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CONTACT:

Beverly James
Preserve Director
(859) 539-2678
bjames@floracliff.org

Zeb Weese
Executive Director
Kentucky State Nature Preserves
Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund
(502) 573-2886
Zeb.Weese@ky.gov

FLORACLIFF NATURE SANCTUARY EXPANDS, PROTECTING 59 ACRES ALONG THE KENTUCKY RIVER

LEXINGTON, KY. (March 16, 2017) — Floracliff Nature Sanctuary recently acquired an adjacent 59 acres in the Kentucky River Palisades region in southern Fayette County, bringing the total acreage of the sanctuary to 346 acres.

The addition, known as Trail's End, is protected with a conservation easement provided by the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF). Trail's End includes mature second-growth forests and frontage along Elk Lick Creek and the Kentucky River, and it provides critical habitat for migratory birds, bats, amphibians, and pollinators. "The KHLCF Board is excited to help Floracliff conserve additional Kentucky River forest," says Zeb Weese, director of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. "Floracliff does fantastic education and conservation work. It is my kids' favorite place to hike. This project is what the nature license plate program is all about."

To some in the region, Trail's End is known for its history as a girls' camp in the early 1900s and a scout and youth group camp in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. A camp lodge on site was built in 1919 "among lofty oaks and fragrant cedars on a high bluff overlooking the Kentucky River." It was converted to a residence in the 1980s and provides a variety of potential uses for Floracliff's programs, including a retreat center for interested groups.

New trails on the property will feature spring wildflower displays, river access, and views of palisade cliffs. They will also enhance Floracliff's programs and guided hikes on plants, wildlife, ecology, water quality, and more. Other plans for Trail's End include an inventory of its plants and animals and management of invasive plants such as bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and wintercreeper.

The addition is the first land purchase for the sanctuary since the passing of its founder, Dr. Mary Wharton, a well-known botanist and author of regional field guides. Dr. Wharton established Floracliff to preserve the natural communities and geological features unique to the area and provide a place for people to connect to nature through education, inspiration, and research.

Trail's End was purchased with the help of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (funded in part by the sale of "Nature's Finest" license plates) and the Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund (a

partnership of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Kentucky Natural Lands Trust). The project received much additional support from Floracliff's Board of Directors, The Sither Family, and over 200 donors and volunteers. "We are so grateful for the support we have received from our partners and countless individuals," says Preserve Director Beverly James, "from the previous landowner and former campers who have loved Trail's End for many years to those who were captivated by the land and its history on their first visit. This has truly been a community supported conservation project."

About Floracliff

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary is a private nature sanctuary that was established in 1989 by Dr. Mary E. Wharton and dedicated as a Kentucky State Nature Preserve in 1996, the first and only State Nature Preserve in Fayette County. Focusing on conservation and education, the sanctuary is open for guided hikes and events and offers a variety of programs, volunteer and research opportunities, and hands-on workshops to interested individuals and groups.

For more information about Floracliff and the Trail's End project, visit floracliff.org.

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