



TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Plant Profile: Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)

By Karen Ripple Hill

Bluebell leaves are poking up through the leaves and debris of winter. Soon the pink flower heads will be visible. Then as they stretch upwards reaching for sunlight the pink buds will turn blue, and we will know it is early spring in Tennessee and the southeastern U.S.

Bluebells are perennial and tend to be multi-stemmed. They die back completely after flowering. Clumps of bluebells can be found in moist rich woods, but sometimes in the open. They often do well in road medians and gardens, forming attractive blue clumps of flowers.

The tender leaves are simple, soft, alternate, and tapered at their base, stretching up to 6" long with mostly rounded tips. Pink flower buds cluster at the end of the stem, turning blue as they open into nodding tubular blue bells about an inch long. The plant itself stretches up to 28" tall. The flower tube is densely hairy inside the base with five stamens and yellow anthers. Fruits are four ovoid nutlets.



TNPS Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally March, June, September, and December.

The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) was founded in 1978. Its purposes are to assist in the exchange of information and encourage fellowship among Tennessee's botanists, both amateur and professional; to promote public education about Tennessee flora and wild plants in general; to provide, through publication of a newsletter or journal, a formal means of documenting information on Tennessee flora and of informing the public about wild plants; and to promote the protection and enhancement of Tennessee's wild plant communities.

Annual Dues

Student: \$10
Individual: \$25
Family: \$35
Business/Institution: \$100
Life: \$500 (onetime)

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Juanita Wade, Asst. Secretary
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Directors

Anne Balentine
Bart Jones
Larry Pounds
Mary Priestley
Ken Rea
Allan Trently

Newsletter Editor

Karen Hill – One issue

The President's Perspective

The new year certainly made a dramatic entrance, especially on the weather front! Snow and ice swept across the state, and many of our members felt their effects firsthand. I hope everyone is now safely back into their routines and enjoying a bit of calm after the storm.



Looking ahead, there is much to anticipate with optimism. Soon, the first spring ephemerals will begin to emerge, offering a hopeful reminder that warmer days and fresh growth are just around the corner. The new year also brings renewed opportunities for TNPS to advance our mission and connect with even more people who share our passion for native plants and the landscapes they call home.

One exciting opportunity on the horizon is the 2026 Annual Conference and Membership Meeting, scheduled for May 15–17 at Henry Horton State Park. A dedicated conference planning committee has been hard at work since early January, and you'll find much more information about the event throughout this newsletter. We hope you will make plans to join us!

Bart Jones and our many field trip leaders have also been busy developing a fantastic lineup of field trips for 2026. Online registration will be available through links included with each field trip description. We are deeply grateful to those who are volunteering their time and expertise to lead these outings and share their knowledge of Tennessee's remarkable natural areas. Details on the scheduled field trips can be found in this newsletter and on the TNPS website.

We've been delighted by the strong response to our new online volunteer interest survey, launched in December. In just the first full month, more than ten people submitted surveys—several of whom are already contributing to TNPS projects. The survey and a list of current volunteer opportunities are available at tnps.org/volunteer. We can always use more helping hands, so please take a look and see if there's a volunteer role that's right for you.

Finally, our Education Outreach team is gearing up for a busy year ahead. We are already scheduled to participate in tabling events in Chattanooga, Cookeville, Murfreesboro, and Knoxville, with more planned. If you see a TNPS booth at a plant sale or other local event, please stop by and say hello—we'd love to meet you in person!

With warm regards,
Mitchell

Field Trip Report: UTC Herbarium Event – Chattanooga, February 3, 2026

By Mitchell Kent

TNPS kicked off the 2026 field trip season with an engaging evening at the UTC Herbarium, hosted by curator Dr. Joey Shaw and his team of graduate students. More than 20 attendees from Chattanooga and the surrounding region joined us, including TNPS members, representatives from local conservation organizations, and other plant enthusiasts.

The program offered a comprehensive overview of the UTC Herbarium, from its history and extensive plant collections to the research currently underway. Dr. Shaw and his students led a fascinating, information-packed evening that featured short presentations, hands-on experience mounting plant specimens, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the herbarium. Participants learned that the collection houses more than 50,000 plant specimens from Tennessee and the surrounding region—some collected more than a century ago.

The evening also underscored the herbarium's vital role in education and research at UTC and beyond, including its participation in the SouthEast Regional Network of Expertise and Collections (SERNEC), an online database that supports researchers and the broader scientific community. Our sincere thanks to Dr. Shaw and his team for hosting such an outstanding event.



Election Results

By Karen Ripple Hill

Our election was held in December for three board members, none of whom were opposed. Anne Balentine, Bart Jones, and Allan Trently will continue serving as Directors through December 2027.

This coming fall at least one director and one executive officer are planning to step down from their offices. All officers and three directors will also be up for reelection. Would you be interested? Duties of each position are described in our TNPS By-Laws, which are posted on our TNPS website (www.TNPS.org/board-of-directors). If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors or as an officer of TNPS, please inform one of the current officers. As an all-volunteer organization we welcome those willing to serve in a leadership role.



Member Spotlight on Bart Jones

By Mitchell Kent

Bart Jones is a longtime leader and past president of the Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS), where he currently serves as a Director (2026–27). His roles include chairing the Field Trips and Nominations committees, co-chairing the Annual Conference, and assisting with membership activities. Over the years, Bart has led numerous TNPS field trips across the state and region with a focus on rare and threatened plant species. He also represents TNPS through talks, seminars, and public programs that highlight the importance of native plants and their conservation.

