BLUE LICKS State Park Nature Preserve was established to protect the state and federally endangered species Short's goldenrod (*Solidago shortii*). The preserve consists of three tracts totaling 53 acres situated within a meander of the Licking River in Robertson County. The original 15-acre tract was dedicated on December 16, 1981. Additional tracts were dedicated on June 16, 1998 and March 7, 2000, respectively. The preserve is located entirely within the bounds of Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park.

Louisville physician and botanist Charles W. Short discovered Short's goldenrod in 1840 at the Falls of the Ohio. At that time it was the only known population of Short's goldenrod. When the locks and dams were built on the Ohio River that population was inundated and lost. In 1939 E. Lucy Braun, a renowned botanist and ecologist, discovered the plant in Robertson County, Kentucky.

Short's goldenrod is an extremely rare species known presently to exist in only two locations in the world; a disjunct population in southern Indiana and within a 2-square-mile area near Blue Licks. On the preserve, it grows in full sun or partial shade in and along the edges of a limestone glade and a remnant bison trace, in openings in oak-hickory woods, in pastures, and along rock cuts adjacent to nearby roads. Braun speculated that historically, bison may have played a role in dispersal of the seeds of this plant. She also speculated that the distribution may have been correlated with grazing and trampling activity of bison, which maintained the open habitat it needed for survival.

Today, KSNPC staff employ a multifaceted approach to managing Short's goldenrod. Exotic invasive species such as sweet clover, nodding thistle, crown vetch, and Kentucky 31 fescue threaten to displace the goldenrod from its native habitat. Mechanical removal of non-native plants and the judicious application of herbicide are helping to reclaim some of the lost habitat. Shade from encroaching trees and shrubs presents another problem for the goldenrod, which competes for sunlight. Prescribed burns have been conducted to reduce shrubs and small- to medium-sized trees. The fires also help enhance conditions that stimulate the growth and increase sunlight necessary for flowering of the goldenrod. Shade-casting cedar trees are being removed with the help of volunteers from the Sierra Club and the Kentucky Native Plant Society. This work is done during the winter rather than the growing season to avoid damaging the goldenrod plants.

Management efforts thus far are having a positive effect on the goldenrod populations. Commission biologists have monitored two management units where there have been stem count increases of 65% and 56%, respectively. This monitoring project was partly funded by a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Short's goldenrod is in bloom from late August until the first frost. Take a trip to Blue Licks Battlefield State Park and walk the bison trace within the nature preserve. The goldenrod is growing along the edges of the trace among the gray goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*). You can differentiate the two fairly easily. Short's goldenrod has smooth stems and leaves and the gray goldenrod has hairy stems and leaves. Keep your eyes open for another rare plant along the trace, the great plains ladies'-tresses orchid (Spiranthes magnicamporum). This species is listed as threatened in Kentucky and blooms in late September-early October. It is another species that has benefited from the increased sunlight brought on by the cedar clearing and prescribed burning.

The trail is open year-round from sunrise to sunset for foot traffic only. Please stay on the marked trail as your feet could adversely impact delicate species present on the dedicated portion of the state park. Federal law prohibits the destruction of federally endangered species on public land. Please do not pick any of the goldenrods that you may see.

Owners/Managers:
* Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
* Kentucky Department of Parks

Purchased with Assistance of:
* Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund

