


Naturally Kentucky


Summer 2005


Number 47



KSNPC Latest News: The Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) has selected KSNPC's Large Forest Blocks of Kentucky map to be included in ESRI's Map Book (Vol. 20). Copies of the book will be distributed to individuals attending ESRI's International Users Conference this summer (13,000+ people). To learn more about the analysis visit www.naturepreserves.ky.gov/inforesources/lfb.htm.

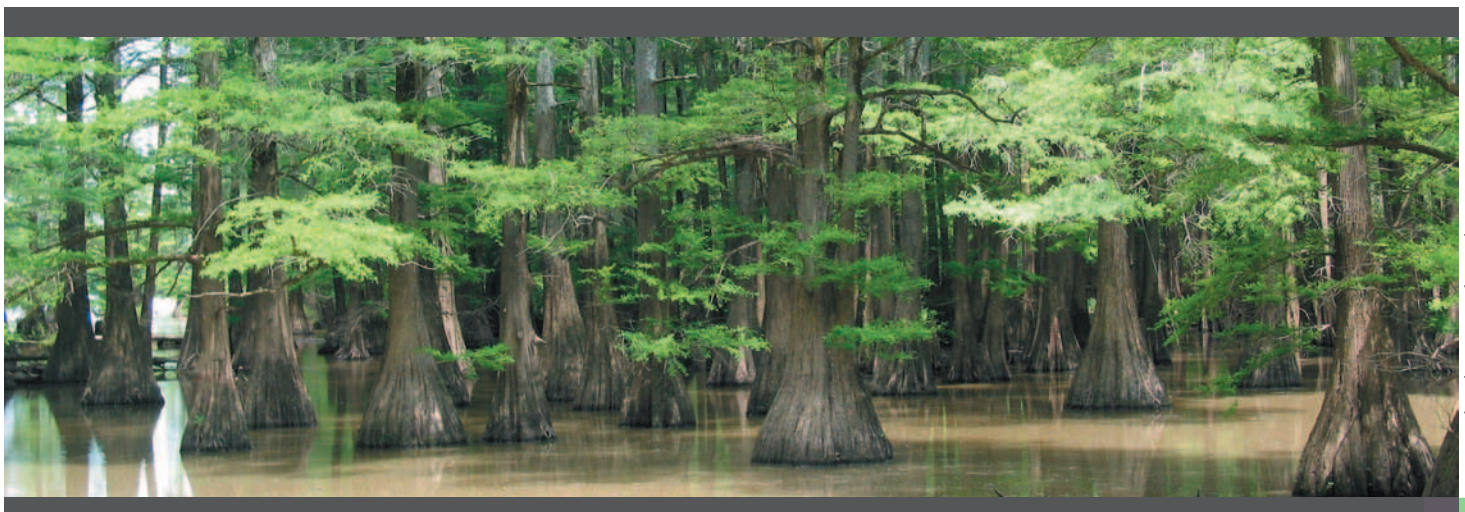
 A Swainson's warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) was captured and banded at the Natural Bridge Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship station. While this species is not considered threatened or endangered, Partners in Flight recognizes it as a "bird of conservation concern." (Complete story on page 3).

 Fire management was performed this spring on seven different state nature preserves totaling over 162 acres. Periodic burning is used to restore glades and barrens, which are some of Kentucky's most unique natural areas. (Complete story on page 5).

 Ninety-nine acres of land have been added to the State Nature Preserve System (93 acres at Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve and six acres at Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve). In addition, properties in Franklin County were enrolled in the Natural Areas Registry Program. (Complete story on page 8).

In This Edition:

All's Not Quiet on the Western Front – A Preserve Manager's Perspective	2
Unusual Bird Encountered at Natural Bridge State Park Nature Preserve	3
An Assessment of "Hot Spots" & Priority Watersheds for Conservation	4
Research on Kentucky's Nature Preserves	5
Prescribed Fires on State Nature Preserves	5
In the Spotlight: Kentucky's Rare Species and Communities	6
Land Protection Report	8
In The Footsteps of Lucy Braun	9
Director's Notes	9



Cypress Slough ~ Greg Abernathy, KSNPC

ALL'S NOT QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT – A PRESERVE MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE

