

# NATURALLY KENTUCKY



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## Bad Branch State Nature Preserve

by Teresa Prather

Bad Branch State Nature Preserve in Letcher County has been the center of attention for many people for the last few months. At the September 17, 1997, Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission meeting, commissioners voted unanimously to dedicate 820 acres as an addition to the existing Bad Branch State Nature Preserve. The addition was part of the Bad Branch preserve design and was purchased to provide additional habitat for wide-ranging animals and rare plants and because of its outstanding scenic and natural features. The existing preserve contains a Kentucky Wild River and a large assemblage of rare plants and animals, and the commissioners recognized that the addition qualified as a natural area.

At the September Commission meeting, representatives of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC) and Representative Paul Mason of Letcher County asked the commissioners to delay dedication of the addition until further studies could be completed on the much needed road improvement of US 119. At that time, it was the belief of the commissioners that two alternatives on the south side of the mountain were viable options to the KTC for improving US 119 over Pine Mountain; and only one affected the preserve addition. Thus, the unanimous vote to dedicate the addition to Bad Branch State Nature

Preserve was based on the belief that the Commission was eliminating only one of two viable alternatives from consideration.

In the weeks following the Commission meeting and after much discussion with KTC and Representative Mason, KSNPC commissioners conducted a public hearing (in accordance with KRS Chapter 424) in Frankfort on December 15. Many concerned citizens from across the

**"There being an imperative and unavoidable public necessity for another public use of this property...the Commission hereby removes dedication... necessary for the construction of Alternative 2 of the proposed US 119 project..."**  
(excerpt from Dec. 30, 1997, Final Determination)

Commonwealth voiced their concerns regarding the removal of dedication of the state nature preserve. Charles Raymer, Deputy State Highway Engineer of the KTC subsequently provided testimony at the hearing, stating the KTC believes that Alternative 2 through the southeastern corner of the Bad Branch SNP addition is "the best and only alternative that's available and no other prudent and feasible alternative that will address the need for improving the road..."

Commissioners met with Representative Mason, KTC personnel, KSNPC staff, and considered all written and verbal comments and consequently, a special Commission meeting was held on December 30 in Oven Fork, (Letcher County) Kentucky. At this

meeting, many citizens spoke in favor of the need for improvements to US 119. Following are the final determinations of that special meeting:

"There being an imperative and unavoidable public necessity for another public use of this property, which is the improvement of US 119 over Pine Mountain, the Commission hereby removes dedication from that portion of the Caudill tract necessary for the construction of Alternative 2 of the proposed US 119 project... The property consists of approximately 170 acres and is in the southeast corner of the most recently dedicated addition to the Bad Branch State Nature Preserve. The KTC is to provide KSNPC with the specific angles, distances, and coordinates of the property in question.

"The property required for the improvement of US 119 over Pine Mountain may be transferred to the KTC, but if it is transferred it shall be transferred only upon conditions determined by the Commission with the recommendation of a panel of commission advisors appointed pursuant to KRS 146.435. This panel shall be known as the AD HOC PANEL OF COMMISSION ADVISORS TO OVERSEE US 119. The purpose of this panel is to follow through with the proceedings of this special meeting to ensure that the findings and determination set forth at this meeting are carried out.

"MEMBERS OF THE PANEL are to include the Legislative Representative of the area or designee, the Letcher County Judge/Executive or designee, the Secretary of Natural Resources Cabinet or designee, the Chair of the Kentucky State Nature

# Director's Farewell

By Robert McCance, Jr.

(January 16 was the last day for our Executive Director. We wish him well in his future endeavors. Here is his farewell message.)

