



NATURALLY KENTUCKY

Number 16, October/November/December 1995

Blanton Forest Acquisition!

by Robert McCance, Jr.

On July 19 the KSNPC exercised its option on the Neal/Knuckles tract of Blanton Forest and purchased 1,075 acres of old-growth forest in Harlan County. This parcel is in the heart of the preserve design and is the highest quality old-growth tract. It is also extremely inaccessible with no usable trails or public access. We are negotiating with other landowners and hope to acquire additional options before the end of the year. This purchase was made possible by an appropriation of \$500,000 by the 1994 General Assembly and by the generous donations of many individuals, foundations and corporations. Also, especially strong support comes from the Harlan County citizens. The fund-raising effort is coordinated by a newly-formed



Kentucky land conservation organization, the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (KNLT).

A celebration on July 20 at Camp Blanton was attended by the families of Serena Knuckles and Anna Neal, the sisters who sold the parcel to the commission. Mrs. Neal's daughter-in law, Sharon Frazier Blanton, donated her painting of Blanton Forest to the commission at the ceremony.

It has been displayed in the Governor's Mansion and in the Capitol building during the July special session of the General Assembly.

Over 150 people attended the early evening celebration. Harlan Mayor Danny Howard welcomed the group and I had the honor of announcing the fund-raising success and purchase of the first tract. Others who spoke included Natural Resources Commissioner Dr. William Martin, Mrs. Anna Neal, Mrs. Libby Jones, and Hugh

Archer representing the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust.

At the ceremony, Department for

Natural Resources commissioner William Martin announced on behalf of Division of Forestry Director Mark Matuszewski that the Division of Forestry will transfer ownership of two parcels of Kentenia State Forest totalling 320 acres to KSNPC. This state property is in the eastern and northeastern portions



Sharon Frazier Blanton, Harry Neal, Serena Knuckles and Anna Neal

of the preserve design, with one parcel adjacent to the Neal/Knuckles property. KSNPC deeply appreciates the support the Division of Forestry has given KSNPC on this project.

The privately owned old-growth forest tract adjacent to Camp Blanton and accessible from the camp has seen much more intensive use since the importance of the forest has been reported in the media. The landowners previously have allowed visitors on their property when using Camp

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Daniel Boone National Forest Ten Year Plan Up For Revision

by Marc Evans

The Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF) covers approximately 672,000 acres in portions of 21 counties in eastern Kentucky. This large and diverse area provides habitat for a vast array of unusual and rare plants, animals and habitats (called ecological communities). In fact, the DBNF has over 1,400 known occurrences of 94 plants, 51 animals and 11 ecological communities. Some of these species such as the white-haired goldenrod, occur nowhere else in the world, and many others occur nowhere else in Kentucky except in the DBNF.

DBNF is managed under guidelines established during the development of their Land and Resource Management Plan that is reviewed and revised every 10-15 years. The plan was completed in 1985 and development of a new, revised plan is currently underway. This means we again have the opportunity to help direct and shape the future management plans of the Forest.

Prior to 1987 our knowledge of the DBNF was limited by the lack

of systematic biological inventory data on the Forest. Although we knew the DBNF harbored many rare species and communities, we lacked of site specific information needed to know where the best areas of the DBNF occurred. In 1985 the Commission recommended only three areas for special protection designation (i.e., Research Natural Area, Special Interest Area). Now, however, after seven years of rare species inventories on the seven ranger districts, we now have enough data to determine the more biological and ecologically significant areas.

Starting in 1987, KSNPC cooperated with The Nature Conservancy, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and DBNF to conduct inventories for rare and endangered species of plants and animals on the DBNF. One ranger district was completed each year with a report generated at the end of each year's inventory effort. Although this was a huge undertaking that generated much needed data, a great deal of work is still needed to further document the significance of DBNF. However, we now have enough data to allow us to recommend many significant areas that deserve special recognition.

KSNPC plans to submit recommendations for at least 69 sites that are important for rare species and ecological community

protection. These sites range from relatively small areas needed to protect a rare plant to large areas needed to protect whole watersheds and the plants and animals that live there. Large or small, these ecologically significant areas need and deserve special attention to make sure the biological diversity of the DBNF is not further compromised.