For more information please contact:
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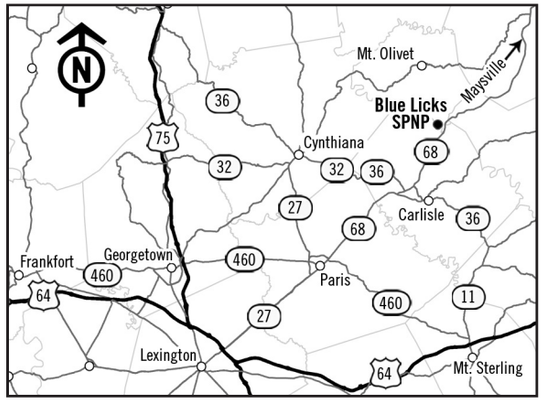
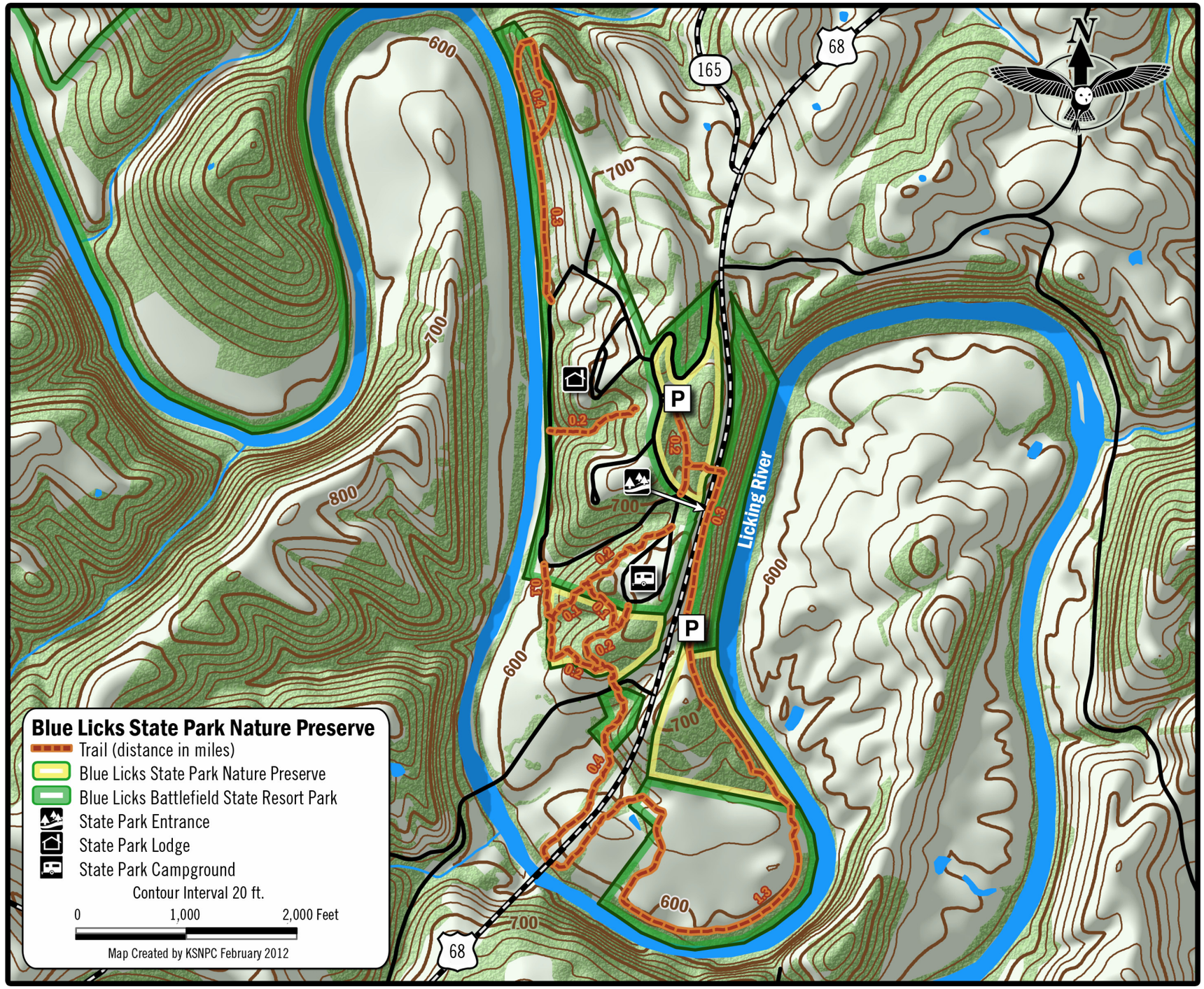
cover artwork by Ann DiSalvo

BLUE LICKS
STATE PARK NATURE PRESERVE



The preserve is in Robertson County just north of the Licking River on US 68. From Maysville, take US 68 south 25 miles to park entrance; from Paris, take US 68 north 23 miles to park entrance; from Cynthiana take KY 32/36 east 14 miles to US 68, take US 68 north 9 miles to park entrance.

By observing the rules for State Nature Preserves, you will be helping to protect Kentucky's natural heritage.

1. Preserves are open sunrise to sunset.
2. Trails are open to foot traffic only. The established trail system provides you with the safest and best way to travel through the preserve. Visitors must not re-route or shortcut the existing trail system.
3. Horses, bicycles, climbing and rappelling are not permitted in nature preserves because of their destructive impacts to the trails and natural features.
4. Motorized vehicles are not permitted.
5. Possession of drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
6. Collecting plants, animals, rocks, artifacts or wood reduces those things that are needed to maintain nature's delicate balance. Therefore, collecting, hunting and trapping are prohibited on dedicated state nature preserves.
7. To ensure the natural beauty of each preserve and to promote visitor safety and enjoyment, camping, picnicking, building fires, audio equipment and pets are not permitted.
8. Remember to carry out your trash.

THESE RULES ARE ESTABLISHED BY 400 KAR 2:090. ANY PERSON IN VIOLATION OF THIS REGULATION MAY BE LIABLE FOR A CIVIL PENALTY OF $1000 PER DAY AND POSSIBLE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN KRS 224.