



Number 29. January, February, March 1999

1998 Highlights

By Don Dott, Director

Here are some quick highlights of our recent accomplishments:

- * Sixty acres of land purchased in Lewis County will become Crooked Creek Barrens State Nature Preserve, Kentucky's 38th State Nature Preserve. The site harbors a limestone barrens and contains state listed plants such as Slender blazing star (*Liatrix cylindracea*) and Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja coccinea*). During an inspection of this property, Eastern Region Preserves Manager Dave Skinner found Ear-leaf foxglove (*Agalinis auriculata*), the first occurrence documented in Kentucky.
 - * A conservation plan for the upper Green River was prepared jointly with the Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The river segment from Green River Lake Dam downstream to the Nolin River is one of the nation's top four streams for the conservation of fishes and mussels and it includes the incomparable Mammoth Cave National Park.
 - * KSNPC submitted a report to the legislature entitled "Kentucky's Rare and Native Plants - Status and Trends," which includes draft regulations to implement the "Kentucky Rare Plant Recognition Act." When finalized, this will be Kentucky's first official listing of state-designated rare plants.
 - * During 1998 KSNPC acquired 497 acres of land at four sites and dedicated an additional 14 acres owned by the Department of Parks. Almost all of these additions were made possible by funding from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund. Since 1976, KSNPC has acquired or
- has dedicated into the state nature preserves system a total of 14,226 acres, protecting important ecological communities and habitat for rare species throughout the state. KSNPC presently owns and/or manages 37 state nature preserves and two state natural areas.
- * Biologists Aissa Feldmann and Martina Hines found Grass pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*), a rare orchid, now known to exist only in two locations in Kentucky. This orchid grows at the edge of a bog covered with cinnamon and royal ferns and sphagnum mosses. Later visits to the same site also revealed one of the largest known populations in Kentucky of the White fringeless orchid (*Platanthera integrilabia*), a globally rare plant, and the Yellow-fringed orchid (*Platanthera cristata*), a state rare species.
 - * Julian Campbell of the Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy received KSNPC's third annual Biodiversity Award.
 - * New populations for Short's goldenrod (*Solidago shortii*) and White-haired goldenrod (*Solidago albopilosa*), both Kentucky endemics, were found. New information for protection strategies and restoration of their habitat has been developed. Our survey of Ohio River gravel bars this year was not so rewarding. Because of severe impacts from hydrologic changes and land use, we concluded that Stipuled scurfpea (*Orbexilum tipulatum*), a plant species that has not been seen in 100 years, is likely extinct.
 - * The Kentucky Natural Areas Inventory completed three new county inventories in Breckinridge, Grayson and Meade counties. A total of 160 sites were investigated for natural area quality with 21 sites identified as significant or notable.
- * Ecological community classification for Kentucky was a priority for the Commission ecology team in 1998. A major effort was made to bring the state classification in line with the new national classification being developed by The Nature Conservancy.



Grass Pink

- * The Stewardship Program completed five prescribed burns, totaling 30 acres on four preserves, during the spring and fall burn seasons. The burn objectives were to reduce the spread of woody species into the glades and barrens and to enhance growing conditions for rare plants. Weather conditions prevented the completion of additional planned burnings. The Commission thanks the Division of Forestry for their assistance.

- * KSNPC received funding from the 1998 General Assembly to establish a Regional Preserves Manager position for southeastern Kentucky. Over 35% of the Commission's total preserve acreage is within five preserves located on Pine Mountain. Our Southeast Regional Preserve Manager, Kyle Napier, began his duties in August.

Highlights of the 98th Meeting of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission

By Barry Howard

The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) held its last quarterly meeting of 1998 on December 8th in Frankfort, Kentucky. The Commission holds regularly scheduled meetings four times per year. KSNPC meetings are open to the public, and all persons interested in the preservation of Kentucky's natural areas are invited and encouraged to attend. Following are some of the highlights from the December meeting.

