PILOT KNOB State Nature Preserve is thought to be the place where Daniel Boone first looked upon the Bluegrass Region in 1769. The view from the summit of this 730-foot-high knob provides an outstanding panorama of three regions of Kentucky: the Bluegrass, the Knobs, and the Cumberland Plateau.

The preserve features a second growth forest generally classified as oak-hickory. Within this classification are a number of forest communities, each associated with different environmental conditions such as elevation, soil type, bedrock, soil moisture, and exposure to sunlight. The trees common to the summit are exposed to more sunlight and wind and less moisture than those found at the base of the knob. These trees, mainly blackjack oak and Virginia pine, are adapted to harsh conditions. They are stunted because of dry, infertile soil. As you hike along the trail, look for the changes in forest composition.

The outcrop of rock near the summit is Pennsylvanian sandstone, and is approximately 280 million years old. A close look reveals pebbles of various sizes incorporated into the rock. This type of sandstone is called 'conglomerate'. This particular conglomerate is made up of a mixture of sands and gravels deposited by an ancient stream that flowed here. During the early 1800's the conglomerate outcrop was quarried from this knob, as well as others in the vicinity, for millstones. A quarry site with several unfinished millstones is located on the preserve and can be seen along the Millstone Quarry Trail. The Millstone Quarry Trail is considered moderately easy.

The round-trip hike to the summit along the Pilot Knob Trail is 2.4 miles and due to the elevation gain, is considered strenuous. The Sage Point Trail is a 2.0-mile loop trail which connects with the Pilot Knob Trail, and takes visitors along the spine of the ridge to Sage Point. The trail then descends to a stream at the bottom of a ravine before ascending to a saddle between Rotten Point and Pilot Knob and reconnecting to the Pilot Knob Trail. It is considered strenuous.

Visitors are advised to stay on the marked trail system, which provides the easiest way to the top of the knobs. Although infrequently encountered, there are venomous snakes on the preserve. Remaining on the trail and being observant are the best ways to avoid them. Please do not collect any artifacts, plants, or animals, or deface the natural features of the preserve. Hunting, camping, pets, rock climbing, and mountain biking are not permitted. The preserve is open from sunrise to sunset daily.

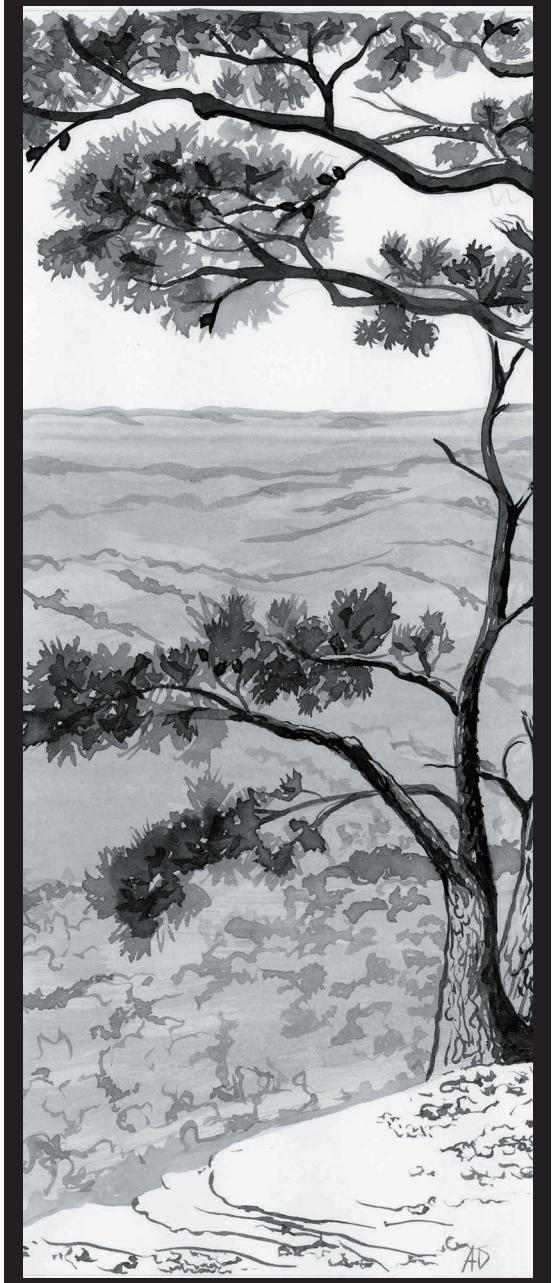
The original parcel establishing Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve was purchased from The Nature Conservancy and dedicated in 1985. In 1999, additional acreage was added to the preserve. A parcel owned by the Powell County Fiscal Court was dedicated in 2005.