By Lane Linnenkohl, Western Regional Preserve Manager

February marked the end of my third year with the Commission as the regional nature preserves manager for the western region of Kentucky. When I was asked to write this article, it was suggested to me to write a recap of my time with the Commission. With that in mind, I sat down and reflected over what has been accomplished in the western region since 2002. The first thing that comes to mind is that we added five new properties in the western region, and made two additions to existing nature preserves. Other highlights include initiating conservation easements as a land protection tool, developing cooperative efforts with other state agencies, increasing public access to the western region's state nature preserves, and making strong headway in our ecosystem restoration efforts.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

One thing that KSNPC has delved into in the past three years is the use of conservation easements to more efficiently distribute resources to protect rare species and natural communities. Three properties have been protected in the western region through conservation easements. These include a maternity cave for the federally endangered gray bat (*Myotis grisecens*), in Allen County, and a population of state threatened glade cress (*Leavenworthia exigua* var. *laciniata*) in Bullitt County. We have a conservation easement on Springhouse Barrens in Hardin County and it has also been dedicated as a state nature preserve. In the eastern region, a population of Braun's rock cress (*Arabis perstellata*) has been protected through a conservation easement in Franklin County.

Thus far, the cooperative relationships between KSNPC and land owners have been highly beneficial. In nearly all instances, the land owners are proud of what they have on their land and eager to help manage and protect it. Not only do these conservation easements offer another tool in protecting natural areas, we have resident assistance in monitoring and managing these areas.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES

In an effort to pool limited resources, KSNPC and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) have entered into a cooperative venture, along with the Livingston County Fiscal Court, to protect two properties in Livingston County. These are known as the Livingston County Wildlife Management Area and State Natural Area, Bissell Bluff and Newman's Bluff tracts. These tracts, along with Stone Mountain WMA/SNA in Harlan County in the southeastern region, mark the first of hopefully many cooperative ventures with KDFWR to protect valuable natural areas throughout Kentucky.

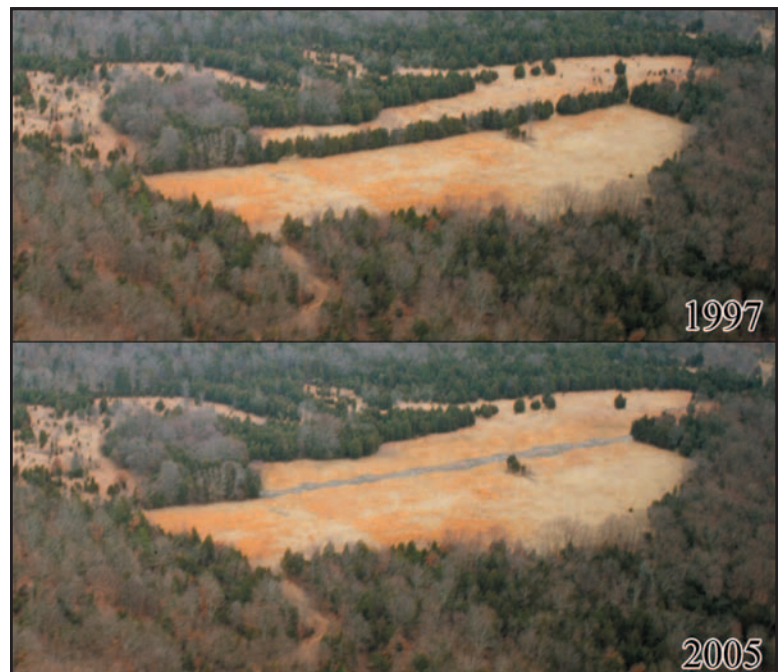
PUBLIC ACCESS

KSNPC is always looking to increase public access, where feasible, to the Kentucky State Nature Preserves system. In the western region, we opened Brigadoon State Nature Preserve (SNP) in Barren County for passive recreation. Brigadoon SNP features a parking lot and a half-mile hiking trail through richly forested ravines and ridges adjacent to the Barren River Lake reservoir.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND EXOTIC SPECIES REMOVAL

Within my region lies what is referred to as the Big Barrens Region, historically an area of open woodlands, grasslands and glades that roughly follow the karst geological area of western Kentucky. This area is characterized primarily by flat topography, fast water drainage and underground water flow through extensive cave systems. These characteristics create hot and dry conditions in which native warm-season grasses flourish. In addition, the lack of topography and surface water flow also created few obstacles to prevent wildfires from sweeping across the region prior to European settlement. As a result, the vegetation typified that of the Midwestern prairies, open grasslands with a few scattered trees. The Big Barrens run in a semi-circle from Meade and Hardin counties, south through Barren and Warren counties, then through Simpson and Logan counties and west into Trigg and Caldwell counties.

