate. According to distribution data collected on the Early Detection Distribution and Mapping System (EDDMaps), autumn olive is found throughout southeastern Kentucky and has been found as far west as Graves County and as far north as Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties (see a map at <http://www.eddmaps.org/southeast/distribution/usstate.cfm?sub=3021> and click on Kentucky). Russian olive is not as widespread (click on Kentucky at this link <http://www.eddmaps.org/southeast/distribution/usstate.cfm?sub=3022>). Both species invade forest openings and open lands and grow so densely that they crowd out native vegetation and limit an area's use by wildlife. They both produce fruits that are eaten by birds and other animals which then spread the seeds through their droppings.



Autumn olive, spring (above) and fall (below) David G. Smith, <http://www.delawarewildflowers.org>





In the Spotlight: Limestone/dolomite prairie

By Brian Yahn, Vegetation Ecologist

An extremely rare community in Kentucky is the Limestone/dolomite prairie. This type of grassland is dry to very dry (i.e. sub-xeric to xeric), dominated by herbaceous plants and is often treeless, or has only a few trees scattered across the community. Soils are usually thin with limestone or dolomite bedrock near the surface (or occasionally some bedrock is exposed). This community was once abundant in the western two-thirds of Kentucky, an area first referred to by early Euro-American settlers as the “Big Barrens.” Since settlement, the conversion of land to agriculture and development, as well as suppression of natural fire and loss of natural grazers has greatly reduced this community, on the landscape. Higher frequency of landscape-level fire at the time of settlement likely played the largest role in shaping Kentucky’s Big Barrens. Many plant communities repeatedly burned and supported a stable grassland system of herb-dominated prairies and open oak woodlands (widely-spaced trees with a grassy understory) instead of the fire-suppressed closed forests we see today.

Outside of Kentucky, grassland communities similar to Limestone/dolomite prairies were once the dominant land cover in the Great Plains states ranging from North Dakota south to Texas (also known as the Prairie Peninsula). Kentucky’s smaller but important prairie-woodland matrix was also found (just to the north and south) in Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee. Since much of this eastern prairie matrix has been destroyed by land conversion, prairies and barrens east of the Mississippi River are one of the most imperiled ecosystems in North America (Noss 1995).



KSNPC’s classification of Limestone/dolomite prairie broadly describes dry calcareous prairies across the state. NatureServe (the national authority on the status of rare species and natural communities) distinguishes at least two types of dry calcareous prairies in Kentucky. One type, the most regularly occurring in the Commonwealth, is found in the Big Barrens (or Highland Rim Region) and is considered globally imperiled (=G2G3). The second type occurs along the rolling hills of Crooked Creek in Lewis County (northeast Kentucky), within the Outer Bluegrass Region. This community is considered globally critically imperiled (=G1Q) (NatureServe 2012).

Describing the natural condition of this community can be difficult as most remnants are small and isolated, and continually disturbed by unnatural processes. Most prairie remnants remain open due to mowing or grazing by livestock which has prevented trees from invading the area (and from succeeding to forest). Regular mowing and/or heavy grazing disturbs the soil, often causing erosion and creating a condition where invasive non-native plants can compete and thrive. Repeated mowing and/or grazing can also stimulate the native grasses to outcompete native forbs (i.e. prairie wildflowers). These conditions usually produce low diversity grasslands (mostly native grasses mixed with non-native and weedy plants). Thus, Limestone/dolomite prairie remnants that support an abundance of high-quality prairie wildflowers are very rare on the landscape. In an effort to improve poor or less than ideal conditions, prescribed fire can be used to remove woody species and promote herbaceous plants. Then herbicides can be applied to treat invasive or aggressive species. As a result, high-quality, fire-dependent plants usually flourish.

The best Limestone/dolomite prairie remnants that occur in Kentucky are dominated by little bluestem (a grass) and often have good populations of conservative native grasses scattered throughout. Common native grasses include Elliott’s beardgrass, longleaf dropseed, silver blue-stem and yellow indian-grass. Less abundant and rare native grasses include big bluestem, northern dropseed and side-oats grama. Native shrubs and small trees frequently seen in high-quality remnants include Carolina buckthorn, Carolina rose, eastern redbud, fragrant sumac and





rusty blackhawk. High-quality remnants are also diverse with wildflowers (i.e. forbs) and can include an array of species. A single plant family, the asters (composites), helps to characterize Kentucky's calcareous prairies by having a plentiful variety of common species including ashy sunflower, dense blazing star, early goldenrod, field goldenrod, gray-head prairie coneflower, prairie rosinweed, scaly gay-feather, Small's ragwort, stiff-hair sunflower, tall boneset, tall gayfeather, tall tickseed, three-leaved rosinweed and wavy-leaf purple-coneflower. Other common plants from different families include several bush-clovers, flowering spurge, green milkweed, pale-spiked lobelia, slender mountain-mint, slender-stalked gaura and many more (KSNPC 2012).

