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## **Kentucky Natural Lands Trust Protects 2,000 Acres of Pine Mountain Creating Three New Preserves**

**Berea, KY** October 20, 2017 – Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (KNLT) has purchased nearly 2,000 additional acres on Pine Mountain near Cumberland, Kentucky creating three new preserves: Line Fork Preserve, Hurricane Gap Preserve and Kingdom Come Preserve. The preserves are located primarily along the north face of Pine Mountain in Harlan and Letcher counties and protect important terrestrial and subterranean habitats for many species including Indiana and northern long-eared bats. This land is a significant addition to the Pine Mountain Wildlands Corridor, a refuge and migratory route for American black bears, yellow fringed orchids, blackburnian warblers, green salamanders and thousands of other plants and animals.

The acquired tracts add to the existing conservation lands along Pine Mountain and adjoin several state properties. The new preserves connect Kingdom Come State Park to the Hensley-Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area, creating a 7,000-acre protected forest tract. They also connect the E. Lucy Braun State Park Nature Preserve to Kentenia State Forest, forming a 6,000-acre protected forest tract.

The new preserves are essential additions for the Great Eastern Trail (GET), the 1,800-mile hiking trail proposed to extend from New York to Alabama. These preserves fill in gaps between existing state lands and facilitate expansion of GET nine miles south toward Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and will enable the completion of over 50% of the Kentucky portion of the trail. GET is a vital part of the transitional economy of the region.

“Large landscapes of intact ecosystems are essential to the human and economic health of local, regional and global communities. Pine Mountain is one of the most biodiverse regions of the Commonwealth and is a place filled with natural beauty and natural capital. This acquisition is a major achievement that has strong support from our government agencies

and nonprofit and private partners due to the size, scenic beauty, biodiversity and connectivity to other conservation lands.” ~ Hugh Archer, KNLN Executive Director

KNLT purchased the land from Kentucky River Properties, a Lexington-based company that had held it for over 80 years. Twenty-seven individual tracts were purchased, comprising the largest and most complex land acquisition in KNLN’s history. The acquisition continues the cost-effective conservation work KNLN has been spearheading for over 20 years.

This conservation project was made possible through funding from the Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kentucky Field Office) along with ongoing support from the Forecastle Foundation, the Snowy Owl Foundation, Beckham Bird Club, Louisville Audubon Society, KNLN’s board, and a broad base of loyal donors.

### **About Kentucky Natural Lands Trust**

KNLT is a nationally accredited land trust working to protect, connect and restore wildlands, large forest tracts and migratory corridors. Efforts began in 1995 with the preservation of Blanton Forest, expanded to the Pine Mountain Wildlands Corridor, and now include a range of conservation projects statewide. KNLN uses a wide variety of tools to conserve natural areas and to work with forest landowners. Through partnerships with government agencies, nonprofits, corporations and private individuals, KNLN has protected over 13,000 acres of wildlands and assisted with protecting an additional 34,000 acres. For more information on how you can help KNLN protect wildlands, visit [www.KNLN.org](http://www.KNLN.org).