



Land Conservation on the Plateau Making Strides

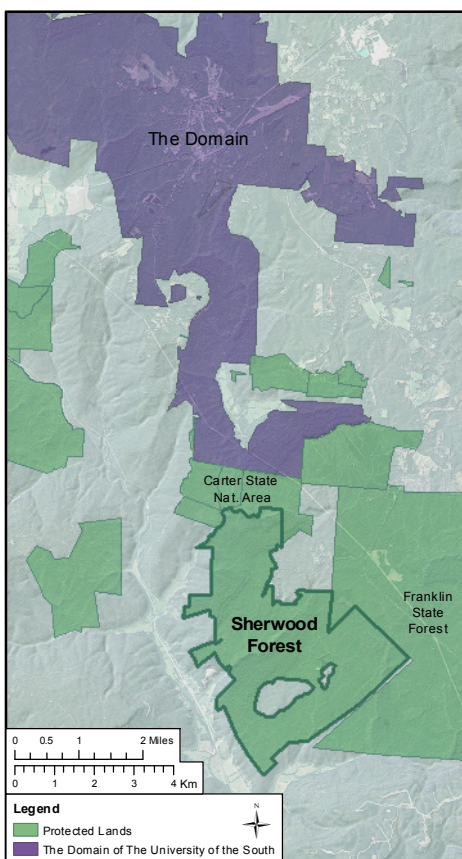
South Cumberland State Park has for years served as a destination for University students, faculty, and community members. Home to Fiery Gizzard, Savage Gulf, Lost Cove Cave, the Sewanee Natural Bridge, and other biologically rich sites, some of which are contiguous to the University Domain, the park often hosts biology, ecology, forestry, geology, and other classes. On weekends as well, look for Sewanee folk in the park hiking, swimming, rock climbing, caving, and camping.

South Cumberland had a growth spurt in 2016, bringing the total protected lands to more than 30,000 acres. The largest addition was the more than 4,000-acre “Sherwood Forest” that backs up to the Carter State Natural Area in Lost Cove. It brings the forest and wildlife corridor that includes the University Domain to 25,000 acres. Threatened plant species, including Morefield’s leather flower (*Clematis morefieldii* Kral) and Cumberland rosinweed (*Silphium brachiatum* Gattiger), inhabit this property, and it is the only place in the world where the endangered painted snake-coiled forest snail lives.

Ten miles up the road from Sewanee is Fiery Gizzard, where a summertime hike for a swim at Sycamore Falls is a regular event for many in the University community. Just south of Foster Falls, which is part of the Gizzard,

685-acre Denny Cove was also added this year. Billed as a rock-climbing mecca, it includes a diversity of plant habitats above and below the plateau’s escarpment.

Another significant addition to the park, which has major implications for



economic development, is shaping up in Beersheba Springs near Savage Gulf’s Great Stone Door. The property consists mainly of the old Shady Valley Nursery—700 acres of fields,

woodlands, and a deep-water lake. Additional adjacent land purchases are in the early stages.

Herbarium Director Jon Evans remarked, “Recent studies, including our published Sewanee flora, point to the south Cumberland Plateau as a hotspot for vascular plant diversity in North America. In the absence of major federal conservation lands in the region (national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges), state conservation lands play an essential role in protecting plant habitats and sustaining this rich natural heritage.

“Located right in Sewanee’s backyard, these lands provide unparalleled student opportunities for botanical exploration and research and the Herbarium looks forward to helping to make this happen in the coming year.”

South Cumberland State Park is a recreational and educational asset that Sewanee is lucky to have so close by. Partners in these land preservation efforts include the State of Tennessee, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Friends of South Cumberland State Park, the Conservation Fund, The Land Trust for Tennessee, the Southeastern Climbers Coalition, and The Nature Conservancy. See friendsofsouthcumberland.org for more information about the park.

—Mary Priestley

Herbarium Specimens to be Scanned



The Sewanee Herbarium is part of a consortium of Tennessee Herbaria that has received funding from the National Science Foundation to digitize their plant collections. The goal of the project is to have all Tennessee plant specimens scanned and part of a common database that can be used collectively within the state to inform research and conservation efforts relating the flora of Tennessee and, more broadly, the plant diversity of the southeastern United States. One of these projects will be the compilation of an online Vascular Plant Atlas for Tennessee such as are currently available for Florida and Alabama.

