



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Dedicates Additions to Crooked Creek State Nature Preserve *Lewis County SNP acreage is increased by nearly 50 percent***

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (March 25, 2011) – The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) dedicated two additions to the Crooked Creek State Nature Preserve in Lewis County during the commission’s March meeting. American Electric Power (AEP) worked jointly with KSNPC to acquire two significant properties to expand the nature preserve.

Crooked Creek Barrens State Nature Preserve (SNP) features a unique oak barrens community and adjacent oak-hickory forest. Prairie species such as big bluestem, little bluestem and prairie dock live in the barrens areas. This site also protects five rare plant species such as starry false Solomon's seal, white rattlesnake root, slender blazing-star, earleaf foxglove and the beautiful scarlet Indian paintbrush.

“As the commission marks its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an agency, it’s rewarding to dedicate these additions, which will increase the acreage of Crooked Creek SNP from 694 acres to 1,022 acres,” said KSNPC Director Don Dott. “Continuing our mission hasn’t been easy over the past 35 years. Right now, we are challenged to manage over 25,000 acres of natural lands with persistent budget cuts and dwindling staff. Without partnerships such as this one with the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (HLCF) and American Electric Power, our job would be impossible.”

The Crooked Creek SNP additions were purchased using a combination of funds from the HLCF and AEP, whose local utility subsidiary Kentucky Power serves a significant portion of eastern Kentucky. The AEP funding was available as part of a mitigation plan required by a consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Air Act. “This funding will also aid in restoring the site to a more natural condition, increasing the prairie type habitat and adding a new rare plant species to the nature preserve,” said Dott.

The HLCF proceeds are generated in part from the sale of Kentucky’s “Nature’s Finest” license plates. The public can assist in protecting natural lands by purchasing a “Nature’s Finest” license plate for an additional \$10 above the cost of a regular license plate, which is considered a tax deductible donation. Natural lands purchased with proceeds from “Nature’s Finest” license plates will be held in trust for present and future generations.

KSNPC’s mission is to protect Kentucky’s natural heritage 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 protects 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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