

# Naturally Kentucky

SPRING 2001

Number 34

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.



## *We are celebrating our 25th Anniversary*

by Joyce Bender  
Stewardship Program Coordinator

This year marks the Commission's 25th anniversary. For two and a half decades we have been carrying out the mandate established by statute to "secure for the people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of natural areas by establishing a system of nature preserves, protecting these areas and gathering and disseminating information regarding them, establishing and maintaining a registry of natural areas and otherwise encouraging and assisting in the preservation of natural areas and features." It is a tall order for a small state agency, but we have accomplished a great deal with a minimal number of staff and limited funds.

The newsletters this year will reflect on our achievements and note the goals we have yet to attain. Activities have been planned to enable Kentuckians across the state to participate in the celebration of our silver anniversary. A series of hikes on state nature preserves have been scheduled throughout 2001. This issue lists hikes that have been planned for the upcoming months. Each issue will provide updates on the schedule, and information on all of our hikes will be available on our web site. We are offering hikes at a few preserves that may be visited only with a guide, as well as walks at old favorites that are open year round. Please call to reserve your place.

Our silver year has us looking at new ways to improve our abilities to provide information from our knowledgeable staff and the natural heritage database about the rare species that inhabit Kentucky and our efforts to protect natural areas. Look on our web site for new features such as rare plant and animal fact sheets, virtual tours of selected preserves, downloadable preserve trail maps, and new links to sites relevant to our work and that of our partners and sister agencies.

Please feel free to send us a note about our past 25 years or the next 25. We hope that friends old and new will take the time to share memories and make new ones with us this year.

## Mountain Wildflower Weekend

May 11-13, 2001

Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) with a week-end of guided hikes and programs featuring mountain wildflowers May 11 - 13, 2001.

Commission botanists will conduct tours of several state nature preserves, including Bad Branch, Blanton Forest and Hi Lewis Pine Barrens, and present informational programs.

For more information and to register for Mountain Wildflower Weekend, contact Deborah White at 502-573-2886 or by e-mail at [deborah.white@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:deborah.white@mail.state.ky.us) and join us for our celebration.



Be sure to check out our web page at [www.kynaturepreserves.org](http://www.kynaturepreserves.org) for future treks to Kentucky's unique state nature preserves.

## Lower Howard's Creek Becomes 40th State Nature Preserve

by David Skinner  
Nature Preserve Regional Manager

Few places in the Bluegrass region are jam-packed with as much scenic beauty, biodiversity and cultural heritage as Lower Howard's Creek in Clark County. As one walks the old wagon roads that were once busy thoroughfares for a bustling milling community, it's hard to absorb all of the surroundings. Nostalgic stone fences are constant reminders of the industriousness of the people who settled this valley in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The landscape is striking - steep slopes and cliffs abruptly rise above Lower Howard's Creek, creating impressive vistas. Rock outcrops, waterfalls, riffles and deep blue-green pools are framed by the forest-covered slopes and valleys.

This gorge is rich in native plants, from trees to spring wildflowers. Despite the intensity of human activity that once took place in this now tranquil gorge, the topography ensured that there was always a place for wild things. Two rare species found here, the running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*), a federally endangered species, and water stitchwort (*Stellaria fontinalis*), a state threatened species, were not protected on a state nature preserve until Lower Howard's Creek was dedicated. Five features listed on the National Register of Historic Places occur on the preserve, two of the most notable being the John Martin Mill and House. Both are impressive stone structures built in the 1780's.

The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission dedicated the site as a state nature preserve on January 22, 2001. The Clark County Fiscal Court purchased the land with Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Funds, and the Friends of Lower Howard's Creek will be active in the management and restoration of the cultural features of this unique area. In the near future, guided hikes will be available on this 244 acre preserve.

To learn more about the state's newest nature preserve, visit our web page at [www.kynaturepreserves.org/howardscreek.html](http://www.kynaturepreserves.org/howardscreek.html).



