



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary
Summer/Fall 2026



A Letter from the Director:

A few weeks ago, we hosted and participated in a climate adaptation workshop for conservation professionals. As a workshop icebreaker, we were asked to share three words that capture our feelings about climate change and the natural world. The first three words that came to my mind were *worry*, *biodiversity*, and *love*.

Let's start with *worry*. In my 20 years at Floracliff, I've witnessed the growing impacts of climate change on the land and wildlife we work to protect. Heavy rains, high winds, severe storms, and warming temperatures have contributed to tree loss, landslides, flash flooding, new invasive threats, and earlier spring wildflower blooms. These events are occurring more frequently, and we don't yet know their full impact.

Despite those concerns, one thing gives me hope: *biodiversity*. The remarkable diversity at Floracliff helps build resilience, as each species and habitat responds differently to changing conditions and environmental stressors. Protecting that diversity has never been more important, and it guides our work every day.

This year, that work includes ongoing stewardship efforts to manage invasive pests like the Emerald Ash Borer, as well as continued monitoring of the sanctuary's plants, birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. It also includes new projects like the installation of a Motus Wildlife Tracking Station, highlighted on page two of this newsletter.

Lastly, this work is meaningful to me because I truly *love* Floracliff – the land, the wildlife, and the people. That love is shared by so many of you, and your support is what sustains our work. Thank you for being a part of it. Let's keep it going.

Sincerely, 



Support Floracliff with a donation:

Visit floracliff.org/donate to learn about various ways to give.

You can also donate online by scanning the QR code:

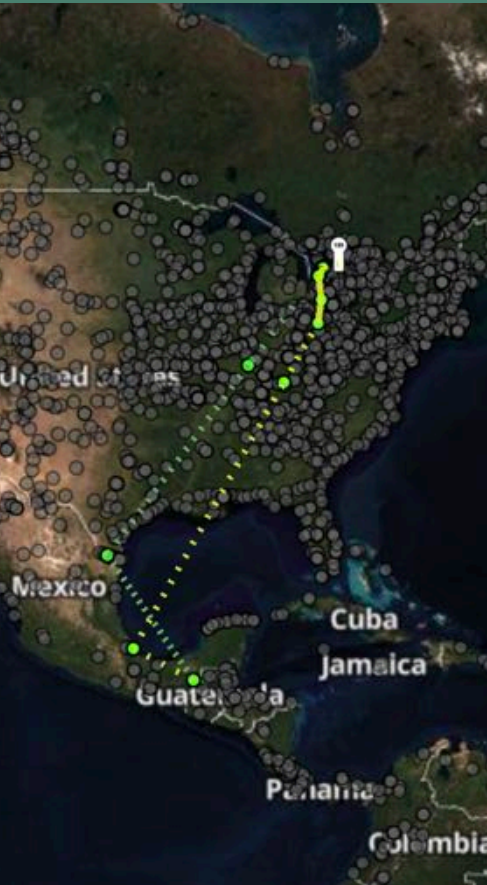


Protecting, Restoring and Sharing Nature in the Bluegrass



On April 23rd, Floracliff's Motus station detected its first tagged bird – an Eastern whip-poor-will! This individual was previously detected in José Cardel, Mexico on April 12th, meaning it traveled more than 1,450 miles in just 11 days. Five days after Floracliff's detection, it was detected again at the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve.

Learn more about this detection and follow future detections at Floracliff:
tinyurl.com/floracliffmotus



Floracliff Joins the Motus Wildlife Tracking Network

Next time you visit Floracliff, keep an eye out for a new tower near the nature center. It's a Motus Wildlife Tracking Station, part of a global network that uses radio telemetry to track the movements of birds, bats, and large insects fitted with tiny, uniquely coded radio tags called nanotags. When a tagged animal flies within 7 miles of the station, the antennas detect its signal. This information is made available to researchers to better understand wildlife migratory routes, habitat use, behavior, and more.

Because Motus is a collaborative network, each new station expands what we can learn about wildlife. There are more than 2,400 Motus stations in 34 countries, including 21 in Kentucky. Floracliff's station is the first in Fayette County and the state's first tri-mode station, equipped with three types of antennas to detect a wider range of tag frequencies used in wildlife tracking. This includes the BluSeries receiver, which can detect the BluMorpho tags used to track monarch butterflies.

Floracliff's Motus station would not be possible without generous support from our community. Special thanks to the project donors as well as the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife for installing the Motus station and LE Gregg Associates for providing special inspections throughout the project.



Join us for Floracliff Field Day: Birds and Beyond

We're excited to host a new family-friendly event this fall at Floracliff. On Saturday, September 26th, join us for **Floracliff Field Day: Birds and Beyond**. We'll start the day with morning bird walks led by Dan Patrick and Pearl James, Tina Brouwer of Red Oaks Forest School, and the Lexington Bird Cult.