Trained as a biologist at the University of Tennessee at Martin, Bart brings a strong scientific foundation and infectious enthusiasm to his exploration of the flora of Tennessee. He is especially well known for his expertise in the state's approximately fifty native orchid species and has shared this knowledge through TNPS seminars such as *Pollination Strategies of Native Orchids* and publications including *The Native Orchids of Tennessee* in *The Tennessee Conservationist*. Beyond orchids, he is an avid field botanist and nature photographer whose images frequently document TNPS field trips, rare plant populations, and special natural areas.

Within TNPS, Bart plays a significant role in shaping member engagement and programming. As Field Trip Chair, he coordinates a robust statewide schedule of outings and prepares written summaries highlighting notable discoveries. As Conference Co-Chair and Nominations Chair, he helps plan the society's annual meeting and field excursions while recruiting and mentoring future leaders. Through 25 years of volunteer service, teaching, and outreach, Bart has become one of TNPS's most visible ambassadors and a driving force behind its mission to study, enjoy, and conserve Tennessee's native plants.

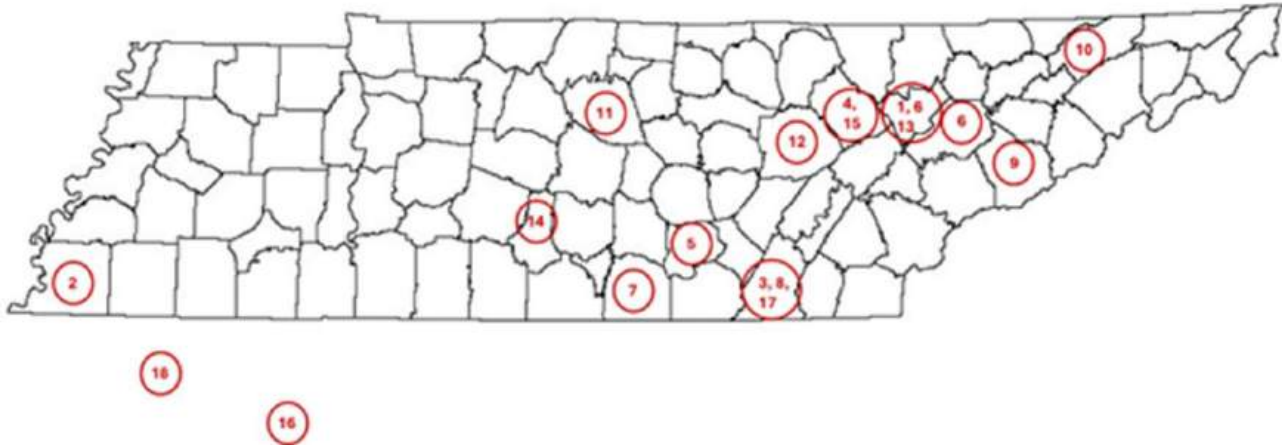


Many of our members have had memorable outings with Bart. Mary Priestley, another long-time TNPS member recounted meeting Bart. *"The first time I met Bart was on a field trip to Keith Springs Mountain. I met Todd Crabtree, who's now our TN State Natural Heritage Botanist, also on that hike. My recollection is that it was the first TNPS trip for both — no wonder people got those two young men confused (and sometimes still do)!"*

We hope that you have the opportunity to meet Bart on one of the TNPS field trips this year.

2026 Field Trip Schedule

Please note, all TNPS Field Trips now require registration through the TNPS website (NeonOne) and a Liability Release. Below are the approximate locations of our 2026 field trips.



(1) March 21 (Saturday) – Wildflower Spot on the N. Walker Access to the North Ridge Trail, Anderson County

Description: This is a joint outing for TNPS and TCWP. This is an amazing spot for early spring ephemerals. It's covered in trout lilies with pockets of twin leaf, foamflowers, wood poppies, and spring beauties. If we hit the timing right, the Dutchman's breeches might be blooming.

Meeting Place/Time: The trailhead is located near the end of N. Walker Ln in Oak Ridge, TN (Access to the North Ridge Trail is not in Google Maps, but coordinates are 36°01'24.7"N 84°16'36.1"W). There is no parking at the Trailhead, but there is some street parking along N. Walker Rd and West Outer Dr. There is also ample parking at the nearby Children's Museum of Oak Ridge. We will meet at **10:00 AM Eastern**.

Difficulty: The trail is only about .7 mile one way, but it is steep in spots. It also can be muddy and there is a stream crossing.

Facilities: The Children's Museum of Oak Ridge has facilities.

Lunch: Bring water, snacks, and bug spray.

Leaders: Margaret Cumberland (Phone/email: 919-339-0072, meshearin@gmail.com) and Larry Pounds

Registration Link:

<https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36356>

Limit of 25 registrants.



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## **(2) March 28 (Saturday) – Overton Park Old Forest, Shelby County**

**Description:** The Old Forest State Natural Area is an urban nature refuge located in the heart of midtown Memphis and is part of Overton Park. The remnant old growth forest harbors various spring ephemerals such as celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), prairie trillium (*Trillium recurvatum*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*), wild blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), oceanblue phacelia (*Phacelia ranunculacea*), goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), doll's eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), cutleaf toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*), and large-flowered bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*). We will enjoy a picnic lunch afterwards.

