



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission, Lewis County Fiscal Court Develop 728 Acre Hiking Trail and Nature Preserve**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 23, 2017)** - The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNP) is opening to the public its Crooked Creek State Nature Preserve in Lewis County on July 15, 2017, with assistance from the Lewis County Fiscal Court.

A public trail dedication of the new 1.35-mile trail on the 728-acre preserve will begin at 9:30 a.m., followed by a free guided hike. Crooked Creek State Nature Preserve is about nine miles north of Tollesboro on Highway 3309.

Following the event, the trail will be open to visitors from sunrise to sunset. For directions and more information on Kentucky State Nature Preserves go to <http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>, and for more information on the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund go to <http://heritageland.ky.gov>.

Both KSNP and Lewis County are seeking new ways to promote the values of healthy living and boost tourism interest. The trail provides passive, low-impact recreation and educational opportunities. The County will assist with parking lot upkeep and routine mowing and trail maintenance. The KSNP will develop trail maps and educational materials, as well as manage habitat along the trail and surrounding nature preserve.

"We are excited to partner with Kentucky State Nature Preserves to offer our community these opportunities," said Lewis County Judge-Executive Todd Ruckel. "This gives the citizens another way to enjoy our beautiful county while helping to maintain a healthy lifestyle. "

The trail highlights the glade and barrens habitat that KSNP has conserved on the site since 1998. Visitors will be able to see a diverse number of grassland plants, including Indian paintbrush and blazing star, as well as the variety of butterflies and bees that pollinate these unique openings in the oak/hickory forest. The woods surrounding the glades give birders opportunities to spot Kentucky warblers, wood thrush and ovenbirds.

In spring and fall, the preserve is managed with prescribed fire to maintain these open areas. The trails will be closed when burning occurs, but visitors will soon note how quickly the site greens up after a fire.

"Nature preserves serve two primary functions. One is to conserve Kentucky's rare species and to provide places for citizens and tourists and two to enjoy a peaceful hike in the woods," said Zeb Weese, KSNPC Executive Director. "Besides its ecological significance, Crooked Creek is less than 30 minutes from Maysville and Vanceburg, so it is an ideal location. We are particularly indebted to citizens who continue to purchase "Nature's Finest" license plates, which are used by the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund to conserve and manage this site."