We are currently putting together site information, descriptions and boundary maps that will be part of our recommendations to the DBNF. The Commission encourages all interested individuals to get involved in DBNF's management plan review process. We seek to prevent management activities such as logging and road construction on the sites that the Commission and The Nature Conservancy will recommend for protection.



Blanton Forest Acquisition! Continued from page 1

Blanton, but now they have asked that only groups using the Camp's facilities for events be permitted to tour their property. Until additional land is acquired and KSNPC has an opportunity to develop adequate visitor use facilities, the old-growth forest will not be open to public use. We will strive to make this Kentucky natural wonder available for visitation as soon as possible, but our first consideration is to assure safe visitor facilities and strong protection for the area's natural qualities. We will begin next spring to develop needed facilities at our newest area. Blanton Forest was dedicated by our Commissioners at the September 15 commission meeting in Elizabethtown, and it is now Kentucky's 32nd state nature preserve.

Kentucky Natural Lands Trust is continuing fund-raising efforts and expects to raise \$2.3 million for additional land acquisition and stewardship at Blanton Forest. KSNPC has hired Harlan resident Mike Allison to assist in landowner contact activities for the Blanton Forest project. Mike will work part-time from September 1 to April 30 on the project.

Terrapin Creek State Nature Preserve -- Growth Continues

by Landon McKinney

More times than not, many of our state nature preserves are pieced together by the purchase of one tract at a time. This has certainly been the case with our Terrapin Creek State Nature Preserve in southern Graves County.

While previously channelized, Terrapin Creek and its associated wetlands and tributaries provide habitat to some of the rarest aquatic species in Kentucky. At least 12 species of rare fish are known from this important aquatic system. Many of these are southern species reaching their northern-most limit in Terrapin Creek and occur no where else in Kentucky. The common names include a variety of shiners, mudminnows, madtoms, darters, and sunfish.

Several other rare species exist in this aquatic system and its associated wetlands, including the three-lined salamander and western ribbon snake. In addition, the overall biodiversity of both aquatic and wetland animals and plants is quite high.

The preserve design boundary includes approximately 700 acres in 18 parcels of land of varying

acreage. Since mid-1992, approximately 61 acres in two separate tracts have been purchased and dedicated as a state nature preserve. Soon, two more tracts of the same approximate acreage will be dedicated.

The largest portion of this soon-to-be dedicated addition (approximately 40 acres) will be purchased with money from Harper Industries, Inc., Paducah, Kentucky based on a wetland mitigation plan developed and submitted by Hal Bryan of Eco-Tech, Inc., Frankfort, Kentucky. Mr. Bryan, who specializes in wetland mitigation projects as well as wetland creation and restoration efforts, was instrumental in seeing that this mitigation plan would be approved by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. This is the first funding of its kind for KSNPC and we are hopeful that similar efforts will make such funding available in the future.

While these four tracts are not contiguous, the Commission will continue to work with local landowners to purchase properties and bridge the gaps. Our goal is to protect this important aquatic system to the greatest possible extent. We're confident that our goal will be reached even if it happens one small tract at a time.

Stewardship News and Views

by Cindy Campbell

In 1983, Dr. Russell and Mrs. Faye Starr gave 92 acres of land adjacent to the Barren River Reservoir in Barren County to the Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. In 1985, the Commission purchased this acreage and dedicated it as Brigadoon State Nature Preserve.* The preserve acreage, part of a 1,000 acre land grant given to Joseph Renfro at the end of the Revolutionary War, represents a mature, old-growth forest community. Located at the center of the preserve is the old Renfro farmstead which includes 3.4-acres that are held in a life estate by Dr. Starr. In addition to other structures on this site, there is a one-and-a-half story log house with weather board that was built around 1840. The house has been considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Kentucky Heritage Council. Commission staff, as well as anyone who has had the opportunity to visit this homesite, have found it to be a very rewarding experience. Through the years, the Starrs hosted events and made their home available to many groups and individuals involved in conservation and preservation activities. In recognition of these kind and generous acts, the Commission's stewardship staff with the support of many volunteers, have concen-

trated their efforts this summer on making needed repairs to the house.