**Meeting Place/Time:** The East Parkway entrance parking area (just south of the intersection of Sam Cooper Blvd and East Parkway), **10:00 AM Central**.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Facilities:** At the trailhead

**Lunch:** Bring for picnic after hike.



**Leaders:** Bart Jones (901-485-2745, [bjones7777@hotmail.com](mailto:bjones7777@hotmail.com)) and Melissa McMasters

**Registration Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36370>  
Limit of 25 registrants.

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(3) March 29 (Sunday) – Wildflower Spot at Rock Creek, Lower Leggett Trailhead, Sale Creek, Hamilton County

Description: This is an amazing spot along Rock Creek for finding early spring ephemerals, carpets of partridgeberry, Gelsemium, and natural hybrids of painted and red buckeye, as well as some old growth Hemlock, striped maple, and large leaf magnolia. It's covered in trout lilies with pockets of blood root, fork leaf toothwort, foamflowers, southern barren strawberry, wood anemone, Ozark tassel-rue and several violet species.

Meeting Place/Time: The Lower Leggett trailhead is located near the base of the escarpment where Leggett Rd starts its ascent. Google Maps, <https://maps.app.goo.gl/xxjjUPby8mEtDnpQA> There is ample parking at the trailhead. We will meet at **10:00 AM Eastern**.

Difficulty: The trail is mostly easy, out and back and only about 1.2 miles each way, but rocky, uneven and steep in spots. It also can be muddy at a potential shallow water rocky crossing.

Facilities: None.

Lunch: Bring water, snacks, and bug spray

Leader: Stephan Eselgroth (email: stephanpmnr@gmail.com).

Registration Link: <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36844>
Limit of 25 registrants.

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#### ***(4) April 4 (Saturday) - Frozen Head Wildflower Pilgrimage Walk, Morgan County***

**Description:** This is a joint outing sponsored by TNPS and TCWP for Frozen Head State Park. All are welcome. We will have an excellent opportunity to see spring wildflowers. The first mile (Interpretive Loop) is ideal for those with limited hiking capabilities; the trail is wide and flat. For those continuing the next 2 miles (Judge Branch Trail) are steeper and rougher but still moderate.

**Meeting Place/Time:** Frozen Head State Park Visitor Center parking area, 964 Flat Fork Rd, Wartburg, TN (36.12491 - 84.50464) at **10:00 AM Eastern**.

**Difficulty:** Option 1. Just one mile of wide flat trail. Easy. Option 2. Continuing another three miles with a stream crossing, rough rock steps, and some steep places.

**Lunch:** Bring water, lunch, and bug spray

**Facilities:** At meeting place

**Leaders:** Larry Pounds, Phone/email: 865-705-8516, [PoundsL471@aol.com](mailto:PoundsL471@aol.com), and Jimmy Groton

**Registration Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36386>  
Limit of 25 registrants.



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(5) April 10-12 (Friday-Sunday) - Trails and Trilliums, Beersheba Springs, Grundy County

See <https://www.trailsandtrilliums.org/> for more information and registration.

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#### ***(6) April 18 (Saturday) – Norris Grist Mill to Observation Point, Anderson County***

**Description:** This is a joint outing for TNPS and TCWP. This loop starts in a valley with spring wildflowers that are usually a little later. We will also go by populations of pink lady's slippers after climbing to a nice view of Norris Dam.

**Meeting Place/Time:**

1. Parking lot at the Norris Grist Mill (Lower Clear Creek Rd, Norris, TN 37828) at **10:00 AM Eastern**. There is additional parking at the Lenoir Museum.

2. Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's) in time to leave Oak Ridge at **9:15 AM Eastern**.



**Difficulty:** The trail is a moderate 2.5 mile loop. There are places with a steep drop-off on one side.

**Facilities:** The Lenoir Museum nearby has facilities.

**Lunch:** Bring water, lunch, and bug spray.

**Leader:** Margaret Cumberland (Phone/email: 919-339-0072, [meshearin@gmail.com](mailto:meshearin@gmail.com)).

**Registration Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36393>  
Limit of 25 registrants.

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(7) April 18 (Saturday) – Sewanee Purple Phacelia, Franklin Co.

Description: We will hike down into Shakerag Hollow on the University of the South campus to observe flowering populations of the [newly described](#) Sewanee purple phacelia (*Phacelia sewaneensis*). Shakerag Hollow hosts an amazing diversity of spring wildflowers and these will be on display as well. After lunch, there will be a tour of the Sewanee Herbarium.

Meeting Place/Time: Green's View parking area on the University of the South campus at **10:00 AM Central**.

Difficulty: Moderate. There is a short stretch of steep stone steps leading down into the cove, then there is a more gradual slope.

Facilities: Various locations on the Sewanee campus. Closest being the Sewanee Inn, which you pass on the way to Green's View.



Lunch: Sewanee Dining Hall.

Leader: Dr. Jon Evans, jevans@sewanee.edu (931-308-3280)

Registration Link: <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36402>
Limit of 25 registrants.

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### ***(8) April 18 (Saturday) - Big Soddy Creek Gulf Park, Hamilton County***

**Description:** On this hike, we will explore in depth the ecology, spring wildflowers, and temperate deciduous forest of the Big Soddy Creek Gulf Park. Topics will include local geology, the forest system, plant interactions, wildflower life histories, and wildflower identification. The hike will take place along a 1.2-mile trail from the trailhead to the pedestrian bridge at Soddy Creek. Some short side trips may be included.

**Meeting Place/Time:** Trailhead at **8:30 AM Eastern**, 11721 Back Valley Road, Soddy-Daisy, TN 37379

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Facilities:** The park has portable restrooms along the trail.

**Lunch:** At your discretion. Bring water and snacks, as desired. There are picnic tables along the route.



**Leader:** Dr. Richard Clements of Chattanooga State Community College

**Registration Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F33529>  
Limit of 25 registrants.

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(9) April 22-25 (Wednesday-Saturday) - Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage, Gatlinburg, Sevier County

See <https://www.wildflowerpilgrimage.org/> for more information and registration.