Scene from Lower Howard's Creek Heritage Park and State Nature Preserve. Photo by Robert Polsgrove of the Kentucky Trust for Historic Preservation.

## Director's Notes

by Don Dott, Executive Director

When it rains it pours! Hectic and fast paced are the words that pop to mind when I think back over the last several months. And that applies to all the KSNPC staff, not just to me. Our recent addition of two primary staff positions, Ron Scott as land protection specialist and Ceci Bunch as executive secretary, should help to get things on a more even keel. But all this high energy has its payoffs. The fundraising for Blanton Forest has been very successful so far, and should remain so. There will be a more focused effort to seek support in the Louisville area this spring. A new preserve is imminent (only the deed closing remains) which will give us our first preserve on the banks of the Mississippi River – and a very diverse wetland. Plans are in the works to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nature Preserves Commission. These events should help raise our public profile and support. The biennial report for the legislature was prepared and delivered while the General Assembly was in session. The stewardship staff is preparing for the spring prescribed burn season which will help restore fire-dependent natural communities.

So keep your eyes on your local papers, especially if we have a preserve near you. We may soon schedule a field trip there for our neighbors and anyone else interested in these ecological gems as part of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. We hope to see you in the great outdoors!

## Invertebrates...catch the fever!

by Ellis L. Lauder milk  
Invertebrate Biologist



It has been estimated that invertebrates (animals without backbones) encompass at least 95 percent of all animal species, while vertebrates receive 95 percent of the attention. However, invertebrates provide important functions in the world, such as pollination of plants, decomposition of waste and pollution, and food for other organisms, to name just a few. Kentucky has a diverse invertebrate fauna, and with its abundance of caves and karst habitats, it has a particularly diverse and rare subterranean fauna. Due to a lack of personnel and funding during the Commission's 25-year history, only a few groups of invertebrates have received significant attention. In recent years, we identified a growing need to broaden our focus by gathering and maintaining data on additional invertebrate groups for the Kentucky Natural Heritage Program. I have devoted part of my time to invertebrates since I began work with KSNPC in 1993, but will now act as the Commission's full-time invertebrate biologist, focusing on rare aquatic, terrestrial and subterranean species.

Since 1993, approximately 71 invertebrate species have been added to KSNPC's list of rare, threatened, and endangered (hereafter "monitored") species, bringing the total to 90 monitored species in the following groups: arachnids, gastropods, insects and millipedes. Current information suggests that at least 30-40 additional species should be added as soon as possible. Recent publications like Dr. Charles Covell's *The Butterflies and Moths of Kentucky: An Annotated Checklist* have provided important baseline information on groups for which information had been lacking and have highlighted the need for a more concerted

effort to protect Kentucky's rare invertebrates. Following is the current number of monitored species in Kentucky summarized by selected group: **Gastropoda** (snails and slugs) – 25 taxa; **Arachnida** (scorpions, spiders, mites, ticks and harvestmen) – 5 cave-obligate taxa have recently been added to our list and 6 more taxa are likely to be added; **Diplopoda** (millipedes) – 5 recently added cave-obligate taxa: one additional species will likely be added; **Coleoptera** (beetles) – 25 species, mostly cave-obligates, but several more are under consideration; **Collembola** (springtails) – 1 recently added cave-obligate species; **Ephemeroptera** (mayflies) – 8 species (one additional species is on our list of extirpated species); **Odonata** (dragonflies and damselflies) – 4 species, but several more will be added; **Plecoptera** (stoneflies) – 3 recently added species; **Lepidoptera** (butterflies and moths) – 12 species; and **Trichoptera** (caddisflies) – 2 species.

While some invertebrates may not be as conspicuous or charismatic as many of their higher profile cousins, they are no less important in the protection of Kentucky's natural heritage. I look forward to the challenges of working to conserve such a diverse group of animals, and helping to ensure they receive the consideration they warrant.