Sierra Club members Tom Coward, Dave Cooper, Ginny Guthrie, Lyn Miller, Donna DePenning, Amy Lawson, Barbara Latham, Monica Stoch, Carla Koford and Oscar Gerald joined Ed Craft, Melanie Dean, Kris Snyder and Cindy Campbell on June 24 and 25 for a weekend of work and play at Brigadoon. Crews worked hard weeding flower beds, removing windthrown trees in the yard, trimming vegetation around the house, reattaching gutter straps, cleaning and resetting gutter angles, replacing missing nails, removing damaged screens from frames, caulking around fireplaces and windows, retarring roof joints, making porch decking and baseboard repairs and replacing flashing wherever needed. Additional tasks revolved around preparing the house for a fall painting and included washing mildew from the weatherboarding and treating all nailheads and other rusted surfaces with a rust inhibitive primer/sealer. On Saturday evening everyone enjoyed excellent food and discussion around a makeshift picnic table in the front yard.

On September 9 and 10, volunteers Ed Craft and Lucia Beeler joined Commission staff members Tim Clarke, Ron Cicerello, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Deborah White and her son, Lee, Tim Brockhoff, Kris Snyder and Cindy Campbell at Brigadoon for a few days of painting. By Sunday afternoon the house (and several

people) were almost completely covered with a coat of primer. Although everyone was weary of painting, the group made plans to return in a few weeks to apply the top coat of paint.

On behalf of the Commission I thank each person who has and continues to assist with this laborious project. I hope that you feel pride and satisfaction for making this very special place shine once again.

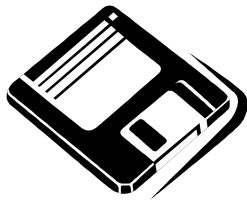
*Presently, the preserve is open for visitation by guided tour only. Please contact the KSNPC for further information.

Volunteer Workday Invitation December 2, 1995

This year restoration activities at Logan County Glade State Nature Preserve in Logan County include cedar removal from one of the glades. The Commission's Stewardship staff would greatly appreciate your assistance in removing the cut trees and limbs from the glade to an awaiting wood chipper. Please consider joining us for a few hours of rewarding work. Contact Cindy by November 15th for details and to sign-up.

Kentucky Natural Heritage Database

by Martina Hines



As most readers are aware, KSNPC's main purpose is to identify and protect Kentucky's rare elements of natural heritage. We do this in part by collecting, organizing, and distributing information about rare species and ecosystems in Kentucky. Our most useful tool for accomplishing this task is the Kentucky Natural Heritage Database. This database uses the "BCD" (Biological and Conservation Database), a soft-

ware program developed by The Nature Conservancy. The Kentucky Natural Heritage Database currently contains information about approximately 500 species with a total of more than 9000 records. In addition it includes information about managed areas and significant natural areas in Kentucky.

Information for the Natural Heritage Database has come from a great variety of sources. KSNPC field biologists have collected much of the information since the mid-1970s, but a great deal of information has been gathered from other sources including museum collections, herbaria, and published literature sources. We also depend on biologists working for other state and federal agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, and consulting firms to provide data collected in the field.

Even private citizens regularly provide rare species information to the Commission.

Any information on rare species or ecosystems is only useful after it has been entered into the Natural Heritage Database. However, before information is entered, it first has to be transferred onto standard data forms. Fields on these forms capture information in various detail:

- what element (species or ecosystem) was observed**
- what type of habitat was the element observed in**
- what is its specific location, how precise is the location**
- when was it observed**
- who observed it**

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Kentucky's Fall Colors

by Joyce Bender



After the incredible haze, heat and humidity of this summer, I am really looking forward to fall! Autumn in Kentucky--cool, crisp days with vibrant foliage set against a cobalt blue sky; mushrooms pushing up through fallen leaves, asters and goldenrods coloring the roadsides. If you are wondering where you can go to enjoy the beauty that fall

brings, look no further than your nearest state nature preserve.

The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission currently owns and/or manages thirty-three preserves across the Commonwealth. Encompassing over 11,000 acres, the preserve system protects a wide variety of natural areas and plant and animal species that are considered rare or endangered in Kentucky. Each area represents an outstanding example of Kentucky's diverse natural heritage. Preserve visitors can explore cypress swamps, prairies, caves, floodplain lakes, barrens, old growth forests, and glades.