For more information please contact:
KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION
801 Schenkel Lane
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.573.2886
naturepreserves@ky.gov
www.naturepreserves.ky.gov

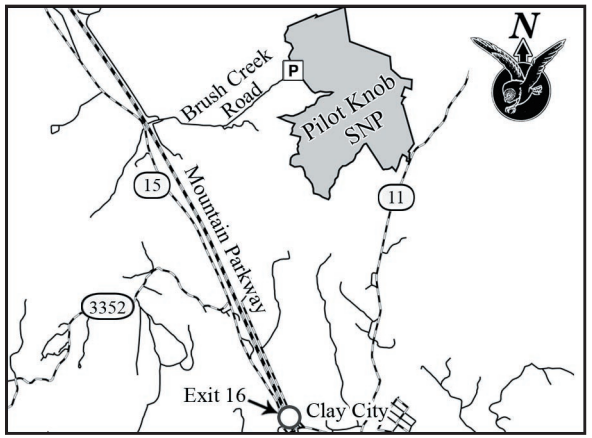
KSNPC ~ July 2005

Kentucky UNBRIDLED SPIRIT

PILOT KNOB
STATE NATURE PRESERVE

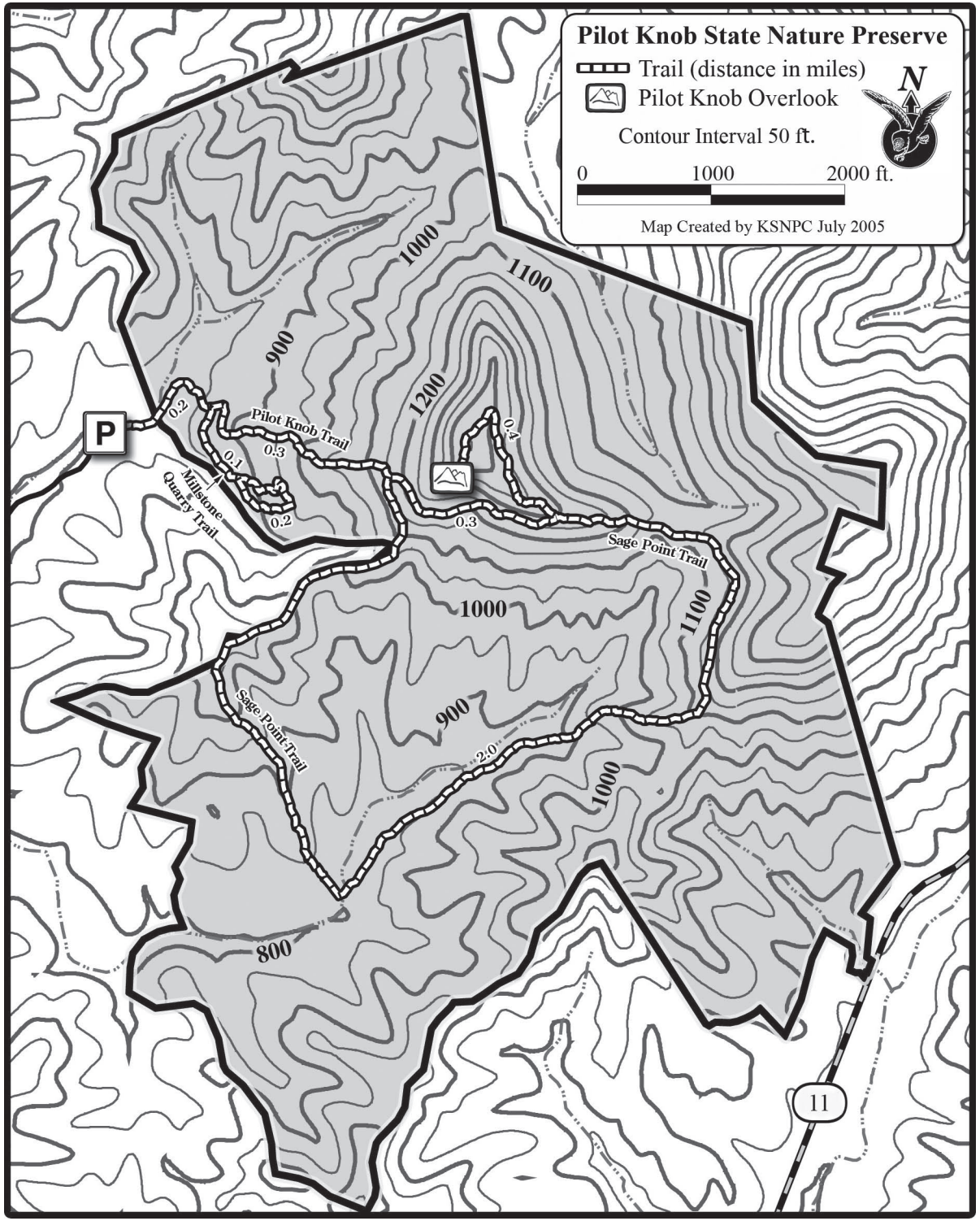


~original artwork by Ann DiSalvo



From the junction of the Mountain Parkway and KY 15 at Clay City (Exit 16), follow KY 15 north for 2.7 miles. Turn right on Brush Creek Road. Travel 1.5 miles to the end of Brush Creek Road into the gravel parking lot.

By observing the rules for State Nature Preserves, you will be helping to protect Kentucky's natural heritage.

1. Preserves are open sunrise to sunset.
2. Trails are open to foot-traffic only. Please stay on the trail so that other visitors don't get lost following a new path that your feet have made.
3. Horseback riding, bike riding, climbing, and rappelling are not permitted in nature preserves because of their destructive impacts to the trails and natural features. Motorized vehicles are not permitted.
4. Possession of firearms, drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
5. Please leave the things that catch your eye to do the same for the visitor who hikes after you. Collecting, hunting and trapping are prohibited.
6. Camping, picnicking, building fires, radios/ tape decks, and pets are not permitted in nature preserves.
7. Please remember to pack out your trash.

THESE RULES ARE ESTABLISHED BY 400 KAR 2:090. ANY PERSON IN VIOLATION OF THIS REGULATION MAY BE LIABLE FOR A CIVIL PENALTY OF $1000 PER DAY AND POSSIBLE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN KRS 224.