For the afternoon, participants can choose between the following sessions led by Floracliff staff and volunteers:

- *Butterfly and Bug Walk* with Beverly James & Karen Michul
- *How to Draw a Bird* with Steve Bennett and Laura Mentor
- *Native Plant Relationships: From Birds to Butterflies* with Isabel Cochran



Stewardship in Action: A Volunteer Spotlight

By: Josie Miller, Stewardship Director

"Charley Sither, volunteer extraordinaire," proclaimed Floracliff Executive Director Beverly James during a recent program. She was explaining how Floracliff is both protected and stewarded, and Charley is an important piece of that story. Like other Floracliff volunteers, Charley is committed to conservation and shares his time freely with many environmental organizations. He is the first though, to purchase land neighboring Floracliff in order to protect habitat and manage invasive species. Perhaps his greatest success thus far is the removal of a dense seed-producing grove of Callery pear, an invasive tree cultivated by people and spread by wildlife. By removing this invasive plant on his own property, Charley (and his hardworking friends) are reducing the spread of seedlings to neighboring lands, including Floracliff.



Most of us don't have the opportunity to protect and steward land in the same way that Charley does, but we do have many opportunities to care for the natural world around us, and in turn make nature healthier for our neighbors. Whether it's at our home, work, place of worship, or neighborhood park, we can all contribute to conservation and foster biodiversity by removing invasive plants, restoring healthy plant communities, or observing and documenting wildlife.

Conservation thrives when everyone participates. Not sure where to begin? Join us on August 22 for **Stewardship in Action**, a new opportunity to participate in invasive plant management at Floracliff, while building skills to take home.

Discoveries From the Field: Running Buffalo Clover

Floracliff's plant life has been well documented over the years, so we were thrilled to add a new rare plant record this spring. During a climate adaptation workshop, Laura Baird, Preserve Manager at Shaker Village, spotted running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*) growing along our forested driveway. Once federally listed as endangered (1987–2021), the species remains globally vulnerable (G3) and state threatened in Kentucky (S2). Running buffalo clover requires mesic soils, filtered sunlight, and periodic disturbance to persist. At Floracliff, a recent waterline replacement and treefall created just the right conditions for it to take hold.



Thank you to our community partners!

- Ash Tree Protection Project**
 Arborjet, Inc.
 Bartlett Tree Experts
 LFUCG Urban & Community Forestry
 NiSource Charitable Foundation and Columbia Gas
 Vulcan Materials Company Foundation

- Kentucky Gives Day Campaign**
 Kentucky Nonprofit Network
 Wild Birds Unlimited of Lexington

- Motus Project**
 LE Gregg Associates
 KY Department of Fish & Wildlife

- Spring Hikes & Programs**
 Kentucky Geological Survey
 KY Department of Fish & Wildlife
 Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves
 Shaker Village
 Tracy Farmer Institute for Sustainability and the Environment
 UK Department of Forestry & Natural Resources

Upcoming Hikes and Programs

July:

21st: Kids Hike: Butterflies & Bugs
23rd: Moth Night
31st: The Natural Word: Nature Journaling w/ Carol Spence

August:

7th: FLOC: First Friday Bird Walk
18th: Seminar: "Entomology for Naturalists" w/ Blake Newton
22nd: Stewardship in Action Volunteer Day

September:

4th: FLOC: First Friday Bird Walk
15th: Seminar: "Between Plants and Animals: examples of cooperation near and bizarre" w/ Rob Paratley
20th: Plein Air Painting & Drawing
24th: Golden Hour Hike to Elk Lick Falls
26th: Floracliff Field Day: Birds and Beyond
29th: Kids Hike: Wildlife Mysteries

October:

2nd: FLOC: First Friday Bird Walk
3rd: Forest Immersion: Nature Rx w/ Russ Turpin
16th: A Tour of Floracliff's Old Oak Trees
17th: Beginning Drawing in Nature
18th: Trees & Shrubs of the Bluegrass w/ Jess Slade
22nd: Golden Hour Hike to the Kentucky River
24th: Birding for Beginners w/ Dan Patrick
24th: The Natural Word: Nature Journaling w/ Carol Spence
25th: Plein Air Painting & Drawing

November:

6th: FLOC: First Friday Bird Walk
14th: Fall Long Hike

December:

4th: FLOC: First Friday Bird Walk
18th: Winter Solstice Golden Hour Hike



Scan the QR code for event details, registration, and to see the full event calendar.



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Elk Lick Echo

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Founded in 1987, Floracliff is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit nature sanctuary. Our mission is to promote conservation and appreciation of nature through education, shared experiences, and stewardship of the sanctuary.