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**(10) April 25 (Saturday) - Laurel Run Park, Church Hill, Hawkins County**

**Description:** Laurel Run Park is considered one of the best places for Spring ephemeral wildflowers. The north-facing slope, combined with a limestone substrate, and being in a rugged forested stream valley, make it an ideal place for ephemerals. Laurel Run Park was donated to Hawkins County after the completion of the film "The River," which starred Mel Gibson and Sissy Spacek. We will go past two small waterfalls; Laurel Run Falls and Kiner Falls. Laurel Run is known more for a proliferation of wildflowers. Hillsides covered in trilliums, Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), Celandine Poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), and Dwarf Larkspur (*Delphinium tricornis*) are stunning. We will also see Largeleaf Waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum macrophyllum*), Mountain Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis montana*), Guyandotte Beauty (*Synarda hispidula*), and Sweet White Trillium (*Trillium simile*).

**Meeting Place/Time:** We will meet at the parking lot near the restroom at **10:00 AM EST**.

**Difficulty:** Moderate, total distance is four miles. Sturdy shoes that may get muddy are helpful, hiking pole(s) are helpful. (Exciting News: Park has a new bridge across creek. No more rock hopping!)

**Facilities:** Yes

**Lunch:** Bring

**Leader:** Ken Rea [kenrea2@gmail.com](mailto:kenrea2@gmail.com) (423-737-3882)



**Registration Link:**

<https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F37605>

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(11) April 30 - May 3 (Friday-Sunday) - Elsie Quarterman Cedar Glade Festival, Lebanon, Wilson County

Come to Cedars of Lebanon for all or part of the 48th Year of Celebrating Cedar Glades, April 30 – May 3, 2026. Learn more about limestone cedar glades and the unique flora this spring. The Center for Cedar Glade Studies and Cedars of Lebanon State Park are hosting a series of activities from April 30 to May 3. Many events are facilitated by our own TNPS members. Here is a brief overview:

- Thursday, April 30, Dr. Erin Anfinson will lead a morning session on making and using inks from native plants; in the afternoon botanical illustrator, Mary Priestley, will share how to journal about nature through narrative and art.

- Friday, May 1, in the afternoon is a research roundtable for those interested in sharing or learning more about research related to cedar glade and other rare plant species, followed by a field experience. There is an evening program with Phil Hodge, Director, TN State Archaeology.
- Saturday, May 2, is a full suite of events that begin at 7am with a bird hike and end at 7pm with an owl prowl. Activities include gardening with native plants, edible natives, glade fossils, cave critters, photography, and morning/afternoon signature hikes to the glades with Holly Taylor and Milo Pyne.
- Sunday, May 3, join Jason and LA Rawlings Allen from NEST (Nature Education Society of Tennessee) for a morning hike to Mt. Pleasant State Natural Area, where Vanderbilt professor, Elsie Quarterman (namesake for the weekend) rediscovered the TN coneflower. In the evening, they will lead a hike at Vesta Cedar Glade to experience the glades in the evening and to listen for our three bird species of “night jars.”



Registration for events will be through Cedars of Lebanon State Park. The website asks for donations to support the park, but nothing is required unless there is a materials fee. Visit:

https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/cedars-of-lebanon/#/?event=48th-elsie-quarterman-cedar-glade-wildflower-festival5226

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## ***(12) May 2 (Saturday) - New Cumberland Trail (CT) Part Hike, Cumberland County***

**Description:** This event is sponsored by TNPS and TCWP. We will start at Peavine Rd. and hike southbound on the CT about 2.5 miles to Daddy's Creek and eat lunch there. We will hike through some rock houses. You can turn back to Peavine Rd. at any point making a hike of the length you desire but the best part is at 2.5 miles where the hike turns back. I do not know what flowers we will see as I have never visited here in the spring, but the mountain laurel should be in flower.

### **Meeting Places/Time:**

1. Marathon Gas Station (52 Main St, Crab Orchard) at the Crab Orchard exit (329) off I-40 east of Crossville (**9:00 AM central, 10:00 AM Eastern**) (35.90871 - 84.87526)

2. Oak Ridge at the Gold's Gym/Books-A-Million parking lot (meet at the end close to S. Illinois Avenue, near Salsarita's) in time to leave Oak Ridge at **8:45 a.m. Eastern**.

**Difficulty:** 5 miles for those going the full distance. There are steep, rough rock steps. There are rocks and roots in the trail. Elevation change is moderate.

**Lunch:** Bring water, lunch, and bug spray

**Restroom:** At meeting places

**Leader:** Larry Pounds. Phone/email: 865-705-8516, [PoundsL471@aol.com](mailto:PoundsL471@aol.com)



**Registration Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36409>  
Limit of 25 registrants.

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(13) May 9 (Saturday) – Oak Ridge Paved Greenway, Anderson County

Description: Sponsored by TNPS and TCWP, the focus is tree and shrub identification along the paved greenway.

Meeting Place/Time: At the end of Old Edgemoor Rd. in Haw Ridge Park in Oak Ridge at **9:00 AM Eastern** (36.01034, -84.16753), we will meet near the former Life Development Center (299 Old Edgemoor Rd. Oak Ridge).

Difficulty: This should work for those with limited walking ability. Wheelchairs are a possibility. We will walk or roll on a flat-ish paved trail. Total out and back distance is perhaps 1.5 miles. As usual attendees can turn back anytime.

Lunch: Bring water, lunch, and bug spray

Facilities: None

Leader: Larry Pounds. Phone/email: 865-705-8516,
PoundsL471@aol.com



Registration Link: <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36411>
Limit of 25 registrants.

