



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

**Matthew G. Bevin, Governor**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Bestows Volunteer Honor *2015 Volunteer Steward Award given to Montgomery County resident***

**Frankfort, Ky.** (Dec. 11, 2015) – The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) has presented its Volunteer Steward Award to Mr. Kyle Elliott of Mt. Sterling.

The annual award recognizes a person, persons or organization which has made a significant contribution to a specific preserve or to the furtherance of KSNPC's mission by volunteering their time, expertise or physical efforts without anticipation of compensation.

Mr. Elliott started helping the commission as a volunteer in May 2013 working at Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve (SNP) in Powell County helping the commission's former eastern regional preserve manager with a trail re-route. Mr. Elliott found he liked helping out so much at Pilot Knob SNP that he became the commission's preserve monitor. Due to the commission's severely limited resources, preserve monitors play a crucial role by adding an additional watchful and protective presence. With so few staff to patrol the commission's 63 preserves, covering over 27,000 acres statewide, the commission counts heavily on preserve monitors to alert the agency to unsafe trail conditions, boundary encroachment issues, illegal activities as well as assisting with a wide variety of preserve management tasks.

Mr. Elliott has helped kept Pilot Knob SNP visitors safe by regularly clearing the three and a half miles of preserve trails. He also replaced trail signage at remote trail junctions. When the main trailhead sign was vandalized, Mr. Elliott hauled (by hand) 80 pound bags of Quikcrete and repaired and reinstalled the sign. He has alerted the commission's preserve manager to three separate instances of lost or injured hikers within the preserve, stopped theft of trail signs by catching the culprits red-handed, picked up plenty of trash, cut back vegetation including poison ivy and catbriars to keep the trails passable and hikers comfortable, greeted visitors, recruited volunteers and allowed the commission to use his photos for publication. Mr. Elliott's skills as a surveyor have come into play as he has walked the boundary of Pilot Knob SNP and found 30 year old pins.

On his volunteer application Kyle Elliott said he wanted to give back to his community and the state. We at the commission believe he has gone above and beyond that humble statement.

For additional information, call 502-573-2886 or visit the commission's website at <http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>.

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