As part of the NSF grant, we have obtained portable digitizing equipment that we are using at each herbarium for the purpose of scanning specimens. The

consortium has already scanned 400,000 of Tennessee's ~850,000 herbarium specimens. It will be Sewanee's turn to process its specimens this spring. Fortunately, we already have them in a database, so it is just a matter of scanning and attaching barcodes to the specimen sheets. We will be supervising a team of undergraduate students this spring who will be helping us with this work in the Herbarium. We have approximately 6,800 Tennessee specimens to scan and process. Hopefully in the near future, you will be able to go online and explore our collection for the flora of the Domain without ever having to open a herbarium cabinet!

—Jon Evans

Thanks to our Friends

Sincere thanks to all who contributed to the Herbarium in 2016

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The Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium support the work of the Herbarium: education, research, and conservation. A \$10 annual contribution would be very much appreciated. The date of your most recent contribution is printed on your address label.

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Winter 2017 Calendar of Events

Herbarium Tour and Mountathon
Sat., Jan. 28, 9:30–11:30 a.m.
Sewanee Herbarium, Spencer Hall
Herbarium Curator Mary Priestley

Your chance to see where and what the herbarium is and to help in the work! Spending a morning mounting pressed plants can be a satisfying and fun experience. The finished product is always useful and often quite beautiful.

Come help us mount our backlog of specimens. Learn methods that have been passed down through generations and are still used today, and take home a guide to mounting pressed plants. Meet in the herbarium on the first floor of Spencer Hall. The main entrance is across from duPont Library and there is parking behind the library.



Water Walk
Sat., Feb. 4, 9:30–11:30 a.m.
Snowden Hall, Room TBA
Martin Knoll and Mary Priestley

This past summer's drought reminded us that the availability of water has always been a concern for Sewanee and other plateau communities. Join geology professor Martin Knoll and Mary Priestley for a walk to learn about water as a resource for inhabitants of the plateau—plants and animals, as well as the human population. Meet at Snowden Hall from which we will caravan to the site of the walk, which will include Hodgson's Pond, Abbo's Alley, the ATO, and Tremlett Springs. Wear comfortable shoes for this easy 1-mile walk. If weather is inclement, we will remain at Snowden.

Winter Botany
Sun., Feb 12, 1 p.m., Shakerag Hollow
Jon Evans

Herbarium Director Jon Evans will lead a walk to explore Shakerag Hollow as plants gear up for spring. Wintertime exposes the “bones” of the forest—the deciduous trees are leafless, and herbaceous plants are almost out of sight.

In addition to woody plants, there will be hardy ferns and possibly the first signs of spring—hepatica, toothwort, and pepper-and-salt—popping up trailside. Meet at Green's View for this moderate-to-strenuous walk that may include a steep rocky section of the trail. Come prepared for muddy, wet, icy, and/or rocky conditions.

Nature Journaling
A nature journaling group, sponsored by the herbarium, meets

Thursday mornings, 9–11 in the herbarium. An informal gathering, participants share observations and writing, and sketch plants or other natural objects. Everyone is welcome. Email Mary Priestley for more information.

All times are CST or CDT.

Wear appropriate shoes on all of these walks. Risks involved in hiking include physical exertion, rough terrain, forces of nature, and other hazards not present in everyday life. Picking flowers and digging plants are prohibited in all of the above-mentioned natural areas.

For more information on these or other Sewanee Herbarium events, please email Mary Priestley at marypriestley@bellsouth.net.

THE SEWANEE PLANT PRESS

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Map by Chris Van de Ven, courtesy of the Sewanee Landscape Analysis Lab. Drawings of Cumberland rosinweed, Morefield's leather flower, and herbarium specimens are by Mary Priestley.

HERBARIUM PUBLICATIONS

Fiery Gizzard: Voices from the Wilderness and What If Trees Could Walk?

HERBARIUM BLOG

sewaneeherbarium.wordpress.com



Domain Activities Planned for Spring 2017

Several activities are planned for Sewanee students and faculty this semester. In early January, a group took a wildland firefighting certification class. That crew will then participate in five prescribed fires across the Domain this semester, varying in size from two to up to 30 acres. The variety of site conditions and species compositions can make for interesting student research projects.

There will be two opportunities to plant shortleaf pine trees this spring within the demonstration forest. These plantings will be in some of the areas harvested last spring.

Planning, layout, and marking of a timber harvest will also be in progress. The purpose is removal of the non-native white pine and transition to a mixed hardwood upland woodland. There will be multiple options for student involvement, ranging from cultural resources protection to timber marking.

Also, we are currently exploring the possibility of constructing an NCAA cross-country track course on the Domain that will require construction and upgrading of some firelanes. Issues of road construction, recreation management, erosion control, and cultural resources protection will all be addressed in that project.

—Nate Wilson, Domain manager