Many of the state nature preserves look their best in the fall. A visit to any one of the three preserves open for public visitation along the length of Pine Mountain is sure to provide colorful vistas. At Bad Branch in Letcher County, the view from High Rocks is well worth the climb to the mountain's crest at any season. Overlooks at Kingdom Come and Pine Mountain State Parks offer bird's-eye views of the beautiful valleys below.

The hike to the top of Pilot Knob in Powell County is strenuous, but the reward from the sandstone promontory is a panoramic view of the

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Kentucky Natural Heritage Database--Continued from page 5

Once the information has been transferred to a data form and the location of the element has been marked on a topographic map, it is still not ready to be entered into the database. To avoid mistakes, every completed form is checked by a second person to ensure that all information was transferred correctly from the original source. This process is extremely important because it can be very difficult to discover an error once the information has been entered into the database.

Only now is the information ready to be entered into the Natural Heritage Database. This process is also very critical because errors can be made when data are computerized. A single keystroke error, for example, could place an occurrence on the wrong quadrangle, or make a different species out of the original one. To ensure high quality data every computerized form is again quality controlled.

Once the information has been computerized and has undergone two quality controls, it becomes a part of the Natural Heritage Database. This information can then be used by KSNPC to prioritize our protection efforts. For example, clusters of occurrences of rare species and unique natural communities are highlighted for prompt protection activity.

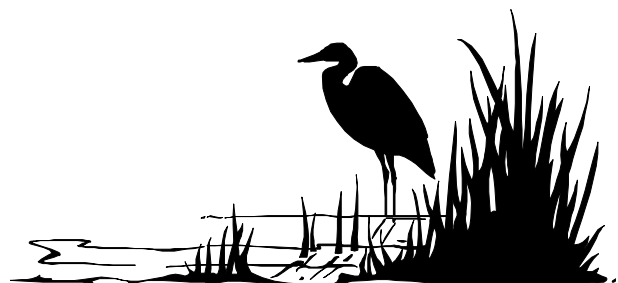
The Natural Heritage Database is also used in a variety of other ways. For example, Kentucky's database can be pooled with information from similar databases across the continent to help determine the overall status, condition, or habitat requirements of a particular species. Because the Natural Heritage Database is the most complete and reliable source for information of rare species and ecosystems in Kentucky, it is used by a variety of agencies for many purposes. We regularly generate a variety of reports in response to various types of data requests. These requests come from private consulting firms, engineering firms, federal and state agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, and private individuals. Information might be needed for research purposes, during planning processes that precede construction projects, or to determine which areas are in need of protection.

Many data requests ask for information about rare species within a given area, like a planned road construction corridor. A typical report generated in response to such a request would include a list of rare species at or near the site, specific location information, habitat requirements and legal protection status of each species, and the

date of last observation for each occurrence. Sometimes information about a particular species is requested. A report might for example, include information about specific locations of known occurrences of a species in the state, its habitat conditions, possible threats, the current condition of its population, and sources of information.

Although this is the most complete database of its kind in Kentucky, it is still incomplete. Many parts of Kentucky have never been surveyed, resulting in blank areas on our maps. Consequently, a report with no rare species information for a given area does not guarantee the absence of these species, but may be the result of a lack of surveys. In this case we try to predict which species might occur at a given site using information on the existing habitat and species occurring nearby.

It is quite a task to keep the Natural Heritage Database up-to-date and accurate. We hope this brief summary will help you appreciate the great effort that is required to maintain it.