Efforts to restore these barrens and glades in the western region have included prescribed burning at Eastview Barrens SNP and



Cedar Removal at Raymond Athey Barrens State Nature Preserve (Logan County)

~ KSNPC Staff



Jim Scudder SNP in Hardin County, Woodburn Glade SNP in Warren County, and Raymond Athey Barrens SNP and Logan County Glade SNP in Logan County. Exotic species control has seen the reduction of spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) at Eastview Barrens SNP and Chinese lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*) at Raymond Athey SNP. These are two highly invasive plants that compete with native plants for space, water and nutrients.

At Logan County Glade SNP, we have removed a substantial amount of exotic privet (*Ligustrum chinense*), an invasive shrub that escapes from yards and invades natural areas. This effort has greatly opened up the understory, and has halted its invasion into the glades. Finally, I have undertaken an effort to remove eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) from barrens restoration areas at Raymond Athey Barrens SNP. Years of fire suppression has resulted

in the invasion of cedar trees into previously open grasslands which would have been controlled by natural fires. An approximately 45 year-old cedar fence row, over 500 feet long, has been removed from one restoration area effectively making one large grassland out of two smaller ones. This will benefit the area through better wildlife migration and utilization and more efficient distribution of native plant seeds into and through the restoration area. Further efforts are under way to open up other cedar choked areas where prairie grasses once dominated.

Three years doesn't seem like much time, but it has amazed me to recall so many accomplishments made by KSNPC in the past three years. Through hard work by dedicated Commission staff, I look forward to all that we can accomplish in the years to come.

UNUSUAL BIRD ENCOUNTERED AT NATURAL BRIDGE STATE PARK NATURE PRESERVE

By Dave Skinner, Eastern Regional Preserve Manager

There is a project at Natural Bridge State Park Nature Preserve known as MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship). The project, designed to monitor the health of bird populations, is continent-wide. There are over 500 MAPS stations in North America. Data are collected on all bird species captured, but the primary emphasis of the project is to monitor neotropical migrant land birds, of which many species are known to be in decline. A Swainson's warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) was captured and banded at the Natural Bridge MAPS station on May 5. This bird is rather drab and brown, but its secretive nature and rareness brought a lot of excitement to the banding station. It was the second Swainson's warbler captured at Natural Bridge; the first one was captured in 2003. While this species is not considered threatened or endangered, it is recognized as a "bird of conservation concern" by Partners in Flight, a non-governmental organization dedicated to bird conservation. Other bird species frequently encountered at this MAPS station include Louisiana waterthrush

(*Seiurus motacilla*), acadian flycatcher (*Empidonax vireescens*) and hooded warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*).

Swainson's warblers nest throughout the southeastern United States. In Kentucky the bird is found primarily in the Cumberland Plateau and Mountains but also in parts of the Jackson Purchase.



Swainson's Warbler ~ Harry D Sell

There are some other scattered areas where appropriate habitat occurs. These birds prefer mesic forest with a dense understory. In eastern Kentucky their preferred habitat occurs in forested ravines and lower slopes dominated by rhododendron. In western Kentucky they can be found in riparian forest where there is a lot of cane and shrubs under the forest canopy. This warbler is secretive and, because of its habitat, is exceedingly difficult to see. While it is a formidable species to monitor, populations appear to be stable at present. Despite this, the species is of high conservation importance because of its small breeding

range, specialized habitat requirements, low overall densities and restricted winter distribution.



