

Naturally Kentucky

Summer/Fall 2016 Number 76

Slender gaura, Logan County Glade SNP ~
Photo courtesy Ed Leathers



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Celebrating the 40th at Berry Hill Mansion

By Leslie Isaman, Administrative Specialist



KSNPC's Second Director, Richard Hannan ~
Photo by Jenny Noran, JennyKat Productions

Many times milestones and achievements come and go with no fanfare at all, yet some are too special to overlook, such as the Kentucky State Nature Preserve Commission's 40th anniversary. When an agency has 40 years of making a difference, it can only do so with dedicated staff, focus on achieving goals, and great persistence. Every staff member, past and present has played an important part of a mission greater than themselves and worthy of note.

On a humid evening in July, approximately 100 people gathered at the historic Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort to relive old memories, discuss recent successes, begin new partnerships, and look to the future of conservation in Kentucky. From the dozens of conversation circles punctuated with laughter, common themes emerged from those well-versed in scientific, environmental, and preservation disciplines; the love of Kentucky and how best to protect its rare and endangered species and communities.

The commission became a force in Kentucky conservation when Senate Bill 155 was signed on March 29, 1976 by then Governor Julian M. Carroll. With that signature, the now Senator Carroll, launched an agency that set its sights on preserving in perpetuity, the best remaining examples of the Kentucky landscape for future generations. Intact, high quality natural lands are not so easy to find - or protect. However, every great journey begins with one step. So with a director, botanist, zoologist, and secretary, the commission embarked on its mission.

As clusters of people moved through Berry Hill Mansion carrying plates of delicious hors d'oeuvres, they carried with them unique pieces of Kentucky's conservation history. The invited speakers each highlighted aspects of that history. Richard Hannan, the commission's second director (1982 - 1992), traveled from Oregon to address the guests assembled in the mansion's Music Room. During Richard's tenure, 21 areas were dedicated as state nature preserves. In 1990 an appropriation of \$600,000 was granted to the commission by the General Assembly to purchase additional land for nature preserves. There was also a generous land donation made by Mr. Bill Wiglesworth. This created the 110-acre Quiet Trails State Nature Preserve, which is visited yearly by hundreds of Kentuckians and out of state guests. Kentucky's largest known old-growth forest had just been identified as Hannan's tenure came to a close. Today, Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve in Harlan County protects 3,500 acres.

Hannan was at the podium sharing his experiences and a remembrance of his time working for the commission's first director, the late Don Harker when Senator Julian M. Carroll attempted to make a quiet entrance. As he moved towards the front of the room - his sheepish grin revealing his humility - the assembly rose to its feet to honor the man who with his signature created the agency. The former Governor raised a friendly hand and waved. He took the podium next and captivated the audience with his passion for the natural world. Using his well-seasoned politician's voice, he reminded those present of the significance of Kentucky's biodiversity and how we cannot let it slip away. In a softened tone, he thanked all present for allowing him to be a part of it. Everyone was aware that without Senate Bill 155, authored by the late Representative Jon E. Rickert of Elizabethtown, and Julian Carroll's signature on it, there would be no stories to tell.