Update on the Daniel Boone National Forest Planning Process

Two representatives from the Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF), Kevin Lawrence and Brian Knowles, made a presentation in which they summarized efforts to update the comprehensive Land and Resource Management Plan for the DBNF. (Forest plans are amended as needed and must be revised every 10-15 years.)

This planning document is required for each national forest by the National Forest Management Act. In this plan, DBNF hopes to:

- (a) establish goals and objectives for the whole national forest,
- (b) identify desired conditions for different areas within the forest, and
- (c) set standards and guidelines to be applied to management activities on the forest.

One of the goals DBNF has set for its plan is to provide for the viability of all native and desirable non-native species on the Daniel Boone National Forest. Some of the issues that must be addressed include how to provide for the protection of endangered species such as the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) and the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). The plan will also address how to protect special habitats such as clifflines.



Dr. Eunice Johnson and Director Don Dott

Due to the large amount of public land managed in this forest, coupled with the fact that it contains many significant natural areas, KSNPC has for many years had a special interest in the DBNF. In September 1996, KSNPC submitted a detailed report to the DBNF entitled "*Recommendations for the Protection of Biological Diversity on the Daniel Boone National Forest*," and asked that the suggestions contained in the report be considered by forest officials during their planning process. In preparing this report, KSNPC staff used Natural Heritage Program methodology to assess the biological significance of sites within the DBNF proclamation boundary. As a result, KSNPC made a formal recommendation that 53 areas be included in a protected network within the forest. Including sites already managed as protected areas, the total protected acreage would be about 176,000 acres, or 26% of the land currently owned by DBNF.

The decision making process involved in producing this plan is guided by the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires that the public be informed of the environmental effects associated with federal actions. DBNF officials welcome and encourage public participation in this process. To find out more about the DBNF, or to learn how you can provide input during this planning process, visit their web site at:

<http://www.r8web.com/boone>



Dr. Eunice L. Johnson Appointed to Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission

KSNPC welcomed Eunice Louise Johnson, M.D., of Booneville, who has been appointed by Governor Paul Patton as an "at-large" member of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. Dr. Johnson will serve a term expiring July 1, 2001. Dr. Johnson works for the Kentucky River Medical Center and currently chairs the Breathitt County Solid Waste Advisory Committee. She is a member of the Board of Health in Breathitt County, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Kentucky Medical Association.

Clara Wheatley Elected Chair of KSNPC

KSNPC elected Clara Wheatley as its new chairperson. Ms. Wheatley was appointed to KSNPC in 1997 as a representative of the Kentucky National Farmers Organization. She graduated from Spalding University in Louisville with a degree in Medical Technology and retired from Caritas Medical Center in 1987, where she served as supervisor of the blood bank and as a student instructor. Ms. Wheatley is a native of



Judith McCandless and Clara Wheatley

Nelson County and lives on her great-great grandfather's farm near Howardstown.

Judith McCandless Recognized for Contributions to KSNPC

At our December meeting, KSNPC recognized Judith McCandless for her many contributions and years of service to the Commission. Ms. McCandless began her service with

KSNPC in 1992 and was elected chairperson in 1995. During her tenure, she demonstrated an exceptional degree of commitment, and worked diligently to encourage high standards in such areas as strategic planning and the preserve design process. She was also very active in promoting the mission of KSNPC to state legislators, government leaders, and other members of the conservation community. In addition to her service with KSNPC, Ms. McCandless has been a very active member of the Kentucky Conservation Committee, and is a former board member of The Nature Conservancy.

Although Ms. McCandless term as Commissioner expired, we will continue to rely on her advice and experience. She was formally appointed by the commissioners as an official advisor to KSNPC.

Julian Campbell Receives Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission Biological Diversity Award

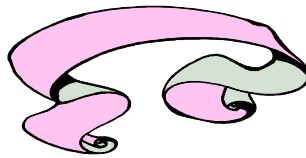
Dr. Julian Campbell of the Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was selected as the third recipient of KSNPC's annual Biological Diversity Protection Award. This honor is given to the individual who has demonstrated outstanding dedication and success toward protecting Kentucky's biological diversity.

