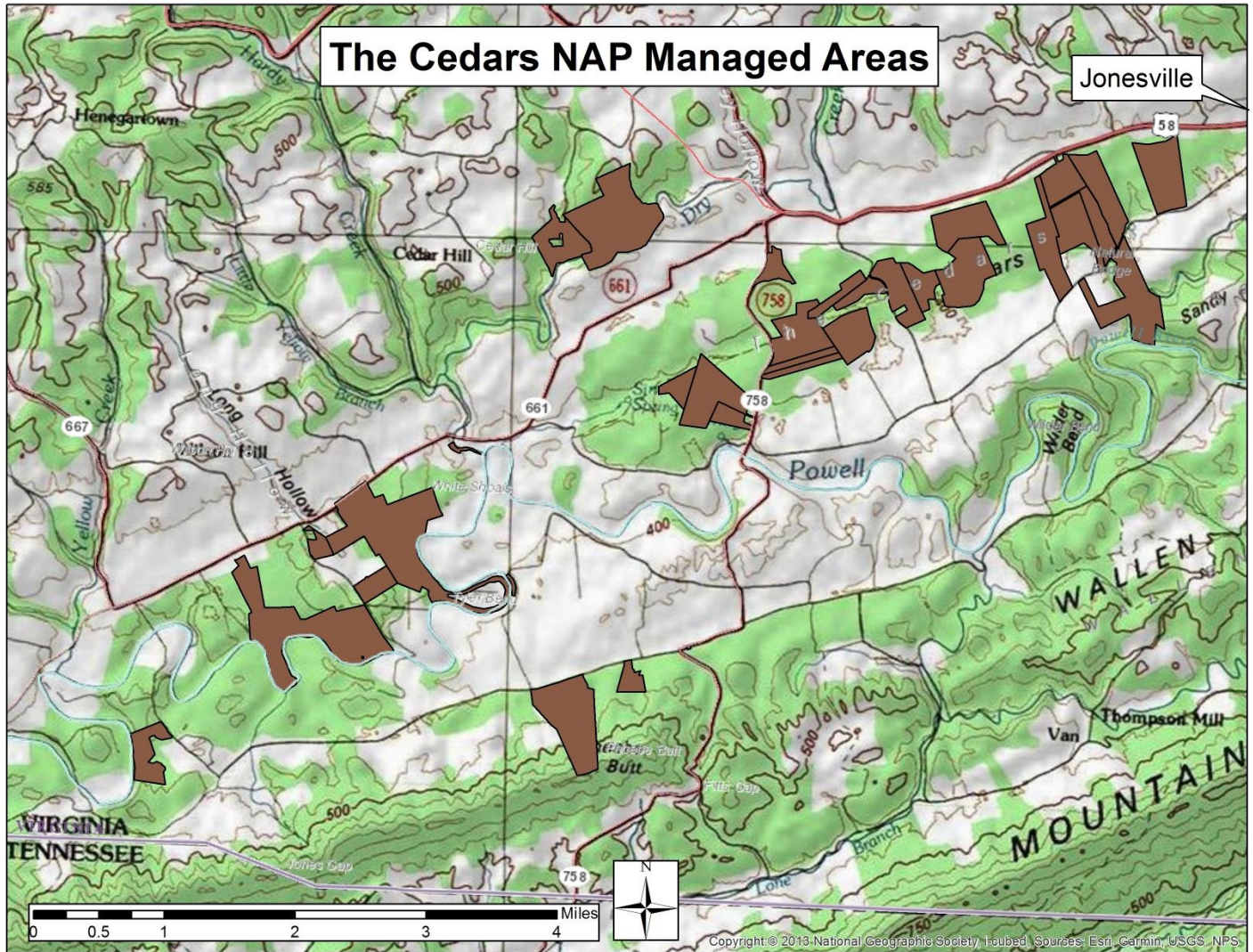
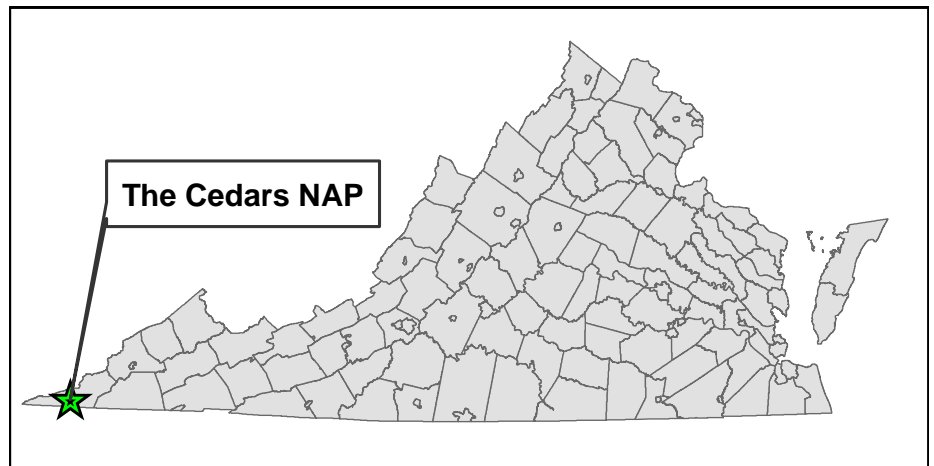


