



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Summer 2013

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Upcoming Nature Journaling Workshop

Nature journaling is a powerful tool for connecting to the world around us. It offers an opportunity to slow down and reflect on your thoughts and inspirations in a natural setting, while also improving your skills in observation and species identification and recording the phenology of the world around you.

On July 26th and 27th, join Artist Betty Beshoar and Ecologist Heather Housman as we explore the fields and forests of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary. We will begin at the Nature Center on Friday, the 26th, at 10 am with a hike to the top of Elk Lick Falls. Using a unique pencil and watercolor technique, we will record the plants, animals, and natural features that we encounter. We will have specimens of plants (collected off-site) and other woodland materials and return to the Nature Center on Saturday to finalize our journaling pages.

This class will combine art (sketching and watercolor) with natural history. John Muir wrote that "most are on the world, not in it." If you would like to improve your skills as a naturalist or as an artist, this is the perfect class for you. A list of materials and additional information is available at www.kynaturejournaling.com. The class is suitable for all skill levels. To register for the class, please contact us at floracliff@aol.com or 859-351-7770.



Journal page by Betty Beshoar

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!



Sixteen people participated in the two-day Herpetology Field Studies workshop held at Floracliff and Maywoods Environmental and Educational Laboratory in May. Led by Andrea Drayer, Dr. Steven Price, and Dr. Stephen Richter, the workshop covered identification, biology, and ecology of Kentucky's native herps, frog call recognition, and survey techniques. Participants got a chance to look for and handle a variety of amphibians and reptiles found in the field or brought to the workshop by the instructors. Pictured above, from left to right, include three species we found at Floracliff: a larval northern red salamander, a female green frog, and a young milk snake. We all had a great time and learned a great deal about some of Kentucky's most misunderstood fauna.

Fauna Focus: Cave Salamander

By: Laura Baird



The cave salamander is so named because it is often found in the “twilight zone” of caves, an area found just within the entrance where it is dark but not pitch black. The specific name “*lucifuga*” is Latin for “light-shunning,” a reference to their affinity for dark places. Despite their name, cave salamanders do not require actual caves. At Floracliff, they can be found by searching the crevices in the limestone overhangs along streams. It is found only in areas rich with limestone, including most of Kentucky and parts of nearby states.

The cave salamander has a base color of orange, red, or yellow with black spots all over its body except for the pale belly. They are fully grown at four to six inches, with their tail accounting for 60-65% of their length. They can easily be confused with the closely related longtail salamander (*Eurycea longicauda longicauda*). The two species can be differentiated by the markings on their tails. The longtail salamander has a herringbone-like pattern along the sides of its tail. The tail of the cave salamander is peppered with random spots.

Cave salamanders breed from September to February and eat any soft-bodied invertebrate, including mites, ticks, and isopods. They have a prehensile tail to help them climb rocks.

Flora Focus: Green Milkweed

By: Josie Miller



Blooming in late May to early June, *Asclepias viridis* is one of the earliest-blooming native milkweeds in our region. Known variously as green antelopehorn, green milkweed, and spider milkweed, *A. viridis* is a beautiful herbaceous perennial that may be found along roadsides and in glades, prairies, and overgrazed fields from Ohio south to Florida and westward to Nebraska and Texas. Due to its early growth, *A. viridis* is a favored plant on which monarch butterflies migrating from Mexico lay their eggs. As is common to all milkweeds, the green milkweed plant contains cardiac glycosides. Not only does this make the plant toxic to most animals, it also makes the monarch caterpillar that eats the plant slightly toxic to any bird that dares to eat it.

In addition to serving as a larval food source for monarch, tussock moth, soldier and queen caterpillars, *A. viridis* is a food source for weevils, milkweed bugs and beetles, aphids, and leafhoppers. It also serves as a hunting ground for crab spiders and harvestmen and a nectar source for bees, checkerspots, whites, and swallowtail butterflies. The silky floss from the seedpods of *Asclepias viridis* has also been used by humans for candlewicks, stuffing in pillows, life preservers and aviation suits.

