

Campbell County dedicates first natural area

Bright October skies and cool breezes greeted 60 people gathered on October 3, 2008, for the dedication of Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area. The Campbell County Conservation District, the Campbell Conservancy and the Campbell County Fiscal Court joined to present Campbell County's first natural area to the citizens of the county. The 140-acre property, named Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area, is located on Licking Pike near Alexandria.

Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area was recently acquired through the combined efforts of the Campbell County Conservation District, the Campbell Conservancy and the Campbell County Fiscal Court. The property came to the attention of the Campbell Conservancy when it was listed for sale in 2006. The Conservancy pursued private funding to purchase the property, but ultimately turned to the Campbell County Conservation District for assistance. Being a governmental unit of the state, the Conservation District was eligible to apply for, and received, a grant through the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund. In August 2008, the Conservation District purchased 135 acres, and the Campbell Conservancy, with assistance from the Campbell County Fiscal Court, acquired an additional five acres.

According to Dennis Walter, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District, the acquisition was made possible only through the hard work and cooperation of many people. "We had been working closely with the Conservancy for several years when this opportunity arose," said Walter. "This partnership will continue into the future to see that the land is managed in accordance with the requirements of the Heritage Land Conservation Fund, for the benefit of future citizens." The property will be held by the Campbell County Conservation District in perpetuity and is protected by a conservation easement held by the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

"This property is unique in that it has beautiful frontage along the Licking River and two knolls that offer views that are unsurpassed in this area," noted David Peck, Chairman of the Campbell Conservancy. "There is also a wide variety of terrain that will permit a leisurely stroll or a challenging hike," said Peck. "We want people to come and enjoy this land and gain a greater appreciation for Campbell County's natural resources."

W. Horace Brown, a member of the Heritage Land Fund board noted that Heritage Land projects are funded through the sale of nature license plates, some state environmental fines and unmined mineral taxes. "Each nature license plate sold generates \$10 toward the fund," he said. "Purchased from willing sellers, these lands will be preserved in their natural state for present and future generations."

Others whose support was invaluable to the project included Senator Katie Stine, Representative Joe Fischer, Northern

Kentucky University Center for Applied Ecology, Sanitation District #1, Vision 2015, the late Ms. Virginia Macke, Campbell County Planning and Zoning, and citizens who purchase Kentucky Nature License plates. Many also assisted with the dedication including the Campbell County Road Department, Campbell County Community Media, Helen Fehr, Licking Valley Baptist Church - Pastor Stephen Fite and Deacon Dennis Bush, Northern Kentucky Water District, Taft, Stettinius & Hollister LLP, and Buck Seibert with the Campbell County Historical and Genealogical Society.

Fiscal Court Judge Executive Steve Pendery noted the importance of this property to the county. "We see our parks, our agricultural land, and all of our green infrastructure as a Campbell County trademark and a cornerstone of our community. Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area is an important step in enlarging our preservation of green space for future generations."

Walter said that, "Through the grant, and assistance from federal, state and local entities, we will be restoring habitat with tree and native grass plantings and eradication of invasive, exotic plant species." There are also several historically significant sites on the property, including a log cabin, that offer the opportunity for future restoration work. The property will be open in the future for public use, providing an access point for canoes and kayaks, as well as trails for hiking and nature study. He added, "It is our hope that this special place will foster in our citizens a new-found stewardship for the land and waters of our county."

For more information, see the article on page seven, and contact the Campbell County Conservation District and Campbell Conservancy at 859-635-9587.

Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator



From left are David Peck, Chairman of the Campbell Conservancy; W. Horace Brown, Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board member; Dennis Walter, Chairman of the Campbell County Conservation District; and Campbell County Judge Executive Steve Pendery.