In Kentucky, Limestone/dolomite prairies also provide habitat for rare species of plants and animals, a few found nowhere else outside of this community. Over 40 KSNPC-listed plants have been documented on, or in close association with Limestone/dolomite prairies (KSNPC 2012). These associated rare species (not highlighted below or listed above) include the blue wild indigo, Carolina larkspur, compassplant, hairy hawkweed, rough rattlesnake-root, round-head bush-clover, slender blazingstar, tansy rosinweed and many more. Unique birds, herps and insects often found associated include Henslow's sparrow, lark sparrow, short-eared owl, northern harrier, northern pine snake, eastern corn snake, eastern slender glass lizard, six-lined racerunner and numerous species of butterflies, leafhoppers and moths (KSNPC 2012). Extirpated animals that once depended on Kentucky's prairies and barrens include the greater prairie chicken and the American bison.

Since the time of Euro-American settlement, prairies and barrens have been disappearing from Kentucky at an alarming rate. Estimated at 2.5 to 3 million acres at the time of settlement, natural prairies and open woodlands (barrens) are now almost gone, with less than 1 percent of prairies and barrens remaining today in Kentucky (Abernathy et al. 2010). And those remaining prairie patches are not recognized (or are sometimes ignored) by most of our citizens (and even some of our biologists!). Plowing, planting, grazing, mowing, development of roads and buildings, lack of fire, succession to forest,... all these activities continue to degrade conditions and often obliterate these remnants from existence. Better understanding and protection is needed to keep our prairie heritage alive. For more information on prairies and barrens in Kentucky, please visit our online nature preserve directory: http://naturepreserves.ky.gov/naturepreserves/Pages/statewide_snpsna.aspx or contact Brian Yahn, ecologist (brian.yahn@ky.gov) or pick up a copy of *Kentucky's Natural History, An Illustrated Guide to Biodiversity*.

References

- Abernathy, G., D. White, E. L. Laudermilk, and M. Evans, editors. 2010. *Kentucky's Natural Heritage: An Illustrated Guide to Biodiversity*. University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky., USA.
- [KSNPC] Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. 2009. *Natural communities of Kentucky*. Working draft. Frankfort, Ky.
- [KSNPC] Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. 2013. *Kentucky Natural Heritage Database*. Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, Frankfort, Ky.
- NatureServe. 2012. *NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life*. <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/>.
- Noss, Reed F. and Robert L. Peters. *Endangered Ecosystems: A Status Report on America's Vanishing Habitat and Wildlife*. Washington, DC: Defenders of Wildlife, December 1995.



Species associated with Limestone/dolomite prairie:

Corn snake

Pantherophis guttatus

KSNPC Status: Special concern

USFWS Status: None

General Description: A medium-sized snake, ranging in length from 30 to 48 inches. Also referred to as “red rat snakes,” corn snakes are most often red to orange in color, however, individuals may vary from brown to gray. The belly is whitish and boldly checkered with black and the underside of the tail is usually striped. The species has weakly keeled scales and a divided anal plate. Dorsal spots, or blotches, are typically red or orange and outlined with black. Spots closest to the head divide into branches that extend forward to meet in a spearpoint between the eyes. In Kentucky, corn snakes are most often confused with milk snakes (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) and prairie kingsnakes (*Lampropeltis c. calligaster*).



Photo by John R. MacGregor

Habitat: Corn snakes are good climbers but spend much of their time below ground, foraging or resting in rodent burrows or other underground passages.

Range: Distributed from southern New Jersey to Kentucky, extending southward to southeastern Louisiana and east to Florida.

Reason for Protection Status: Kentucky populations of this species are at the northwestern extent of the range. Their distribution is limited in the state and occurs in two widely disjunct populations.

Leonard’s Skipper

Hesperia leonardus

KSNPC Status: Watch list (appears to be declining)

USFWS Status: None

General Description: Upperside of wings is reddish-orange to brown. Underside of wings is reddish brown with a band of white, cream, or yellow spots. Forewings and hindwings have moderately wide black borders along rear edge. Wing span is approximately 1.25 – 1.75 inches.



KSNPC photo by Ellis Laudermilk

Habitat: Open grassy areas, especially prairies and barrens that support good populations of the caterpillar’s host plant, little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*).

Flight Season: Adults are active during late summer and early fall (Aug – Sep).

Range: Much of eastern and central North America, including southern Canada. In Kentucky this species is usually found locally in small colonies.

