

Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Summer 2021



Protecting, Restoring and Sharing Nature in the Bluegrass

Floracliff Hosts Lexington's First City Nature Challenge

In spring, Floracliff organized Lexington's first foray into the City Nature Challenge. This 4-day global bioblitz is conducted annually by the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. When it began in 2016, the Challenge was just a competition between San Francisco and Los Angeles to document wild urban biodiversity using iNaturalist. It has grown since then, and this year 419 cities in 44 countries participated. More than 52,000 people documented over 45,000 species in and around cities. This focused and collective effort increases awareness, understanding, and appreciation of biodiversity around the world, and we were thrilled to bring it to Lexington and Kentucky for the first time.

Lexington participants captured photographs and audio recordings of over 700 species including 348 plants, 170 insects, and 97 birds. In addition to the natural areas of Floracliff and Raven Run, observations were made in urban greenspaces like The Arboretum, Unitarian Universalist Church, Veteran's Park, and Henry Clay High School. At Floracliff, zoologist Shelby Fulton documented the red-spotted glyph moth, a new Fayette County record and a rare to uncommon species in Kentucky. A group of birders at the Lexington Cemetery were excited to see a golden-winged warbler. Populations of this songbird have declined significantly due to habitat loss in breeding areas and overwintering grounds. Local greenspaces like the cemetery provide important stopover sites to rest and refuel on their migration routes.

For those wondering how Lexington compared to other participating cities, we finished in the top 30% for the number of observations, the top 25% for the number of species, and the top 20% for the number of observers using iNaturalist. Next year's City Nature Challenge is scheduled for April 29 – May 2. Put it on your calendar so you can help us build on this year's impressive effort to document wild nature in Lexington!



Red-spotted glyph moth (Shelby Fulton)



Nighttime Exploration (Ward Ransdell)



Golden-winged warbler (David Lang)

Floracliff Awarded the Landscape Preservation Award



On June 27th, the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation hosted its annual meeting and Historic Preservation Award ceremony. Floracliff was presented with the Landscape Preservation Award which is given to an individual or group for the preservation, design, stewardship, restoration or enhancement of an historic cultural landscape in the Bluegrass. With the historic use of the land by native peoples, the Trail's End tract's history as a girls' camp in the early 1900s, and Dr. Wharton's unique vision for the sanctuary's conservation and purpose, Floracliff has long been a place where cultural history and natural history intersect. We are so grateful for the Blue Grass Trust's recognition of this special part of the Bluegrass landscape and all we do to protect, restore, and share it!



764
Species



2,697
Observations (50%
Research Grade)



164
Observers/Parties

2,702
K-12 students used
the Seek App



NatureServe Network Van Tour Visits Floracliff

For nearly 50 years, the NatureServe organization has been a central hub for biodiversity data throughout the Western hemisphere. It works with a network of natural heritage programs like the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves to collect, standardize, and interpret information on regional species and ecosystems. This year, NatureServe's CEO, Sean O'Brien, is touring the United States and Canada to highlight how NatureServe's data documents and protects biodiversity. When the tour came through Kentucky in early June, Floracliff hosted a visit for NatureServe's representatives, the OKNP, the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

At Floracliff, we focus on documenting the sanctuary's plant and animal life through bio-inventories, community science projects, stewardship projects, and research. When these activities lead to the discovery of an unrecorded species at Floracliff, the information available through Kentucky Nature Preserves and NatureServe is essential for understanding the new plant or animal's abundance, ecology, and management needs. This information from OKNP and NatureServe also enhances our educational programs on biodiversity.

NatureServe particularly focuses on providing information about rare and imperiled species and ecosystems. Floracliff's rarest documented species include the globally imperiled tricolored bat, the globally vulnerable American bumblebee, the state critically imperiled glass spot snail, and the state imperiled Wood's bunchflower.

You can find much more about NatureServe's work at NatureServe.org



NatureServe CEO Sean O'Brien, left, with OKNP biologists Courtney Hayes, Martina Hines, and Nour Salam (KEEC)



OKNP Executive Director Zeb Weese (KEEC)

Donor-Funded Conservation

We are immensely grateful for a generous donation that has funded a 3-month position to focus on stewardship activities at Floracliff this summer. Quinn Towery started this position in June with prior land management experience from his time with the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves. He also has a



degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Science from the University of Kentucky and is very passionate about Kentucky botany, geology, and conservation issues. We are thrilled to have Quinn and his enthusiasm on board this summer to help with invasive species management, botanical surveys, community science projects, and educational programming!

LG&E and KU Community Grant

Thanks to a Community Grant from the LG&E and KU Foundation, we were able to purchase a few mobile night collecting sheets and battery-powered UV lights for our Community Science Nature Kits. The sheets are easy to set up almost anywhere and are designed to attract moths and other nocturnal insects after dark. During the City Nature Challenge in April, we used them to photograph and document 48 species of moths during the Nighttime Exploration program, and we will use them again for National Moth Week, a global community science event scheduled annually in July.

The collecting sheet and light kits are also available to local groups participating in community science projects. To request the use of a kit, contact info@floracliff.org.



Upcoming Hikes and Programs

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

Stay up to date on additional events by signing up for our email announcements at floracliff.org.

August:

6th: Elk Lick Creek Walk

September:

9th: Golden Hour Hike to Elk Lick Falls

16th: Golden Hour Hike to the Kentucky River

18th: Butterflies and Wildflowers of Late Summer w/ Beverly James

24th: Fall Bird Walk w/ Joyce Bender & David Lang

25th: Bring the Bluegrass Home w/ Josie Miller

October:

8th: In the Company of Trees: A Contemplation Hike w/ Lucia Gilchrist

9th: Bearing Fruit: How Fruit Aids Trees in Dispersing Seeds, and How We Use Fruit in Tree ID w/ Rob Paratley

14th: Tree Week Golden Hour Hike to Elk Lick Falls

16th: Tree-lationships Hike w/ Beverly James

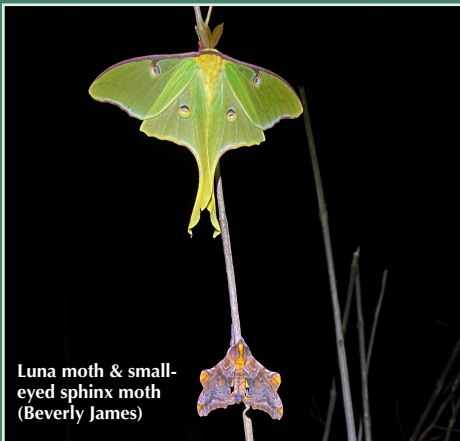
21st: Golden Hour Hike to the Kentucky River

30th: Fall Molds and Mushrooms w/ Megan Buland

November:

13th: Fall Long Hike

24th: Thanksgiving Eve Long Hike



Luna moth & small-eyed sphinx moth (Beverly James)

Staff

Beverly James,
Preserve Director

Josie Miller,
Stewardship Director

Cover photo:
Zebra swallowtail (David Lang)

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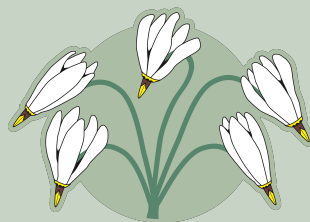
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Founded in 1987, Floracliff is a nonprofit nature sanctuary. Our mission is to care for the sanctuary property, ensure its protection as a nature preserve, and promote public education of the natural history of the Inner Bluegrass Region.