

Naturally Kentucky

Summer 2003

Number 39



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.

James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve Dedicated at Pine Mountain Settlement School

by Ceci Mitchell

On June 30, 2003, more than 200 individuals attended the dedication ceremony for the James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve (Bickford SNP) conducted by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC). Located on the campus of the Pine Mountain Settlement School (PMSS) in Harlan County, Ky., this 348-acre newly dedicated state nature preserve was named in honor of the former secretary of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet (NREPC) who died in late 2002.

Attendees included Gov. Paul Patton, Mrs. Judi Patton, NREPC Secretary Henry C. List, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner Hugh Archer, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Secretary James Codell, U. S. Rep. Hal Rogers, Mrs. Shirley Bickford, and representing PMSS were Dr. James Greene III and Ms. Nancy Adams. Individuals representing a multitude of federal, state and local agencies and organizations were also present.

As part of the Commission's dedication ceremony, informative slideshows were provided by KSNPC staff members. Marc Evans, KSNPC senior ecologist, noted the ecological value of the entire Pine Mountain corridor, including PMSS. Ellis Lauder milk, KSNPC invertebrate biologist, focused on the unique species endemic to the preserve.

Of the day, NREPC Secretary Henry C. List said, "I don't think I can overemphasize the importance of the Nature Preserves Commission and all the people that make things like this happen on behalf of the state of Kentucky."

Gov. Patton spoke of his former cabinet secretary and friend, James E. Bickford, who was raised in Harlan County. Patton said that when it comes to our land, "None of us own the land; we are only stewards of the land, at best, for just a lifetime. And as stewards of the land, not only as individuals, but, as a society, we have an absolute responsibility to make sure that we leave this earth better than we found it."

U.S. Rep. Harold "Hal" Rogers, Somerset, of the 5th Congressional District, spoke of developing PRIDE (Personal Responsibility In a Desirable Environment) with Bickford. Rogers said, "I can't thank all of you enough, whose had a part in naming this beautiful preserved land in the name of James Bickford. He was a man who was, if there ever was one, an ideal public servant."

Dr. James Greene III, of the Board of Trustees of PMSS, spoke and said, "Many of the great issues that confront Kentucky and Appalachia today are tied intimately to the environment - flood control, water quality, solid waste disposal, logging and timber management, road building, mineral extraction and development of energy resources. The creation of rational environment policies requires a citizenry which is educated and understands what is at stake." Dr. Greene went on to say he believed that Pine Mountain Settlement School can play an important role in environmental education.

Mrs. Shirley Bickford, widow of James E. Bickford, commented about her husband's devotion to improving Kentucky's environment and spoke glowingly about the work of NREPC and KSNPC. She said, "This preserve will speak of Jim's love for Harlan County, for Pine Mountain and of eastern Kentucky. It will serve as a reminder to my children and grandchildren, as well as to yours, of the importance of protecting Kentucky's environment." She added, "I believe if Jim could pick any mountain on which to rest it would be here on Pine Mountain, a special place he truly loved."

(continued on Page 2)

(continued from Page 1)



Shown left to right: Mrs. Shirley Bickford, Mrs. Clara Wheatley, Dr. James Greene, Secretary Henry List, Gov. Paul Patton, U. S. Rep. Hal Rogers.

In unanimously voting to dedicate the James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve, Chair of KSNPC, Clara Wheatley said, “the Commission is honored to be dedicating land on the north face of Pine Mountain, which will provide the highest level of protection available under state law.” After the dedication ceremony, the cedar sign to be erected at the trailhead entering the preserve was unveiled (see photo).

Ms. Nancy Adams, PMSS director, said that in 2001, Bickford “made a critical decision to protect PMSS from outside development.” She added that Bickford “took a personal interest in the school and encouraged us to join others to work to improve the educational and

economic opportunities for people in surrounding counties to restore their hopes for the future.”

Following the meeting and dedication, Ms. Adams invited everyone to a reception provided by PMSS and KSNPC. Guided hikes of the preserve were offered by Ben Begley, PMSS naturalist, and Kyle Napier, KSNPC regional preserves manager. An unexpected thunderstorm kept the hikers to a daring few.

No one among the standing room only crowd attending the dedication of the James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve seemed to mind the on-again/off-again rain on the lush and verdant Pine Mountain in Harlan County. The dedication by KSNPC, guaranteeing the perpetual preservation of this important natural area, as well as the homage of naming of the preserve for former NREPC secretary James E. Bickford, brought together many individuals representing diverse positions in Kentucky’s environmental arena. On this day, both environmental regulators and the regulated came together for a day’s celebration of a momentous occasion.