Northern (or Prairie) dropseed

Sporobolus heterolepis

KSNPC Status: Endangered

USFWS Status: None

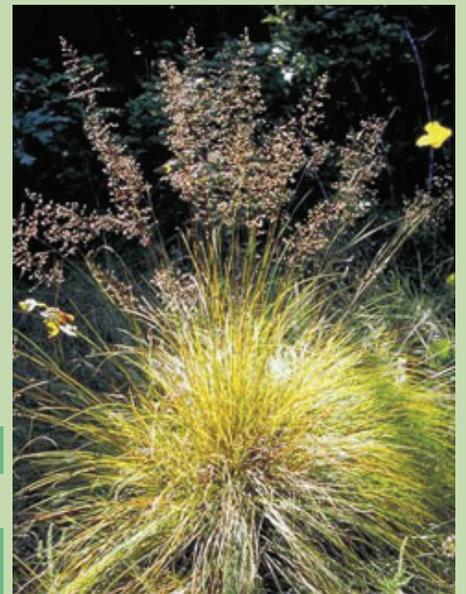
General Description: This perennial grass is one of the true prairie grasses that is characteristic of the tall grass prairies of the Midwest U.S. It forms dense clumps or bunches of long hair-like (less than a quarter inch wide) leaves. As with many grasses, the flowers are wind pollinated. This dropseed is a food plant for certain species of grasshoppers and leaf hoppers and the seeds are eaten by birds such as white-throated and other sparrows and juncos. It mostly spreads by seed but once established is persistent if the habitat remains open. It is being used in prairie restoration and landscaping.

Flowering Period: Summer. Seeds mature in late summer and early fall.

Habitat: Prairies. This grass is often a good indicator of high-quality prairies.

Range: Ontario to Saskatchewan, south through the Midwestern U.S. to Texas and east to North Carolina.

Reasons for Listing: The decline in grasslands across Kentucky due to development as well as the lack of fire needed to maintain grasslands.



Land Protection Report

By Brent Frazier, Land Acquisition Specialist

The commission completed 2012 with a large acquisition at Laurel Fork in Whitley County. This project has been in the works for several years. The land was purchased from the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (KNLT) and we are very lucky to have such a great partner as they sold the tracts totaling 1,864 acres at a discounted price, which made the project possible. These tracts are significant to the much larger, Laurel Fork Watershed, which harbors the federally listed mussel Cumberland elktoe (*Alasmidonta atropurpurea*) and fishes, blackside dace (*Chrosomus cumberlandensis*) and Cumberland darter (*Etheostoma susanae*), and the federal candidate fish Cumberland arrow darter (*Etheostoma sagitta*). For plants, these tracts include populations of the globally rare Appalachian rosinweed (*Silphium wasiotense*) and state listed rock harlequin (*Corydalis sempervirens*), Michaux's bluets (*Houstonia serpyllifolia*) and golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*). The Laurel Fork lands are also part of one of the largest forest blocks in the state.

The commission has submitted three new projects to the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board (KHLCFB). The Baxley Tract is a potential conservation easement acquisition that would protect the Swallowfield site. This tract, located north of Frankfort in Franklin County, consists of wooded slopes along the Kentucky River. It contains a high-quality occurrence of one of the Commonwealth's rarest plants – Braun's rockcress (*Arabis perstellata*).

The commission currently owns a conservation easement on the Perkins Tract at Apple Valley Glade but is hoping to acquire full ownership of the land. Owning this tract outright is preferable to improve management on both properties at the site. This preserve provides protection for the Kentucky gladecress (*Leavenworthia exigua* var. *laciniata*) that is only known from Jefferson and Bullitt counties. Any addition to the preserve is a major victory considering the pace of development occurring in the area.

The third project is an application to acquire the Brown Tract at Bouteloua Barrens. This tract protects habitat for the preserve's namesake, *Bouteloua curtipendula* (side-oats grama grass), a listed species of special concern. The tract also contains a stand of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and numerous other native barrens species. The remainder of the tract will provide additional buffer land surrounding the grassland community to protect it from external threats such as off-road vehicle use.



The Director's Notes

By Don Dott, Executive Director

A Conserve Kentucky Update: The Conserve Kentucky partnership that has been active for at least three years now has one goal – greatly increasing the scale of land conservation and public access to natural lands statewide. This includes everything from state parks to fishing and hunting lands, to urban green space and agricultural lands, to nature preserves. A new dedicated funding source is key, but considering the slow economic recovery, achieving this goal is probably still a few years away. However, Conserve Kentucky is working diligently on other ways to push the needle forward.

A bill introduced by Rep. Keith Hall, HB 281, allows non-profit land trusts to apply for a grant from the Heritage Land Conservation Fund (HLCF) to purchase natural lands - if they can bring a dollar for dollar match of private funds to the table. The effect of such a change would make HLCF grants directly available to land trusts for the first time, and at the same time brings private funds (donations) into play, increasing the total amount of funds, and *acres*, which could be conserved. By the time this newsletter reaches you, it's likely the 2013 General Assembly will have finished its work, but I would still encourage you to thank Rep. Hall for his sponsorship of HB 281. It's simple to do; call the Legislative Research Commission toll free at 1-800-372-7181 and leave a message.