AN ASSESSMENT OF "HOT SPOTS" & PRIORITY WATERSHEDS FOR CONSERVATION OF IMPERILED FRESHWATER MUSSELS AND FISHES IN KENTUCKY

By Ronald Cicerello and Greg Abernathy

Kentucky's native freshwater fish and mussel faunas are among the richest in North America, the center of worldwide freshwater mussel and temperate freshwater fish biodiversity. Mussels and fishes are among the most imperiled groups nationally; their distribution in Kentucky is well documented. During the last century, habitat destruction and degradation (e.g., dams, pollution) caused the extirpation or extinction of 21 percent and 4 percent of Kentucky's mussels and fishes, respectively. Of the existing groups, 41 percent of mussels and 25 percent of fishes are imperiled because of significant declines in diversity, numbers and distribution. Although there are efforts to conserve these imperiled aquatic groups, priority areas for conservation have not been assessed. Priority areas must be identified so limited conservation funds can be expended wisely.

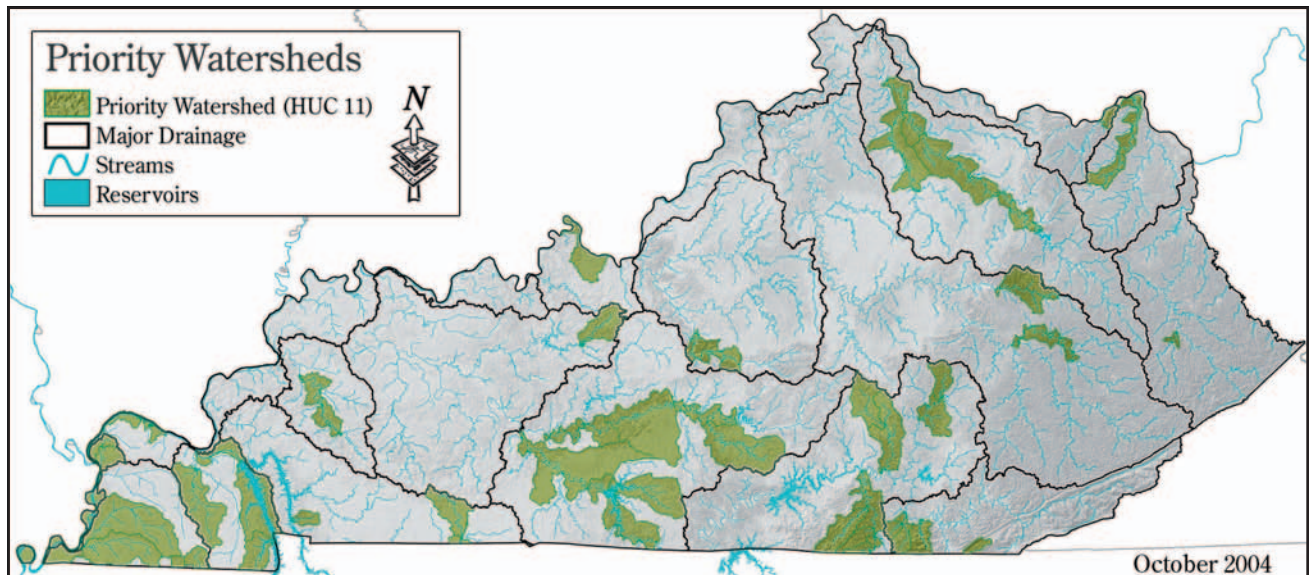
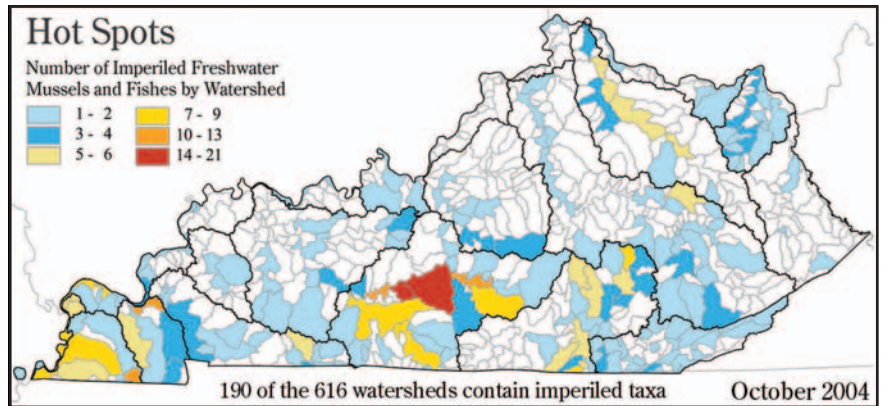
The objective of this analysis was to identify hot spots (watersheds with the highest species richness) and priority watersheds for conservation of existing imperiled freshwater mussels and fishes in Kentucky. Using Geographic Information Systems, each of 616 Kentucky watersheds was scored for post-1984 records of imperiled mussels and fishes in the Kentucky State Nature Preserve Commission Natural Heritage Program database. Only 31 percent of the 616 watersheds in Kentucky had at least one imperiled group and only 1.9 percent were determined to be hot spot watersheds (a watershed that supports eight

