



Kentucky Native Plant Society's Wildflower Weekend 2026

**Natural Bridge State Resort Park
Friday, April 17th - Sunday, April 19th, 2026**

**iNaturalist Bioblitz: Saturday, April 11th to
Sunday, April 19th, 2026**

Join nature lovers, families, community scientists, amateur naturalists, and professional botanists from across the commonwealth, as we explore the beauty and diversity of Kentucky's natural history. Wildflower Weekend is open to the public and family friendly.

Pre-registration is required on knps.com. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$3 for ages 13-17, and free for ages 12 & under. The agenda for the weekend is listed below.

We are offering 31 different hikes this year! In addition to our usual "all things botanical" hikes, we have a couple of hikes concentrating on birds, fungi, general biodiversity, geology, and pollinators. This year we are offering hikes on Sunday morning as well!

We have always tried to make Wildflower Weekend a family-friendly event (kids 12 and under attend free). This year we are offering two kid-centered activities, a wildflower hike on Friday afternoon focusing on how different flower colors attract pollinators, and then on Saturday afternoon, a nature hike with fun botanical activities designed for the young naturalist. Additionally, there are several hikes throughout the weekend for beginner naturalists. We will have a children's corner at the registration table with coloring activities and scavenger hunt available throughout the weekend. See details in the schedule below. Natural Bridge Resort Park also has a playground, a basketball court, and mini golf.

Of course, we will have our **Members & Friends Social** on Friday evening and the **Saturday Evening Talks** and raffle in the Woodland Center, a short walk from the Hemlock Lodge. Additionally, this year we will have our second Student Research Poster Session, featured in the Woodland Center all day Saturday.

This is the fourth consecutive year that KNPS is offering merchandise with a logo developed specifically for Wildflower Weekend. This is the third year we have had a Wildflower Weekend 2026 Logo Design Contest. This was an open design contest to come up with a logo for Wildflower Weekend 2026. The winning design (featured at the top of this page) is an image of a **Pink Lady's Slipper orchid (*Cypripedium acaule*)**. The winning design was submitted by Alexandra Taylor of Fayette County, KY. Visit the [Lady Slipper Blog](#) for more information on the winner and all the wonderful artists who participated.

KNPS will have staffed tables in the Woodland Center where you can check in, ask questions, sign up to volunteer, meet old and new native plant friends, see the items that will be raffled off on Saturday night, purchase raffle tickets, and purchase some other native plant related items. You must be present at the Saturday night talks to win a raffle prize. Raffle tickets will be sold up until talks begin at 6:30PM. No tickets can be purchased after that time.