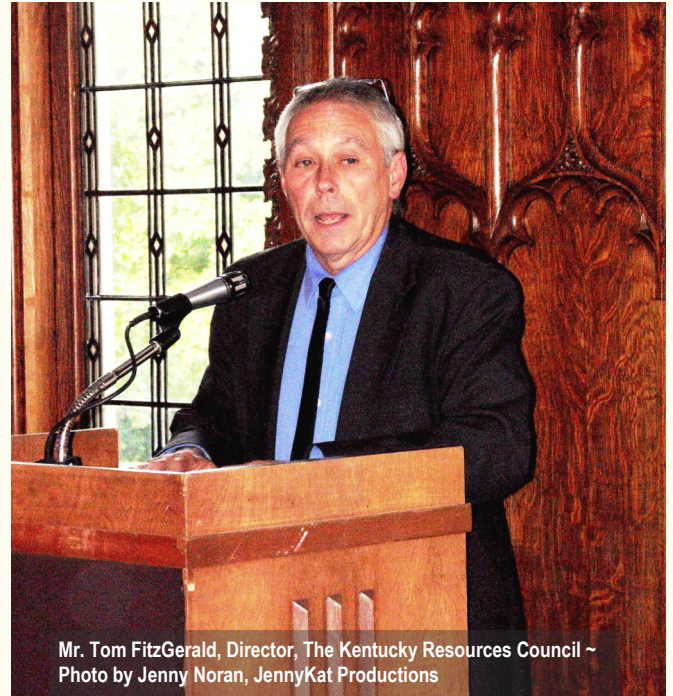


An impassioned Senator Julian Carroll reminds the audience of Kentucky's biodiversity significance ~
Photo by Jenny Noran, JennyKat Productions



Senator Carroll was a hard act to follow, but Tom FitzGerald, director of The Kentucky Resources Council held his own. His address breathed optimism into those present despite their knowledge that the struggles are evident and opposition abounds. The audience was bolstered by the message that it is possible to rescue imperiled species from perishing. Conservation organizations and Kentucky businesses can partner together to find common ground and responsible legislation can reach beyond financial deficits to protect the habitats on which we and the endangered plants and animals rely. FitzGerald's insight encompassed the past where a piece of legislation continues to make a difference through the contributions of every commission staff member.

Yes, it was an evening worthy of note.



Mr. Tom FitzGerald, Director, The Kentucky Resources Council ~
Photo by Jenny Noran, JennyKat Productions



40th Anniversary cake provided by 3 Peas in a Pod Catering



With sincere appreciation, the commission wishes to acknowledge the following:

- Mr. Adrian Arnold
- Ms. Dalaina Bean, Event Coordinator, Berry Hill Mansion
- Mr. Peter E. Brown
- Mr. Donald S. Dott, Jr.
- Kentucky Natural Lands Trust, Hugh Archer, Director
- Ms. Mary Margaret Lowe
- Ms. Judith McCandless
- Ms. Ceci Mitchell
- Mr. Ronald R. Scott
- Catering: 3 Peas in a Pod Catering, Frankfort
- Floral arrangements: Ms. Sara Hines and Ms. Joyce Bender
- Linens: Greenwell Rentals, Ms. Jolene Greenwell, Frankfort
- Photographer: Ms. Jenny Noran, JennyKat Productions, Lexington



In the Spotlight: Wet Meadow

By Brian Yahn, Vegetation Ecologist



Atlantic St. Peter's-wort



Crossleaf Milkwort

KSNPC Photo by Martina Hines

Mink Meadow in Lincoln County -
pink-flowering joe-pye weeds in the background
KSNPC Photo by Brian Yahn

KSNPC's "Community Spotlight" is a unique type of wetland called a wet meadow. In general, these meadows are herbaceous communities predominately found along flat to rolling land with soils that remain saturated for a sustained period in the growing season. In this setting, they may also be associated with the margins of depression ponds that have fluctuating water levels. Today, the community is shaped by farm management practices, with areas left open as fields and other areas left to grow as small-patch woods. Some meadows remain due to the non-forested corridor of powerline rights of way. Prior to European settlement, the areas that supported wet meadows likely developed as a matrix of wet, flat woodlands (i.e. Wet flatwoods) with natural openings. It is thought these openings ranged from small to large (representing the meadows) and likely graded into drier prairies and barrens (open woodlands of slightly raised elevation). Such areas would have burned at an interval that kept the meadows, prairies and woodlands more open and regularly maintained. In Kentucky, such a matrix of unique fire-maintained communities has not been set aside and protected, but public areas, like the Daniel Boone National Forest, may harbor a few remnants that need further restoration. Only very small remnants of isolated wet meadows and woodlands still exist, and nearly all with some level of degradation.