Dr. Campbell is a native of Great Britain, and first visited and fell in love with the natural beauty of Kentucky in 1971. He has lived in Kentucky since 1976. Since that time, he has been very supportive of the Commission and has played an important and integral role in the effort to identify and protect significant natural areas across the state.

In his capacity as the Inventory Coordinator and Botanist for Kentucky TNC, as well as on his own time, Dr. Campbell has made many contributions toward the identification and discovery of outstanding natural communities and rare species in Kentucky. He was instrumental in describing a plant new to science, the Rockcastle

aster (*Aster saxicastellii*), which is endemic to the Big South Fork Cumberland River of Kentucky and Tennessee. He also has discovered or re-discovered six plant taxa in Kentucky, and recently worked to secure a valuable collection of Kentucky plants being incorporated into the Western Kentucky University Arboretum.

One of his more significant long-term accomplishments has been the compilation of a floristic database for Kentucky, which is based on county distribution records obtained from herbaria across the U.S. This has been a very time consuming project that eventually will lead to a publication on the flora of Kentucky.



Meeting Dates for 1999

The Commission has set the following dates and locations for its 1999 quarterly meetings:

- ***March 16**, Camp Nelson (Jessamine County), with a field trip to Kentucky River Palisades State Nature Preserve.
- ***June 15**, Vanceburg (Lewis County), with a field trip to Crooked Creek Barrens.
- * **September 14**, Wickliffe (Ballard County), with a field trip to Axe Lake Swamp State Nature Preserve.
- ***December 7**, Frankfort (meeting only) at the KSNPC conference room.

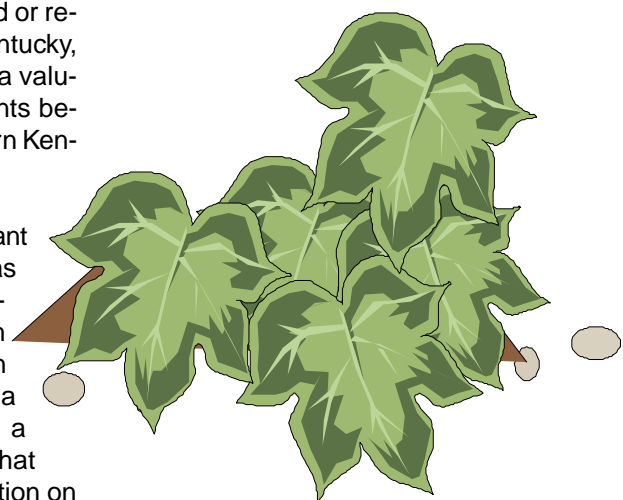
Persons interested in attending these meetings should contact KSNPC to confirm meeting locations and times.



Julian Campbell & Clara Wheatley

Dr. Campbell has been actively involved in preservation and protection of natural areas in the Lexington/Fayette County area, including Shady Lane Woods, which is now part of the University of Kentucky Arboretum, where he serves as a volunteer. He is a board member of the Land and Nature Trust of the Bluegrass and a co-founder and past president of the Kentucky Native Plant Society. He is a board member of Raven Run Sanctuary and has conducted botanical surveys and worked on the management plan for the sanctuary.

Dr. Campbell has also served as mentor for many amateur and developing botanists, spending a great deal of his own time to heighten their botanical skills and awareness. KSNPC commissioners and staff are honored to be able to recognize Dr. Campbell for these many accomplishments and his continuing devotion to the preservation of biodiversity in Kentucky.



Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund

by Barry Howard

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, not only to the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, but also to other state agencies and units of local government throughout the Commonwealth. This funding source is still relatively new, and it certainly doesn't solve all the needs that exist in Kentucky for money to preserve our most sensitive and vulnerable natural areas. However, this is by far the most meaningful and significant source of funding that exists today to preserve heritage lands in our state.

The beginnings of this fund can be traced to the 1990 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, which established in the State Treasury, a fund entitled "Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund" (KHLCHF). This legislation also established a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board, which was charged with the duties of reviewing and rewarding all grants from the fund. This legislation, known as the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Act (KRS 146.55 - 570), is a very important first step toward allocating resources for the protection of natural areas in Kentucky. However, at that time the General Assembly did not provide a funding mechanism, nor did it authorize or appropriate money for the fund.

