

3000 Acres Protected on the Cumberland Plateau

In addition to the record-breaking number of conservation easements donated by generous Tennessee landowners in 2007, on February 12, 2008, The Land Trust for Tennessee completed an exciting four-year effort to purchase and permanently protect Lost and Champion Coves. This prize land on the South Cumberland Plateau could only be saved through a purchase.

The Coves are adjacent to the 10,000 acre Domain of the University of the South and extend to the boundary of privately held land at the bottom of Lost Cove. The Land Trust will hold a perpetual conservation easement on the land and will monitor to be sure that the land stays protected. The property will be owned and managed by the University as an outdoor academic laboratory and for recreation—making the University campus now total 13,000 acres.

These Coves have significant conservation values and history. The opportunity to link large protected tracts and create wildlife corridors of this magnitude come along rarely—this 3,000 acre tract connects the Domain to the 8,000 acre Franklin State Forest and ties together two State Natural Areas, Buggy Top Cave and Natural Bridge



Photo Courtesy of Nancy Rhoda

The success of this effort would not have been possible without the leadership commitment of \$1.75 million from the Tennessee Conservation Heritage Trust Fund, a state initiative established 3 years ago to leverage important and urgent acquisitions. Their act helped to inspire early and significant gifts from the Benwood Foundation and the Lyndhurst Foundation with The Nature Conservancy. We all owe enormous thanks to these organizations.

And, for the final push to get to the total \$4.3 million needed for the acquisition, The Land Trust had the great fortune to be able to partner with Sewanee: The University of the South for the Lost Cove Campaign. In record time, the last and key dollars were raised. Major commitments by alumni and friends of both the University and The Land Trust, in conjunction with a grassroots effort among young alumni, raised gifts totaling \$1.2 million.

So many people made this special project possible, especially our friends at the University and the foundations who have supported this work. We would also like to mention the yeomen's work of Land Trust board members Julian Bibb and his firm Stites and Harbison, Gentry Barden, and former board member Bruce Dobie. Their commitment to the protection of this area is unparalleled and we are forever grateful.

On top of this purchase, three landowners with property that abuts the Coves were inspired to donate conservation easements to add to the protection of this area. We are all so appreciative of Lee Stapleton and John Adams along with **John and Melissa Goodson** for their gifts that enhance this magnificent area.

The Land Trust for Tennessee would like to thank all our donors and supporters that made the protection of the amazing resource possible.