



## Wildflower Weekend 2023

# Kentucky Native Plant Society's Wildflower Weekend

2023

at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park

Friday, April 14th & Saturday, April 15th, 2023

Join nature lovers, families, community scientists, amateur naturalists, and professional botanists from across the commonwealth, as we explore the beauty and diversity of Kentucky's natural history. Wildflower Weekend is open to the public and family friendly. **Pre-registration is required on knps.com.** Admission is \$10 for adults, \$3 for ages 13-17, and free for ages 12 & under. The agenda for the weekend is listed below. Saturday night includes a raffle featuring a woodcarving by Bob VanHoff.

**For Friday afternoon, Saturday morning, and Saturday afternoon, walks listed below are organized into three geographical areas:** Big South Fork Area, Natural Arch Scenic Area, and the Cumberland Falls State Resort Park (SRP) Area. Attendees will meet walk leaders in the Great Hall to get directions, and to coordinate carpooling & caravanning to trailheads. The Great Hall is located behind the lobby of the historic Dupont Lodge of Cumberland Falls SRP.

### Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup> – Afternoon Walks

#### **Big South Fork Area**

**1:00 PM Natural History Walk, Yahoo Falls:** **moderately difficult walk.** Explore the area around the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River with Senior Biologist James Kiser of Stantec. This walk will focus on the natural history of the Big South Fork region, along with its associated plants, animals, and ecological communities. Aside from the beautiful waterfall along the trail, attendees can expect to see the only known Kentucky population of lesser rattlesnake plantain, the rare filmy fern, and box huckleberry. Attendees can meet at the lodge at 1PM to carpool and/or caravan to the site. Alternatively, attendees can meet at the Yahoo Falls trailhead at 1:45PM.

#### **Natural Arch Scenic Area**

**1:30 PM Bryophyte Walk, Natural Arch:** **easy walk.** Join U.S. Forest Service botanist David Taylor for a hike along this ridgetop trail to learn about the diversity and ecology of the non-vascular plants in the area, including mosses, liverworts, and hornworts. If you have a hand lens (a.k.a. jewelers loupe) or magnifying lens available, bring it along for better viewing of these small organisms.

### **Cumberland Falls SRP Area**

**2:00 PM Woody Plants and their Enemies, Dog Slaughter Falls Trail:** **moderately difficult walk.** Hike with Kentucky Division of Forestry's Forest Health Program Coordinator Alexandra Blevins along this scenic trail beneath towering hemlocks and learn about our woody plants and threats to the forest health of Kentucky. Attendees will have the chance to spot sweet pinesap alongside this trail!

**2:30 PM Woody Plants and Wildflowers Walk, Blue Bend Loop Trail:** **moderately difficult walk.** Join Copperhead Consulting botanist Nate Parrish and UK-LFUCG Arboretum Curator Jess Slade for a hike along a section of the Sheltowee Trace, which follows the Cumberland River. Hike leaders will place special emphasis on the diversity of woody plants in the area and how the communities shift with changes in elevation. Expect to see a wide variety of wildflowers in bloom!

**3:00 PM Wildflowers and Ferns Walk, Sheltowee Trace to Anvil Branch Trail:** **moderately difficult to strenuous walk.** Join Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves botanist Rachel Cook and UK-LFUCG Arboretum native plants assistant Judson Collins for a hike on this botanically diverse trail. This hike will focus on a wide array of ferns and an even more diverse cast of wildflowers. Some plants we hope to find include Trilliums, showy orchid, climbing fern, spleenwort ferns, and more! This trail has lots of hills, so bring plenty of water.

**Friday Evening 7:30pm, Members & Friends Social, Picnic Shelter along Cumberland River:** Join us at the picnic shelter to gather around a firepit with fellow wildflower enthusiasts. S'mores fixings will be provided! Bring your own camp chairs and flashlights. No alcohol allowed per state park. See next page for directions.

**Friday Evening 7:30pm, Members & Friends Social, Picnic Shelter along Cumberland River Directions:**

**Directions to the picnic shelter by car:** See yellow dotted line on map below. Take Hwy 90 west from the Dupont lodge parking lot. Just before you cross the river, take the driveway to the left, across from the Cumberland Falls Visitor Center parking lot. Continue about 0.2 mile down the road and the shelter will be on the left. Parking is available at the end of the road.



**Directions to picnic shelter by foot:** See yellow dotted line on map below. Take the trail behind the Dupont Lodge down the slope to the river. Turn left onto the road or trail going northeast. The picnic shelter will be on the left-hand side of the road. **Caution:** the trail is steep, and you will need a headlamp or flashlight to safely get back up the trail to the lodge in the dark after the social.