The original legislation did establish the purposes and priorities for grants of money from the fund. These are:

- (a)** *Natural areas that possess unique features such as habitat for rare and endangered species;*
- (b)** *Areas important to migratory birds;*
- (c)** *Areas that perform important natural functions that are subject to alteration or loss; or*
- (d)** *Areas to be preserved in their natural state for public use, outdoor recreation and education.*

In 1994, during the administration of Governor Brereton Jones, the General Assembly passed House Bill 368. Among other things, this bill amended the original legislation to define the composition of the KHLCHF Board as it now exists. More importantly, this bill also amended existing statutes and created one new statute in order to provide revenue for the fund.

Through the end 1998, over 17 million dollars have been deposited into the KHLCHF. The three largest revenue sources and the amounts they generated for the fund during this period (rounded to the nearest \$1000) are:

- (1)** The state portion of the tax applied to unmined minerals (\$8,138,000).
- (2)** Fines collected by the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet for violation of various environmental laws and regulations (\$6,331,000).
- (3)** Sales of specially authorized environmental license plates (\$1,091,000).

In addition some donations have been received, and the fund accrued \$1,537,000 in interest during this period. The Act specifies that half the money in the fund shall be allocated equally among five state agencies. Consequently, the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission automatically receives 10% of the total, and 10% shares are also allocated to the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, the Kentucky Department of Parks, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry. In addition, 10% is allocated for wild river corridors established by the Kentucky Wild Rivers Act. The remaining 50% is allocated to state agencies, local governments, and state colleges and universities. The KHLCHF Board must often choose among competing applications when deciding how to allocate this half.



The KHLCHF Board consists of members from 5 state agencies, plus 7 members appointed by the Governor for 3 year terms. Representing government agencies are the following state officials (or their designees): the commissioner of the Department of Parks, the director of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, the commissioner of the Department for Natural Resources, the commissioner of the Department for Fish & Wildlife Resources, and the chairperson of the Kentucky Environmental Education Council. The other 7 board members are

appointed from persons nominated by various Kentucky organizations with natural resource interests (including the Kentucky Academy of Sciences and the Kentucky Chapter of the Nature Conservancy).

Any unit of government requesting money must submit an application to the KHLCHF Board. This applies both to the state agencies that automatically receive a portion of the fund, and to all other units of state and local government that submit project requests for the remaining 50% (often referred to as the "competitive" portion of the fund). The application is submitted on a standardized form, and includes a breakdown of the costs for the project.

The KHLCHF can provide money to pay for land itself, as well as associated costs of acquisition such as appraisals, a survey, and title opinion. In addition the Heritage

Land Conservation Act mandates that at least 10% of the money an applicant receives from the fund be used for management of the lands acquired. The Act also mandates that each recipient of money shall develop a resource management plan for each tract acquired. Hence, the Board requires that applicants include as a part of their application a preliminary plan for management of the land, and a breakdown estimating how the management portion of the money will be used.

If within two years, an applicant cannot acquire the land approved by the Board, then the money approved reverts back into the fund and is made available for other projects. It is, however, possible for an applicant to request an extension of a project.

The Heritage Land Conservation Act requires that land only be acquired from willing sellers, and that the Board shall "maximize the greatest public benefit by taking advantage of those priority areas available below fair market value and where public or private funds are available on a matching basis." If an applicant successfully acquires land using KHLCHF money, then by law, this land must be "maintained in perpetuity" for the purposes set forth in the Act (These purposes are listed earlier in this article). To ensure that this land is maintained in its natural state and not diverted to another purpose, the Board requires that local governments convey to the Commonwealth of Kentucky a conservation easement over all the land acquired.

Since it began approving projects in 1995, through the end of the fiscal year June 1998, the KHLCHF Board has approved 54 projects in 29 counties across the state.