Since European settlement, modern humans have drastically reduced this community's range and distribution on the landscape, mostly due to agricultural clearing, draining and planting for crops and pasture, along with the loss of natural fire on the landscape. In fact, less than five wet meadow communities are recognized within KSNPC conservation sites; and only three have been mapped as remnants in the KSNPC Natural Heritage database, making this one of the most endangered communities in the Commonwealth. Although these three locations are very small, it is quite remarkable that they support a variety of rare plants in these meadow patches. To date, just two restricted regions of Kentucky (a relatively large area surrounding Somerset, and a few sites in Edmonson County) have documented remnants (see map on 2nd page). Those in Edmonson County are only on the margins of depressions, are less developed and thus not mapped as significant remnants. Targeted surveys are still needed throughout Kentucky, as it is very likely there are more occurrences.

In neighboring states, biologists have documented occurrences of wet meadows that are somewhat similar to Kentucky's, but more comprehensive research is needed to further understand the differences. One type, documented in Tennessee, known as the Highland Rim Pond, is comparable; NatureServe (the national authority on the status of rare species and natural communities) lists the status as globally imperiled (=G2). KSNPC expects the Kentucky meadows to have similar global rarity (NatureServe 2016).

A description of the natural condition of this community is defined by the few remaining examples in Kentucky. Although these examples are considered the best remaining, they have been altered by past and current disturbances and landscape manipulations. Currently, the remnant wet meadows are maintained by mowing, bush hogging and herbicide (targeting woody species), and are found in the form of unconverted (non-pasture) wet fields or powerline ROWs. With maintenance, wet meadows support a dense variety of herbaceous plants, but shrubs and hardwood tree saplings can occur at high to low densities and woody invasion is often immediate without fire or bush-hog mowing.

Wet meadow soils are often poorly drained with a fragipan or hardpan that helps to reduce drainage. They can be "fine-silty noncalcareous loess over residuum weathered from sandstone and siltstone and/or shale" or "fine-silty residuum weathered from limestone and sandstone and/or alluvium". Accordingly, soils are slightly acidic (Evans and Kelley 1996, Ross 1974). Light to densely-scattered shrubs and saplings include hardhack spiraea, hazel alder, red maple, sweetgum, maleberry, common winterberry and black willow. Wetland grasses such as



Sundew Meadow in Russell County with bushy bluestem, common boneset and round-head bush-clover in the foreground ~ KSNPC Photo by Martina Hines



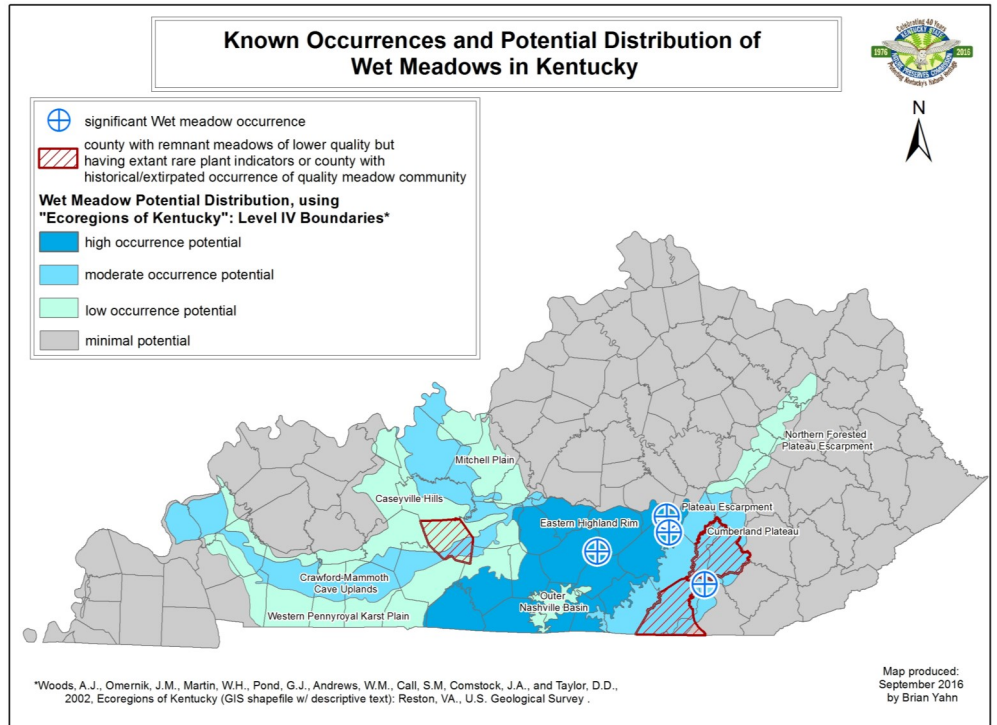
bushy bluestem, velvet panicum, redtop panic grass and silver plume grass are common and/or characteristic, with poverty oat-grass often on drier, sandy margins. Sedges are also very common representing several genera (*Carex*, *Juncus*, *Rhynchospora* and *Scirpus*). Characteristic forbs include, but are not limited to, common boneset, Curtiss' milkwort, harvestbells, helmet flower, joe-pye-weed, Maryland meadowbeauty, roundleaf thoroughwort, stiff marsh bedstraw, swamp sunflower, white colicroot, white thoroughwort and yellow-fringed orchid. Drier barrens plants found associated (or nearby) include, but are not limited to, big bluestem, Indiangrass and dense blazingstar (KSNPC 2016).

