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Commonwealth of Kentucky
Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Celebrates 35th
Anniversary**

Agency commemorates environmental protection successes

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 8, 2011) – The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) is marking 35 years of carrying out its environmental mission to protect Kentucky’s natural heritage.

On June 19, 1976, Gov. Julian Carroll signed legislation authored by the late Jon E. Rickert of Elizabethtown, establishing the commission. Since 1976, the commission has created a nature preserve system that protects Kentucky’s best, most intact natural areas.

“The work of the commission has had a tremendous positive impact on our state,” said Don Dott, executive director of KSNPC. “From the Blanton Forest near the Virginia border to Three Ponds on the banks of the Mississippi River, 60 state nature preserves cover more than 25,000 acres of Kentucky’s natural heritage.

“To locate the best lands for preserves, the commission’s field biologists have cataloged over 12,000 records in the most complete and accurate inventory of rare species, natural communities and conserved lands in Kentucky,” said Dott.

Many of the preserves KSNPC works so hard to obtain and protect are open to the public for hiking and wildlife observation. Whether you are looking for a casual nature walk or a vigorous hike, the trails at these public preserves offer a variety of choices. On occasion, staff biologists, ecologists and botanists lead guided hikes into selected preserves which lack public facilities. These guided hikes are usually held in the spring, when vast arrays of wildflowers are at the peak of their splendor.

Twice a year, KSNPC produces an e-mail newsletter, *Naturally Kentucky*. In it you’ll find articles written by the staff describing activities, discoveries and projects the commission is involved in. Dates and places for guided hikes and volunteer opportunities are listed as well as in-depth environmental issues and vivid pictures.

If you are interested in receiving the *Naturally Kentucky* newsletter, please email the commission at naturepreserves@ky.gov.

In 2010, a team from KSNPC produced a book featuring a foreward by Wendell Berry entitled, *Kentucky's Natural Heritage: An Illustrated Guide to Biodiversity*. The informative, yet easily read book, currently available for purchase, is an exploration of Kentucky that highlights species and natural communities throughout the Commonwealth. Richly detailed and lavishly illustrated with more than 250 color photos, maps and charts, *Kentucky's Natural Heritage* is the definitive compendium of the Commonwealth's fascinating diversity.

The quality, hardcover book can be purchased at most major bookstores, through the UK Press, Amazon.com and the KSNPC office in Frankfort. A small number of books will be for sale at the celebration for \$40, which saves tax, shipping and handling.

The mission of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission is to protect Kentucky's natural habitat and biological diversity and to educate Kentuckians on the value and purpose of nature preserves and biodiversity conservation.

Discover more about KSNPC online at <http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>.

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