As KSNPC Executive Director Donald S. Dott Jr. was overheard saying, “All of Kentucky - past, present *and* future - benefits by this action today.”

KSNPC Commissioner Kenneth D. Jackson retires after 14 Years

by Ceci Mitchell

Representing the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts, Kenneth D. Jackson of Mercer County, Ky. was initially appointed to the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) in 1989. He served four, three-year appointments continually under four governors and also served several terms as chair. However, due to health reasons, Ken opted to “cheer from the sidelines” when his term expired on July 1, 2003.

Commissioner Jackson was pleased that one of his last orders of business was the dedication of the James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve on June 30. Gov. Paul Patton and U. S. Rep. Hal Rogers both commended and congratulated Commissioner Jackson at his last KSNPC meeting. Patton additionally provided Commissioner Jackson with a letter acknowledging Ken’s years of service and accomplishments with KSNPC. Commissioner Jackson also received a formal letter of appreciation from all the commissioners of KSNPC thanking him for his good work and dedicated service.

During a dinner at Pine Mountain Settlement School Commissioner Jackson was honored by commissioners, staff and others, some of whom traveled to southeast Kentucky specifically to attend the retirement dinner. KSNPC honored him with a framed reprint of an original James Archambeault photograph taken at Bad Branch Falls State Nature Preserve. Staff presented him with cards and a gift of a large basket of native Kentucky wildflower perennials. And KSNPC Executive Director Donald S. Dott Jr. also presented a gift of Rebecca Ruth candy to Mrs. Kenneth (Lee) Jackson for her 14 years of accompanying Ken to his KSNPC meetings.

As Ken Jackson said during his comments at his retirement dinner, “There is no better bunch of folks or state office doing as good work as there is with the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. I’m proud to have been a part of it.”

Director's Notes

by Don Dott
Executive Director

The June 30 KSNPC quarterly Commission meeting was probably one of the best meetings we have ever had. The impetus for this meeting was dedication of the James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve at Pine Mountain Settlement School (PMSS), a highly regarded community education facility in Harlan County, founded in 1913. The new preserve of 348 acres on the north face of Pine Mountain was named and dedicated in tribute to James E. Bickford, former secretary of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet, who died last October. Secretary Bickford was instrumental in assuring the future of the PMSS when he granted a petition declaring lands in close proximity to the school unsuitable for surface mining operations. Dedication of the natural area on the mountain at the school protects a high quality mixed mesophytic forest, Sawmill Hollow Cave, and a diverse invertebrate fauna including two rare beetles and two species new to science. Six rare plant species, including fetterbush and golden saxifrage, are also known to occur on the preserve.

The dedication ceremony was well attended due to the high esteem and respect earned by Secretary Bickford, a retired U.S. Army brigadier general, during his seven years as secretary. Gov. and First Lady Judi Patton, U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, Cabinet Secretaries Hank List and James Codell, Mrs. Shirley Bickford and her daughters and their families were in attendance, as well as numerous other officials, dignitaries and guests. It was a wonderful opportunity for the Commission to honor Secretary Bickford for his work to protect some of the more special environs of his boyhood home in Harlan County, and to avail ourselves of the opportunity to showcase our agency and its mission before our government leaders.

We also marked another very significant event at the PMSS meeting. Commissioner Kenneth Jackson, representative of the State Association of Conservation Districts, retired at the end of this meeting. His guidance, experience and wisdom will be greatly missed. During Commissioner Jackson's tenure KSNPC added 26 preserves, several staff ecologists, a data manager and land protection specialist. The Natural Heritage program added over 5,000 rare species records and the Natural Area Inventory program assessed 30 additional counties, finding gems like Blanton Forest, Terrapin Creek and Three Ponds SNPs. Commissioner Jackson was an instrumental leader for KSNPC during a period of substantial growth. We wish him the best.

While saddened by Commissioner Jackson's retirement, I am pleased to welcome Mrs. Gayle Horn, who was appointed by Gov. Patton to succeed Commissioner Jackson. Commissioner Horn comes to us highly recommended by her predecessor. She is not only very active in the Conservation Districts Association but is also the Deputy Mercer County Judge-Executive. I look forward to a long and productive association with our newest Commissioner, Gayle Horn. And last, but not least I am pleased to inform you that our current chair, Commissioner Clara Wheatley has been reappointed for another term on the Commission.