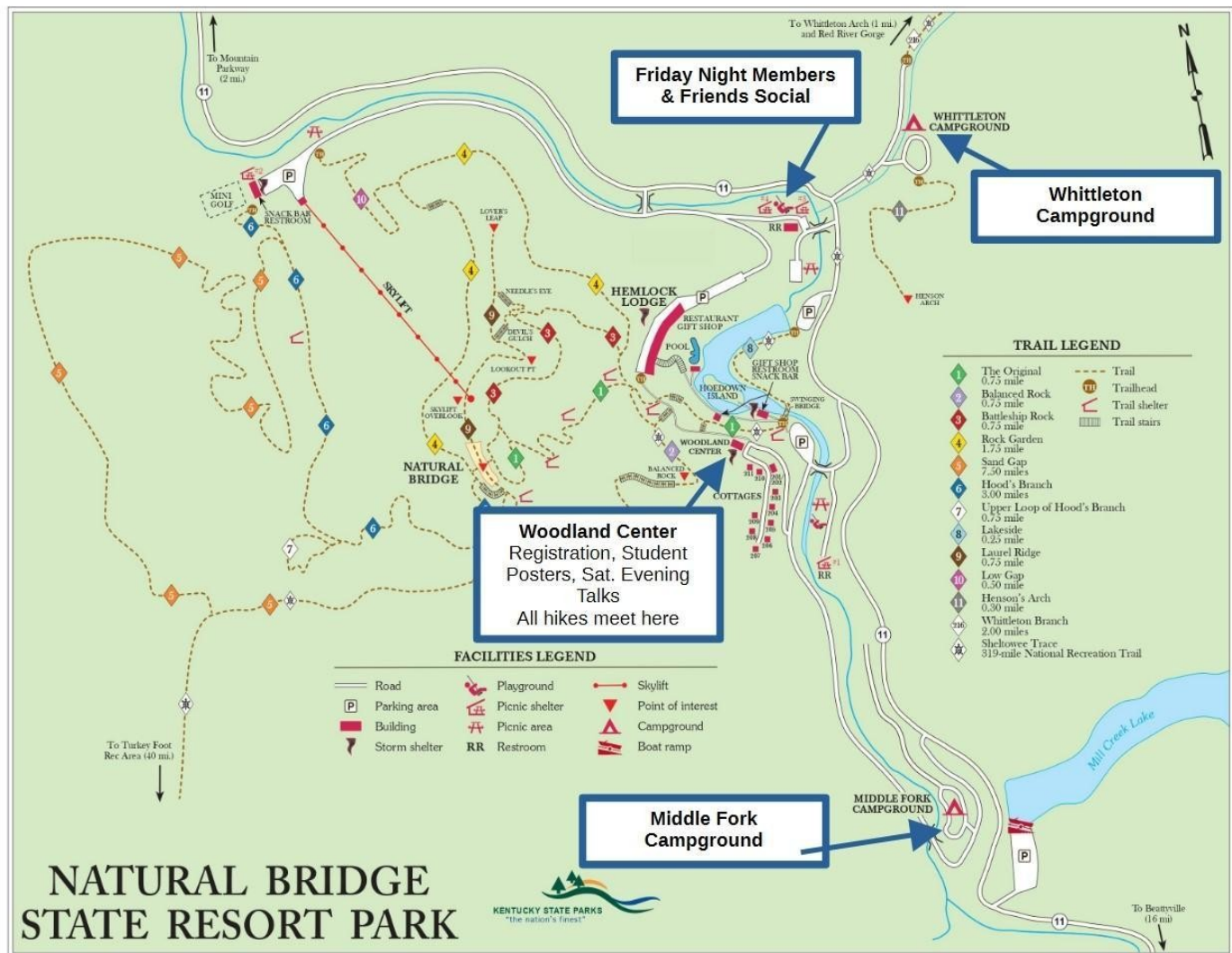
The hikes are limited as to the number of people who can sign up. This is done so that everyone will have a rich and positive experience. After feedback last year, we have reduced the number of participants per hike, but increased the number of hikes available. Last year hikes filled up fairly quickly, so register as soon as possible to get the best choice of hikes. On the registration form at the bottom of the page each hike shows the number of slots available.

All hikes will meet in the Woodland Center at Natural Bridge SRP: 2135 Natural Bridge Rd, Slade, KY 40376

The Woodland Center is a short walk from the Hemlock Lodge. Attendees will meet hike leaders to get directions, and to coordinate carpooling & caravanning to trailheads. Hike leaders and KNPS representatives will be there 10-15 minutes before a hike is scheduled to leave. Hike times listed are the times that the hike is meant to leave from the Hemlock Lodge parking areas.

In case you miss your hike's meet up time: Hike trails and trail heads are listed. All hikes will meet at the Woodland Center regardless of the trail head listed. Planning to meet your hiking group at the trail head instead of at the lodge may cause you to miss your hike or go on the wrong trail. There is limited cell phone service in the Natural Bridge/Red River Gorge area, so contacting your hiking group in the event you are late may be impossible. Please plan accordingly.

Map of Natural Bridge SRP with Hike and Event Locations Labeled:



For quick information on each hike, use the symbols provided after each hike title.



All hikes will meet in the Woodland Center at Natural Bridge SRP: 2135 Natural Bridge Rd, Slade, KY 40376

Friday, April 17th – Afternoon Hikes

12:00PM - F1 - Lichen Hike, Dr. Allen Risk



Hike will take the Original Trail up to Natural Bridge. This is **hard difficulty, 1 mile in-and-out hike with ~480' ascent and stairs**. Original Trail Trailhead is located between Woodland Center and Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking is at the lodge.

