

## Lower Howard's Creek Nature & Heritage Preserve 2009 Spring Hiking Schedule



The winter of 2009 will be remembered for its ice storm, which wreaked devastation and caused power outages across the state. We survived winter and now it's time to enjoy the moderate weather of spring.

All hikes will meet at our main entrance on Athens-Boonesboro Road (0.3 mile up the hill from Hall's Restaurant). As space is limited, please call the Preserve manager at (859) 744-4888 and leave a message to make reservations. Since this is a Kentucky State Nature Preserve, no dogs are allowed on the hikes. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Hikers should dress according to the expected weather. The terrain at the Preserve is quite steep and rocky, so please wear appropriate shoes or boots. Shallow creek crossings are a possibility on all hikes and your feet may get wet. Please call the preserve manager if there is a question about suitability of the weather. It is recommended that you carry water and trail snacks. Hike is free to members of the Friends of Lower Howard's Creek, \$5 donation suggested for each non member. Private tours are available upon request by calling the Preserve manager.

**March 21 - 10 a.m. – “Almost” First Day of Spring-Thompson Ridge Settlement:** This small settlement was populated until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. While the houses have disappeared, the forsythia, vinca, yucca and daffodils that the inhabitants planted are still very much present, and should be blooming. We will also visit some of the old limestone quarries that these people worked in, and will talk about other pioneer entrepreneurs who lived here over 200 years ago. Expect to see the earliest blooming native ephemerals such as bloodroot and trout lilies. Moderately strenuous hike of about 2.5 hours.

**March 28 - 10:00 a.m. - Heirloom Daffodils and Early Spring Wildflowers:** This hike, will feature abandoned homesites throughout the Preserve. The homesteads will contain some heirloom varieties of old daffodils, and between sites the early wildflowers such as squirrel corn and dutchman's breeches should be showing their colors. Steep slopes will be traversed, and this is one of the more strenuous hikes, so be prepared to spend at least 3 hours with us.

**April 4-10 a.m. – Got the Blues:** This should be the week of blues-Virginia bluebells, early blue phlox, Jacob's ladder, and dwarf larkspur put on quite a show in the creek valley during the first 2 weeks of April. Moderately strenuous hike, 3 hours.

**April 15-10 a.m. - Mid-week Hike:** Looking for an excuse to play hooky from work and celebrate turning in your tax forms? Take this opportunity to look for wildflowers and migratory birds. Moderately strenuous, 3 hours.

**April 18- 10:00 a.m. – Saturday Stroll:** The days should be getting longer, so the vegetation will be closing in the forest canopy. This is our most leisurely stroll through the Preserve because we have to stop so often for photographing the riot of colors. Moderately strenuous, 3 hours.

**April 25- 10:00 a.m. - Last Hike of Spring.** As the temperatures rise, the blooms decline, so this will be the last hike of the spring. We will be looking for columbines, synandra and woods hyacinths. Moderately strenuous, 3 hours.