The Cedars Natural Area Preserve

2,315 acres - Lee County, Virginia



*Natural Heritage Program –
Conserving Virginia’s
biodiversity through
Inventory, Protection, and
Stewardship*



This information for The Cedars NAP also includes nearby Fletcher Ford and Unthanks Cave Natural Areas as they are located in the same local area and contain similar species and geological compositions. We manage these three Natural Area Preserves collectively as a unit.

The Cedars Natural Area Preserve

2,315 acres - Lee County, Virginia

The Site: The Cedars Natural Area Preserve protects an impressive karst landscape that supports one of the highest concentrations of rare plants, animals and natural communities in the state. The preserve is underlain by calcium-rich limestone bedrock, which is key to the presence of these rarities. The preserve has been acquired with funding from the 1992 and 2002 Virginia Parks and Natural Areas Bonds, the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, and other sources of conservation funding.

Natural History: The Cedars Natural Area Preserve is comprised of multiple parcels of land within an area that has long been referred to locally as The Cedars. The name is derived from the abundance of eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) growing on the thin-soiled rocky terrain characteristic of the area. Karst topography is a dominant feature of The Cedars. The landscape is laced with caves, sinkholes, springs, and sinking streams formed by dissolution of the area's water-soluble limestone and dolomite bedrock.

The Cedars supports 17 rare plant species and numerous rare animal species. Notable among these rarities are: the Lee County Cave Isopod (*Lirceus usdagulun*), an invertebrate animal known only from two cave systems and two springs in The Cedars area of Lee County; running glade clover (*Trifolium calcaricum*), a globally-rare plant first described in 1992, and found in only two locations worldwide (The Cedars area of Lee County and a much smaller disjunct population in middle Tennessee); yarrow-leaved ragwort (*Packera millefolium*), known from The Cedars and a few other sites in the Carolinas and Georgia; the cedar glade mimic millipede (*Brachoria cedra*), known only from areas in and near The Cedars; and the loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), a bird that is an uncommon nester in Virginia and whose population is declining precipitously throughout its range.

Rocky, calcium-rich soils high in clay create harsh growing conditions suitable for two natural communities rare to Virginia. The Dry-Mesic Calcareous Forest community is characterized by stunted hardwoods such as chinquapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*), white oak (*Q. alba*) and hickories (*Carya* spp.). Limestone/Dolomite Barrens occur in more extreme conditions with very thin gravelly soils atop limestone or dolomite and were historically maintained by a combination of drought, grazing and fire. They feature prairie grasses and forbs with widely spaced, stunted eastern redcedar.