“Let’s take time to think about lichens” hike led by Dr. Allen Risk of Morehead State University to explore the incredible (and tiny) world of lichens! Learn to appreciate these non-flowering symbiotic organisms for their beauty, biodiversity, and vital role in our ecosystems. This hike will not feature many wildflowers, as it is focused on lichens. A hand lens is suggested to fully appreciate these small specimens.

12:00PM - F2 – Hemlock Hike & Treatment Workshop, Alexandra Blevins and Sandra Elliott



Hike will follow the Hood Branch Trail. This is **moderately difficult, 5.5 mile in-and-out hike with a ~1300' ascent with Creek crossings, though hike will not cover the entire distance**. Hood Branch Trailhead and parking area are located near the Sky Lift at Natural Bridge State Park (37.781963, -83.689817).

Learn the importance of hemlock trees and how Kentucky is working to protect them from the invasive pest, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, with Alexandra Blevins, forest health specialist from Kentucky Division of Forestry and Sandra Elliott, Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves Cumberland Plateau Manager. This hike will be hands-on, with participants helping to measure and record hemlock trees while hike leaders demonstrate treatment techniques.

12:15PM – F3 - Woody Plants Walk, Jess Slade



Hike along Auxier Ridge Trail. This is **moderately difficult, 4.2 mile in-and-out hike with ~1040' ascent**. The Auxier Ridge Trailhead is at the end of Tunnel Ridge Road in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.820069, -83.680840). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~25-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join Jess Slade, Kentucky Natural Land Trust’s Conservation manager, as she teaches about woody plants and their adaptations to upland environments. This is the perfect trail to learn or brush up on your trees and shrubs, while experiencing beautiful geologic scenery of the Red River Gorge.

12:30PM – F4 - Wildflower Walk, Heidi Braunreiter



Hike follows Rock Bridge Trail. This is a **moderately difficult, 1.3 mile loop hike with a ~260' ascent and stairs**. The Rock Bridge Trailhead is at the end of Rock Bridge Road in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.770166, -83.567498). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~25-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join Heidi Braunreiter, a botanist with the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves on this hike around the Rock Bridge loop trail as she teaches about the wildflowers in the area. In addition to learning about spring wildflowers, the hike will feature the Rock Bridge arch.

12:30PM – F5 – Children’s Wildflower and Pollinator Hike, Tina Brouwer



Hike follows Rock Bridge Trail. This is a **moderately difficult, 1.3 mile loop hike with a ~260' ascent and stairs**. The Rock Bridge Trailhead is at the end of Rock Bridge Road in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.770166, -83.567498). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~25-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join “Rainbows and Besties,” a children’s hike led by Tina Brouwer, director of the Red Oaks Forest School. This hike will have a scavenger hunt for all the colors of the rainbow, exploring the important mutualism of spring ephemerals and their pollinators.

:Hike :Cave Tour :Kid’s Activity :Gentle and Easy Activity :Carpooling :Binoculars Recommended :Handlens Recommended
 :Wildflower focus :Woody focus :Fungi focus :Insect focus :Bat focus :Seedless Plant focus :Nonvascular focus

All hikes will meet in the Woodland Center at Natural Bridge SRP: 2135 Natural Bridge Rd, Slade, KY 40376

Friday, April 17th – Afternoon Hikes continued

12:45PM – F 08 – Naturalist and Wildflower Hike, Samantha Evans



Hike will take the Original Trail up to Natural Bridge. This is hard difficulty, 1 mile in-and-out hike with ~480' ascent and stairs. Original Trail Trailhead is located between Woodland Center and Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking is at the lodge.

Hike the Original Trail up to Natural Bridge with Natural Bridge SRP Park Naturalist Samantha Evans as she teaches about the wildflowers and natural history of the iconic Kentucky state park.

1:00PM – F6 - Woody Plants Walk, David Taylor



Walk around the Woodland Center and Lodge. **This is an easy, 0.5 mile walk.** Woodland Center and around the Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park Lodge (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking is at the lodge.

Join US Forest Service Botanist David Taylor as he teaches about the woody plants in the area on this gentle walk. This is a perfect place to learn or brush up on your trees and shrubs while remaining close to the State Park.

