

DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS

please call (859) 622-1476 or visit the website, www.naturalareas.eku.edu (<http://www.naturalareas.eku.edu/>).

The Division of Natural Areas

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Eastern Kentucky University's Division of Natural Areas manages four natural areas available for use by faculty, staff, and students across campus and for use by the public: Lilley Cornett Woods Appalachian Ecological Research Station (Letcher County), Maywoods Environmental and Educational Laboratory (Garrard and Rockcastle counties), Taylor Fork Ecological Area (Madison County), and Cardinal Lane Outdoor Laboratory (Madison County). As a unit, these Natural Areas function as a continuum of natural habitats found in the Commonwealth. They also serve as base stations for engaging regional communities. Our Natural Areas are used extensively by ECU, other universities, and elementary and secondary schools as outdoor classrooms. The Division of Natural Areas is responsible for stewardship and management of the areas collectively for:

1. Place-based education, research, recreation, and regional outreach by ECU personnel and
2. Providing infrastructure and expertise to the public for environmental education and nature-based learning, research, recreation through K-12 programming, public events, and open-hours activities such as hiking, fishing, and wildlife photography.

Lilley Cornett Woods, the oldest and most studied tract of old-growth forest in eastern Kentucky, is a Registered Natural Landmark (U.S. Department of Interior) and is operated as a nature preserve. Onsite facilities, including visitor center, research and learning laboratory, bunkhouse, manager's home, outdoor teaching pavilion, and maintenance building, offer an excellent off-campus venue for meetings, classes, and workshops. The property is 659 acres, and public use is limited to facilities and guided hikes in this unique forest.

Maywoods Environmental and Educational Laboratory is 1,700 forested-acres, with a 13-acre lake and is a wildlife refuge that provides protective habitat for native species. Onsite facilities, including a lodge with classroom and sleeping space, manager's home, outdoor classroom shelter, amphitheater, and maintenance building, also offer a venue for meetings, classes, and workshops. The site is open to the public for fishing, and hiking on any of the six self-guiding trails.

Taylor Fork Ecological Area is a 60-acre restoration site at the south end of ECU's main campus in Richmond. The Area's habitat is primarily old pastureland with fence row strips of trees and small patches of woods and canebrakes. Developed as a site for experiential learning, research, and restoration, Taylor Fork was conceived by students in ECU's Wildlife Management Program and includes the adjacent American Chestnut Orchard. The site currently has no facilities and is open to the public for hiking on the designated trails.

Cardinal Lane Outdoor Laboratory is a 10-acre urban forest adjacent to ECU's Richmond campus. The site is a living laboratory for urban forestry, permaculture, community leadership and environmental education. Cardinal Lane features a community garden, pollinator garden, tree nursery, and a walking trail.

For further information about the use and availability of ECU's Natural Areas for research, education, leisure or educational programming,