or more imperiled groups). Using a rarity-weighted richness index (RWRI), 53 watersheds were identified as priority watersheds, an area totaling ca. 1,490,896 hectares or 14 percent of Kentucky. This preliminary assessment focused on imperiled mussels and fishes. A future assessment will use data for all native mussels and fishes to determine priorities for biodiversity conservation of these groups.

Visit our Web site to read the full report:
www.naturepreserves.ky.gov/inforesources/prwshds.htm



Smallscale Darter (*Etheostoma microlepidum*) ~ KSNPC Staff



RESEARCH ON KENTUCKY'S NATURE PRESERVES

By Alice Mandt, Stewardship Assistant

Kentucky's state nature preserves provide an undisturbed place for students, professors and state agencies to conduct short and long-term research. Since the Commission began tracking permits in 1991, more than 100 have been issued to researchers studying all facets of Kentucky's environment. Research projects have included species inventories, genetic analysis of rare plants, seed germination studies, water quality assessments and soil analysis in association with prescribed burns. About 10 permits are currently active across the 21,000 acres of the preserve system.

Paul Marek, a Ph.D. candidate at East Carolina University, has just renewed his permit to survey millipedes in the genus *Brachoria*. Kentucky has the second highest species diversity of this genus in the country. Paul is also studying the general milliped composition of the Appalachian Mountains. In 2003, he collected 5 specimens at Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve and has collected 192 specimens across 13 states.



Brachoria splendida (top) *Brachoria hansonia* (bottom) ~ Paul Marek

Dr. Jonathon W. Gassett from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and Dr. David Maehr from the University of Kentucky were issued a permit in 2001 to work on our Pine Mountain preserves for their investigation of the distribution, abundance, genetic diversity, movement patterns and natural history of black bears in southeastern Kentucky. Kyle Napier, the southeast preserve manager, has been involved in baiting trees with peanut butter to attract bears. The trees are surrounded with

barbed wire. When a bear brushes the wire, it leaves hair samples for DNA analysis. This exciting 5-year project will answer questions in an area where little is known.

Tracy Hawkins, a U.S. Forest Service ecologist, was issued a permit in 1997 to investigate the fire history of Hi Lewis Pine Barrens State Nature Preserve in Harlan County. In 2004, she revisited the sites with a new project studying effects of the southern pine beetle infestation.



Hi Lewis Pine Barrens State Nature Preserve ~ Marc Evans, KSNPC

The preserves have been used to gauge forest health. In 2002 and 2003, Kevin Lee Johnson and Sara Sanders of the Kentucky Division of Forestry collected leaf samples from several preserves across the state to be analyzed for ozone damage.

We would like to thank everyone involved in all past and current projects and encourage future studies. Many questions have been answered that help us manage the preserve system's natural communities and rare species. With every new preserve, more questions arise. To apply for a permit, contact Joyce Bender, branch manager for Nature Preserves and Natural Areas, at (502) 573-2886.

PRESCRIBED FIRES ON STATE NATURE PRESERVES

By Dave Skinner, Eastern Regional Preserve Manager

Commission staff uses various techniques to restore and manage the state nature preserves. Chainsaws, herbicides, mowers and sprayers are sometimes used. By far the most exciting management tool is prescribed fire. Every year the Commission conducts prescribed fires on state nature preserves that have fire dependent flora and ecological communities. The fires help reduce competition from woody and exotic plant species and stimulate many glade and barrens species. Without fire management,

some rare plant species such as Short's goldenrod (*Solidago shortii*), slender blazing star (*Liatrix cylindracea*) and ear-leaf foxglove (*Agalinis auriculata*) would be even rarer. This spring, fire management was performed on seven different state nature preserves totaling over 162 acres. Periodic burning is used to restore glades and barrens, which are some of Kentucky's most unique natural areas.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: KENTUCKY'S RARE SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES

Alasmidonta atropurpurea *Cumberland elktoe*

KSNPC STATUS: Endangered

USFWS / NOAA STATUS: Endangered

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: A 3-4 inch elongate freshwater mussel, one of more than 100 kinds known from Kentucky.