When I started with the Commission, I set seven goals that I presented in the April 1993 issue of this newsletter. Some of these goals have been completely accomplished (with a great deal of credit to many dedicated staff, Commissioners, and others!) while others are only in process. My goals as presented in April 1993 were: (1) *Develop and implement a good strategic plan for the program;* (2) *seek a stable source of land acquisition funding;* (3) *seek additional General Funds from the Kentucky General Assembly so that we can truly implement the mission that they set out for us;* (4) *continue to provide for the needs of a dedicated and hard-working staff;* (5) *provide better information about our mission to Kentucky's general population, opinion leaders, and KSNPC-supporters;* (6) *make better use of the data we acquire to meet the needs of other organizations, government agencies, and businesses in Kentucky;* and (7) *continue to build a nature preserve system that represents the finest examples of Kentucky's natural heritage for all Kentuckians.*

I would like to reflect upon the accomplishments of the Commission over the past five years, and to thank the many friends I have made here. The following comments refer to the seven items listed above. (1) We established a strategic plan in March 1995 after a year of work, and in December 1997 conducted our third annual review of our accomplishments. An annual review of objectives set at the beginning of a year can be both rewarding and frustrating. Commission staff care a great deal about their work, and we always seem to over estimate what we

can accomplish in a year, and under estimate all of the surprises, opportunities, and "must-do" assignments that come upon us. The plan is, however, clearly beneficial, as it serves both as a benchmark of accomplishments for the previous year and helps identify tasks for the next year. As part of the plan, the Commissioners adopted a mission statement and a Commission vision of a desired future for the staff and Commissioners to strive toward. This mission statement and vision statement refine and clarify our goals as set down in the Kentucky Natural Areas Law that was enacted in 1976. Each year the planning process gets easier, and I believe this work will continue.

(2) A secure source of land acquisition funding was obtained in 1994 when the General Assembly revised and funded the Heritage Land Conservation Fund; this program now provides land acquisition money to KSNPC and four other state agencies, as well as to any state or local governmental entity interested in acquiring and protecting land that meets the HLCF objectives. Passage of this program was a milestone event in Kentucky, and was the result of the efforts of many good people. We have had eight projects approved by the HLCF Board, and about half have had some successful land acquisition take place. This program has also brought the state's land managing agencies closer together and has resulted in better cooperation and information sharing about possible land protection activities. This program will remain critical to the future success of the Commission's efforts to acquire and protect Kentucky's finest natural areas.

(3) Our General Fund (tax dollar support) has increased significantly in five years, and is now more than double the fiscal year 1993 amount. Much of this improvement was the result of previous Natural

## Resources

Cabinet Secretary  
Phillip Shepherd's



support, who placed the Commission's work very high in his priorities. The Commission's work is important to the future of Kentucky; we still have a chance to protect great areas for our children's children so that they may learn to appreciate what Kentucky once was like. The most immediate need for the Commission is to complete the county natural area inventory (NAI) so that we at least know what good areas remain relatively undisturbed in Kentucky. We are progressing at only a few counties per year, and each county study finds that good areas have been recently damaged — time is critical, and we must finish this work much more quickly! Funding of the county NAI should remain our highest priority until it is completed.

(4) When I started as Director, we were located at 401 Broadway, an old house with leaking roof, inadequate heating, and a distinct mildew aroma. We moved to our current location in April 1994. Additional staff have significantly improved the operations of the agency, especially the addition of a fiscal officer and two permanent regional preserve managers. Equipment additions and technology improvements have clearly increased staff efficiency.

(5) We have not made the desired progress in explaining our mission to Kentuckians, and most legislators and an even higher percentage of citizens still have only a vague understanding of our activities and role in serving the long-term needs of our Commonwealth. While The Nature Conservancy has grown to become America's largest and most influential conservation organization, with a mission that is nearly identical to ours, we have not succeeded in making most Kentuckians aware of

# A Time for Healing

by Barry Howard

As many of you are aware, this is an uncertain and challenging time for the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. Events of the past few months have focused an unusual amount of attention on our agency, and caused many of us--staff, commissioners, and our many friends--a great deal of anguish and hurt. I am hopeful that the healing process can now begin.

I would like to offer my own personal thoughts and reflections on what has happened recently. I am well aware that there are differences of opinion on these issues, and I think this is good and healthy. Even within our own staff there are strong and opposing viewpoints on these matters.