## Saturday, April 15th – Morning Walks

### Big South Fork Area

**8:45 AM Ecology of the Big South Fork Walk, Blue Heron Trail:** moderately difficult walk, 3-4 hours. Join botanist Rob Paratley and ecologist Dr. Mary Arthur as they explore the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. Hike leaders will be highlighting plants that are restricted to southern Kentucky counties and therefore unique to this part of Appalachia. The impacts of climate change on Kentucky's ecosystems will also be discussed.

**8:15 AM Natural History Walk, Princess Falls:** moderately difficult walk. Explore the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River with senior biologist James Kiser of Stantec. This walk will focus on the natural history of the area and its associated plants, animals, and natural communities. In addition to Princess Falls, there is a diverse mix of spring wildflowers growing along the trail and river.

### Natural Arch Scenic Area

**9:30 AM Natural Formations, Waterfalls, and Associated Plants, Buffalo Canyon Trail:** moderately difficult walk. Admire the stunning natural formations and waterfalls of this scenic area while learning about the associated plant communities from hike leaders Nate Parrish, botanist of Copperhead Consulting, and Tyler Adams, a KNPS member and waterfalls enthusiast.

### Cumberland Falls SRP Area

**7:45 AM Birds and Wildflowers Walk, Sheltoewe Trace to Dog Slaughter Falls:** easy to moderately difficult walk. Join Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves Rod Botkins and Heidi Braunreiter for this morning bird & wildflower walk along the Sheltoewe Trace. Attendees should expect to see a variety of migratory birds in their showy mating plumage, in addition to wildflowers blooming along the trail. If you have a pair of binoculars handy, we recommend bringing them along for this walk. The destination for the walk will be the Dog Slaughter Falls. Topography is generally flat along the river and gets hillier into the forest to see the waterfall.

**8:30 AM Wildflower Walk, Trail #2 to Bunches Creek Tributary:** easy to moderately difficult walk. Join botanist Julian Campbell to hike 1.5 miles along the Cumberland River to the mouth of Bunches Creek through mature mesic and subxeric forests. The cobble bar at the mouth of Bunches Creek is a remarkably unique river scour plant community, with several rare plants. These include the rare Balsam Ragweed (*Packera paupercula* var. *paupercula*) and dragonhead (*Physostegia virginiana*), plus several graminoids.

**9:00 AM Ecology, Biodiversity, and Endemism Walk, Anvil Branch Trail to Sheltoewe Trace Trail:** 4-5 miles, strenuous walk with 600' elevation gain. Hike with Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves botanist Devin Rodgers to explore a cross-section of southern Cumberland Plateau natural communities and learn how their density in this region leads to not only high biodiversity, but also endemism. Special emphasis will be given to xeric pine-heath

woodlands, Appalachian mesophytic forest, sandstone cliff/rockhouse, and sandstone riverscours communities.

**10:00 AM Wildflower Walk, Blue Bend Loop:** **easy to moderately difficult walk.** Join Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves botanist Rachel Cook to hike along the botanically rich Blue Bend section of the Shelton Trace and see a dazzling display of spring ephemerals.

**10:30AM Wildflower Walk, Pinnacle Knob Lookout trail:** **easy to moderately difficult walk.** See a diverse mix of blooms along with spectacular views along this short out and back trail. U.S. Forest Service botanist David Taylor will lead this hike with a special focus on wildflowers in the area. The trail ends at a restored fire tower that is one of only 13 remaining historic look-outs in Kentucky.

## **Saturday, April 15th – Afternoon Walks**

### **Big South Fork Area**

**1:15 PM Wildflower Walk, Yahoo Falls:** **moderately difficult walk.** Join KNPS member and plant photographer Alan Abbott on this hike to a beautiful waterfall with lots of wildflowers in bloom along the way. Expect to see the usual suspects including Trillium and bellflowers as well as a rare plant, the lesser rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera repens*).

### **Natural Arch Scenic Area**

**2:30PM Woody Plants Walk, Panoramic Trail:** **easy walk.** Join U.S. Forest Service botanist David Taylor to learn about the trees and shrubs growing on this ridgetop trail and take in some scenic views of the area.

### **Cumberland Falls SRP Area**

**1:00 PM WORKSHOP: Frondly Endeavors: Identifying the ferns of Kentucky, Cumberland Falls Lodge:** **easy, accessible walk.** Ferns are the second most diverse group of vascular land plants, but identification is often difficult for many botanical enthusiasts. In this workshop, you will learn about the morphological features that are important for fern identification. You will also learn about some unique and cool ferns found in Kentucky! Dr. Sally Chambers, Assistant Professor and Herbarium Curator at Eastern Kentucky University, will lead this workshop followed by an outdoor walk to identify some ferns in their natural habitat.

**1:30 PM Vascular Plants and Geology Walk, Blue Bend trail along the Cumberland River:** **generally easy walk.** Join Professor Emeritus of Eastern Kentucky University, Dr. Ron Jones, and retired president of Shield Environmental Associates, Mark Sweet, for an out-and-back walk on the Blue Bend trail along the Cumberland River to learn about vascular plants, including the primitive and advanced features, as well as a lesson in geology and natural history of the Cumberland Falls area.

