



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Registers Sections of Jefferson Memorial Forest**

*Rare tracts of knobs forest recognized for high quality*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Sept. 7, 2011) – A cooperative effort between the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) and Louisville Metro Parks has resulted in placing 2,472 acres of the Jefferson Memorial Forest on the Kentucky Registry of Natural Areas.

The Jefferson Memorial Forest is a 6,218-acre regional park and nature preserve in southwestern Jefferson and Bullitt counties widely known for its hiking trails, outdoor recreation and educational programming. The forest is also one of the largest municipally-owned urban forests in the country. By placing a large portion of the Jefferson Memorial Forest on the Kentucky Registry of Natural Areas, Louisville Metro Parks and KSNPC are pleased to draw attention to the benefits of such a unique natural area so close to the largest city in Kentucky.

“The segment of the Jefferson Memorial Forest being recognized represents a maturing, high-quality forest,” said Don Dott, the commission’s executive director. “This site not only contains unique pockets of forests, but semi-open woodlands as well. A richly developed and older growth forest is represented by Headley Hollow. The trees are more mature here than in other parts of the forest, indicating that logging has not occurred in a very long time.”

Numerous notable areas support very dry, acidic woodlands that occur along southwest-facing slopes. Most of these woodlands are mature with dry, rocky soils, a diverse herb layer and chestnut oak-dominated canopies. The most noteworthy component of this community is a small population of narrowleaf blue-curls, a state endangered plant.

“The registry designation is important because it draws attention to the common threats facing natural areas such as invasive plants and loss of critical habitat. The designation affirms the value of the Jefferson Memorial Forest for

visitors and especially individuals who volunteer their time to help improve the ecological condition of the forest”, said Louisville Metro Parks administrator Bennett Knox.

The Kentucky Natural Areas Registry is a voluntary, non-regulatory program designed to provide recognition for sound stewardship and awareness of the ecological significance of a landowner’s property. To be eligible for registration, a property must contain habitat for plants or animals that are rare or have declining populations in Kentucky or that contain an outstanding example of an ecological community, such as an old growth forest, wetland, glade or prairie.

The mission of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission is to protect Kentucky’s natural habitat by 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. The commission also works with others to protect biological diversity and educates Kentuckians as to the value and purpose of nature preserves and biodiversity conservation.

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

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