1:15PM – F7 – Beginner Wildflower Walk, Kendall McDonald



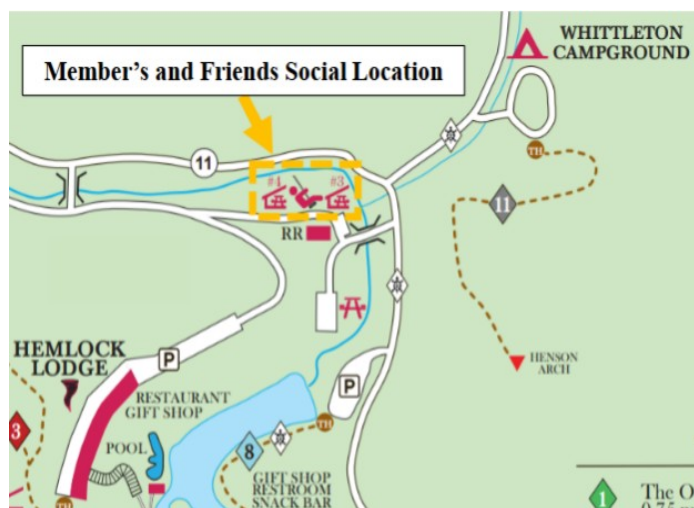
Hike along Whittleton Arch Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, in-and-out 2 mile hike with ~380' ascent with stairs and a creek crossing.** Whittleton Arch Trailhead and parking is located at the end of Whittleton Branch Road, within the Whittleton Campground (37.782821, -83.672861). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~5-minute drive to the trailhead.

Learn your spring wildflowers with Kendall McDonald, KNPS President and botanist/lichenologist with the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves. This hike will be a gentle introduction on how to identify spring wildflowers, perfect for those who are new to native plants and eager to learn or those looking to brush up on their knowledge.

4:30PM-6:30PM: Check-in to lodging and dinner on your own

Pack a meal, visit the Sandstone Arches Restaurant at Hemlock Lodge in NBSRP, or visit local restaurants in the area.

Please be gracious to our hosts at NBSRP and be understanding of any delays in service. WW grows larger every year, and we have grown into a lot of mouths to feed! Be prepared with snacks and other food options during the weekend. There are many picnic tables and shelters in NBSRP that are great spots to enjoy a meal outdoors. Check the KNPS WW registration desk for information on food and drink options in the area.



Friday Evening, April 17th - Members & Friends Social

6:30PM Members & Friends Social, Natural Bridge SRP, Picnic Shelter #3 & #4 (37.779750, -83.676750)

Join us around the fire pit to gather with fellow wildflower enthusiasts. Meet the KNPS board members & officers. Meet at Picnic Shelters #3 & #4 which are across the road (Rt. 11) from the Whittleton Campground. Utilities include restrooms, parking, picnic tables and a small playground. S'more fixings will be provided. Bring your own chair, drinks (no alcohol allowed), flashlights, and weather appropriate clothing/gear.



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Directions to picnic shelter by car: Hemlock Lodge, turn onto the first road on the right. Parking is available at the picnic shelter. Excess parking is available at neighboring picnic area and across the street in the Whittleton Campground Area.

Directions to picnic shelters on foot: There are no walking paths from the Hemlock Lodge to the picnic shelters. Walking to the picnic shelters from Hemlock Lodge will involve walking along the very thin shoulder of the road.

Saturday, April 18th – Morning Hikes

8:00AM - 9:00AM - Student Poster Session

Woodland Center at Natural Bridge State Resort Park.

Join us to learn about the botanical research Kentucky's higher education students are conducting during KNPS's second Wildflower Weekend Student Poster Session! The poster session is walk through and should be enjoyed at your own pace.

8:00AM – S01 – Birding for Beginners and Beyond, Nour Salam & Meaghan Petix

Meader along Log Gap Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 1 mile in-and-out hike with a ~280' ascent with steep stairs.** The Low Gap Trailhead and parking area are located near the Sky Lift at Natural Bridge State Park (37.781963, -83.689817).

Look and listen for birds of all kinds with birders Nour Salam of the Frankfort Audubon Society, and Meaghan Petix of the Lexington Bird Cult. The Low Gap Trail runs above Hemlock Lodge Road and the Middle Fork of the Red River, the perfect mix of open spaces and edge habitat for birding and wildlife viewing. Binoculars suggested.