HABITAT: Stream bottoms of small to medium-size streams in sand and gravel among cobbles and boulders.

RANGE: Upper Cumberland River basin in Kentucky and Tennessee; now restricted in Kentucky to five streams in the vicinity of Cumberland Falls.

REASONS FOR LISTING: Habitat degradation and loss.



Photo by KSNPC Staff

Hyla gratiosa *Barking treefrog*

KSNPC STATUS: Special Concern

USFWS / NOAA STATUS: None

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: A medium-size frog belonging to the family Hylidae, or treefrogs.

HABITAT: Breeds in temporary ponds in open to semi-open karst areas following heavy summer rains.

CALLING SEASON: Late May through early July.

RANGE: Southeastern United States. In Kentucky, occurs in a relatively narrow band within seven counties of the western Pennyriple region from southern Logan County, west to southern Crittenden and Livingston counties.

REASONS FOR LISTING: Habitat has been degraded and is relatively limited in Kentucky; most breeding aggregations are small, involving only a few to about a dozen males.



Photo by Mark Gumbert

KEY TO KSNPC STATUS CATEGORIES:

ENDANGERED: A taxon in danger of extirpation and/or extinction throughout all or a significant part of its range in Kentucky.

THREATENED: A taxon likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant part of its range in Kentucky.

SPECIAL CONCERN: A taxon that should be monitored because (1) it exists in a limited geographic area in Kentucky, (2) it may become threatened or endangered due to modification or destruction of habitat, (3) certain characteristics or requirements make it especially vulnerable to specific pressures, (4) experienced researchers have identified other factors that may jeopardize it, or (5) it is thought to be rare or declining in Kentucky but insufficient information exists for assignment to the threatened or endangered status categories.

HISTORIC: A taxon documented from Kentucky but not observed reliably since 1980 but is not considered extinct or extirpated.



Apios priceana

Price's potato-bean

KSNPC STATUS: Threatened

USFWS / NOAA STATUS: Listed Threatened

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: An herbaceous, twining, perennial vine arising from a large, underground tuber. Greenish pink flowers occur in a large cluster.

HABITAT: Open, rocky, wooded slopes and the edges and canopy gaps of mixed hardwoods forest.

FLOWERING PERIOD: July and August.

RANGE: Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky (extirpated in Illinois). In Kentucky found only in three western counties (Livingston, Lyon and Trigg).

REASONS FOR LISTING: Few occurrences rangewide, commercial development and general changes in the habitat resulting from land use (particularly clearing succeeded by regrowth of dense forest). counties, showy plant that is likely to be reported.



Photo by Bramard Palmer-Ball, KSNPC

Cypress Swamp

KSNPC STATUS: Endangered

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Cypress swamps are forested wetlands dominated by bald cypress trees. These swamps usually occur in areas with shallow to deep standing water. Cypress trees can grow to be one of the largest trees in the eastern United States and can live for over 1,000 years. They are unique in that they are deciduous conifers, like pine trees, but lose their needles (leaves). They also have large, swollen bases and produce "knees" that rise several feet. The knees are thought to provide structural support and aid in gas exchange. Cypress swamps also are home to many unique and rare plants and animals.

RANGE: Southeastern United States north to the lower Ohio River Valley. In Kentucky they are restricted to far western Kentucky and the lower Ohio River Valley.

REASONS FOR LISTING: Kentucky has lost over 80 percent of its original wetlands, including bald cypress swamps. The remaining swamps are usually isolated from each other and are threatened with hydrologic alterations, logging and siltation.



Photo by Marc Evans, KSNPC

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

KSNPC Species and Community Information ~ www.naturepreserves.ky.gov/inforesources/SpeciesCommunityInfo.htm

NatureServe Explorer ~ www.natureserve.org/explorer/

USFWS Endangered Species Program ~ <http://endangered.fws.gov>

KEY TO USFWS / NOAA STATUS CATEGORIES:

(US) ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973

ENDANGERED: ". . . any species . . . in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range . . ." (USFWS 1992).

