



Elk Lick Echo

Fall 2009

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Meet Our New Staff

Earlier this month we hired two new field technicians to assist with invasive species removal and environmental education activities at Floracliff. Ryan Quire recently graduated from the University of Kentucky with a B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation and Management (NRCM). You may recognize her from the nearby Raven Run Sanctuary, where she has been working for the past two years. She is very passionate about plants and biodiversity and we are excited to have her on board! Tommie Kuhlman will be graduating this fall with a B.S. in NRCM from UK as well. He worked at Floracliff a couple of years ago and since then has been working as a lab assistant in the Department of Entomology. We are happy to have him working on the preserve again! Ryan and Tommie will be co-leading a tree identification hike on October 17th, which will be a great time to meet them. Details are on page 3.



Ryan Quire, left, and Tommie Kuhlman

Fauna Focus: Northern Ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*)

By: Tommie Kuhlman



This ringneck snake was found at Floracliff underneath a tin coverboard.

The Northern ringneck snake is a fairly common non-poisonous snake found throughout the eastern and central United States. These snakes have a dark blue to black body that generally reaches about one foot in length. The body, as would be expected from the name, has a ring of yellow or orange around the neck. The belly is the same color as the neck, often with dark spots going down it. They prey on salamanders, frogs, lizards, other juvenile snakes, and even earthworms. Some large spiders and centipedes have been observed eating juvenile ringnecks, however the mature ones only succumb to larger predators such as owls, opossums, and bigger snakes.

This snake is a common species, however it is sometimes a hard one to spot given its nocturnal behavior and proclivity towards habitats with plenty of hiding spaces, such as dead trees or areas with lots of leaf litter. These places provide plenty of cover and are often the home to a whole colony of ringneck snakes. If one is found and threatened, they release a saliva that has a clinging, musky odor to it. After 3 years they reach reproductive maturity. Mating mainly takes place in the spring, the eggs are laid in the summer, and then they hatch in the fall. The nesting dens are also quite often communal and a single place is chosen to return to each year.

Our Wish List

Please contact Beverly James at 859-351-7770 or floracliff@aol.com if you wish to donate any of the following items. All donations are tax deductible.

- Handheld GPS
- Regional field guides
- Work gloves
- Tools (hand tool or power tools)
- Gift certificate to hardware or office supply store
- Spray bottles
- Birding binoculars

Help us save on printing and postage costs by receiving your newsletter via email and in color! Send an email to Floracliff@aol.com and include your name and address so that we can make the changes. Thank you!

Fauna Focus: Mourning Cloak Butterfly (*Nymphalis antiopa*)

By: Ryan Quire

The Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa* L.) is a large butterfly native to the Inner Bluegrass region and is one of the world's longest lived butterflies! This species usually has one generation, or brood, per year, with adults living up to twelve months. A portion of the population migrate south during the fall, but many Kentucky broods overwinter here. Its range is widespread throughout North America, south of tundra regions and extending south to northern Florida and Texas.

During its larval stage its body is black and mottled with small white speckles. It also has eight red spots on its dorsal side and several branched black spines all along its body. Although it appears to have stinging spines, they are harmless to touch. Larvae feed in groups and prefer young leaves of willows (*Salix*), elms (*Ulmus*), hackberry (*Celtis*), and cottonwood (*Populus*). As an adult the inside of its wings are brownish-maroon with a pale-yellow border and a row of bright blue spots adjacent to the border. The outside of its wings have an irregular shape with bands of blue-green and black inside a tan border. Adults prefer to consume tree sap from oaks, but may occasionally feed on rotting fruit or flower nectar.



Eggs are laid in clusters on leaves or twigs during the spring. Adults emerge in midsummer, aestivate until early autumn, and then re-emerge to feed and acquire energy for winter hibernation. Although they seek out a sheltered area to overwinter, you may observe adults flying during warm days in winter or early spring. You can search for the Mourning Cloak butterfly along streams, wetlands, woodland edges, city parks, and your own yards!

Photo: Copyright © 2009 University of Alberta Museums

Nature Center Status

Hopefully we will soon have the necessary permits and total cost estimate. The Floracliff Board of Directors will then decide if it's feasible to start construction. Thanks again to the following individuals and businesses who have donated their services in helping us with this project:

Jim Potts and Bill Rodgers, James W. Potts Architects.
Chris Edling and Kerry Willett, Anderson Community Properties.
Kay Wright, Rector Hayden Realtors.
John Park, Yunker & Associates.

