

## **Friends of the Kent Bog: A KEC Focus Group**

### **Who We Are**

Friends of the Kent Bog is an informal support and advocacy group of people of all ages. The group is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the Tom S. Cooperrider Kent Bog State Nature Preserve for the education, enjoyment and inspiration of present and future generations. We keep in touch through e-mail and occasional postcard mailings and meetings.

### **What We Do**

- Spread the word about what a precious gift of nature we have in our community
- Write letters to the editor and speak at public meetings that deal with the preserve
- Publish and distribute free trail guides that point out interesting plants and animals that may be seen in the preserve during each season of the year
- Serve as greeters and docents during special events at the preserve, such as Discovery Days sponsored by the Ohio Divisions of Natural Areas and Preserves

### **Why We Care\***

Anyone who has walked the Kent Bog knows what a special place it is during every season, including winter, so if you have never been there, I urge you to go. This is not any old wetland or swamp, as some may think of it. It is a remnant of the last Ice Age and supports one of the largest southernmost stands of tamaracks in the continental United States.

Its unique plants thrive on the low level of nutrients available to them and are experts at recycling them. It is also an enormous carbon "sink" and may mitigate against the effects of global warming. Some studies suggest that tamarack trees, which live there in abundance, are able to reduce urban air pollution.

Once tampered with, whether by altering drainage, allowing it to silt up sooner than its natural life cycle, changing its pH, increasing its salinity, changing its temperature, or flooding it with light pollution, it cannot be repaired or mitigated.

When I go there, it is like stepping back in time to when the last glaciers, which at one time covered about half the state, were retreating from Ohio. I almost expect to hear a mastodon crashing through the underbrush or to see an early Native American family of hunter-gatherers preparing a meal. What I have seen, and it's definitely not imaginary, is a group of first-graders in rapt attention while the naturalist for Kent Parks and Recreation was describing the creatures living in the Bog now.

The Kent Bog needs to be protected and preserved. Let us be able to say in the year 2030 that we did what was necessary in 2005 to assure that another generation of schoolchildren can be awestruck by the Kent Bog State Nature Preserve.

\*From a letter to the editor by KEC chairperson Ann Ward to the *Record-Courier*, December 17, 2005.

Please join us. It's free! Please call, write, or e-mail:

Friends of the Kent Bog

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