



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Summer 2019



Protecting, Restoring and Sharing Nature in the Bluegrass

Many Thanks to Past-President John Park

Since 2011, we have been very fortunate to have the guidance and expertise of John Park as our Board President. In February, he handed the reigns over to our new President, Ellen Tunnell. While John is continuing to serve on our board, all of us at Floracliff are immensely grateful to him for his commitment to the organization over the past eight years.

During John’s leadership, Floracliff experienced significant growth in a number of areas. We increased the size of the sanctuary by 59 acres, added a second full-time staff position, and increased visitation by 60%. Much of this would not have been possible without John’s support and engagement. Additionally, he took great care to follow the example and guidelines set forth by our founder, Dr. Mary Wharton, and he never hesitated to express that it was an honor and a privilege to lead the organization and carry on her wishes.

Thank you, John, for your years of dedication to Floracliff and also your interest in and support of conservation throughout the region!



Biodiversity Projects



This year we are participating in the **Kentucky Statewide Land Snail Project**, a project led by Dan and Judy Dourson who are training and mobilizing citizen scientists throughout the state to document land snails. These under-studied invertebrates are an important food source for other animals and can serve as bioindicators of ecosystem health. Floracliff is considered a “hotspot” for land snail diversity in Kentucky thanks to a 2010 research project by Daniel Douglas who documented 51 species. We hope to expand on that species list with this project.



Two years ago, we began a project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to revamp the 6-acre field by our nature center with the goal of improving habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Last year it was seeded with a diversity of wildflowers and grasses to provide important host plants and nectar sources throughout the growing season. Our patience has paid off! This year, the field is in its first full bloom and has attracted over 40 species of butterflies. We owe a lot of thanks to volunteer Eric Ruschman who helped sow the seeds for this project.



In October, we established the **Floracliff Ornithology Club (FLOCK)**, a group of bird enthusiasts who meet monthly to help us observe and document the avian diversity at Floracliff. So far, these citizen scientists have recorded 89 species including common forest-dwelling birds like the red-bellied woodpecker and seldom-seen migrants like the Canada warbler. If you are interested in birding with us, email info@floracliff.org to receive announcements about these Friday morning outings.



Trail’s End Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

This summer, we received exciting news that the Trail’s End tract has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. This recognition would not be possible without the work and dedication of Tim Condo, who prepared the nomination, and The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, who provided support along the way.

The historic significance of the Trail’s End tract is largely due to its use as a girls’ camp in the early 1900s, a period of major development for the organized camping movement in the United States. Founded in 1913 near Boone Creek by Mary DeWitt Snyder, Trail’s End Camp was one of the first camps for girls in the South. With a focus on building character and physical strength through outdoor activities and exposure to nature, the camp “provided a program of living...which makes for alertness of mind, skill of hand, and poise of body.” In 1917, the camp lodge was built overlooking Elk Lick Creek and the Kentucky River. This was a turning point for the camp, moving the nexus of camp activities to the lodge and adjacent grounds. These activities included swimming, canoeing, nature study, tennis, horseback riding, archery, handicrafts, dramatics, and woodcraft. In 1921, Sarah Gibson Blanding joined as Assistant Director and was instrumental in expanding camp programs. Trail’s End Camp ended operation in 1935, but not before impacting the lives of 100s of girls and young women.

Today, the lodge and idyllic forest setting of the camp are still very much intact. While the exterior of the lodge has seen some changes, the rustic feel and original layout of the interior is evident. Of course, one can still hike the trails that campers took to the river, the creek and the gamecourt and be immersed in nature during a visit. We are honored to be the stewards of a place with such a unique and special history and look forward to sharing the history and carrying on the legacy of Trail’s End Camp.



Join Us For Tree Week!

For the second year, Floracliff is proud to participate in the Urban Forest Initiative’s annual Tree Week. Tree Week was developed in 2018 to celebrate Lexington’s trees and the many ways they impact our lives. At Floracliff, we will explore tree identification and ecology, the forest understory, and the inspirational side of trees.

Trees of the Creek

October 13th, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Over 100 species of woody plants grow in the woodlands and forests of Floracliff. On this creek walk, we’ll learn to identify both common and unusual species that live along the banks of Elk Lick Creek.

Shrubs and Understory Trees of Central and Eastern Kentucky

October 14th, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Apart from the major trees in our forests, smaller woody plants add greatly to the diversity of our ecosystems. Join UK Herbarium Curator and botanist Rob Paratley to delve into the forest understory at Floracliff and the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Creative Reflections: A Magic Hour with Trees

October 17th, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Enjoy a full hour immersed in a select location of Floracliff with some of our favorite trees. Starting 2 hours before sunset, this program offers the opportunity to slow down, connect to nature, and disconnect from electronic devices while sketching, journaling, or meditating.



Upcoming Hikes and Programs

All events require pre-registration. To register, visit floracliff.org.

August:

4th: Creative Reflections Creek Walk

9th: Creek Explorations Hike

September:

14th: Fall Wildflowers and Butterflies Hike

26th: Magic Hour Hike to Elk Lick Falls

October:

5th & 6th: Spiders of Kentucky: A Floracliff Field Studies Workshop

11th: Trees, TreeSnap, and iNaturalist: A Citizen Science Workshop

13th: Trees of the Creek Hike

14th: Shrubs and Understory Trees of Central and Eastern Kentucky Workshop

17th: Creative Reflections: A Magic Hour with Trees

26th: Fall Color Long Hike

30th: Magic Hour Hike to the Kentucky River

November:

9th: Elk Lick Falls, the Kentucky River Fault, and the Evolution of the Kentucky River Gorge

27th: Thanksgiving Eve Long Hike

December:

7th: Winter Birds, the Christmas Bird Count, and eBird: A Citizen Science Workshop

To stay up to date on additional events, sign up for our email announcements at floracliff.org or follow us on Facebook.



Eastern bluebird (Ward Ransdell)

Staff

Beverly James,
Preserve Director

Josie Miller,
Stewardship Director

Cover photo:
Gray hairstreak (Beverly James)
Inside, bottom left photos:
Snail and Red Admiral butterfly (Beverly James)
Prothonotary warbler (Beth Oleson)

Board of Directors

Ellen Tunnell
President

Rob Paratley
*Vice-president
& Secretary*

Dale White
Treasurer

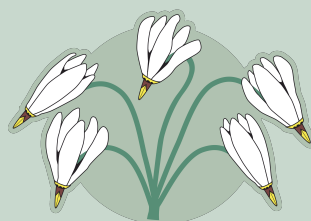
Greg Abernathy
Peter Brown

Charles Chandler
Lucia Gilchrist
Elizabeth Graves

John Park
Vicki Reed
Layton Register

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary
P. O. Box 21723
Lexington, KY 40522

floracliff.org
info@floracliff.org
facebook.com/floracliff
instagram.com/floracliff



Founded in 1987, Floracliff is a nonprofit nature sanctuary. Our mission is to care for the sanctuary property, ensure its protection as a nature preserve, and promote public education of the natural history of the Inner Bluegrass Region.