

# HOW CAN PLANTS-PEOPLE IMPROVE BLUEGRASS LAND AND LIFE?

## Especially botanical life: a summary of problems, solutions and specific goals

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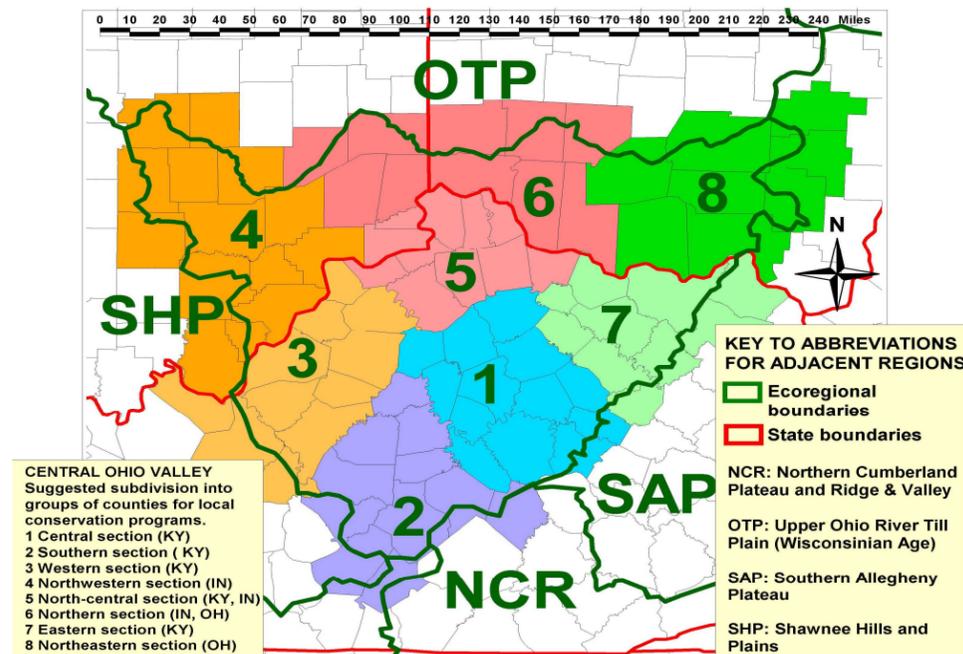
**Problems.** Before we begin to detail the urgent diverse needs for conservation of native flora and vegetation, we must address the need for better consensus-building and coordination among interested individuals and organizations. Although much land is somewhat protected, it has been difficult to develop mutual support for good restoration of worthy sites. Also, we need more agreement on which native species should be recovered; and how to fund alien reduction.

**Solutions.** Three ‘golden-rules’ could be applied.

1. Generate stronger *teamwork* through regular meetings, field trips and cooperative projects; focus on regional sections within the Bluegrass.
2. Outline clearer *targets* for conservation in terms of prioritized lands, habitats for restoration, and groups of species for micro-management.
3. Develop more careful *tradeoffs* among competing interests, based on good mutual understanding of diverse viewpoints and effective compromises.

**Specific goals based on ‘conservation targets’.**

1. Continue to refine priorities for the lands (and waters) that are most important to protect; improve public education about these lands.
2. Build consensus on definitions of native habitats and how to approach restoration; compare browsing, burning & mowing effects.
3. Build consensus on which species are most important to propagate for general plantings, and how to recover the most imperiled species.



The whole Central Ohio Valley could become a good region for coordination of local groups.



Remarkable glade at Griffith Woods: mysterious habitat seemingly maintained by wild herbivores.



The new “Kentucky Clover” is a highly endangered species, seems to depend on browsing or trampling.

**Examples of failures, wastes or serious delays.**

- TNC and UK give up on Griffith Woods—the best opportunity for large-scale restoration.
- TNC’s “master plan” for the Palisades to be “finalized in 2013” excludes some stakeholders.
- Lexington proposes \$1.25 million “restoration” in Coldstream Park with false information.
- State Division of Forestry sells invasive alien white mulberry, initially misidentified as “red”.

**Why have such solutions not yet been pursued?**  
 State agencies and The Nature Conservancy did engage in more transparent planning during the past, especially 1980-2000. But TNC’s ambitious ‘ecoregional planning’ was organized around regions that are too large and complex for the teamwork to be continued. We need a more local focus by ‘plants-people’ interested in local details, ideally involving a lot more education.

**Examples of how specific goals would help.**

- It is possible to design an east-west corridor across Harrison Co. through the Griffith Woods area, protecting farms, woods & wildlife habitat.
- From deeper reading and analysis of historical materials, concepts of the original vegetation can become better developed across the region.
- Some imperiled species such as the native clovers could be grown by garden clubs and individuals.