Many Thanks!

2009 Donors

Acorns:

Ramesh and Suzanne Bhatt
Claire Carpenter
Patsy Corns
Alan Fryer
Charles Gregg
Cecil McFarland
Joe Willett

Shooting stars:

Charles and Catherine
Bishop
Dennis Chambers
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Parks
Barbara Ruff
Meg Shaw

Spicebushes:

David and Karma Cassidy
Down to Earth Garden Club
David Elbon
Lillian Jones
Leyton Register

Dogwoods:

John Sither
Clara Wieland
William Elwood

Hickories:

Charles Dirksen
Old Oak Trees:
Charles Sither

2009 Hike leaders

Beverly James

Ciara Lockstadt

Neil Pederson
Charles Sither
Deborah White
Hank Yacek

2009 Volunteers

John Baggerman
Daniel Carubb
Bill Crankshaw
Erin Cutler
Tinique Gay
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Laura Goode
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Leigh Ann Robertson
Bill Rodgers
Danielle Runyon
Stephanie Shaw
Charles Sither
John Sither
Kristen Thompson
Angela Woodward
Kay Wright

Schedule of Events

All events require advance registration. Cost is \$4 per person or \$10.00 per family unless otherwise noted. Most programs last 2-3 hours. Call 859-351-7770 to register or for more information.

Interpretive Hikes

Saturday, October 17th @ 10:00 a.m.: Tree Identification with Ryan Quire and Tommie Kuhlman

Meet our new field techs, Ryan and Tommie, on this hike they are co-leading. They will cover how to identify many of our native trees as well their natural history on this hike down to Elk Lick Creek.

Saturday, October 24th @ 1:00 p.m.: Forest Ecology at Floracliff w/ Rob Paratley

How have differences in habitat helped create different plant communities in the preserve? How have past disturbance and forest history shaped the woods that we see today? Join Rob Paratley, Research Specialist and Herbarium Curator from UK as he discusses the ecology of the Kentucky River Palisades and answers these questions. This will also be a great time to catch the fall colors at their peak.

Saturday, October 31st @ 10:00 a.m.: Trees as Environmental Historians w/ Dr. Neil Pederson (rescheduled program*)

Assistant Professor Neil Pederson from ECU will lead this hike to visit the oldest documented tree in Kentucky and scenic highlights of Floracliff including the recently recognized Epicenter— a clump of trees dating to before Daniel Boone. Along the way, Neil will discuss the value of old trees and forests, environmental history of the Inner Bluegrass region and the science of dendrochronology. Hiking level is moderate to difficult. *Priority will be given to those who registered for this program in the spring. We will try to call everyone we can who was registered, but if you know you were on the list and can call us to assist, we would appreciate it. Thanks!

Saturday, November 14th @ 10:00 a.m.: Long Walk w/ Beverly James

Join us in enjoying the changes of the season on our annual long walk. This hike is approximately 5 miles long and is rated moderate to difficult.

Saturday, December 5th @ 1:00 p.m.: Winter Tree Identification

Warm up on this hike to Elk Lick Creek. Preserve Manager Beverly James will discuss how to identify trees by looking at their bark, buds, and leaf scars.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, October 3rd
Saturday, November 7th
Saturday, December 5th

Volunteer activities will involve assisting with the removal of exotic plants from the preserve. This is part of an ongoing effort to protect our native species and we rely on the help of volunteers. Please call ahead to register and receive more information at 859-351-7770. If you are interested in helping out on any other day, give us a call and we can work something out!

**THE MARY E.
WHARTON NATURE
SANCTUARY AT
FLORA CLIFF**

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Web address: www.floracliff.org

Floracliff is a non-profit organization. We rely on support from community members like you. Please support preservation in your region.

Yes! I would like to contribute a tax-deductible gift to Floracliff.

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Address _____

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Zip _____ Email _____

Amount enclosed _____ Date _____

- \$25 - \$49 acorn
- \$50 - \$99 shooting star
- \$100 - \$299 spicebush
- \$300 - \$499 dogwood
- \$500 - \$999 hickory
- \$1000+ old oak tree
- other

Please make checks payable to Floracliff and mail to:
Floracliff, P. O. Box 4006, Lexington, KY 40544.
Thank you!



**P.O. Box 4006
Lexington, KY 40544**

Address correction requested