**2:00 PM Wake up, Woods! A spring pollinator walk, Eagle Falls trail:** **easy to moderately difficult walk.** Come take a bilingual (Spanish and English) walk in the woods to learn about spring wildflowers and their pollinators as the forest wakes up from its winter slumber. Families and people of all ages are welcome. Join two Eastern Kentucky University professors along the Eagle Falls trail. Dr. Valerie Peters, who studies pollinators in Kentucky and Costa



Rica, will lead the walk in Spanish, while Dr. Jennifer Koslow, a plant ecologist who works in Kentucky, will assist in Spanglish.

**¡Despierta, bosque!: caminata fácil a moderadamente difícil.** Venga al bosque para una caminata bilingüe en español y inglés para aprender sobre las flores de la primavera y sus polinizadores, durante el tiempo del año cuando el bosque está despertando del invierno. Las familias y la gente de todas las edades están bienvenidos. La Dra. Valerie Peters, quien estudia los polinizadores de KY y en Costa Rica, sería encargada de dirigir la caminata en español. La Dra. Jennifer Koslow, una ecóloga que estudia plantas en KY, estaría co-líder de la caminata, en Spanglish.

**3:00 PM Birds and Wildflowers Walk, Pinnacle Knob Lookout trail: easy walk.** Join Shaker Village preserve managers Ben Leffew and Laura Baird to search for birds in the canopy and wildflowers beneath your feet on this short forested trail that ends at a historic fire tower with spectacular views of the area. Since this walk will occur during spring migration, we are sure to see some migratory birds in their showy mating plumage. If you have a pair of binoculars available, we recommend bringing those along for this hike.

### **Saturday Evening Talks in the Moonbow Conference Room, Dupont Lodge at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park**

**6:00 Welcome/Introductions,** Heidi Braunreiter

**6:05 KNPS Membership Business Meeting,** Jeff Nelson & David Taylor

**6:25 iNaturalist BotanyBlitz Results,** Vanessa Voelker

**6:30 Trilliums of Kentucky Update,** Tara Littlefield (see next page for bio)

**6:50 Southern Kentucky Landscape Features and Associated Rare Species,** James Kiser (see next page for bio)

7:20 Ten-minute break

**7:30 Botanical Humor: You Never Knew Plants Were So Funny,** Chris Benda (see next page for bio)

**8:15 Q&A time (& raffle set-up)**

**8:30 Raffle Drawing, featuring KNPS gear, wildflowers, and a wood carving by Bob VanHoff**

#### **Speakers:**

**Heidi Braunreiter,** KNPS Vice President & Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves Fire Program Manager

**Jeff Nelson,** Kentucky Native Plant Society President

**David Taylor,** USFS Botanist for Daniel Boone National Forest

**Vanessa Voelker,** Botanist for Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves

#### **Presentation Speaker Biographies**

**Tara Littlefield** is the state botanist and manager of the Biological Assessment Branch at the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves. She has over 17 years' experience as a heritage botanist and ecologist and natural area conservation leadership. She coordinates the state's Plant Conservation Alliance, a public private partnership working on rare plant and community conservation, and is the past

president of the KNPS (2016-2022). Tara has a B.S. in Biochemistry from University of Louisville, M.S. in Forestry/Plant Ecology from the University of Kentucky and is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Kentucky in Forest/Natural Resource Conservation. Much of her work involves rare species surveys, general floristic inventories, natural areas inventory, biological research, acquisition/protection of natural areas, rare plant/community restoration and recovery, and biological/conservation program development and management.

**James Kiser** is a senior biologist with Stantec Consulting Services. He grew up along the base of Pine Mountain in Letcher County, Kentucky, received a B.S. degree from Morehead State University and completed courses toward a Master's Science Degree at Eastern Kentucky University. James moved to the Big South Fork area in McCreary County in 2003 when he took a biologist position with the Daniel Boone National Forest. He is an old fashioned Naturalist spending the last 32 years studying the flora and fauna of Kentucky. He has traveled throughout the eastern and Midwestern United States conducting rare plant, reptile, amphibian, bat and mussel surveys. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chris Benda** is a botanist and past president of the Illinois Native Plant Society (2015-2016). Currently, he works as a Researcher at Southern Illinois University, where he coordinates the Plants of Concern Southern Illinois Program and teaches The Flora of Southern Illinois. Besides working at SIU, he conducts botanical fieldwork around the world, teaches a variety of classes at The Morton Arboretum and leads nature tours for Camp Ondessonk. He has research appointments with the University of Illinois and Argonne National Laboratory, and is an accomplished photographer and author of several publications about natural areas in Illinois. He is also known as Illinois Botanizer and can be reached by email at [botanizer@gmail.com](mailto:botanizer@gmail.com).