



Elk Lick Echo

Summer 2009

Inside this issue:

Flora Focus:	2
Prickly pear cactus	
Fungus Focus:	2
Wrinkled peach	
Schedule of Events	3

Winifred Haggart Nature Center - A New Milestone

By: Charles Sither

A generous bequest in 2005 from the Winifred Haggart estate (Ms. Haggart was a friend of Dr. Wharton) provided funds for a nature/education center to fill the void of not having indoor space for classes, meetings, research, and office space for our Preserve Manager who currently works out of her home. Planning since then has been a slow arduous process due to our limited resources and bureaucratic obstacles.

Floracliff has now reached a critical milestone by obtaining a conditional use permit from the LFUCG Board of Adjustment that will allow us to build this center. We have now transitioned from the planning stage to detail design and construction cost estimating phase for a very modest structure that will satisfy our functional needs and represent the preserve architecturally. We still have several bureaucratic and possible financial obstacles to overcome. There are several ways you can help. One is by donating money using the form on page 4. Also, if you or someone you know is in the construction business and is willing to supply materials and services at reduced rates or possibly donate them, please call Charley Sither, 268-8309, or Beverly James, 351-7770.

We thank the following individuals who have donated their services in helping us achieve this milestone:

- 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.

Ciara Moving On

If any of you had a chance to come out to one of our recent hikes, you probably met Ciara Lockstadt, a field tech at Floracliff. For the past year and a half, Ciara has been assisting us with exotic invasive plant control, trail maintenance, leading hikes, water sampling, tree coring, species inventory, writing educational materials, and so much more. She always came to work with a smile on her face and a positive attitude.

Ciara recently graduated from the University of Kentucky with a B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation and Management. She has been accepted into the General Biology Masters of Science Degree program at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, which means she is leaving her position at Floracliff. We will miss her, but wish her the best of luck in this next step. Congratulations, Ciara!



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!

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
- Tools
- Regional field guides
- Gift certificate to hardware or office supply store
- Work gloves
- Birding binoculars

Many Thanks!

2009 Donors

Acorns:

Claire Carpenter
Charles Gregg

Shooting stars:

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

Spicebushes:

Down to Earth Garden Club
Lillian Jones

Leyton Register
Clara Wieland

Dogwoods:

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
Bill Crankshaw
Erin Cutler

Laura Goble

Colin Goggin

Laura Goode

Edgar Hume

Roberta James

Claudia Marin

Montessori Middle School

Will Overbeck

David Robertson

Leigh Ann Robertson

Bill Rodgers

Stephanie Shaw

Charles Sither

John Sither

Kristen Thompson

Kay Wright



The showy Prickly pear flower blooms from May to June.

Flora Focus: Prickly Pear (*Opuntia humifusa*)

By: Ciara Lockstadt

On an afternoon hike through the scrubby cedar forest of Floracliff you may stumble across a low-lying cactus with clusters of hair-like spines or glochids that have long spines protruding from them. Be sure to watch out for this spiny cactus, known as prickly pear. Like other cacti, prickly pear uses CAM (Crassulacean Acid Metabolism) photosynthesis to survive in arid environments. CAM photosynthesis prevents water loss through evaporation from the prickly pear's succulent stems by closing its gas exchange cells.

Prickly pear has showy yellow flowers that turn into an edible berry, which is called "tuna" by the Native Americans who have been consuming them and the juicy pads of the plant for centuries. The pads taste like green beans, while the tunas taste like watermelon. Though prickly pear spreads vegetatively, seeds are spread by birds and rodents consuming the tuna. Prickly pear is found in the rocky outcrops in young cedar forests of Floracliff and can be seen flowering from May to June.



Young specimens of the wrinkled peach mushroom have distinctive ridges on their caps.

Fungus Focus: Wrinkled Peach (*Rhodotus palmatus*)

By: Beverly James

The wrinkled peach, also known as netted rhodotus or apricot fungus, is a mushroom with no close relatives. It is in the family Rhodotaceae, with only one genus and one species. Once thought to be rare, this saprobic mushroom is now often seen from May through September on dead elm logs from trees struck by the Dutch Elm disease. Young specimens of this unique fungus have bright salmon colored caps with a netting of pale ridges. However, as it matures, the cap changes to a smoother texture and paler color which make it more difficult to identify. Other characteristics to look for are attached gills, a pink spore print, and rubbery texture. It may also appear to "bleed" on the stem or become slimy with age, due to their gelatinous spores. Once discovered, it is apparent why this beauty is favored by many mycologists!

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, August 22nd @ 10:00 a.m.: Macroinvertebrates and Water Quality

The presence or absence of various benthic macroinvertebrates such as crayfish, mollusks, aquatic worms, and the larvae of aquatic insects inform us of the cleanliness of a stream. Cool off near Elk Lick Creek as we discuss and look for them in the riffles of the creek.

September is Invasive Weed Awareness Month!

September will be Invasive Plant Awareness Month throughout Kentucky to bring awareness of the issue of invasive exotic plants and their impact to our environment. It will be kicked off by the presentation of a proclamation signed by the governor at the Capitol Rotunda. A variety of invasive plant removal projects and educational activities will be held throughout the month at various locations. The following programs are scheduled for Floracliff:

Saturday, September 12th @ 10:00 a.m.: Children's activity (Ages 6-12)

We will go on a short hike and do some brainstorming exercises to get the group thinking about the effects of invasive plants. Then, we will work on making art projects out of invasive plants found at Floracliff and give you ideas for things to do with those pesky plants in your backyard.

Saturday, September 19th @ 10:00 a.m.: Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants

Preserve Manager Beverly James will lead this hike down to Elk Lick Creek discussing ornamental plants that have become invasive in Central Kentucky. We will also see many native plants that would make great alternatives in the garden.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, September 5th

Every Wednesday in September (2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th)

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.

For the Teachers:

Floracliff has provided Kentucky Core Content connections to lesson plans covering invasive plants. If you need assistance with them, the staff of Floracliff would be happy to help. You can find them on the internet at the following web addresses:

Grade school lesson plans- <http://www.se-eppc.org/ky/K-5plans.pdf>

Middle school lesson plans- <http://www.se-eppc.org/ky/MSplans.pdf>

High school lesson plans- <http://www.se-eppc.org/ky/HSplans.pdf>

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

P. O. Box 4006
Lexington, KY 40544

Phone: 859-351-7770
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 _____

- \$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