8:00AM – S02 – Common Violets of the Eastern US, Tyson Gregory

Hike follows Rock Bridge Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 1.3 mile loop hike with a ~260' ascent and stairs.** The Rock Bridge Trailhead is at the end of Rock Bridge Road in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.770166, -83.567498). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~25-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join Tyson Gregory from the University of Kentucky Arboretum on this hike around the Rock Bridge loop trail as he examines the common violet species found in Eastern deciduous forests. In addition to learning about spring wildflowers, the hike will feature the Rock Bridge arch. A handlens is recommended.

8:15AM – S03 - Lichens of Sandstone Ridge Tops, Kendall McDonald

Walk along Chimney Top Rock Trail. **This is an easy, 0.5 mile in-and-out hike on a paved trail with a ~200' ascent and few stairs.** Chimney Top Rock Trailhead and parking are located at the end of Chimney Top Rock Road in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.824831, -83.618130). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~30-minute drive to the trailhead.

Learn about lichens with Kendall McDonald, KNPS President and botanist/lichenologist with the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves. This hike will explore the incredible diversity of sandstone-loving lichens in the Red River Gorge. This hike will not feature many wildflowers, as it is focused on lichens. A handlens is suggested to fully appreciate these small specimens.

8:15AM - S04 – Wildflowers and Woody Plants, Rob Paratley

Hike follows Bison Way Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 1 mile in-and-out hike with 200' ascent, stairs, and creek crossings.** Bison Way Trailhead and parking located on Hwy 715 just before the Gladie Visitor Center in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.836852, -83.609650). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~25-minute drive to the trailhead.

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Join retired UK herbarium curator Rob Paratley on a hike to learn about spring plant life. Not only will you learn to identify the plants seen, but hike leads will discuss their plant families and their unique ecologies. Great hike option for beginner to intermediate plant enthusiasts.

8:30AM – S05 - Wildflower and Geology Car Tour, Ron Jones & Mark Sweet



Enjoy a driving and walking tour of the Red River Gorge. **Driving tour with some walking.** Parking at the Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park for those not using their vehicles. The group will carpool/caravan and make stops at Mill Creek Lake, Nada Tunnel, and Rock Bridge. Carpooling will be required due to limited parking in the RRG area.

Join Ron Jones, retired professor from EKV, and Mark Sweet, retired president of Shield Environmental Associates, on a car tour examining the botany and geology of the Red River Gorge. The group make stops at Mill Creek Lake, Nada Tunnel, and Rock Bridge. This is a driving tour, so carpooling will be required due to limited parking in the RRG area.

Saturday, April 18th – Morning Hikes continued

8:45AM – S06 - Wildflower & Forest Ecology, Dan & Judy Dourson



Meander along Indian Creek. **This is an easy 1 mile walk with a ~50' ascent.** Pebble Beach Trailhead and parking area located along Indian Creek Road in the Daniel Boone National Forest (37.860809, -83.674104). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~30-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join authors Dan & Judy Dourson on a walk along Indian Creek to see a dazzling display of spring ephemerals and botanical diversity. For a great plant guide of the area, check out their book “Wildflowers and Ferns of Red River Gorge and the Greater Red River Basin.”

9:00AM – S07 - Bryophytes and Ferns Hike, Dr. Allen Risk



Hike will take Original Trailhead to Balanced Rock trail to Rock Garden Trail. **This is a strenuously difficult, 3.5-mile in-and-out hike with 1280' ascent and stairs.** Original Trail Trailhead is located between Woodland Center and Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking at the lodge.

Join Dr. Allen Risk of Morehead State University on a walk through the lush cove forests and unusual geologic features of the Rock Garden Trail to learn about the non-flowering, seedless plants of Natural Bridge State Park. These organisms are best appreciated with magnification, so a handlens is suggested.

