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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**DR. WILLIAM H. MARTIN RECEIVES BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
PROTECTION AWARD**

*Presented annually by Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 14, 2006) – Dr. William H. Martin, who once served as commissioner of the Department for Natural Resources, has been presented the 2006 Biological Diversity Protection Award from the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC).

The annual award recognizes a person who has made a significant contribution to the discovery and protection of Kentucky's biological diversity. Martin, who taught biology at Eastern Kentucky University from 1969 until his retirement in 2005, formerly directed the Natural Areas Program. He was instrumental in the protection of Lilley Cornett Woods in Letcher County and served as its research coordinator from 1977 to 2005.

Martin has published at least 21 edited or refereed books and papers, the most significant of which is the three-volume "Biodiversity of the Southeastern United States."

Martin took leave from EKU to serve as commissioner of the Department for Natural Resources from 1992 to 1998, a period in which he was in charge of the divisions of Conservation, Forestry and Energy. He was co-chair of the 1995 Kentucky Biodiversity Task Force and a lead member of the team that developed and successfully worked to pass the 1998 Kentucky Forest Conservation Act.

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Martin has been chairman of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board since its inception in 1994. During his tenure the board has been able to make grants in excess of \$31 million toward purchase of more than 27,000 acres of natural lands for permanent protection across the state.

The Board currently receives \$3 million to \$4 million annually for natural lands purchases. Martin has described this position as one of the most rewarding he has ever held.

KSNPC's mission is to protect Kentucky's natural heritage by: (1) 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; (2) working with others to protect biological diversity; and (3) educating Kentuckians as to the value and purpose of nature preserves and biodiversity conservation. The commission inventories Kentucky for significant natural areas and protects the best examples in a state nature preserve system.

More information about the commission can be obtained by mail (KSNPC, 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, Ky. 40601-1403), by telephone (502-573-2886) or via Internet ([www.naturepreserves.ky.gov](http://www.naturepreserves.ky.gov)).

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