THREATENED: ". . . any species . . . likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range" (USFWS 1992).

CANDIDATE: Taxa for which the USFWS has ". . . sufficient information on biological vulnerability and threats to support proposals to list them as endangered or threatened" (USFWS 1999).

SPECIES OF MANAGEMENT CONCERN: Species the USFWS believes are in need of conservation management.



LAND PROTECTION REPORT

By Ron Scott, Land Protection Specialist

Additions to two state nature preserves – Pilot Knob in Powell County and Blanton Forest in Harlan County – were dedicated at the most recent meeting of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. The Pilot Knob addition consisted of 93 forested acres that the Powell County Fiscal Court purchased in 2002, using money from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund. Thanks in large measure to the efforts of Craig Dawson of the Powell County Industrial Development Authority and support from Powell County Judge-Executive Bobby Drake, this valuable addition to the state nature preserves system became a reality after more than a year of effort to rectify a title defect. In addition, commissioners approved inclusion of a small but strategically important buffer tract adjoining the Blanton Forest preserve, on the south face of Pine Mountain. The six-acre Parsons tract was the eighth addition since the Blanton Forest preserve was established on Sept. 15, 1995.

Along with these two additions, I am happy to report that the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has acquired two tracts of land in Letcher County that together encompass roughly 200 acres adjoining Bad Branch SNP. The cabinet acquired the properties as a condition of receiving a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for stream degradation associated with the major reconstruction of U.S. 119. The properties will be transferred to the commission and dedicated as additions to Bad Branch SNP. At the other end of the state, Murray State University has agreed to dedicate approximately 175 acres of land it owns in Hickman County as an addition to our Obion Creek

SNP. The property, known as Murphy's Pond, contains the highest quality bald cypress swamp remaining in Kentucky and is host to a tremendous variety of plant and animal species – reportedly including the highest concentration of cottonmouth snakes in the state. A boundary survey of the property will be performed this summer, and we are planning an on-site formal dedication ceremony Oct. 13, 2005.



Bad Branch Falls ~ James Archambeault

We continue to enroll ecologically significant private property in our Natural Areas Registry program. In Franklin County, we added one new site and successfully encouraged the new owner of property formerly enrolled in the program to participate as well. Both sites are located in the northern half of the county and contain populations of Braun's rockcress (*Arabis perstellata*) – a globally rare plant listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Finally, as critically important as it is to receive land acquisition funding from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (www.heritageland.ky.gov) and the Kentucky Nature and Wildlife Fund (tax checkoff program), we continue to seek other sources of funding to assist in our land protection efforts. To that end, we recently submitted two grant proposals to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under its Recovery Land Acquisition program for projects in Fleming and Christian counties. Both projects will benefit species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act and are designed to contribute to their successful recovery. The grant program is competitive and we hope to learn this summer whether we have been successful.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LUCY BRAUN

The Pine Mountain Settlement School is offering an August. 24-28 workshop, "IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LUCY BRAUN." The program discusses the work of the eminent ecologist and retraces her visits to eastern Kentucky. Her theory was that the Mixed Mesophytic Forest is a remnant of the great Tertiary Forest and the originator of all forest types that exist today in North America. The workshop includes outings to Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve and Bad Branch State Nature Preserve.

For more information:

www.pinemountainsettlementschool.com
(606) 558-3571 or (606) 558-3542



Photo Courtesy of Ecological Society of America

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

By Don Dott, Executive Director

The rediscovery of the ivory-billed woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) in the Big Woods of Arkansas was some of the most exciting news I have heard this year. Many feared the ivory-billed woodpecker extinct, as it had not been confirmed since the 1940s, despite several intensive search efforts, most recently in Louisiana. The ivory-bill is an inhabitant of bottomland hardwood forests and swamps, which once covered extensive areas throughout the southeastern United States. A staple of its diet is grubs found under the bark of dead or dying trees. KSNPC had listed it as presumed extinct or extirpated, but fortunately it turned out to be the latter. The reason for the ivory-bill's decline is the primary reason for most of our species losses – habitat conversion. Bottomland hardwood forests and swamps across the southeast have been drained, the trees logged and the land converted to multiple other uses, from agriculture to poorly located residential areas subject to flooding, and water control impoundments. But thanks to a conservation partnership by Arkansas, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others – a partnership that began some 20 years before this largest of woodpeckers was found – the Big Woods has over 120,000 acres under some form of

protection. Rediscovery of the ivory-bill will spur even greater conservation for the Big Woods, bringing more of its sprawling cypress and tupelo swamps under protection.