Persons interested in receiving more information, including an application for funding, should contact Joe Dietz at Department for Natural Resources; 663 Teton Trail; Frankfort, KY 40601 (Phone 502-564-2184). Keep in mind that a unit of local government will have to submit the application, and that requests for funding must typically compete with applications from other cities, counties, or state agencies. Applications are due two months prior to the KHLCHF Board meeting at which a project will be considered. The remaining 1999 meetings are on April 19, July 19, and October 18. All of these meetings are open to the public and begin at 1PM at the Department for Natural Resources conference room, unless otherwise announced.

The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission encourages interested citizens throughout Kentucky to work with local elected officials to pursue the acquisition and protection of high quality natural areas. Kentucky is still in large part a rural state, and the undeveloped, "natural" land found near many of our state's communities is a vital and integral part of our heritage. We should all be thankful for the foresight our state elected officials have shown in providing local citizens and state agencies, through the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, the resources to save and protect some of our most cherished natural areas.

Black Mountain Update

by Brainard Palmer-Ball

Since the last issue of *Naturally Kentucky*, there have been several developments relative to mining on Black Mountain. On January 29, 1999, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) filed a "Lands Unsuitable Petition" to designate the higher portions of Black Mountain as unsuitable for surface coal mining. The Petition seeks this designation for the contiguous portion of Black Mountain above 3,000 feet, which includes approximately 20,000 acres of land.

The Petition states that "surface coal mining would damage the biological integrity of an ecosystem whose habitat and diversity is unique to the state and perhaps the region; where the visual impacts of mining would indelibly mar the scenic beauty that is an integral part of the natural, historical and cultural landscape of the region; and where degradation of the water quality of the headwater reaches of the streams originating on Black Mountain could compromise the integrity of the biology of the streams."

In response to the filing of the Lands Unsuitable Petition, the companies owning rights to the coal reserves on the mountain filed a request for a formal hearing to have the Petition dismissed based on technical deficiencies. This hearing is scheduled for March 3rd, and if the petition is not upheld it could jeopardize KFTC's efforts to protect the mountain. A public hearing will be held on April 6, 1999, at the Black Mountain Elementary School in Kenvir, Kentucky, to receive public input on its merit. The normal one-year public comment period has been shortened to 90 days because of the presence of pending coal mining permit applications within the Petition area.



"Extinction is not something to contemplate, it is something to rebel against."

-- Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*



Treasures on Unsteady Grounds - Kentucky's Streamhead Bogs

by Martina Hines

As part of a statewide inventory for natural areas, Aissa Feldmann and I roamed the countryside of Pulaski County last summer. Weeks of uneventful fieldwork were finally rewarded when we stumbled upon a beautiful rare orchid, grass pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*), which is currently known from one other location in Kentucky. This orchid grows at the edge of a bog covered with Cinnamon and Royal ferns and sphagnum mosses. Later visits to the same site revealed one of the largest known populations in Kentucky of the white fringeless orchid, (*Platanthera integrilabia*), a globally rare plant, and the yellow-fringed orchid, (*Platanthera cristata*), a state rare species.

We were lucky that day in July, but luck alone did not lead us to this outstanding bog. Its discovery required the cooperation of several knowledgeable biologists. Prior to our survey, Dr. Julian Campbell from The Nature Conservancy suggested that we search some of Pulaski County's eastern uplands, since boggy places had been found in similar areas in the nearby National Forest. Based on the fact that bogs only occur in areas with flat topography, we scanned topographic maps for likely locations. In the spring, when Aissa, Marc Evans and I surveyed these spots via helicopter, Marc noticed patches of Cinnamon ferns in some. We knew that these needed to be ground-checked, because Cinnamon ferns often indicate good orchid habitat. Nearly all the local bog orchids flower in late July; it would therefore have been logical to schedule a visit for this month. But here is where the luck came in. A decision was made to visit the site a month earlier. Thanks to the landowner's permission, we were able to visit the site in late June. We noticed several unidentifiable orchid leaves, but just as we were leaving, we

literally stumbled upon a flowering grass-pink. This beautiful pink orchid flowers only for a few days. During all other times, its narrow leaves make it nearly indistinguishable from the surrounding grassy vegetation. During later visits we discovered the white-fringeless orchids and yellow-fringed orchids. It was definitely one of the most exciting moments I have experienced as a biologist, when I walked down an old trail toward the bog and, looking up, noticed hundreds of flowering orchids.