Another goal of Conserve Kentucky is to seek the General Assembly's approval of a state income tax credit for anyone who donates a conservation easement or land outright for conservation purposes. This would be a great incentive for land owners who may already desire to see their lands conserved. It's an incentive that has been very successful in surrounding states, particularly Virginia and Georgia.

Since it was created by the General Assembly in 1994, the HLCF has enabled the purchase of over 76,656 acres. That's a great start, but it's really just a drop in the bucket considering Kentucky has over 25,000,000 acres in this beautiful state. Please express your support for the need to conserve more land in Kentucky by contacting your local state representative and senator. Conserve Kentucky needs your help to be successful! You can use the same toll-free number listed above.

An easy way you can support the HLCF is on the back of your car. You can purchase a *Nature's Finest* license plate for only an extra \$10. Not only do you get to choose from three attractive plates: a cardinal, a bobcat or a viceroy butterfly, but you also make an important donation to help save some of Kentucky's best natural areas - from the Cumberland mountains of southeast Kentucky to the bottomland hardwood forests along the Mississippi River.

For more information on the lands that have been purchased, visit the website at www.heritageland.ky.gov; one may be near you. For information about high-quality natural areas, contact KSNPC. If you want to see an area protected, talk to your local county or city officials. They can apply for an HLCF grant to purchase the land so it can be

protected for you and your neighbors to enjoy.

Lastly, I invite you to check out the commission's 2013 Biennial Report. The commission is directed by statute to provide this report to the governor and the General Assembly and we make it available to the public on our website. It summarizes accomplishments over the last two years and provides recommendations for action to protect the natural lands and biodiversity of the Commonwealth. You can read it on our website at <http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>.

Three accomplishments highlighted in the report include:

- a. A three-year project to survey rare grasslands and dry woodlands of west central Kentucky has been completed. These areas provide habitat for declining grassland plants, insects, birds and reptiles.
- b. A new state nature preserve, Apple Valley Glade in Bullitt County was created. The new preserve protects a unique limestone glade and woodland system with many rare plant species including Kentucky gladecress, an endemic, which only grows along the Salt River and nowhere else in the world.
- c. Land along the Laurel Fork in Whitley county, which is in one of the largest forest blocks in Kentucky, was purchased. This land on Pine Mountain supports rare plant species, a federally listed mussel and a rare fish species. The 1,864 acres was dedicated as the Archer Benge State Nature Preserve in March.



Upcoming Hikes and Events

Please note that most events require preregistration. View our complete events calendar at naturepreserves.ky.gov/news/.

April—KSNPC Metal Art Exhibit at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College

April 21—Louisville Zoo, "Party for the Planet" (Jefferson County)

April 22—Earth Day

April 27—Arbor Day, University of Kentucky Arboretum (Fayette County)

**More events are planned so please check our online calendar for an up-to-date list.

Join the Friends of Kentucky Nature Preserves Today!



Please recycle all paper.



friendsofkynaturepreserves.org

Produced with state funds.

KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

Carl W. Breeding, Chair
Adrian K. Arnold
Peter E. Brown, Secretary
David W. Rowlett
Shirley Trunnell

STAFF

Donald S. Dott, Jr.
Executive Director

Joyce Bender
Mike Compton
Dan Cox
Judy Cunningham
Shauna Dunham
Brent Frazier
Martina Hines
Sara Hines
Felisha Hubbard
Leslie Isaman
Ellis Laudermilk
Tara Littlefield
Kyle Napier
Deborah White
Brian Yahn

An Equal Opportunity Employer



DON'T FORGET TO DO SOMETHING WILD

ON YOUR STATE INCOME TAX RETURN AND USE THE CHECKOFF BOX TO DONATE TO THE NATURE AND WILDLIFE FUND!

**Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
Quarterly Public Meeting**

**June 13, 2013
TBA, Frankfort, KY**

**Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601-1403
502-573-2886
naturepreserves@ky.gov
<http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>**

It is the mission of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission to protect Kentucky's natural heritage by: (1) identifying, acquiring, and managing natural areas that represent the best known occurrences of rare native species, natural communities, and significant natural features in a statewide nature preserve system; (2) working with others to protect biological diversity; and (3) educating Kentuckians as to the value and purpose of nature preserves and biodiversity.

The Energy and Environment Cabinet does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion or disability and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodations including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs and activities. To request materials in an alternative format, contact the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission at 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601-1403 or call 502-573-2886. Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired persons may contact the agency by using the Kentucky Relay Service, a toll-free telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD). For voice to TDD, call 800-648-6057. For TDD to voice, call 800-648-6065.