9:15AM – S08 - Wildflowers Hike, David Taylor



Hike along Whittleton Arch Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, in-and-out 2 mile hike with ~380' ascent with stairs and a creek crossing.** Whittleton Arch Trailhead and parking is located at the end of Whittleton Branch Road, within the Whittleton Campground (37.782821, -83.672861). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~5-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join US Forest Service botanist David Taylor as he teaches about the wildflowers in the area. Whittleton Trail has become a favorite area for our Wildflower Weekend hikers and is a must see for its gorgeous spring ephemeral display.

10:15AM - S09 – Workshop: An Introduction to Seeds, Judson Collins



This is an indoor workshop in the Woodland Center. Parking at the lodge.

Join Judson Collins, owner of ExtraFlora Nursery, for an introduction into seeds! This workshop will delve into ethical seed collection and storage, as well as general characteristics of seeds- dormancy, longevity, and germination. A handlens is recommended.

11:30AM-12:30PM: Lunch on Your Own

Pack a lunch, visit the Sandstone Arches Restaurant at Hemlock Lodge in NBSRP, or visit local restaurants in the area. Please be gracious to our hosts at NBSRP and be understanding of any delays in service. WW grows larger every year, and we have grown into a lot of mouths to feed! Be prepared with snacks and other food options during the weekend. There are

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All hikes will meet in the Woodland Center at Natural Bridge SRP: 2135 Natural Bridge Rd, Slade, KY 40376

many picnic tables and shelters in NBSRP that are great spots to enjoy a meal outdoors. Check the KNPS WW registration desk for information on food and drink options in the area.

Saturday, April 18th – Afternoon Hikes

12:30PM - 1:30PM - Student Poster Session

Woodland Center at Natural Bridge State Resort Park.

Join us to learn about the botanical research Kentucky's higher education students are conducting during KNPS's second Wildflower Weekend Student Poster Session! The poster session is walk through and should be enjoyed at your own pace

12:30PM – S10 – Naturalist and Wildflower Hike, Alan Abbott

Hike will take the Original Trail up to Natural Bridge. **This is hard difficulty, 1 mile in-and-out hike with ~480' ascent and stairs.** Original Trail Trailhead is located between Woodland Center and Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking is at the lodge.

Hike the Original Trail up to Natural Bridge with KNPS member Alan Abbott as he teaches about the wildflowers and natural history of the iconic Kentucky state park.

12:45PM – S11 – Children's Wildflower Hike, Isabel Cochran

Explore the Whittleton Arch Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, in-and-out 2 mile hike with ~380' ascent with stairs and a creek crossing.** Whittleton Arch Trailhead and parking is located at the end of Whittleton Branch Road, within the Whittleton Campground (37.782821, -83.672861). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~5-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join environmental educator Isabel Cochran for a kid's nature hike to Whittleton Arch. We will be identifying spring wildflowers and other exciting nature discoveries along the way!

12:45PM - S12 – Ferns, Mosses and Liverworts, David Taylor

Walk around the Woodland Center and Lodge. **This is an easy, 0.5 mile walk.** Woodland Center and around the Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park Lodge (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking is at the lodge.

Walk with U.S. Forest Service botanist David Taylor around the Hemlock Lodge to learn about these interesting seedless plants including mosses, liverworts, and ferns that have considerable diversity in form and ecology. A handlens is suggested to fully appreciate these small specimens.

1:00PM – S13 – iNaturalist Hike, Dr. Nick Koenig & Kelly Watson

Hike along Silvermine Arch Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 2.8-mile in-and-out hike with ~420' ascent.** The trailhead for is hike is Silvermine Arch Trail #225 at the end of Koomer Ridge Picnic Area Road with parking at the Koomer Ridge campground (37.784296, -83.636365). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~15-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join University of Cincinnati researcher Dr. Nick Koenig and Dr. Kelly Watson for an iNaturalist tutorial hike. This hike will teach participants best practices while enjoying the wildflower display and geologic features of the trail.

1:15PM – S14 - Evolutionary Relationships of Wildflowers and Ferns, Judson Collins

Hike winds down D Boone Hut Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 1-mile in-and-out hike with ~400' ascent, stairs, and creek crossings.** D Boone Hut Trailhead and parking found in the Gray's Arch Parking area along Tunnel Ridge Road (37.807611, -83.658086). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~15-minute drive to the trailhead.