So why are there so few populations of these orchids in Kentucky? Certain orchids, such as the white-fringeless orchid, only grow in bogs. The type of bog they prefer is called an acid seep, a place where water seeps out of sand-



Grass Pink Orchid (*Calopogon tuberosus*)
Photos courtesy of John R. MacGregor

stone and stays somewhat perched for part the year. Sphagnum mosses and Cinnamon and Royal ferns are often good indicators for suitable habitat conditions, but acid seeps can provide habitat for hundreds of plant species. At the Pulaski County site alone, we have already discovered over 60 species. Unfortunately, acid seeps are one of Kentucky's most sensitive and rare ecosystems.

While they are naturally rare and occur only as small and widely scattered patches, many also have been destroyed by development, grazing and mining. A slight change in the hydrology of a seep can degrade the habitat for many species.

In 1992, during a helicopter survey, Marc Evans discovered a series of small seeps in a rather unlikely location - near the top of Cumberland and Pine mountains. While the people of Maine or Michigan would laugh at us for referring to these tiny wetlands as bogs, they are nevertheless unique ecosystems that harbor a number of species commonly found in northern bogs. Just like bogs in the northern United States and Canada, they are covered with thick mats of sphagnum mosses, ferns, rushes, and sedges. The unique hydrological conditions coupled with the high elevation created a refuge for some plants that would otherwise have disappeared from Kentucky at the end of the last ice age. Among them are red sphagnum (*Sphagnum rubellum*) and tawny cotton-grass (*Eriophorum virginicum*). Pitcher plants have not been found in our Kentucky bogs, but we hopefully will soon be able to report the discovery of this beautiful insectivorous plant in Kentucky. One characteristic that distinguishes our Kentucky mountain bogs from bogs found further north are thick stands of shoulder high Cinnamon, Royal and New York ferns, which remind one of scenes from Steven Spielberg's "Jurassic Park." Because of their remote location, these bogs have not been thoroughly studied, and some have never been visited. We are planning to explore them in the coming field season and learn more about these natural treasures. Who knows what we will find!



A Good Year for Fire

by Rick Remington, Western Regional Preserves Manager

Fire has played a key historic role in the formation and maintenance of many of Kentucky's ecological communities. Prairies, glades, barrens, and many oak woodlands all relied upon fire to reduce litter, eliminate brush and woody competition, and perpetuate sun-loving plant species. Many species of birds, mammals, insects, and reptiles also benefited from the periodic fires. It has been a major part of the KSNPC Stewardship staff's mission to reintroduce fire to nature preserves containing fire-dependant communities. 1998 marked another successful year of prescribed burning with the completion of five burns on four nature preserves and one registered natural area.

Although plagued by rain during the spring burn season, we were able to conduct two burns on the only two days dry enough to do so. A 10 acre burn on a prairie and oak barrens remnant was conducted at Raymond Athey Barrens State Nature Preserve (SNP) in Logan County, and a 5 acre burn on a prairie and limestone slope glade was conducted at Jim Scudder SNP in Hardin County. Our thanks to Mike Stokes, Western Kentucky University professor who assisted us at Raymond Athey Barrens.

The fall burn season weather was a bit more cooperative, but we



Prescribed burn at Eastview Barrens
Photos courtesy of Dr. Bill Campbell

still had planned more than the weather allowed us to accomplish. A 10 acre prairie burn was conducted at Eastview Barrens SNP in Hardin County, a 1.5 acre prairie burn was conducted at Raymond Athey Barrens SNP, and a 2 acre prairie burn was conducted at Big Clifty Prairie Registered Natural Area (RNA) in Grayson County.