First, having observed this process "up close and personal." I want everyone to know that any proposal to remove land from dedication is never taken lightly. The decision by our commissioners to remove roughly 170 acres from our Bad Branch State Nature Preserve was made only after much soul-searching, study, and a concerted effort to gather opinions and advice from as many people as possible. Whether there was an "unavoidable and imperative public necessity" to remove this land from dedication, and whether this was adequately demonstrated to the commission, I know are points that can be endlessly debated. I do know our commissioners have a great love for our land—especially for those special places that have been dedicated as nature preserves. In the end they did what they thought was right.

Having lived in southeastern Kentucky for 10 years, including 7 years in Bell County and 3 years on top of Pine Mountain straddling the Harlan-Letcher county line, I do have personal memories and insights into this issue. One of the things I learned

a long time ago is that nobody loves the mountains more than the people who live in the mountains. Furthermore, it's my belief the people who live in southeastern Kentucky have a right to decide their own destiny. I would hate to have our agency perceived as an uncaring obstacle to the efforts of people who are trying to build better lives for themselves. Certainly, nature preserves are also important parts of this equation, and I know from experience how much southeastern Kentuckians value their existing parks and natural areas. I feel confident that we will have a great deal of local support as we strive to preserve additional land in our Kentucky mountains.

I certainly empathize with our many friends and supporters who are concerned about the precedent that has been set with removal of this land from dedication. However, I truly believe that the issues involved with the Bad Branch decision are unique, and that these particular circumstances are unlikely to be repeated. For the vast majority of road and utility projects there are indeed viable alternatives, and most projects won't generate the strong and emotional sentiments that surround improvements to US 119 across Pine Mountain.

I want to extend my fondest thanks and appreciation to our outgoing director Bob McCance for first of all, giving me the opportunity to serve our state as a staff member of KSNPC, and also for his support and encouragement since I have been here. Bob has demonstrated a tremendous devotion to the preservation of Kentucky's finest natural areas, and has made many personal sacrifices for our commission during the five years he served as director. Although any position of responsibility carries with it a certain amount of stress and "hard times," I hope that in future years it will be the good times and the special

places that shine through, and that Bob will reserve a warm place in his heart for the land and people of Kentucky.

The commissioners have appointed me to serve as their acting director during the interval between Bob's departure and the hiring of a new director. All I can say is I will do my very best to keep the ship in the water and steer a straight course during this transitional period. Our staff, commissioners, and I certainly would appreciate your support and encouragement during this period.

Right now, more than ever, we are in "listening" mode. Don't hesitate to voice your opinions and concerns about what you like about our agency and operation, and what you don't like. It's been said that the only people who don't make mistakes are those that don't do anything. I like to think that we've made and will make our share of mistakes, but that we're smart enough, committed enough, and open-minded enough to learn from them. As a public agency we welcome, and in fact *need*, your input.

I look forward to hearing from you.

## **KSNPC Quarterly Commission Meeting**

**DATE: March 24, 1998**

**PLACE: Clay County  
Courthouse, Clay County  
Extension Office**

**Main Street, Manchester,  
KY**

**TIME: 2:00 p.m.**

**A field trip to Pilot Knob  
State Nature Preserve will  
begin at 10:00 a.m., at the  
preserve. Everyone is  
welcome.**

how our work, if they know of us at all, differs from that of other state natural resources agencies.

(6) The Commission has included the Kentucky Natural Heritage Program for over 18 years. This program was created in Kentucky under contract with The Nature Conservancy, and is both a method of conducting biological inventory and a way of maintaining the data collected in an accessible computer filing structure. Similar programs exist in all states, and in many other countries in the Western Hemisphere. The data maintained by the Commission has become increasingly important to other agencies, and with the aid of improved computers and software, especially new Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies, we should now be able to provide this information in more useable formats to a variety of users.

