



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Winter 2014

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Floracliff Field Studies 2014

We are now into the third year of Floracliff Field Studies workshops! In 2012, we developed these workshops to highlight biodiversity in the region and give people unique hands-on field experiences in Central Kentucky. We greatly appreciate all the participants that have helped to make the workshops a success and given us ideas for new workshops.

For 2014, we will be focusing on botany, aquatic diversity, and geology. The field sites will include Floracliff, Maywoods Environmental and Education Laboratory, Lower Howard's Creek and other sites in central Kentucky. Workshop participants will gain experience in species and fossil identification, biological surveys and collection techniques, and field observations. Lecture topics will cover natural history, ecology, life cycles, species behavior, paleontology, and more.



As with previous years, the workshops are open to anyone. We think they will be of particular interest to naturalists, biology students, science educators, and land managers, as well as those with a strong passion for the subject. Each workshop will cost \$50, which covers instruction and a book or other resource for everyone who attends. We will be offering one scholarship per workshop, which will be open to anyone. Registration and scholarship information is available on our website at www.floracliff.org/fieldstudies.html.

The workshops are limited to 12-18 participants, so early registration is strongly encouraged. Here is a summary of this year's workshops:



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- **April 19th & May 3rd: Spring Flora of Kentucky:** Led by Dr. Brad Ruhfel of Eastern Kentucky University's Department of Biology, this workshop will cover plant identification, plant communities of Kentucky, collection techniques, and conservation issues. Field locations will be Floracliff and Maywoods Environmental and Education Laboratory.
- **May 30-31: Kentucky's Aquatic Diversity:** Led by Michael Compton of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission and Ryan



Top - bottom: wild blue phlox and yellow wood violet, logperch from Elk Lick Creek, and an Ordovician starfish fossil

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!

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Evans of the Kentucky Division of Water, this workshop will cover identification and diversity of aquatic organisms, particularly fish and macroinvertebrates. Water chemistry, collection techniques, and stream habitats, and conservation issues will also be covered. Field trips will include Floracliff and the nearby Lower Howard's Creek State Nature Preserve.

- **October 10-11: Geology of Central Kentucky and the Palisades:** Led by Dr. Stephen Greb of the Kentucky Geological Survey at the University of Kentucky, this workshop will focus on the geology and paleontology of central Kentucky, covering geologic principles, geologic mapping, and geologic history of central Kentucky. Field trips will include Floracliff and other locations in the Palisades.

For more information including detailed descriptions of the workshops, registration information, and a scholarship application, please visit www.floracliff.org/fieldstudies. If you do not have internet access and would like a packet sent to you, please contact Beverly James at 859-351-7770.

Fauna Focus: Eastern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*)

By: Laura Baird



The eastern fence lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*) is common throughout eastern North America. The subspecies in our area is called *Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus*.

Fence lizards are named for their habit of climbing fences to bask in the sun, but really they're happy to climb anything. They can be spotted in dry, open woods climbing trees, logs, stumps and rock outcrops. In the evenings and during the cold winter they will crawl beneath these same objects to hide until the warmth returns. They emerge from hibernation in the spring to hunt for insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates. They mate in late spring, laying a clutch of 3 to 16 eggs, which hatch by late summer.

Lizards in the genus *Sceloporus* are commonly known as "spiny lizards" because of their exceptional rough scales. This is the only species of spiny lizard in Kentucky, so it is easy to identify. They're fairly small between 4 and 7.25 inches long. They're grayish or brownish and both sexes have a series of wavy, undulating lines across their backs, hence their specific epithet *undulatus*. The markings are darker and more distinct in females. Males can be identified during mating season by the bright hyacinth-blue markings on their chin and along the sides of their bellies (thus the subspecies name *hyacinthinus*).

Many thanks to those who donated in the last quarter:

Donors

Acorn (\$5-49):

Claire Carpenter
Charles Gregg
Stephen Stolz
Pat Waggener
Kay Wright

Shooting Star (\$50-99):

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John B. Park
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Rick and Connie Oleson
Charles Sither
Clara Wieland

Dogwood (\$300-499):

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Barbara Ruff (in honor of Carey Ruff)
Old Oak Tree (\$1000+):
Crutcher Family Foundation, Inc.
(Dottie Crutcher Cordray)
Charles Dirksen (in honor of Charles R.
Sither)

Volunteers

Nancy Adams
Ben Albritton
Marley Allen
Mary Carol Cooper
John Davis
Hugh Huffman
Karen Lanier
Ellen Molle
Montessori Middle School
Will Overbeck
Terese Pierskalla
Leigh Anne Robertson
Charles Sither

Schedule of Events

All events require advance registration. Cost is \$5 per person or \$12 per family unless otherwise noted. Most hikes 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 to strenuous in difficulty due to narrow trails, uneven terrain, and change in elevation, and distance.

Saturday, February 15th @ 10:00 a.m.: Winter Tree Identification

Preserve Manager Beverly James will cover how to identify common trees of the Bluegrass region by their bark, buds, leaf scars, and other characteristics.

Saturday, March 15th, 1:00 p.m.: Signs of Spring

Join us for the first wildflower hike of the season. We should see some early risers such as trout lilies, snow trillium, and hepatica.

Saturday, March 22nd, 10:00 a.m.: Wildflower Folklore

Many of our wildflowers have interesting historical uses and superstitions or neat stories about how they were named. Floracliff Field Technician, Laura Baird, will discuss the fun facts of wildflowers on this hike to Elk Lick Creek.

Saturday, March 29th @ 1:00 p.m.: Wildflower Hike

Preserve Manager Beverly James will lead this wildflower hike to Elk Lick Creek. Highlights will likely include bloodroot, twinleaf, and Dutchman's breeches.

Wednesday, April 2nd @ 1:00 p.m.: Mid-week Wildflower Hike

For those with some free time during the week, we'll be offering this wildflower hike to Elk Lick Creek.

Thursday, April 3rd @ 1:00 p.m.: Wild Turkey Workout - Nature Yoga for Kids

A Spring Break Program: Former Floracliff preserve manager and yoga instructor Carey Ruff will lead this hike and program. Using their whole bodies, children will become the plants and animals they may see on our nature hike.

Recommended for ages 3 and up. We will have a few yoga mats to offer, but please bring one if you have one.

Saturday, April 5th @ 10:00 a.m.: Wildflower Hike w/ Martina Hines

Martina Hines, an ecologist with the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, will lead this wildflower hike during the peak blooming period. Highlights will likely include Virginia bluebells, celandine poppies, and bellwort.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, February 1st, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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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Lexington, KY 40522

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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.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Email _____

Amount enclosed _____ Date _____

- \$5 - \$49 acorn
- \$50 - \$99 shooting star
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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