Special thanks go out to the Kentucky Division of Forestry for their help in completing these burns. Our thanks to Ron Cicerello for pitching in on our Raymond Athey Barrens burn. We also thank the Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for assisting with the burn at our jointly owned preserve, Eastview Barrens.

1999 promises to be a very busy year as we burn our way towards the millennium. All six members of the Stewardship Program have taken fire-training courses. The Eastern and Western Regional Managers are the latest staff members to complete TNC's Ecological Burn training and are on their way to becoming fire leaders. Our improved equipment enables us to safely and efficiently



Western Regional Preserve Manager Rick Remington

execute burns, and our list of cooperators continues to grow. We have established vegetative monitoring plots on the fire maintained preserves.

Eight burns are currently being planned for this spring, although weather and logistics often dictate a lower number. Sites on the list are Raymond Athey Barrens SNP, Jim Scudder SNP, Logan County Glade SNP, Woodburn Glade SNP, Barkley Airport Prairie RNA, and Hymes Knob State Natural Area. We'll keep our fingers crossed for good weather!

Vote for the Next Nature Plate

A new nature license plate will be released this year and the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation fund Board wants your input. What do you want to see on the next nature plate? A white-tailed deer, the state butterfly on a gold-enrod stem or how about a Kentucky bass or a bobcat?

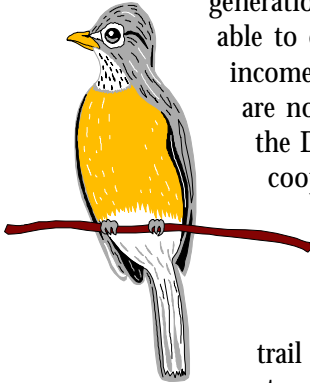
These were the top four suggestions from the 1998 Kentucky State Fair. Sample plates have been manufactured and the voting has begun. A display with these four license plates will be traveling across the state during the next several months. Kentucky residents with a valid driver's license are eligible to vote. Visit our website at: <http://www.nr.state.ky.us/nrepc/dnr/ksnpc/index.htm>

Currently, Kentucky residents have a choice of two nature plates: a Kentucky warbler on a tulip poplar branch or a cardinal on a Kentucky coffee tree branch. The nature plate costs \$10 more than the cost of a regular license plate. These funds are deposited in the Kentucky Heritage Land conservation fund and are used for the purchase and management of nature preserves, wildlife management areas, state parks, recreation and environmental education areas, state forests, wild river corridors, and wetlands. Since the fund was established more than 3,000 acres have been purchased in 13 counties.

We need your support! Please consider purchasing a nature license plate. Help preserve "Nature's Finest"!

Remember to "Save Something Wild On Your Taxes"

Less than one percent of Kentucky's land and water remains undeveloped or unmodified by humankind. The few natural areas that remain are being destroyed faster than we can find and protect them. The checkoff program is the most convenient way for many Kentuckians to participate in protecting the natural heritage we leave to future generations. Yet, less than two percent of all eligible Kentuckians donate. Kentuckians have been able to contribute to the Nature and Wildlife Fund through the checkoff option on the Kentucky income tax form since tax year 1980. Donations reached their highest level in 1997 (1998 figures are not finalized) at \$109,792 and an average donation of \$5.94. Donations are divided between the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the State Nature Preserves Commission. Both cooperate on programs to protect Kentucky's rare plants and animals; acquire and protect the most important and threatened forests, caves, wetlands and prairies; and provide management to our diverse wildlife heritage.



The Commission's share of donations are used for the maintenance of preserves, including trail construction, exotic species control, brush removal for community restoration, firebreak construction, posting/blazing boundaries and rare species management. Firebelly darters, glass lizards, gray bats, prairie gentians, white lady-slippers and many other species benefit from the management and protection made possible by checkoff dollars. Your support helps protect and manage Kentucky's remaining natural heritage areas for generations to come. No amount is too small. Please help save something wild by checking off your donation under the 'Nature and Wildlife Fund' option on your income tax form. For inquiries regarding the Nature and Wildlife Fund, please contact the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission at 502-573-2886.

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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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