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Hike historic D Boone Hut Trail with botanist Judson Collins as you learn about the fascinating evolutionary relationships of wildflowers and ferns. This trail, besides having a welcoming spring wildflower display, features many sandstone rockhouses and historic artifacts.

1:30PM - S15 – Art Presentation: Orchid Art and Orchid-gami, Bob Van Hoff



This is an indoor workshop in the Woodland Center. Parking at the lodge.

Join beloved artist Bob Van Hoff for a presentation on his orchid art throughout the years. There will be origami sheets provided by the North American Orchid Conservation Center for participants to craft their own orchid art of two Kentucky native orchid species- the pink lady-slipper and the showy lady-slipper.

Saturday, April 18th – Afternoon Hikes continued

1:45PM - S16 – Woody Plants for Beginners, Ted Brancheau



Hike follows Hidden Arch Trail. This is a moderately difficult, 1.3-mile loop hike with ~230' ascent. The trailhead for is hike is Trail #220 at the end of Koomer Ridge Picnic Area Road with parking at the Koomer Ridge campground (37.784296, -83.636365). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~15-minute drive to the trailhead.

Join KNPS Secretary Ted Brancheau on a beginner as he teaches about the diversity of woody plants in the area. This is a perfect place to learn or brush up on your trees and shrubs while seeing some stunning geologic formations.

2:00PM – S17 - Wildflowers and Common Pollinators, Rachel Cook



Meader along Log Gap Trail. This is a moderately difficult, 1 mile in-and-out hike with a ~280' ascent with steep stairs. The Low Gap Trailhead and parking area are located near the Sky Lift at Natural Bridge State Park (37.781963, -83.689817).

Join Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves botanist Rachel Cook on a hike to enjoy the spring wildflowers and explore their relationships with insects. This hike will walk you through the dynamics of host plants, the foraging of insects, and the importance of spring ephemerals.

2:30PM – S18 – Workshop: Pressed Plant, Quinn Towery



This is an indoor workshop in the Woodland Center. Parking at the lodge.

Join Quinn Towery, Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves Bluegrass Land Manager, for a workshop on how to press, mount, and digitize plant specimens. The first half of the workshop will be a tutorial on how to press and mount plant specimens, where he will have several plant presses and supplied plant material for participants. Then he will demonstrate how to mount a specimen using pre-pressed materials. The second half of the workshop will be an educational presentation on why digitization of plant specimens is important, and how to help digitization efforts at home through the website Notes from Nature.

4:30PM-6:30PM: Check-in to lodging and dinner on your own

Pack a meal, visit the Sandstone Arches Restaurant at Hemlock Lodge in NBSRP, or visit local restaurants in the area. Please be gracious to our hosts at NBSRP and be understanding of any delays in service. WW grows larger every year, and we have grown into a lot of mouths to feed! Be prepared with snacks and other food options during the weekend. There are many picnic tables and shelters in NBSRP that are great spots to enjoy a meal outdoors. Check the KNPS WW registration desk for information on food and drink options in the area.

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2135 Natural Bridge Rd, Slade, KY 40376**

Saturday, April 18th – Evening Talks

All events occur in the Woodland Center. Raffle tickets will not be sold after talks begin at 6:30PM..

6:00PM - 9:00PM - Informal Student Poster Session

Learn about the botanical research Kentucky's higher education students are conducting during KNPS's second Wildflower Weekend Student Poster Session. Posters will be available for viewing throughout the evening.

6:30PM - Welcome/Introductions – Rachel Cook

6:35PM - KNPS Business Meeting, Kendall McDonald

6:55PM - iNaturalist BotanyBlitz Results

iNaturalist BotanyBlitz lead will give guests a preliminary update on the results of the BotanyBlitz, covering current rankings in the competition and featuring any interesting botanical finds.

7:00PM – History of Kentucky Native Plant Society and Kentucky Botany, Dr. Ron Jones

7:30PM – KNPS Officer and Board Member Recognition Ceremony

7:45PM - Break

7:55 PM – Keynote Speaker: Ethan Tapper

8:35PM - Q & A Session/Raffle Set up

8:45PM - Raffle

Saturday, April 18th – Night Hike

9:00PM (Following the Evening Talks) – S19 – Salamander Saunter, Courtney Hayes



Nighttime Stroll around the Woodland Center and Lodge. **This is an easy, 0.25 mile walk.** Woodland Center and along the beginning of the Original Trail at Natural Bridge State Park Lodge (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking is at the lodge.