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### ***(14) May 15 (Friday) – Henry Horton Wetlands BioBlitz***

**(Note: this is NOT an official event of the Annual Conference. Registration is separate.)**

**Description:** Join us as we document all aspects of life—plants, insects, mammals, birds, and more using the iNaturalist cellphone application. Participants will help log species in the park, including walks through wetland areas, to see who can record the most species during the event. Online registration is required.

This is an excellent opportunity to explore the wetlands of the park with nature enthusiasts while obtaining more experience with the iNaturalist app. It will directly benefit Henry Horton State Park and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation by contributing valuable biodiversity data for conservation and management.

Attendees will need to download the iNaturalist app prior to the event. This app will be used to document the specimens observed. A bioblitz is an intensive, time-limited survey where scientists, naturalists, and volunteers work together to find and record as many species as possible in a defined area.

**Meeting Place/Time:** Be at Henry Horton State Park main Visitor Center parking lot at 4209 Nashville Hwy, Chapel Hill, TN 37034, **10:00 AM Central**. We will carpool to the trailhead of the Ronnie Bowers Wetland Trail. In case you arrive later, the geographic coordinates of parking area of the trailhead are: 35.58700, -86.71620.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Lunch:** Bring water and other snacks, as desired.

**Facilities:** None at the site, nearest are in the Visitors Center near the park entrance.

**Leader:** Eli Harris, Tennessee Tech Graduate Student and iNaturalist Ambassador

**Trip Registration:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36576>  
Limit of 25 registrants.



## ***May 15-17 (Friday-Sunday) – TNPS Annual Conference at Henry Horton State Park, Marshall County***

### ***May 16 (Saturday AM) - Columbia Glade, Maury County***

Distance from Henry Horton State Park to Columbia Glade is 28 miles (about a 37-minute drive). Box lunches will be available at Henry Horton before departure.

Leave Henry Horton at **8:30 AM Central**.

**Parking:** Space for possibly ten cars

**Description:** Columbia Glade is part of the 2,612-acre Duck River Complex State Natural Area. Rare plants that are likely include glade cress (*Leavenworthia exigua* var. *exigua*), Tennessee milk-vetch (*Astragalus tennesseensis*), pale umbrella-wort (*Mirabilis albida*), yellow sunnyside (*Schoenolirion croceum*), leafy prairie-clover (*Dalea foliosa*), butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), limestone fame-flower (*Phemeranthus calcaricus*), and velvety field mouse-ear (*Cerastium velutinum* var. *velutinum*). Please bring lunch. We will eat here before proceeding to the next location. There are no facilities at Columbia Glade.

### ***May 16 (Saturday PM) – Cheek’s Bend, Maury County***

Distance from Henry Horton State Park to Cheek’s Bend - 18 miles (about a 30-minute drive).

**Description:** The 800-acre Cheek’s Bend site is part of the 2,612-acre Duck River Complex State Natural Area. From Columbia Glade, we’ll travel to the Cheek’s Bend parking lot. From here, we will hike the 2-mile trail. Along the trail we will explore a series of Middle Tennessee Cedar Glade and Barrens ecosystems, scenic bluffs overlooking the Duck River, and extensive cedar and hardwood forests. Rare plants that are likely include glade cress (*Leavenworthia exigua* var. *exigua*), and limestone blue star (*Amsonia tabernaemontana* var. *gattereri*). We may see up to twelve species of fern including Alabama lip fern (*Myriopteris alabamensis*) and wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*). Other uncommon or regionally common plants we may see include whiteleaf leather flower (*Clematis glaucophylla*), Carolina larkspur (*Delphinium carolinianum*), narrowleaf gumweed (*Grindelia lanceolata*), Gattereri’s lobelia (*Lobelia gattereri*), and needle grass (*Piptochaetium avenaceum*).

Though the trail is relatively easy to hike, it is rocky, uneven, and contains some steep sections. We recommend wearing sturdy shoes. The access to Cheek’s Bend does not have any restroom facilities.

### ***May 17 (Sunday) – Casual Hike of the Wilhoite Mill Trail inside Henry Horton State Park***

Meet at the parking lot of Lodge at **9:00 AM Central** where we will proceed to the trailhead for a brief hike to cap off the weekend’s activities.

### ***(15) September 5 (Saturday) – Ramsey Creek - Obed River, Morgan County***

**Description:** This is a joint outing for TNPS and TCWP. We will walk about .5 mile on a rough road to the Obed. If the water is low enough and you want to, we will wade the Obed to visit a scour prairie. On the way back we will hike off trail along Ramsey Creek. Hikers may skip this and return along the rough road. We will have bird and plant interpretation.

**Meeting Place/Time:** Wartburg Visitor Center, 3804 Morgan County Hwy (US 27), Wartburg at **10:00 AM Eastern**

**Difficulty:** Easy if you skip the wade and the off-trail hike. Distance about 1 mile.

**Facilities:** At meeting place

**Lunch:** Bring water, lunch, and bug spray

**Leaders:** Larry Pounds (Phone/email: 865-705-8516, [PoundsL471@aol.com](mailto:PoundsL471@aol.com)), Chuck Estes



**Registration Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36415>  
Limit of 25 registrants.

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(16) September 19 (Saturday) - Camp Creek Natives Nursery + Black Belt Prairie, Lee County, MS

Description: This trip will begin at Camp Creek Native Plant Nursery in New Albany, MS. Camp Creek specializes in growing local ecotype native plants from seed and offers a diverse selection of regionally native species in various container sizes. From here, we will carpool to a Black Belt Prairie remnant in Lee County, MS that hosts several endemic species and signature chalky exposures. We will have a late lunch in Tupelo (near the site) and return to the nursery to finish off the trip. Some notable species on the site include: Black Belt black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia terranigrae*), Black Belt rosinweed (*Silphium confertifolium* also known as *S. asteriscus* var. *latifolium*), Great Plains ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*), rough rattlesnake-root (*Nabalus asper*), rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*), and many more.