Land Protection Report

by Ron Scott
Land Protection Specialist

On June 27, a multi-year effort to permanently protect one of the Commonwealth's rarest plant species – *Leavenworthia exigua* var. *laciniata* (Glade cress) – came to fruition with the purchase of a 23.2-acre perpetual conservation easement in northern Bullitt County. Acquired with funds provided by the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, a federal transportation enhancement grant, and a generous donation from East Kentucky Power, the site contains a high quality example of a dolomite-limestone glade and barrens community, along with surrounding woodlands.

The area, known as Apple Valley Glades, is experiencing intensified development pressure associated with the new nearby interchange with Interstate 65. As a result, the remaining high quality examples of dolomite-limestone glade and barrens communities are at great risk of permanent destruction or severe degradation.

The glades at this site are characterized by outcrops of bare rock, covered in places by a thin layer of gravelly soil. This seemingly austere habitat is populated by state-threatened *Leavenworthia*, which is found only in northern Bullitt and southern Jefferson counties. The plant has adapted to the extreme conditions found in the glades, which are seasonally wet in winter and spring and extremely dry in summer and fall.

Since the land remains in private ownership, the site will not be open for public visitation. However, in accordance with the terms of the easement, the area will be managed by the Commission and is available for scientific research.

Coming soon...

September Quarterly Meeting -

Mark your calendars for our fall quarterly Commission meeting. It will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2003, at Mammoth Cave National Park at 1 p.m. CST. Further details on our September meeting are available by contacting our office.

Brigadoon Open House -

We are also making plans to have an open house on Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2003, at 10 a.m. CST at Brigadoon State Nature Preserve in Barren County. The preserve is located adjacent to Barren River Reservoir. The open house will celebrate the official opening to the public of the rich woodlands at this preserve, made possible with the completion of a trail and parking area. We hope you can join us at Brigadoon! For additional information, please contact our office.

Kentucky State Fair -

Visit our display at the Kentucky State Fair and Exposition Center from Aug. 14 - 24, 2003. Our theme for this year's display is "Kentucky - Then and Now" and ties into the 200-year anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Maps depicting the status of Kentucky's environment two centuries ago, along with current information on the Commonwealth's natural conditions, photographs of historic scenes, quotes by famous explorers, and a listing of resources for information and activities to help preserve Kentucky's natural areas will be available at the Kentucky State Fair (and on our Web page).

Our exhibit is combined again this year with the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund. This fund is perpetuated by the sale of "nature" license plates and other sources and is the leading funding mechanism for acquisition of the preserve properties acquired by the KSNPC.

Additionally, we'll highlight the Pine Mountain corridor and the Pine Mountain Legacy project currently in full-swing by the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust.

KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

CLARA WHEATLEY, CHAIR
EUNICE JOHNSON, SECRETARY
O.D. HAWKINS
DAVID W. WRIGHT
GAYLE HORN

STAFF

DONALD S. DOTT JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GREG ABERNATHY
JOYCE BENDER
BYRON BROOKS
RONALD CICERELLO
JUDY CUNNINGHAM
NICHOLAS DROZDA
MARC EVANS
MARTINA HINES
SARA HINES
EVELYN HOUSE
HEATHER HOUSMAN
ELLIS LAUDERMILK
LANE LINNENKOHL
CECILIA MITCHELL
KYLE NAPIER
BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR.
PAMELA PRINGLE
RON SCOTT
DEBORAH WHITE

The Courier-Journal Conservation Tabloid -

In cooperation with the Louisville Courier-Journal and Kentucky Association of Conservation District's annual conservation tabloid, KSNPC has submitted a feature article to be published later this month and distributed to schools throughout the state. Our article on "Kentucky - Then and Now" contains comparisons of our state's natural habitat now and 200 years ago. This year's conservation tabloid topic is "wildlife habitat" and will be available online at the Courier-Journal's Web site at <http://www.courier-journal.com/education/>.

A Guide to the Freshwater Mussels of Kentucky -

KSNPC aquatic biologist Ronald Cicerello and Dr. Guenter Schuster of ECU are soon to publish *A Guide to the Freshwater Mussels of Kentucky*. This publication is a culmination of years of research on the state's mussel populations. Additional information will appear in subsequent newsletters.

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: nrep.ksnpcemail@mail.state.ky.us

Visit us online at: 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.

An Equal Opportunity Employer



Please recycle all paper.

Produced with state funds.