(7) My last goal was to continue to protect more natural areas in the state nature preserve system. In five years the Preserve system has grown from 30 preserves to 37, with an increase in acreage from 8737 to 13,700, an increase of 37%. Most important, the areas and acres added to the preserve system are of high quality, and will reflect well on the system in the future. This protection process must continue and accelerate, since good areas, especially forested areas, are being lost each month. Dedicated staff have worked very hard to make this possible, including work to improve the natural area selection process, the nature preserve design process, and the landowner contact efforts. Even before I interviewed for the job, I had heard about Blanton Forest and its remarkable natural value. Although the project has not moved along as fast as I had hoped, we do now own over 1400

acres at Blanton Forest. I have been continually amazed and impressed at the support given to this project by the citizens and public officials of Harlan County, and I will forever remember the many supporters and friends of the Commission in Harlan. There are many state-significant natural areas yet to be discovered, and the work of finding and protecting them will take decades. The tasks of maintaining reasonably current data on our rare species and managing the state nature preserves will be unending.

There were also many important events and accomplishments that were not expected in 1993, including the staff's work on our report, "Recommendations for the Protection of Biological Diversity on the Daniel Boone National Forest", as part of the DBNF forest management planning process. This report and its recommendations hopefully will help the DBNF staff and the public concerned about the Forest to make sound decisions which will result in more protection provided to rare species and high quality natural communities. The Governor's Biodiversity Task Force and Biodiversity Council were a pleasure to serve on, and great things should be expected from the Council. Much progress has been made on the management of our nature preserves over the past few years, thanks to additional funding from Phillip Shepherd and the work of Joyce Bender and her new staff. We have finally made progress on preserve management plans and the evaluation of the natural communities within the preserves; this work must continue. Kentucky is very fortunate to have its Natural Areas Law, Commission organizational structure, dedicated and skilled staff, and overall support that you enjoy. All of this may come under close scrutiny in 1998, and I hope you will pay close attention to events as

they occur and to express your opinions on the issues. Kentucky has much beautiful land and important biological diversity, and I urge you all to help achieve the goals expressed in the Mission Statement of the Commission. I have enjoyed my time in Kentucky and the friends I have made while at the Commission, and I wish you grand successes in the future.



## Jeff Hohman Receives Biological Diversity Protection Award

by Teresa Prather

Jeff Hohman of East Kentucky Power Cooperative is the second award recipient of the Biological Diversity Protection Award given by KSNPC. The commissioners gave Mr. Hohman the award during the quarterly meeting on December 15, 1997. The honor is given to the individual who has demonstrated dedication and success in protecting Kentucky's biological diversity.

Mr. Hohman has provided very active support to the commission for many years, and his recent accomplishments as a member of the Kentucky Biodiversity Task Force and chairman of the Kentucky Biodiversity Council have lead Kentucky into a new era in its concern for and management of our native species and biological resources. The commission congratulates Jeff Hohman on his accomplishments and dedication.

Preserves Commission or designee, the Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet or designee, the Chair of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Board or designee, a representative of the Sierra Club, and a representative of The Nature Conservancy.

“Issues to be addressed and reported back to KSNPC shall include: 1) the status of US 119 design, funding, and environmental assessment; 2) notification of appropriate time for public comment during the environmental assessment process; 3) the design alternatives being considered; 4) proposed wildlife corridor design solutions; 5) proposed pedestrian access across the 119 corridor to link the Bad Branch SNP with its property and/or the nearby Wildlife Management Area; 6) ongoing road maintenance impacts to the area including but not limited to snow and ice removal; 7) notification of appropriate time to move forward with necessary land transfer; 8) conditions under which this transfer might be made; 9) review of right-of-way re-vegetation proposal; 10) the use of the property not required for the permanent right-of-way including both temporary rights-of-way and undisturbed land; 11) the date at which the Commission might consider rededication of the property in question provided that the road project is not proceeding; 12) the amount, location and probable effect of spoil placement on Bad Branch SNP including the Presley House Branch; 13) during construction the methods that will be used to minimize possible deleterious environmental effects; 14) possible mitigation measures to compensate KSNPC for the loss of preserve habitat and convenient access, and; 15) other concerns relating to the long-term viability of Bad Branch SNP and the Pine Mountain ecosystem.

“In addition, the Commission would like to hear from this panel suggestions as to a consistent methodology we might use when assessing a request for removal of dedication.

“This advisory panel will be convened by the KSNPC Chair or designee and report to the KSNPC at its regular quarterly meetings.”