Meeting Place/Time: Camp Creek Native Plants, 921 Sam T Barkley Dr, New Albany, MS. **10:00 AM Central.**

Difficulty: Easy - Moderate. There are pathways/trails. Will require a short walk through a thick wooded area.

Facilities: Camp Creek Native Plants Nursery/Shop and/or Neon Pig (lunch location)

Lunch: Neon Pig in Tupelo



Leaders: Bart Jones (901-485-2745, bjones7777@hotmail.com), Harry Babb, and Andrew Ballard (Camp Creek Native Plant Nursery)

Registration Link:

<https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36416>

Limit of 25 registrants.

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**(17) September 26 (Saturday) – Fall Wildflowers of Big Soddy Creek Gulf, Soddy-Daisy, Hamilton County**

**Description:** Not to be outdone by its spring displays, there are several amazing spots for a variety of blooms of woodland and creek scour species here. It is great for at least eight species of goldenrods, several sunflower and rosinweed species, several *Symphyotrichum* aster species, false foxglove, stiff-leaved aster, white wood aster, two golden asters, fall phlox, downy lobelia, impressive farkleberry specimens, royal fern and much more.

**Meeting Place/Time:** The trailhead is located just off the first exit of Hwy 111 after it splits from Hwy 27 in Soddy Daisy, TN on Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/fLpH61S5AA9XF5Ne6>. There is plenty of parking at the Trailhead (2 lots) and some street parking if needed. We will meet at **9:00 AM Eastern**.

**Difficulty:** The trail is only about 1.4 miles one way and easy, mostly a packed gravel pathway, with a few rocky spots on side trails. Option for additional two miles along Board Camp creek on the Cumberland Trail which is hilly with a few ascents and stairs along the escarpment, but rated easy to moderate.

**Facilities:** Only port-a-potties.

**Lunch:** Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, hat, and bug spray.

**Leader:** Stephan Eselgroth (email: [stephanpmnr@gmail.com](mailto:stephanpmnr@gmail.com)).

**Registration**

**Link:** <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36850>

Limit of 25 registrants.

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(18) October 3 (Saturday) - *Liatris squarrulosa*/Helianthus spp. Superbloom - Marshall County, MS

Description: This trip will focus on exploring a diverse grassland remnant (+ seep) within the Holly Springs National Forest. During early fall, large populations of Appalachian blazing star (*Liatris squarrulosa*) and several *Helianthus* species are in bloom, historically attracting migrating monarchs in large numbers to the site. Other notable species include white-leaf mountainmint (*Pycnanthemum albescens*), Virginia marbleseed (*Lithospermum virginianum*), narrowleaf bluecurls (*Trichostema setaceum*), eastern silvery aster (*Symphyotrichum concolor*), Ozark sunflower (*Helianthus silphoides*), slender Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum elliottii*), woollysheat threeawn (*Aristida lanosa*), orange fringed orchid (*Platanthera ciliaris*) and many others.



Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous. There are no designated trails. Site is hilly with wet areas (seep area/valleys). Comfortable to observe from around the parking area.

Meeting Place/Time: Flick's Truck Stop/Dollar General,
6469-6493 Church Ave, Potts Camp, MS at **10:00 AM**
Central

Facilities: At meeting place

Lunch: Bring to eat in the field

Leaders: Bart Jones (901-485-2745,
bjones7777@hotmail.com), Allan Trently, and Harry Babb

Registration Link:

<https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F36421>

Limit of 25 registrants.

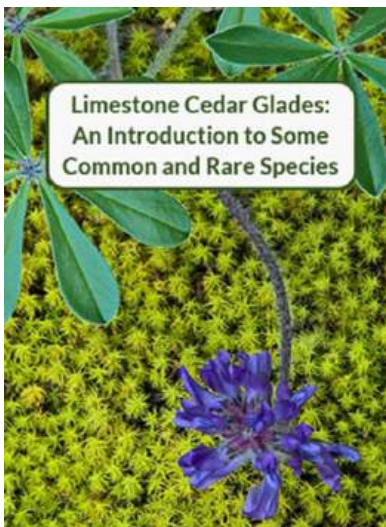


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## ***Limestone Cedar Glades Booklet***

*By Dr. Kim Sadler*

Come to an event where TNPS has a table or booth to purchase your copy of *the Limestone Cedar Glades: An Introduction to Some Common and Rare Species* booklet (2025). A joint effort between the Center for Cedar Glade Studies at MTSU and the Tennessee Native Plant Society, the booklet is a companion to the official field guide of the Tennessee Native Plant Society, *Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley, and the Southern Appalachians* by Horn, Cathcart, Hemmerly, and Duhl, 2nd edition (2013). This booklet was developed to assist students and the public in identifying common, endemic, and rare species that occur in Middle Tennessee Limestone Cedar Glades and Barrens.



The booklet consists primarily of herbaceous plants, but in the last sections it also includes shrubs, trees, and other organisms that occur in the glade complex. Out of more than 400 plants identified in Middle Tennessee Limestone Cedar Glades and Barrens 114 species are represented in this handy 60-page booklet.

The plants are grouped by Family to acquaint the budding botanist with shared characteristics. Learning to recognize the Family in which a plant belongs, often makes it easier to identify the species. The TNPS *Wildflowers of Tennessee* field guide provides more information, but this booklet is intended to be “thumbed” through to find your unknown cedar glades plant!