In Kentucky, wet meadows also provide essential habitat for rare plant and animal species, several found nowhere else outside of this community. At least 17 KSNPC-listed plants

have been documented within wet meadow remnants (KSNPC 2016). These associated rare plant species (not highlighted below) include, but are not limited to, Atlantic St. Peter's-wort, crossleaf milkwort, dwarf sundew, narrowleaf lespedeza, Nuttall's lobelia, Rafinesque's seedbox, round-head bush-clover, shaggy hedgehyssop and spoon-leaved sundew (KSNPC 2016). In fact, many of the rare species are good indicators of the community type, including the sundews and crossleaf milkwort. Since Wet meadow remnants are quite small, it is difficult to determine if any unique or rare birds, amphibians or reptiles are dependent upon or closely associated with the community.

However, a few crayfish are associated with these fragipan wet soils, such as the bluegrass crayfish (*Cambarus batchi*) and the Valley Flame crayfish (*Cambarus deweesae*) (Taylor and Schuster 2004). Also, many adult butterfly and moth species nectar on wildflowers, their caterpillars feed on plant tissues, and native bees collect pollen and nectar from the flowers found in these meadows. Dragonflies may also be common during wet periods.

Since the time of European settlement, Kentucky's wilderness has been disappearing at an alarming rate, with most areas now severely fragmented or completely destroyed. The great human improvements of the Industrial age and the expansion of modern civilization have left humanity with a broken and abused natural landscape. Rare communities like the wet meadow hover on the brink of existence in Kentucky and perhaps throughout the entire range. Steps should be taken to ensure that no existing occurrence is further lost, and efforts to protect and then restore the meadows, along with their surrounding wet woodlands and barrens, should be a priority for our Commonwealth. For more information on Wet meadows in Kentucky contact commission ecologists Brian Yahn, (brian.yahn@ky.gov) and Martina Hines (martina.hines@ky.gov) or botanist Tara Littlefield (tara.littlefield@ky.gov).



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 Taylor, C.A. and G.A. Schuster. 2004. The crayfishes of Kentucky. Illinois Natural History Survey Special Publication No. 28. viii + 219 pp.



Species associated with Wet Meadow:

Blue-faced Meadowhawk *Sympetrum ambiguum*

KSNPC Status: None

USFWS Status: None

General Description: Dragonfly with a red and black abdomen, dull gray or pale blue thorax, and pale blue eyes with a blue "face" or frons.

Habitat: Marshes, wet meadows, and overflow areas along streams.

Range: United States from Michigan south to northern Florida and west to eastern New Mexico.

Flight Season: In Kentucky, primarily July through October.



KSNPC Photo by Ellis Laudermilk

Prairie Milkweed *Asclepias hirtella*

KSNPC Status: Special concern, KSNPC is currently evaluating the conservation status of this species. If you know of any populations, please contact KSNPC.

