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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kentucky Natural Lands Trust Expands Warbler Ridge to Over 3,200 Acres**

**Berea, KY** September 27, 2023 – Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (KNLT) protected more wildlands on Pine Mountain through a land purchase in Harlan County. The 42-acre John L. Creech addition expands the Warbler Ridge Preserve to 3,236 acres, protecting forested habitat at the headwaters of the Cumberland River.

*"The John L. Creech heirs are grateful to KNLT for working with us to add our family's land to the Warbler Ridge Preserve. Many of us loved exploring nature in childhood, and still do today," said Elaine Hewitt. "Preserving this rugged unspoiled mountain land with majestic old trees and sparkling streams as habitat for the plants, birds, animals and insects we grew up with will help ensure that new generations will be able to experience and enjoy their beauty too, just as we, our parents and grandparents did."*

The John L. Creech addition will help safeguard the headwaters of the Cumberland River, a source of drinking water for many communities and part of the most biodiverse temperate freshwater ecosystem on Earth.

KNLT's Warbler Ridge Preserve connects several state lands to form nearly 9,000 acres of contiguous wildlands. It's also planned to include a portion of the Great Eastern Trail, a contemporary to the Appalachian Trail, making it an important addition to the emerging outdoor economy of Eastern Kentucky.

For more than 25 years, KNLT has safeguarded wildlands along Pine Mountain, a biodiverse and climate resilient landscapes in Central Appalachia. The mountain is home to thousands of species of plants and animals, many of them rare or endangered. Throughout its history, KNLT has worked with landowners and local communities to conserve this wildlands corridor.

We're grateful for the support of individual donors, foundations, and partners. We thank the James Graham Brown Foundation and the Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kentucky Field Office), for making this project possible.

**About Kentucky Natural Lands Trust**

KNLT is a nationally accredited nonprofit working to protect biodiverse and climate resilient landscapes in ways that benefit communities. Through partnerships with government agencies, nonprofits, corporations and private individuals, KNLT has protected more than 55,000 acres of wildlands throughout the Commonwealth. For more information on how you can help KNLT protect wildlands, visit [KNLT.org](https://KNLT.org).