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Newsletter Editor for TNPS

Do you love words, details, and a good story? The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) is looking for a volunteer **Newsletter Editor** to help create our quarterly publication.

Our newsletter highlights the heart of TNPS, featuring field trips across Tennessee's beautiful natural areas, member spotlights, conference highlights, and community outreach efforts. As editor, you will help shape these stories and share the incredible work of our members with a wide and engaged audience.

This is a fulfilling way to put your writing and editing skills to work for a cause that matters. We provide guidance and support along the way, whether you are a longtime TNPS member or new to the organization.

Interested in volunteering or wanting to learn more? Please reach out to us via email at info@tnps.org soon. We would love to hear from you!



**CULLOWHEE
NATIVE
PLANT
CONFERENCE**

July 15-18, 2026

Join us on the scenic campus of Western Carolina University for four days of learning, discovery, and connection. Experience expert-led lectures, hands-on workshops, and guided field trips focused on native plant design, ecology, and conservation. Connect with professionals, educators, and enthusiasts who share your passion for sustainability.

- Guided tours of WCU's native plant gardens
- Keynote presentations from leading experts
- Practical workshops on sustainable landscaping
- Exclusive networking sessions and scholarship opportunities
- Registration Support available for students & teachers

**Apply now through April 15th at:
nativeplants.wcu.edu**

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1984-2026**

Cullowhee Native Plant Conference

The Cullowhee Native Plant Conference will be held July 15-18 this year on the campus of Western Carolina University. Attendees will experience expert-led lectures, hands-on workshops, and guided field trips focused on native plant design, ecology, and conservation. Connect with professionals, educators, and enthusiasts who share your passion for sustainability.

TNPS provides one full scholarship for a student, teacher, or beginning professional. Apply now through April 15th at: nativeplants.wcu.edu.

TNPS Conference and Annual Meeting

You are warmly invited to join us for the **TNPS 2026 Conference and Annual Meeting**, to be held May 15–17, 2026, at Henry Horton State Park.

Our conference planning committee has been diligently coordinating the many details that will make this gathering both meaningful and memorable. From engaging field trips to thoughtfully designed on-site activities, the weekend is being crafted to inspire, educate, and connect our diverse membership. We look forward to celebrating Tennessee's native plants—and the community that champions them.

After considering several potential venues in Middle Tennessee, we selected Henry Horton State Park for its outstanding amenities and its proximity to the Duck River. Centrally located and easily accessible, the park features a spacious Conference Hall well suited to our membership size, miles of trails (including paved options to enhance



accessibility), and direct access to one of Tennessee's most biologically diverse river systems—where many of our field trips will take place. A modern visitor center and new on-site restaurant add to the convenience and appeal.

We are working closely with the park's event coordinator and staff to provide a full weekend program that includes catered meals, ranger-led activities, and discounted lodging for members. Reservation links for both lodge accommodation and conference registration are provided below. Additionally, the TNPS Board of Directors has approved a supplemental budget to help reduce registration costs for attendees.

Conference check-in begins on Friday at 3:00 p.m. in the Conference Hall, followed by a member social with snacks. Dinner will be on your own to enjoy at the on-site restaurant or another place of your choice. Friday evening will feature a presentation by Dr. Shawn Krosnick of Tennessee Technological University on her research on the *Passiflora* (Passionflower) genus.

Saturday morning activities include a field trip to the Columbia Glade—home to rare cedar glade species— and an on-site drawing workshop led by TNPS member Mary Priestley. In the afternoon, participants may choose between a guided hike on the Cheeks Bend Trail beside the Duck River or a ranger-led hike on the park's Greenway Trail. Saturday evening includes a group dinner, followed by a presentation from Brittany Bajo-Walker, Tennessee Statewide Mollusk Conservation Coordinator and Aquatic Biologist with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. A brief annual membership meeting will conclude the evening's events.

For those wishing to extend their experience, optional activities are also planned earlier on Friday and Sunday mornings. On Friday morning at 10:00 a.m., Eli Harris will lead a Wetland BioBlitz within the park, documenting the diversity of life found on site. On Sunday morning two other optional activities are planned at the same time. One is a ranger-led kayak trip on the Duck River, and if you don't want to get in the water, a short riverside hike along the Duck River will be led by Bart Jones.

We look forward to gathering in May for a weekend of learning, exploration, and fellowship in support of Tennessee's native plants!



Schedule with Details for 2026 Annual Conference at Henry Horton State Park

Note: All times are Central Daylight Time.

Day 1: Friday, May 15, 2026

10:00 am – to 3:00 pm – Preconference *Wetlands Bioblitz* inside the park led by Eli Harris and Allan Trently

This activity requires registration separate from the Conference. See page 11 of this newsletter.

3:00 pm – Arrival and check-in at Henry Horton State Park Lodge.

3:00 - 5:00 pm - Pick up TNPS conference badges in Conference Hall and attend an afternoon social.

5:00 to 7:00 pm – **Dinner** on your own. Restaurant is available within the park.

7:00 – 8:30 pm – Beginning of conference with welcome and announcements, followed by a **presentation** on the Passionflower by Dr. Shawn Krosnick, Associate Chair of Biology and Director of the Hollister Herbarium at Tennessee Tech University. The passionflower, *Passiflora incarnata*, is our state wildflower. In her talk, titled "Floral Morphs to Frugivores: Reproductive Ecology of *Passiflora incarnata*," she will explain the remarkably complex reproductive system of this familiar native vine. Prof. Krosnick will present an overview of research in her lab on passionflower flowering and fruiting, with a focus on the different types of flowers produced by individual plants. Briefly, Prof. Krosnick describes passionflower's reproductive strategy this way: "Some flowers function primarily as male, while others are fully capable of producing fruit, a pattern known as functional andromonoecy. These floral morphs differ in traits such as style and ovary development, influencing pollination dynamics and determining which flowers ultimately set fruit. The talk will illustrate how following a plant from flowering through dispersal reveals the interconnected roles of floral form, pollination, and animal-mediated seed movement in shaping reproductive outcomes."