USFWS Status: None

General Description: This species of milkweed is 1.5-3 feet tall and is distinguished by its greenish white umbels of flowers, lack of horns in the hoods of the flowers and narrow alternate leaves.

Habitat: Wet meadows, mesic prairies

Range: United States from Michigan south to northern Florida and west to eastern New Mexico.

Flowering Period: June to August



KSNPC Photo by Brian Yahn

Bluegrass Crayfish *Cambarus batchi*

KSNPC Status: None

USFWS Status: None

General Description: A bullet-shaped crayfish with the claws (chela) and body (carapace) bright red to brown, and tail (abdomen) not as bright.

Habitat: Wetlands. Digs burrows within hydric soils with clay fragipan that connect to the groundwater table.

Range: Central Kentucky, outer Bluegrass Region within the Kentucky River drainage.



Photo courtesy Dr. Guenter Schuster



Kentucky's Invasive Plants

By Shaun Ziegler, Applied Ecologist and Nature Preserves Manager

Wineberry, (*Rubus phoenicolasius*), is also referred to as wine raspberry. This berry was brought to the United States from Asia in the late 1800's. The original purpose of this plant's introduction was to increase breeding stock options for creating new raspberry cultivars and is still being used for this purpose today. Wineberry's presence in Kentucky has been known since the 1950's. Where this plant started out in Kentucky is unknown; it likely increased its range moving from New England as nursery stock for home gardeners. From these beginnings, wineberry has continued to spread farther south and east, in addition to increasing in Kentucky. Despite the invasive nature of this plant, it continues to be sold and shared among gardeners.

Wineberry has a few distinguishing characteristics that make it relatively easy to identify in the field. It has compound leaves with three leaflets, the terminal, or end, leaflet is larger than the other two, and they have toothed margins. The undersides of the leaves are almost white, which is very distinguishable. The other characteristic that is highly recognizable are the stems, or canes, covered by dense reddish spines and hairs. These hairs are also dense on the flowering stems and buds as shown in the image.



The undersides of the leaves are almost white, which is very distinguishable. The other characteristic that is highly recognizable are the stems, or canes, covered by dense reddish spines and hairs. These hairs are also dense on the flowering stems and buds as shown in the image.

Wineberries are edible and many consider a tasty treat that is easy to recognize in the early summer. However, they are more efficient photosynthesizers and energy users than our native berries, and many other plants, and can quickly create dense thickets that displace native species as well as alter and degrade natural habitat structure. Wineberry is spread locally through vegetative means as well as dispersed by birds eating the fruits. Wineberry is appearing as thickets in many natural areas across the state. For this reason, wineberry is considered

an invasive threat. Please do not plant this species and choose native blackberries or non-invasive raspberry cultivars as good alternatives. Wineberry prefers moist conditions and can be found invading forest and stream edges, as well as more open forest interior locations.

Wineberry can be controlled by pulling and cutting as well as using a systemic herbicide like glyphosate or triclopyr in a 1-2 percent concentration. A combination of these methods is seen to be most effective and reduce overall herbicide usage. Pulling or cutting the plants and then spraying re-sprouts as they grow back will yield the best results while minimizing the herbicide use.

EDDMapS is the online real time tracking system for documenting the presence of invasive species. Currently, the data is spotty for wineberry and the plant is likely to be much more widespread than the current data shows. If you see wineberry, please visit <https://www.eddmaps.org/>, and report an observation occurrence and location there to assist with understanding current spread locations and density. If possible please help to control areas where you find it in and around your yard or community and refrain from planting this species.



