



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Explore Some of Kentucky's Best Kept Natural Areas** *Nature Preserves Commission Celebrating 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 30, 2011)** – In celebration of its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) is providing Kentuckians with an opportunity to experience some of Kentucky's best natural communities through guided group hikes and natural-history interpretation by KSNPC's staff and preserve volunteers.

A schedule of the planned activities follows:

#### **Letcher County**

Saturday, Oct. 8; 9 a.m., EDT at Bad Branch State Nature Preserve. Southeastern regional preserve manager Kyle Napier and ecologist Martina Hines will take experienced hikers along a 7.5 mile, 8-hour hike to explore Pine Mountain's most unique areas including an expansive sandstone outcrop extending along the mountaintop known as High Rock that offers a spectacular view of the Cumberland Plateau and Black Mountain. Participants must be in good physical condition as this hike traverses uneven terrain and crosses several streams and large boulders. **Please do not attempt this hike unless in good physical shape.** Hikers should bring a sack lunch, plenty of drinking water and wear hiking boots and long pants. **Registration ends Oct. 6.**

#### **Barren County**

Saturday, Oct. 15; 9 a.m., CDT at Brigadoon State Nature Preserve. Western regional preserve manager Libby Watt and preserve monitor Harold Kelly are guides. Take a two-and-a-half hour hike along a moderately difficult trail through a great representation of a mature mesophytic forest with scenic ravines and 150-year-old trees. Please wear sturdy shoes for hiking, bring water bottles, a light snack, bug spray and binoculars. **Registration ends Oct. 12.**

### **Garrard County**

Sunday, Oct. 16; 1 p.m., EDT at Tom Dorman State Nature Preserve (SNP). Lead botanist Deborah White will guide participants along two miles of trail on an easy walk with some gradual grades and uneven footing. Tom Dorman SNP is known for spectacular 220-foot palisades cliffs along the Kentucky River. Please wear sturdy shoes for hiking, bring water and a snack if needed. **Registration ends Oct. 13.**

### **Powell County**

Saturday, Oct. 22, 1 p.m., EDT at Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve. Nature preserves branch manager Joyce Bender leads this nearly 3-hour moderate to strenuous hike, culminating in a view from the summit of a 730-foot-high knob providing an outstanding panorama of three regions of Kentucky: the Bluegrass, the Knobs, and the Cumberland Plateau. Pilot Knob is thought to be the place where Daniel Boone first looked upon the Bluegrass Region in 1769. Please wear sturdy shoes for hiking, bring water bottles and a snack. **Registration ends Oct. 19.**

### **Livingston County**

Saturday, Oct. 22, 9 a.m., CDT at Bissell Bluff State Natural Area. Robert Dunlap, a longtime commission volunteer and recipient of KSNPC's 2005 Volunteer Steward Award, will guide participants on a moderate-to-strenuous mile-and-a-half hike through bottomland hardwood and mesic ravine forest. A state natural area is a site jointly managed with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Please wear sturdy shoes for hiking and bring water bottles. **Registration ends Oct. 19.**

**Advanced registration is required.** Registration is free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, contact Leslie Isaman by email at [Leslie.Isaman@ky.gov](mailto:Leslie.Isaman@ky.gov) or by phone at 502-573-2886 no later than the registration deadlines indicated. Additional information about each hike is located online at <http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>. The number of participants is limited to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment and to protect resources at certain areas.

On June 19, 1976, Gov. Julian Carroll signed legislation establishing the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. Since then, the commission has endeavored to create a nature preserve system that protects Kentucky's best, most intact natural areas.

Sixty state nature preserves cover more than 25,000 acres of Kentucky's natural heritage. These preserves contain some of the best examples of natural communities and rare plant and animal habitats in the state – 219 rare species in 444 distinct populations and 22 different natural community types in 35 occurrences. To locate the best lands for preserves, the commission's field biologists have cataloged more than 12,000 records in the most complete and accurate inventory of rare species, natural communities and conserved lands in Kentucky.

The commission was one of the first in the country to join the NatureServe National Heritage Network, which covers all 50 states and Canadian provinces and 19 Latin American programs. In the past two years, KSNPC biologists have located two plant and animal species never before known in Kentucky, relocated two species that had not been seen since the 1800's, and discovered two species new to science, i.e. never described before in scientific literature.

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

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