Pictured at the Commission's office are our newest employees, Ron Scott and Ceci Bunch.

Join us in August at John James Audubon State Park and State Nature Preserve and learn about Kentucky's diverse and beautiful dragonfly and damselfly faunas at the lakes and wetlands in the Henderson area. The tour guide will be Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission invertebrate biologist Ellis Lauder milk. Bring a pair of close-focusing binoculars, if possible, for a better view of some species.

### John James Audubon State Park and Nature Preserve Henderson County - August 3-4, 2001

- Aug. 3 at 7:30 p.m. (CST). Slide show: "An Introduction to Kentucky Dragonflies and Damselflies"
- Aug. 4 from 9:00-4:00. Field trip to Wilderness Lake inside the preserve. Moderate hike.
- Side trip to Sloughs Wildlife Management Area, Sauerheber Unit. Easy hike.

For further details, contact Ellis at the Commission's Frankfort office by phone at 502-573-2886 or by e-mail at [ellis.laudermilk@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:ellis.laudermilk@mail.state.ky.us).

# Sherrri Evans Memorial Fund

by Don Dott, Executive Director

Dr. Allen Risk of Morehead State University is this year's recipient of the grant awarded in memory of the many contributions of Sherrri Evans to protect Kentucky's native biodiversity. Dr. Risk submitted a proposal to inventory the bryophytes (mosses) of Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve. This project will build on research already begun in this area and is part of his broader effort to research and document this poorly known group of flora in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. It will provide much needed information on these species and has the promise of uncovering some well-kept secrets by focusing on Blanton Forest. It also helps implement our objective to fully utilize Blanton Forest, a focal

point for biological research. As the 13<sup>th</sup> largest old growth forest in the eastern United States, it certainly holds lessons that can be uncovered only in its rare, largely undisturbed natural communities.

All of this promising work would not be possible without your help and the support of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, which has provided the lion's share of support for this grant. The grant will be made available again at the end of the year (details for submitting a proposal will be announced in the fall newsletter). If you would like to provide financial support for this important work and honor the memory of Sherrri Evans, we are happy to accept contributions today.

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

## KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

### COMMISSIONERS

CLARA WHEATLEY, CHAIR  
KENNETH JACKSON, SECRETARY  
O.D. HAWKINS  
EUNICE JOHNSON, M.D.  
DAVID W. WRIGHT

### STAFF

DONALD S. DOTT, JR.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JOYCE BENDER  
CECILIA BUNCH  
RONALD CICERELLO  
AMY COVERT  
EMILY CRAIN  
NICHOLAS DROZDA  
MARC EVANS  
BRYCE FIELDS  
EVELYN HOUSE  
MARTINA HINES  
SARA HINES  
ELLIS LAUDERMILK  
BREE McMURRAY  
KYLE NAPIER  
BRINARD PALMER-BALL, JR.  
PAUL QUINLAN  
RICK REMINGTON  
RON SCOTT  
DAVID SKINNER  
DAN RUSSELL  
DEBORAH WHITE

An Equal Opportunity Employer

How to contact the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission:

Mail: 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort KY 40601-1403

Phone: 502-573-2886 Fax: 502-573-2355

E-mail: [nrepc.ksnpcmail@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:nrepc.ksnpcmail@mail.state.ky.us)

Visit us online at: [www.kynaturepreserves.org](http://www.kynaturepreserves.org)

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. To request materials in an alternative format, contact the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission at 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601-1403 or call 502-573-2886. Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired persons may contact the agency by using the Kentucky Relay Service, a toll-free telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD). For voice to TDD, call 800-648-6057. For TDD to voice, call 800-648-6065.

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION  
801 SCHENKEL LANE  
FRANKFORT KY 40601-1403

PRESORT STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
FRANKFORT, KY  
PERMIT NO. 379



Please recycle this recycled paper.

Printed with state funds.