Photos courtesy of Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut. Bugwood.org





The Way We Are - The future of protecting Kentucky's natural heritage

Ellis Laudermilk
Invertebrate Zoologist



Sara Hines
Data Manager



Leslie Isaman - Administrative Support



Joyce Bender - Acting Director



Brent Frazier
Land Acquisition Specialist



Shaun Ziegler
Applied Ecologist and Nature Preserves Manager



Brian Yahn
Vegetation Ecologist





The Way We Are - The future of protecting Kentucky's natural heritage



Mike Compton
Aquatic Zoologist



Ilan Horn - Geoprocessing Specialist



Tara Littlefield - Rare Plant Botanist

Camera shy:
Judy Cunningham -
Fiscal Manager
Felisha Hubbard -
Administrative Support



Martina Hines
Heritage Branch Manager



Kyle Napier
Southeastern Regional Preserves Manager



Land Protection Report

By Brent Frazier, Land Acquisition Specialist



Northern cricket frog ~ KSNPC staff photo

The commission continues to work on several projects in the pipeline.

Title issues on the Van Sant LLC tract at Frances J. Palk State Nature Preserve in Pulaski County have been addressed by the owner and a new offer to purchase will be made soon. This tract, along with the newly acquired Van Sant tract will be a great addition to the preserve. The 150-acre preserve contains a series of acid seep communities that are very rare in Kentucky.

The Carmical tract at Hi Lewis State Nature Preserve in Harlan County is slowly progressing. A title issue is being worked out and we hope to close this fall. Named for the stream that drains the area, the preserve on Pine Mountain supports an extremely rare Pine Barrens community, as well as a number of rare plants associated with the barrens.

The commission is also working on a trade with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (KNLT) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for the Butler tract (George Washington/Jefferson Forest), which would be an 845 acre addition to Bad Branch State Nature Preserve in Letcher County. As you can imagine, working with so many entities makes the project very complex. The parties involved have been meeting regularly for more than two years to move this project forward. The Nature Conservancy and Kentucky Natural Lands Trust are going to trade land they currently own to the Daniel Boone National Forest for the Butler tract, which the commission will then buy from TNC. All of the partners benefit from this deal. The George Washington/Jefferson National Forest will improve its management capabilities because it no longer will be responsible for a disjunct tract of land, The Daniel Boone National Forest will acquire some new land within its proclamation boundary. TNC and KNLT will sell some tracts and KSNPC will be able to add 845 acres to Bad Branch State Nature Preserve. Ultimately, this important tract, which includes the Poor Fork Wetland, will have better oversight and management to protect several rare species. This will be a highly significant addition to the preserve.

Study on Kinniconick Creek Wraps Up

By Brent Frazier, Land Acquisition Specialist

The commission has been working with the University of Louisville Stream Institute (ULSI) and the Kentucky Division of Water (KDOW) on an assessment of Kinniconick Creek in Lewis County. This stream provides habitat for several threatened and endangered species and is a recreational fishing stream for the muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*), a.k.a. muskie. However, the stream conditions to sustain these species have deteriorated greatly, due to past land use practices. For example, decades ago it was common for farmers to straighten the stream in an attempt to create more land for farming. This practice marginalized the benefits of the stream floodplain and led to increased water velocity during rain events, resulting in excessive amounts of erosion in the stream channel. With the partnership of ULSI, KDOW, and KSNPC, working with local agencies and landowners, we hope to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the altered hydrology, excessive erosion, and massive sediment load within the Kinniconick Creek watershed and put in place land use practices that are beneficial for the imperiled aquatic life and for all who enjoy Kinniconick Creek.

Funding for the project was provided through an EPA 319 Grant which was administered by the KDOW. KSNPC handled the financial and educational components of the project, while ULSI was contracted to conduct the Coarse Sediment Assessment and Stream Restoration Design Alternative for Upper Kinniconick Creek.

To date, ULSI has collected water and sediment data for one year. Collection pits were dug at seven locations in the stream and its tributaries to measure the amount of sediment moving down the stream. The amount and size of the sediment that collected in these traps was recorded and are currently being analyzed. In addition, rain fall amounts and the location of the bank at the beginning of the year versus the end of the year in certain areas were analyzed.

Ultimately, the partnership hopes that the results will lead to a potential stream restoration on an eight mile section of the creek that will improve the habitat for the aquatic life and stabilize the stream bank for property owners.