This final determination was approved by a quorum of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission at a special meeting of the Commission on December 30, 1997. If you would like to obtain a copy of the Findings and the Final Determination, please contact Teresa Prather at (502)573-2886, or you may view through our homepage.

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## CHECKOFF YOUR SUPPORT!

*by Teresa Prather*



The Nature and Wildlife Fund, Kentucky's oldest checkoff program, is now entering its 18<sup>th</sup> year and we are very thankful that Kentuckians continue to support this Fund.

All of your donations are divided equally between the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), and it continues to be used for acquiring and managing Kentucky's finest natural areas and for management of wildlife.

Thanks to your support, KDFWR used funds to accomplish a variety of goals in 1997. Through the **Threatened and Endangered Species Program**, annual statewide midwinter bald eagle surveys were conducted; eagle nesting activities were monitored; least tern colonies were studied; searches were made for additional red-cockaded woodpecker colony sites; Virginia big-eared, gray and Indiana bats sites were monitored and protected; and work is conducted with listed aquatic species (blackside dace, relict darter, and freshwater mussels). Your donations helped support the **General Nongame Program** that conducted rare animal inventories; monitored colonial

water bird rookeries; established a songbird nest box program; and investigated the ranges of lesser-known mammals. **Restoration Projects** included the reintroduction and reestablishment of two of Kentucky's former residents, the osprey and peregrine falcon. **Partners in Flight** has established a viable bird conservation program in Kentucky as part of a national initiative. **Partners In Flight/Aves de las Americas** is a comprehensive bird conservation program with its goal being to maintain populations of forest and grassland neotropical migratory birds throughout the Americas. Through habitat protection, management, professional training and public education this program hopes to turn around the decline of most migratory birds. KDFWR's **Public Education and Program Promotion** developed activities and programs for schools, clubs, and organizations designed to educate Kentuckians about their rich wildlife heritage.

The Commonwealth has also benefited through your support because KSNPC uses checkoff program donations for primarily two purposes—land acquisition and nature preserve management. KSNPC used checkoff donations to help acquire **Metropolis Lake State Nature**

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# Exploring the Shawnee Hills and the Mississippian Plateau

by *Martina Hines and Aissa Feldmann*

Biologists at the Commission are very lucky, because following in the footsteps of Daniel Boone we get to explore Kentucky's last great natural places. 1997 was a very active year for Natural Area Inventory (NAI) at the Commission. Two new ecologists have been trained to conduct these inventories, and with a total of three ecologists, the Commission now has a stronger team than ever to inventory Kentucky for the best remaining natural areas. A statewide inventory is extremely important because it allows us to compare natural areas and select for protection, areas that are most important to rare species, high quality natural communities, and biological diversity. In addition, the rapid destruction of remaining natural areas makes this type of comprehensive inventory critical. Based upon the acreage of known natural areas, it is estimated that less than one half of one percent of Kentucky remains in its original condition. Only about one-third of all counties have been at least partially inventoried, and even with

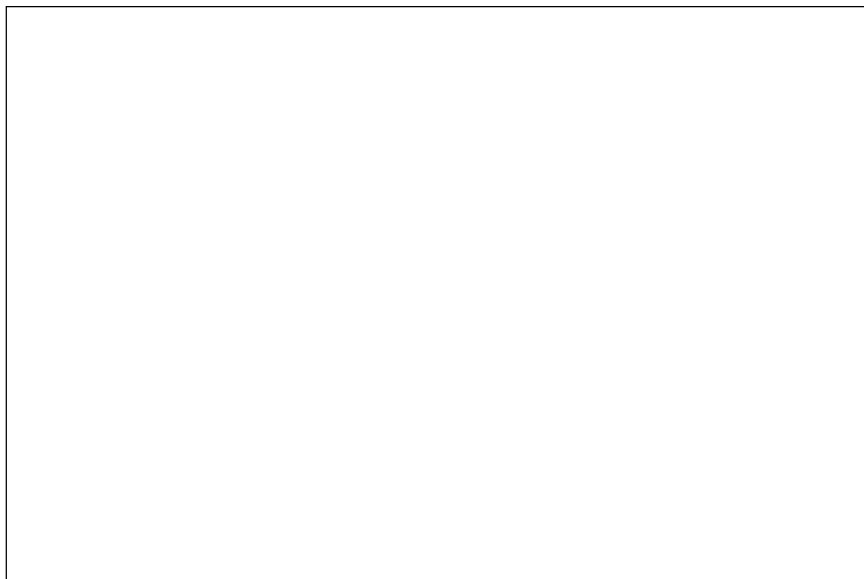
the additional staff it might be another 15 to 20 years until completion.