Day 2: Saturday, May 16, 2026

8:00 am – Attendees arriving on Saturday can pick up their conference badges at the TNPS information table in the Conference Hall.

8:30 am – Meetup for travel to the morning field trip at **Columbia Glade** led by Allan Trently. Details on page 12 of this newsletter. Note that box lunches will be available for participants prior to leaving the park.

10:00 to 11:30 am – **Workshop** in the Conference Hall titled "Illustrating Passionflowers".

Those opting not to take the field trips on Saturday may be interested in this workshop provided by Mary Priestley, TNPS board member and longtime botanical illustrator. On Friday night we will learn from Dr. Krosnick some of the subtleties of passionflowers reproduction and why these showy and complicated flowers look the way they do. This will inform our illustrations, help us make them that much better. This is a low-pressure workshop, because tracing from herbarium specimens will be an option. Here's a little-known fact of botanical illustration: tracing is not cheating! Botanical illustrators do it all the time — the fun is in

bringing these "flattened flora" back to life. Materials for making a pen-and-ink drawing will be provided but bring your own art materials if you wish.

11:30 to 1:00 pm – Remaining box lunches will be available for pickup at the Conference Center by conference attendees. The park restaurant is also available.

1:00 pm - Meetup for field trip on **Cheeks Bend** at the Duck River Complex SNA for the afternoon hike. Trip leaders are Bart Jones and Allan Trently. Details are on page 12 of this newsletter.

1:00 pm – Meet up at the Visitors Center for planned **guided walk** on campus led by Park Ranger, Hannah Bell. Those not taking the field trips can join park interpretive specialist Hannah Bell for an easy walk on the Greenway Trail. The trailhead is located at the Visitors' Center Waterwheel, between the Visitors' Center and the Lodge. The multi-use 1.5-mile accessible greenway features scenic views of the park and access to the Duck River, while highlighting amenities such as pollinator gardens, native grass fields, the gravesite of Gov. Henry Horton, and an historic rock wall original to the property.

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm – Self-directed activities in the park for those people not attending the field trips.

6:00 to 7:00 pm – Saturday Night **Group Dinner** in the Conference Hall for all conference attendees.

7:00 to 8:00 pm –Presentation by Brittany Bajo-Walker, TWRA's Statewide Mollusk Conservation Coordinator and Aquatic Biologist for the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency will be our speaker Saturday night. Her presentation, titled "Hidden in Plain Sight—The Biodiversity of the Duck River," focuses on the amazing river that flows right through the Henry Horton State Park, where our meeting will take place. According to Bajo-Walker, "Tennessee's Duck River is filled to the brim with aquatic life and is the country's most biodiverse watershed! It is contained entirely in the state of Tennessee and is one of our most treasured natural resources and an area of conservation. With over 50 species of freshwater mussels and over 150 species of fish, there is no shortage of amazing wildlife, but to reveal its beauty you may have to put on your snorkel and mask! In this presentation we'll dive into some of the beauty and the unique attributes that make the Duck River truly a special place for animals to thrive!"

8:00 – 9:00 pm - Annual TNPS **Membership Meeting**

Day 3: Sunday, May 17, 2026

7:00 – Breakfast on your own followed by check-out

8:30 am – Meet up for a 2-mile **float trip** on the Duck River, organized and led by park rangers.

Option 1. We have an opportunity to take a two-mile Ranger guided kayak trip while at our Annual Conference. At 10 a.m. on Sunday we can experience one of the single most biodiverse rivers in all of North America. Kayaks, paddles and life vests are included, or you can use your own kayak. (All participants are required to wear life vests throughout the entire float trip.) A single kayak can be rented for \$25 or a tandem kayak (2-person) is \$40. The maximum number of participants per trip is 16. The minimum is 10. Henry Horton can schedule an additional trip at 2 pm if there are more than 16 participants to sign up for the 10 am trip. **Registration is through Henry Horton State Park.**

9:00 am – Option 2 is a short **riverside hike** along the Duck River led by Bart Jones.

11:00 am – Conference concludes.

Online Conference Registration: [Link](#). Log in to your TNPS Portal to register, \$115 per person

Mail-in Conference Registration: Available for printing on our website at:
<https://tnps.org/conference/>.

Online Hotel Reservation: [Link](#). Special rate of \$120 per night only available until May 1, 2026.

Phone-in Hotel Reservation: Please contact the front desk at the Henry Horton State Park Lodge by phone at 931-364-2222. Select option #2 and identify yourself as a TNPS conference attendee to make your reservations at the discounted rate.

TECH TIP: Conference and Field Trip Registration

The easiest way to view and register for upcoming TNPS field trips and other events is through the TNPS Member Portal. Simply visit tnps.org and click the **LOGIN** button at the top right of the homepage.

After logging in, use the sidebar menu on the left and select **Upcoming Events**. A list of scheduled events will appear on the right. Scroll through, choose any events that interest you, and click **Register**. Select the event title and follow the prompts to complete your registration.

You will receive a confirmation email with tickets for the event(s) you selected—and that is it! You are officially on the list to attend.

Tennessee Native Plant Society
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