Don Dott, former KSNPC director and Deven Carrigan from Division of Water inspect a collection pit. KSNPC Photo by Brent Frazier



Natural Area Registry Spotlight

We shine the spotlight on Katie White Barrens, which contains a high quality occurrence of a limestone barrens and glade complex. The 30 acre site is a hotspot for a diverse mix of native prairie grasses and wildflowers and is home to several species of glade or prairie plants considered rare in Kentucky. Vast expanses of prairie and open woodlands were once common on the Kentucky landscape, but today only patches of this system remain, scattered and broken into (mostly) small remnants (majority <15 acres).

The site in Logan County is owned by the Luckett and Webb families and was initially registered in the spring of 2001. It is one of the best remaining unprotected glades known in the state. Rare plants that call this site home include white prairie clover, tansy rosinweed, hispid falsemallow and side-oats grama grass.

The commission would like to recognize both families for their commitment to keeping this significant area in its natural state for many years. We hope to work with the families to reduce woody vegetation that inevitably encroaches on areas of this type.

The Natural Area Registry program is a voluntary, non-regulatory program designed to provide landowners with awareness of the ecological significance of a special piece of land and encourage them to provide for its sound stewardship. 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 a Kentucky ecological community, such as an old growth forest, wetland, glade or prairie.



Side-oats grama grass ~
Photo courtesy Dr. Tom Barnes



White prairie clover ~
Photo courtesy Dr. Tom Barnes

Limestone barrens remnant with big bluestem and pale purple coneflower (dark seedheads) at Katie White Barrens in Logan County. Red cedar are encroaching.
KSNPC Photo by Brian Yahh



Remembering Generous Acts at Quiet Trails State Nature Preserve

By Joyce Bender, Acting Director

Forty friends and family members came out in the high heat and humidity on Saturday, July 23 to honor the memories of Bill and Martha Wiglesworth, former owners of Quiet Trails near Sunrise in northern Harrison County. In 1991, the Wiglesworths donated 110 acres along the Licking River to the commission to create Quiet Trails State Nature Preserve. Prior to the donation, Bill Wiglesworth maintained the acreage as a nature sanctuary. He invited school groups and scout troops, as well as college professors and their classes to use the land for nature education. He made sure his own children and stepchildren (the Johnsons) enjoyed hiking the land and learning about the wildflowers, trees and birds while they were growing up.



Following their deaths a few years ago, the Wiglesworth and Johnson families wanted to honor their parents for their generous contribution to Kentucky conservation. To get the whole family together from the various corners of the globe they inhabit took some planning and some time. Working with the commission's guidance, the family provided the plaque and agreed to a celebration during the month of July as the commission marked its 40th anniversary as a state agency. Governor Matt Bevin had proclaimed July as Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Month, so it was very fitting to hold the ceremony at that time.



KSNPC Acting Director, Joyce Bender addresses the gathering on the history of Quiet Trails SNP

After the plaque's unveiling, the "sitters" appreciated the shade while trading memories and the hikers enjoyed a walk to the Licking River where the Mike Compton, the commission's aquatic zoologist, showed everyone the mussels inhabiting the shoal along the preserve's river frontage. He discussed with the group the impressive diversity of mussels he found that day, identifying 27 species, including the federally endangered fanshell (*Cyprogenia stegaria*).

Watching Bill and Martha's children and grandchildren engaging with Mike, looking at spider webs and mushrooms, wading in the Licking River and enjoying one another's company, I could hear

Bill's gentle voice explaining his vision for the property and his philosophy on nature's place in our lives, "I want others to have the opportunity to enjoy nature. If people would learn to love and enjoy nature, this Earth would be a better place to live."



Dozens of the federally endangered fanshell (*Cyprogenia stegaria*) were discovered in a muskrat midden along the bank of the Licking River. Although unfortunate this rare mussel species was preyed upon, the large quantities and multiple age classes indicate a robust population near the Quiet Trails State Nature Preserve in the Licking River.

KSNPC Photo by Mike Compton



KSNPC Aquatic Zoologist, Mike Compton speaks to the Wiglesworth and Johnson families about the rich variety of mussels found at Quiet Trails SNP.