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Join Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Resources wildlife biologist Courtney Hayes in a hunt for elusive salamanders near the caves of Natural Bridge State Park. Search will begin immediately after the Evening Talks (approximately 9:00PM). Flashlight/headlamp suggested

Sunday, April 19th – Morning Hikes

All Day: Last Day of iNaturalist BotanyBlitz

By popular demand, KNPS keeps the iNaturalist BotanyBlitz going the Sunday after the event to give participants one last chance to snag the prizes!

8:00AM – SU01 – Birding hike for Beginners, Rod Botkins



Meander around the Gladie Visitor Center. **This is an easy walk of 0.25 miles.** The Gladie Center is located at 3451 Skybridge Rd, Stanton, KY 40380 (37.834017, -83.608152). This is a ~30 minute drive.

New to birding? Join birder Rod Botkins on a gentle bird watching trip at the Gladie Visitor Center designed for those just getting into bird watching. Guests will listen and look for spring migratory birds of the Red River Gorge. Binoculars suggested. This hike has minimal walking and is considered a gentle activity.

8:00AM – SU02 – Birds and Blooms, Meaghan Petix & Alexandra Taylor



Hike follows Rock Bridge Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 1.3 mile loop hike with a ~260' ascent and stairs.** The Rock Bridge Trailhead is at the end of Rock Bridge Road in the Red River Gorge Geologic Area (37.770166, -83.567498). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~25-minute drive to the trailhead.

Look and listen for birds and wildflowers alike as you hike with birders Meaghan Petix and Alexandra Taylor from the Lexington Bird Cult.

8:15AM – SU03 – Wildflower Hike, Quinn Towery & Zach Meuth



Hike will take Original Trailhead to Balanced Rock trail. **This is a hard difficulty, 1.5-mile in-and-out hike with 850' ascent and stairs.** Original Trail Trailhead is located between Woodland Center and Hemlock Lodge at Natural Bridge State Park (37.776054, -83.680638). Parking at the lodge.

Join Quinn Towery, Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves Bluegrass Land Manager, and Kentucky Division of Water, Zach Meuth, for a final wildflower hike for the weekend.

8:30AM - SU04 – Fantastic Fungi and Where to Find Them, Megan Buland



Explore the Henson's Arch Trail. **This is an easy, in-and-out 0.6 mile hike with ~250' ascent with stairs and a creek crossing.** Henson's Arch Trailhead and parking is located near the restrooms at the Whittleton Campground (37.780005, -83.673588). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~5-minute drive to the trailhead.

Walk with UK Arboretum Native Plant Curator Megan Buland on a stroll to learn about the area's fantastic fungi and their habitats. A handlens is suggested to fully appreciate these small specimens.

:Hike :Cave Tour :Kid's Activity :Gentle and Easy Activity :Carpooling :Binoculars Recommended :Handlens Recommended
 :Wildflower focus :Woody focus :Fungi focus :Insect focus :Bat focus :Seedless Plant focus :Nonvascular focus

All hikes will meet in the Woodland Center at Natural Bridge SRP: 2135 Natural Bridge Rd, Slade, KY 40376

8:45AM – SU05 – Critical Plant Hike, Dr. Nick Koenig & Kelly Watson



Hike winds down D Boone Hut Trail. **This is a moderately difficult, 1-mile in-and-out hike with ~400' ascent, stairs, and creek crossings.** D Boone Hut Trailhead and parking found in the Gray's Arch Parking area along Tunnel Ridge Road (37.807611, -83.658086). Carpooling is encouraged, with a ~15-minute drive to the trailhead.

Hike the historic D Boone Hut Trail with Join University of Cincinnati researcher Dr. Nick Koenig and Dr. Kelly Watson as you learn about the Indigenous and settler histories of the Red River Gorge.

:Hike :Cave Tour :Kid's Activity :Gentle and Easy Activity :Carpooling :Binoculars Recommended :Handlens Recommended
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