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Anglin Falls Area Closed for Restoration

Berea College Forestry Outreach Center Opens Four New Hiking Trails

BEREA, Ky. – Berea College today announced that the John B. Stephenson Memorial Forest Nature Preserve, commonly known as Anglin Falls, will close temporarily for restoration. The preserve, named after the former Berea College President, is a 123-acre wooded tract that includes Anglin Falls, a nearly 75-foot wet-weather waterfall.

Anglin Falls is owned by the College and is dedicated as a State Nature Preserve for its natural significance. It is protected by law primarily for preservation, scientific and educational purposes.

The temporary closure will allow for a comprehensive forest preservation and protection plan to be put into place. The College will restore trails damaged by recent rainfall and heavy human use. The restoration will include improved trail signage providing new directional and educational information. In addition, the College will use this period to perform a survey of flora and fauna growing in the Stephenson Memorial Forest, updating earlier scientific studies.

Dedicated State Nature Preserves are established by the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves to protect and preserve rare species, the natural environment or exceptional natural scenery or environmental education opportunities. Kentucky Nature Preserves are strictly regulated to protect the natural integrity of the preserve, ensuring it can be passed on unimpaired to future generations. Some preserves are open only for research. Other Kentucky Nature Preserves in the area that are open to the public on a limited basis include Raven Run Nature Sanctuary in Fayette County and the Kentucky River Palisades/Tom Dorman State Nature Preserve in Garrard County.

Over the years, Anglin Falls has experienced a rash of human-made damage, including the accumulation of a large trash dump on the grounds. Other damage includes the proliferation of unsanctioned trails that heavily disturb the natural flora as well as areas that could be dangerous for hikers.

To mitigate damage to Anglin Falls and to keep the property in line with guidelines from the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves, College officials, in partnership with the Kentucky Nature Preserves, have decided to temporarily close the property to allow for proper management and remediation.

“Anglin Falls is a beautiful site which our late President John B. Stephenson sought to preserve during the last years of his life. It is important that we maintain its status as a Kentucky Nature Preserve for visitors to the site and in honor of President Stephenson. We want to ensure that the Forest’s beauty is maintained and preserved for future generations,” said Berea College President Cheryl L. Nixon.

The John B. Stephenson Memorial Forest State Nature Preserve was dedicated to the State Nature Preserve system on Dec. 10, 1996. The Cobb-Venable family owned this 123-acre wooded gorge for nearly five decades. In 1997, ownership passed to Berea College, which now manages the site.

Hikers visiting Berea College’s forest trails during Anglin Falls’ closure can experience a new trail system boasting four new trails, which have opened off State Route 21 (Big Hill Road), near Berea’s Forestry Outreach Center, providing a variety of new options for visitors.

These new trails span Pinnacle Knob with seven total miles of trails, ranging between 1.9 and 6.6 miles in length.

“We are thrilled that four new trails in Berea College’s 9,000-acre forest have opened for visitors, allowing the community and our thousands of yearly visitors from outside Berea to experience more of Berea’s natural beauty,” President Nixon said.

Educational signs along the new trails will highlight forest management topics and include quotes from the first management plan written for the Berea College Forest by Silas Mason, the first College Forester (1907-1917).

Three of the new trails – Pig Hollow at 1.9 miles, Cowbell at 6.5 miles and Chestnut at 4.3 miles – are loops. The fourth figure eight-shaped trail is 6.6 miles. On the Chestnut Loop, hikers can view American chestnut sprouts, currently being tended by the Berea College Forestry Department and the Kentucky chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation for efforts to restore the American chestnut to the forest.

More information about Berea College’s Forest, trails and Forestry Outreach Center events can be found at <https://forestryoutreach.berea.edu>

Anglin Falls is expected to reopen for educational and scientific purposes with guided hikes upon completion of scheduled management and maintenance actions. The property has been gated to accommodate the closure and future access.

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