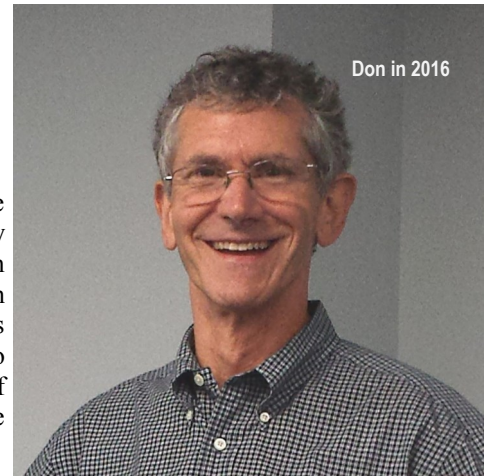
Retirement of the Director

By Joyce Bender, Acting Director

Kingdom Come SNP at sunset ~
Photo courtesy Barry Howard

From a letter Don wrote dated August 28, 1998 to Commissioner Clara Wheatley: “I am hoping for a long and productive career here and intend to do all I can to move KSNPC forward, to acquire more preserve lands and increase our data collection and management capabilities.”

Don Dott retired at the end of July after serving as the executive director of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission for 18 years. During his tenure, the commission greatly expanded the nature preserve system and its technological capacity to maintain information on Kentucky’s rare plants, animals and natural communities. Since he became the director on August 24, 1998, 15 new preserves were acquired totaling 5,775 acres, four State Natural Areas were dedicated adding 3,358 acres to the preserve system and 3,637 acres were added to existing preserves. The commission acquired GIS technology and gained the needed staff expertise to continue the agency’s mandate to compile and disseminate information on the state’s rich biological diversity.



Don in 2016

Don watched the budget wax and wane and for most of his tenure he struggled with the challenges of cutbacks, which previous directors had not experienced. Through it all, he kept a positive outlook, reminding the staff to persevere, saying, “You know how important this work is – it’s the foundation for a healthy environment, not just for us humans, but for all life on this planet that makes our lives possible. And when you think about it, we are not just working on the foundation blocks – it’s everything from the basement to the roof!”

Don worked with many other state and non-profit conservation organizations and played key roles in their development and advancement. He was as a board member of the U.S. Council of NatureServe, Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, board member and former chair of the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust, and co-founder of the Kentucky Lands Trust Coalition.



Don in 2011

During his tenure, Don assisted with fire management, trail work and invasive species control. He retained a lot of the information passed on about plants and animals. He surprised me more than once on preserve visits by identifying plants he’d seen years before. He was an ardent supporter for the production of the book, “*Kentucky’s Natural Heritage, An Illustrated Guide to Biodiversity*,” conceived and edited by commission staff. The biodiversity book has been well received and is now in its second printing. It has been distributed to public and private middle, high schools, colleges and universities throughout Kentucky and is used as a classroom textbook.

Prior to serving as the director of KSNPC, Don worked for eight years in the office of legal services as an attorney for the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet. He was the commission’s legal counsel and he enjoyed helping with the more offbeat legal needs of a non-regulatory agency. When he came to the commission, he was already well-versed in some of the issues associated with managing a statewide nature preserve system.

I knew Don prior to his joining the commission and I know he was sincere when he wrote in his last report to our Commissioners, “I am very grateful that I was able to work the better part of my career for the commission. My very best to our Commissioners and the staff who make it all happen.”



Don in 2001



Please check our [online calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of activities. Most events require preregistration. View our complete [events calendar](#).

Join the Friends of Kentucky Nature Preserves Today!

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Please remember to recycle.



KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

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DON'T FORGET TO DO SOMETHING WILD ON YOUR STATE INCOME TAX RETURN — USE THE CHECKOFF BOX TO DONATE TO THE NATURE AND WILDLIFE FUND!

**Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
Quarterly Public Meeting**

**December 8, 2016
KSNPC office, 801 Teton Trail, Frankfort**

**Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
801 Teton Trail, Frankfort, KY 40601-1403
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<http://naturepreserves.ky.gov>**

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It is the mission of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission 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.

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