Water resources in karst regions are especially vulnerable to degradation. The bedrock of The Cedars has many openings that range in size from narrow fissures to large sinkholes. Rainfall and surface water may undergo little or no filtering through soil before it becomes groundwater. Clean groundwater is essential, not only for human consumption but for cave-dwelling animals, most of which are quite rare. In addition, groundwater-fed springs flowing into the Powell River help sustain the delicate habitats of many rare, threatened or endangered animals, including mussels, amphibians and fishes.

Resource Management: Scientists continue to study the preserve's unique flora and fauna and are developing a preserve management plan. A prescribed burning program is being implemented to help maintain the limestone forest and barren communities. DCR and other conservation organizations continue to cooperate with surrounding landowners and local governments to protect the caves and water resources within and near the preserve, to restore water quality and conduct management activities that will favor the continued existence of the preserve's rarities.

Compatible Uses: Compatible uses include hiking, bird watching, nature study and photography. Some uses are prohibited including horseback riding, camping, off-road vehicles, and the collection of plants, animals or minerals.

Public Access: There are currently no public access facilities. The preserve is available for research and educational activities, and periodic interpretive tours are offered.

Location: The preserve is located in Lee County, southwest of Jonesville. The parcels that comprise the preserve are located between Jonesville and the Beech Grove community.

Natural Heritage Resources

Communities

Dry-Mesic Calcareous Forest (Southern Ridge and Valley / Cumberlands type) G4/S3?
Limestone and Dolomite Barrens (Southern Ridge and Valley Type) G2G3 / S1S2

Animals (partial list)

Gray myotis (bat) (*Myotis grisescens*) G2/S1 Federal, State LE
Indiana bat (social myotis) (*Myotis sodalis*) G2/S1 Federal, State LE
Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) G4/S1B/S2N State LT
Western sand darter (*Ammocrypta clara*) G3/S1 State LT
Slender chub (*Erimystax cahni*) G1/S1 Federal, State LT
Emerald shiner (*Notropis atherinoides*) G5/S1S2 State LT
Yellowfin madtom (*Noturus flavipinnis*) G1S1 Federal, State LT
Lee County cave isopod (*Lirceus usdagulun*) G2G3/S1 Federal, State LE
Thankless ghostsnail (Unthanks Cave snail) (*Holsingeria unthinksensis*) G2/S2 State LE
cedar glade mimic millipede (*Brachoria cedra*) G2G3/S2S3
Goatweed leafwing butterfly (*Anaea andria*) G4G5/S1
A cane moth (*Leucania calidior*) G2G4/S2
A cane moth (*Argillophora furcilla*) G3G4/S1S3
A noctuid moth (*Paectes abrostolella*) G4/S1S2
Elfin emerald (moth) (*Nemoria elfa*) G4?/S1S3

Plants

Wild Hyacinth (*Camassia scilloides*) G4G5/S1
Crawe's Sedge (*Carex crawei*) G5/S2
Mullein Foxglove (*Dasistoma macrophyllum*) G4/S1
Flattened Spikerush (*Eleocharis compressa*) G4/S2
Northern Rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) G5T5/S2
Pink Thoroughwort (*Fleischmannia incarnata*) G5/S2
Canada Bluets (*Houstonia canadensis*) G4G5/S2
Hispid False Mallow (*Malvastrum angustum*) G3G5/S1
Rattlesnake-master (*Manfreda virginica*) G5/S2
Yarrow-leaved Ragwort (*Packera millefolium*) G2/S2
White Blue-eyed-grass (*Sisyrinchium albidum*) G5?/S2
Tall Dropseed (*Sporobolus compositus* var. *compositus*) G5T5/S2
Small Dropseed (*Sporobolus neglectus*) G5/S1
Running Glade Clover (*Trifolium calcaricum*) G1/S1 State LE

For more information, contact:

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Natural Heritage Program: (276) 274-0173
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/>