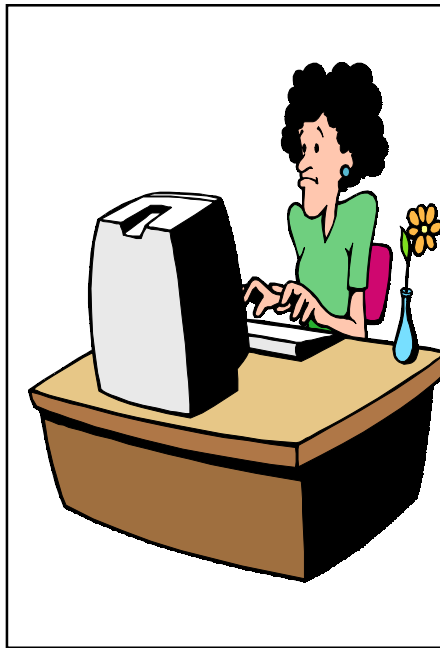
*From the Desk of
Dot Marek
Commission Secretary*

People often ask me, "What's it like being the secretary at the Nature Preserves Commission?" I reply, "It's very interesting, educational and fun!" You may wonder what makes it that way. I'll try to explain.

Working at the Commission is interesting because the duties I perform are so varied. Sure, there are mundane duties that must be performed every day such as distributing the mail, making photocopies and doing the filing, but there are also more challenging tasks such as maintaining the Commission Library, making travel arrangements, keeping our Master Mail List up-to-date and taking notes at our quarterly Commission meetings.

My job is educational because I have been given the opportunity to learn new computer programs, become familiar with our scientific jargon and grow into a better citizen of the planet Earth. I've become more diligent about recycling glass, paper and plastic products now that I realize how important it is for our environment. I've learned what a person who is a "spelunker" does for fun and the difference between an aquatic biologist and a terrestrial biologist.

The best part of my job, though, is the fun I have each and every day. Perhaps the fun originates from



reading our "Far Side" calendar, or perhaps it comes from sharing a good joke with an office mate. Sometimes, fun is the result of a typo committed innocently enough on my part. What better fun is there than a good laugh at yourself. At KSNPC I'm also known as "Dot Matrix" and "Psychic Secretary", names I've come to appreciate because I know the people using them mean them in the nicest way. That's the number one thing I love about my job -- the people I work with -- they care deeply about the work they do and they're not afraid to have a little fun along the way.

So if you have a question about the Commission, want to obtain a copy of one of our fine publications, or if you're having "one of those days" and just need to hear a smiling voice on the other end of the telephone, don't hesitate to call. Better yet, stop in, we'd love to meet you!

Staff Update

Going, going, gone. Another summer field season has come and is just about gone--especially for our summer seasonal positions. Rob Klein served his three-month period assisting our botanists in the area of much needed field data collection. Rob left August 15 to attend graduate school.

James Nason was hired June 1 to serve a five month seasonal position to assist the stewardship staff in maintenance at preserves across the state. However, James obtained a full-time position with the Division of Forestry and left us August 15.

Matt Patterson was hired as a three-month intern assisting in aquatic field work. Matt also left us August 15 to return to school.

Tim Brockhoff was hired as a maintenance worker assisting the stewardship staff in the upkeep of preserves. Tim's employment was scheduled to run through October 31 but Tim has recently accepted the position as an assistant editor of a magazine based in Lexington. We wish everyone the best of luck in their future endeavors.

We are closer than ever to hiring two nature preserves regional managers. The Department of Personnel is currently working on the register and interviews should be taking place soon. Stay tuned.

Kentucky's Fall Color - Continued from page 5

colorful tree tops stretched out like a quilt below. Another vantage point for fall color viewing in Powell County is the top of Natural Bridge at Natural Bridge State Park.

The best views at state nature preserves aren't only from the top. Metropolis Lake in McCracken County mirrors back the colors of trees and sky reflected on its calm surface. Fall is the only time to observe the federally endangered Short's Goldenrod at Blue Licks State Park in Robertson County. This rare plant is only known from a two square mile area around the park and nowhere else in the world.

Throughout the year, the state nature preserve system provides ample opportunities to enjoy the natural beauty of Kentucky. The majority of the nature preserves have trail systems and are open to the public from sunrise to sunset. Due to the presence of some particularly rare species or extremely fragile habitats, visitation at several preserves has been limited to research purposes or is by appointment with Commission staff. If you would like further information about Kentucky's state nature preserves, please contact Joyce Bender, Stewardship Coordinator, at 502/573-2886.

"Conservation is a journey without end. Finding harmony between human enterprise and the web of life requires long-term vision."

**Kathryn S. Fuller
President
World Wildlife Fund**



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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 preserves 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.

Commonwealth of Kentucky

Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission

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