In 1997 Grayson, Breckinridge and Meade counties in west-central Kentucky were inventoried. These adjacent counties are located within the Escarpment and Karst Section of the Shawnee Hills and partially within the Mississippian Plateau ecological region. This area is very interesting, physiographically as well as biologically. Most of it is underlain with Mississippian aged limestone that forms extensive karst and cave systems in a gently rolling landscape often dotted with sinkholes. The largest known cave system, Mammoth Cave, is located within this region. According to historical evidence, before European settlement a large portion of these karst plains had been covered with fire-maintained tall grass prairie. Fires were set by native Americans and caused by lightning, and due to a lack of natural barriers, they sometimes burned extensive areas. Agricultural practices such as grazing and conversion of vegetation by European settlers led to a drastic reduction in fires. Today, most of these areas are in agricultural production or have been allowed to regrow after extensive erosion made the land undesirable. In some places the limestone is capped with sandstone and forms ridge and valley systems,

intensified by stream erosion, that are similar to typical Appalachian landscapes. These areas were covered with western mesophytic forests dominated by oaks and hickories, but also contain pockets of Appalachian vegetation such as hemlock, magnolia and mountain laurel. Most examples of this rugged landscape have been extensively timbered, but a lot of it is still forested.

The inventory process was started by compiling all available information regarding natural areas in these counties. Some high quality natural areas such as Eastview Barrens, a prairie remnant in Hardin County, and Lapland Barrens, a glade and prairie complex in Meade County, were already well described. In order to find additional natural areas, we used aerial photo interpretation. Carefully scanning acre by acre with magnifiers, we tried to identify any feature that suggested the presence of high quality remnants of native vegetation. Examples of these features include irregularly shaped canopy openings and rock outcrops, suggesting natural glades or barrens, large tree crowns of possible old-growth remnants, and unaltered wetlands. During aerial photo interpretation, a total of 160 Potential Natural Areas (PNAs) were identified in the three counties.

In the next step of the process, we conducted aerial surveys by helicopter. This is a very efficient way to quickly and accurately evaluate the current quality of most PNAs. Most areas that showed up as high quality forest on the 1960s aerial photographs, had either been cut or converted into non-forested cover types. Many potential glades or barrens had been converted to fescue or used for other agricultural practices, had been destroyed by development, or had been invaded by woody vegetation due to a lack of fire and grazing. Most of the wetlands we had identified on the photos had been drained and converted to agricultural production and



Aissa Feldmann and Martina Hines

Photo by Marc Evans

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golf courses. Within a few days we had eliminated 102 (62%) of the PNAs from our list. This demonstrates clearly how quickly our natural areas are disappearing and how critical it is to try to find the last high quality remnants so that we can protect them.

We spent the whole field season visiting the remaining 58 PNAs on the ground. This is a relatively simple task if a site is located close to roads and landowner permission is easy to obtain, but can be very time consuming if ownership is unclear or the site is in a remote location. Some of the larger and more rugged sites required several days of field work. In order to evaluate the quality of each site, we used the following criteria: diversity of native plants, presence of rare species and communities, degree of disturbance, size and, for forested sites, age and structure.

In Meade County we found five glade and barren remnants and a high quality mature beech/maple forest. The highlight of this county's survey was the discovery of a number of undisturbed glade openings adjacent to the already known Lapland Barrens system. Three new glades were found in Breckinridge County which are probably remnants of a once extensive glade and woodland complex. In Grayson County we located four high quality barrens and two fairly undisturbed ravine systems, one of which contained examples of an Appalachian Hemlock community, which is rare in this part of the state.