Kentucky's history has been quite similar, and we have also seen most of our bottomland hardwood forests disappear. This is the most threatened community type in Kentucky. Our wetland forests, as elsewhere throughout the southeast, have been drained, logged and converted, most often for agriculture, especially soybeans. Wetlands and swampy areas were long considered useless land and were "reclaimed" and put into productive use with drain tiles and ditches. One of the largest remaining tracts of bottomland hardwood forest in Kentucky is found in the Obion Creek and Bayou du Chien wetland corridor in far western Hickman and Fulton counties. Flowing into the Mississippi River, Obion Creek is one of the Mississippi's longest unchannelized tributaries in the Gulf Coastal Plain, though portions of it, too, have been straightened and surrounding land tilled and drained for agriculture. Nonetheless, the Obion and Bayou du Chien remain our best chance at protecting, preserving and restoring a landscape level bottomland hardwood forest.



KSNPC established the Obion Creek State Nature Preserve in June 1992. Its 1,400 acres in Hickman County are a mosaic of shrub swamp, marsh, cypress swamp and bottomland hardwood forest. The entire Obion Creek watershed is a haven for numerous rare plants and animals and includes an outstanding cypress swamp, Murphy's Pond. This past year we gained the agreement of President Alexander of Murray State University to dedicate Murphy's Pond as a state nature preserve. Although this unique cypress swamp was already under the protective ownership of the university (acquired with help of TNC), dedication will give it an even higher level of protection and allow KSNPC to partner with the university on its stewardship. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) owns and protects the Obion Wildlife Management Area – just under 3,500 acres, part of which adjoins our preserve. The KDFWR recently completed a project to restore a natural stream channel and water flow to a previously channelized stretch of the Obion. The Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has hired a project coordinator who is working in the Obion corridor with private landowners and government agencies for its protection. Though these are some great positive steps, much remains to be done to

preserve the extensive bottomland hardwood forests and free-flowing streams of the Obion and Bayou du Chien.

An easy and inexpensive way for you to help this effort is through the purchase of Naturally Kentucky license plates. For an extra \$10, you can choose from the viceroy butterfly, bobcat, or cardinal license plates. This nominal donation not only buys a nature plate, it allows you to demonstrate your interest in protecting natural areas and encourages others to do the same. Where does the \$10 go? Half of it is divided evenly among Kentucky State Parks, KDFWR, Wild Rivers, the Division of Forestry and KSNPC. The other half is available through grants to local governments, universities and other state agencies seeking to acquire and protect natural areas. For more information visit www.natureplate.ky.gov.

Maybe someday you will be able to visit a boardwalk in the Obion Creek corridor and see an ivory-billed woodpecker wing past, or hear its distinctive double rap drumming deep among the cypress and tupelos, and know it has returned to Kentucky. What a thrill that would be!

KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS
 CLARA WHEATLEY, CHAIR
 GAYLE HORN, SECRETARY
 JOY HAWKES
 O.D. HAWKINS
 DAVID W. WRIGHT

STAFF
 DONALD S. DOTT JR.
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GREG ABERNATHY
 JOYCE BENDER
 BYRON BROOKS
 JUDY CUNNINGHAM
 SHAUNA DUNHAM
 NICHOLAS DROZDA
 MARC EVANS
 MARTINA HINES
 SARA HINES
 HEATHER HOUSMAN
 LESLIE ISAMAN
 ELLIS LAUDERMILK
 LANE LINNENKOHL
 ALICE MANDT
 JAYSON MITCHELL
 KYLE NAPIER
 BRAINARD PALMER-BALL JR.
 RON SCOTT
 DAVID SKINNER
 DEBORAH WHITE
 BRIAN YAHN

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
 Quarterly Public Meeting
 October 13, 2005
 Murray State University
 The room and time to be determined

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: naturepreserves@ky.gov
 Visit us online @ www.naturepreserves.ky.gov

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.

The Environmental and Public 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.