Many thanks to those who donated in the last quarter:

Donors

Acorn:

Greg Abernathy
Charles Chandler
Robert Hayes
Tamara Horn
Joseph Omielan
Stephanie Shaw
Carol Spence
J F Spragens
Angela Warner

Shooting Star:

Ramesh and Suzanne Bhatt

Kevin Lutes

William and Kathryn Ruth

Fernita Wallace

Spicebush:

Katherine Johnson
Laurie Kuhlman
Richard Stephen
Clara Wieland

Hickory:

Charley Sither

Hike/Program Leaders

Daniel Douglas
Andrea Drayer

Myron Hardesty

Steven Price

Stephen Richter

Zeb Weese

Hank Yacek

Volunteers

Marley Allen

Hugh Huffman

Montessori Middle School of KY

Jacob Moody

Bill Rodgers

Charles Sither

Schedule of Events

All events require advance registration. Cost is \$5 per person or \$12 per family unless otherwise noted. Most programs last 2-3 hours. Call 859-351-7770 or email floracliff@aol.com to register or get more information.

Programs and Hikes

All hikes are rated moderate in difficulty due to narrow trails, uneven terrain, and change in elevation.

Friday, June 28th & Saturday June 29th: Fern Workshop w/ Rob Paratley (\$50)

This workshop will explore the evolutionary history of ferns, their life cycles, and introduce you to their natural history and ecology. We will learn the descriptive terminology of ferns, how to key them out to identify them to species, and, on two field trips, learn to recognize the more common and conspicuous members of the group.

Wednesday, July 10th @ 1:00 p.m.: Fabric Sunprints and Tree Identification

A program for naturalists of all ages, we'll find and identify leaves and other objects to make sunprints on fabric that is light sensitive. The majority of the program will be held in and around the nature center, with a short hike to the woods.

Friday, July 19th @ 1:00 p.m.: Wild Turkey Workout: Nature Yoga for Kids

Led by Carey Ruff, children will use their whole bodies to become the plants and animals they may see on our nature hike. Recommended for ages 3 and up. Please bring a mat if you have one; a few will be available.

Friday, July 26th & Saturday, July 27th: Nature Journaling Workshop (\$50)

Join Artist Betty Beshoar and Ecologist Heather Housman as we explore the fields and forests of Floracliff. We will begin at the Nature Center on Friday with a hike to the top of Elk Lick Falls. Using a unique pencil and watercolor technique, we will record the plants, animals, and natural features that we encounter.

Wednesday, July 31st @ 11:00 a.m.: Creek Walk

Join Floracliff staff on this trek to Elk Lick Creek, to look for macroinvertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, and more.

Friday, September 13th & Saturday, September 14th: Kentucky Insects and Spiders Workshop w/ Dr. James Wagner (\$50)

This workshop will focus on the great diversity of insects and spiders found in Kentucky. Exploring various habitats at Floracliff, we will capture and identify insects found in the streams, old fields, and forests of the preserve.

Saturday, September 28th @ 10:00 a.m.: Late Summer Wildflowers

This hike to Elk Lick Creek will feature the last blooms of the season, such as goldenrods, asters, and lobelia.

Saturday, October 12th: Venerable Trees: The Lives of Ancient Trees in the Kentucky Bluegrass w/ Dr. Tom Kimmerer (\$30)

This will be a full-day workshop held at Floracliff, the Lexington Cemetery, and other sites in Fayette County. More details coming soon. Please see our website for updates.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, September 7th, 10 am - 1 pm

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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Email: floracliff@aol.com
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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Amount enclosed _____ Date _____

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- \$500 - \$999 hickory
- \$1000+ old oak tree
- other

Please make checks payable to Floracliff and mail to:
Floracliff, P. O. Box 21723, Lexington, KY 40522.
Thank you!



**P.O. Box 21723
Lexington, KY 40522**

Address correction requested