As the data from this year's field season are being processed, and the land protection specialist is pursuing the acquisition of significant natural areas, the ecology team is preparing for another field season. In 1998 we will explore three new counties and hope to find more remnants of Kentucky's natural heritage.

## Stewardship Takes to the Skies?

by Andrea Hughes



"When did you become interested in working on an airplane?" a friend asked when I told her about my new position as a Stewardship Assistant. Taking my 5-foot tall frame into consideration, she should have realized right away that I'm not exactly airline stewardess material. Nonetheless, for her sake, and for any one else out there who might be wondering, let me clarify just what it is that I do around here.

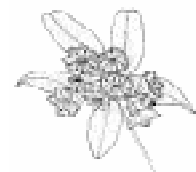
I arrived on the Commission's doorstep in mid-September and pledged the following eleven months of my life to the preservation of Kentucky's natural heritage. For my part, that means a multitude of administrative duties relating to the Stewardship program. There's research to track, reports to file and volunteers to coordinate. I'm often seen in the hall heading to the copier or sitting at my desk, trying to convey the beauty of our preserves through the pages of a brochure. I'll be working to improve our preserves' interpretive signs and compiling data on exotic species and rare elements for our Regional Managers as well.

Through this experience, I hope to gain more than just another line on my resume and leave more than just a forwarding address. I took the position because I wanted to experience the challenges and motivations behind preserve management. I wanted to serve as an intercessor between the average person and the sometimes intimidating scientific community. Most of all, I wanted to reaffirm my belief that there are small battles being won against the destruction of our natural resources. I am grateful to KSNPC for giving me the opportunity to do all of this and more.

Preserve in McCracken County; **Bad Branch State Nature Preserve** in Letcher County; **Brigadoon State Nature Preserve** in Barren County; and **Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve** in Powell County. Additional funds have been used for land appraisals and legal surveys for several other acquisition projects; and construction of public visitation facilities at a number of nature preserves. In the previous year KSNPC specifically used checkoff donations for additional trail maintenance and habitat management at several nature preserves; and money was set aside to assist in the purchase of **Blanton Forest**, a large old growth forest in southeastern Kentucky. In addition, a small grants research program was started to support studies on state nature preserves.

No donation to the fund is too small. Your contribution on the state's income tax form will increase the quantity and quality of the care given to the beauty and bounty of Kentucky's natural heritage. You may also make a direct donation by mailing your contribution to the Nature and Wildlife Fund, P.O. Box 311, Frankfort, Kentucky 40602.

Thank you so much for your continued support...BUT, there is much, much more to do. Each year presents new threats to our rare wildlife, and important natural areas are still being destroyed or degraded. Together we can protect and manage Kentucky's finest examples of our natural heritage so that Kentucky's children will continue to inherit the full wealth of our wildlife and natural areas.





You now have a choice between two plates. The new design with Kentucky's state bird, the Kentucky Cardinal, and our state heritage tree, the Kentucky Coffee Tree. Or choose the first design featuring the Kentucky Warbler and branches of the state tree, the Tulip Poplar. The annual cost is \$25. Of the \$25 cost, \$12 goes to the Transportation Cabinet for the production of the plate, \$3 goes to your county court clerk for the processing fee, and \$10 goes to the Heritage Land Conservation Fund.

Monies from the fund are used to purchase land from willing sellers for nature preserves, wildlife management areas, state parks, recreation and environmental education areas, state forests, wild river corridors, and wetlands. Local governments, colleges, and universities can also apply to use these funds for these purposes.

If you would like to purchase a plate and if you are registering a new or out-of-state vehicle for the first time, request a Nature License Plate from your county clerk or motor vehicle dealer. If you lease, offer your leasing company a check for the extra charge to get the plate. If you are converting from a regular plate, turn in your plate to your county clerk, and you will be given credit for the months remaining on your decal.

So the next time you renew your plate, renew Kentucky's environment too!

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The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodations including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs, and activities.

*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.*

Commonwealth of Kentucky  
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