

affirming women's professional rights that became state law. In 1881, 11 years after receiving her law degree from the University of Chicago, Ada Kepley was admitted to the Illinois bar. She continued to work for women's rights, and the couple added temperance to their list of social causes. The Kepley farm and its springs became a summer meeting



place for many local temperance meetings. With only the foundation remaining today, the farm's red horse barn was known as the Tabernacle at Kepley Springs. Ada published a collection of her essays and poems – many about the farm, nature and wildlife – titled "A Farm Philosopher" prior to her death in 1925.

The Illinois Department of Transportation acquired 290 acres of the property in 1968 for construction of Interstate 57. With only 10 acres needed for highway construction, IDOT transferred the remaining 280 acres to the Department of Natural Resources. Additional land purchases during the 1970's brought the total acreage to 371.

For 20 years, however, the land was virtually inaccessible. It wasn't until 1993 that IDOT transferred to DNR a 30-foot easement on the area's southwest corner, which provided a way for the public to enter the property. Then in 1996, the state partnered with the National Wild Turkey Federation to purchase a 174-acre tract immediately north of the original acreage, which allowed access into the area from a township road. The purchase also was significant for another reason – it marked the first time the state acquired land using the Illinois Habitat Stamp Fund.



**History**  
The land now known as Wildcat Hollow was owned in the late 1800's by attorney Henry Kepley and his wife, Ada, who in 1870 became the first woman to graduate from an accredited law school. Denied a license to practice law solely because she was a woman, she worked diligently for women's suffrage. Her husband supported her crusade and wrote a bill

The heavy forest provides habitat for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, squirrel, raccoon, fox and numerous songbird species. The creek and river, along with a small developed wetland, offer habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, muskrat and beaver.

where bedrock protrudes above the soil. The floodplain brings dogwood growing along the dry ridges and with shadbush, red cedar, hop hornbeam and forest features silver maple, sycamore and boxelder, root orchid and silver spleenwort fern. The floodplain

Three distinct forest types are evident – upland, ravine and floodplain. The upland forest consists of white and black oaks; shagbark hickory and occasional stands of pin and post oaks. Sugar maple, ash, walnut and basswood trees occur in the ravines, which also harbor many uncommon plants, including yellow trout lily, blue-eyed Mary, squirrel corn, putty

and wooded areas. Upland forest types are evident – upland, rolling bottomland featuring farm fields, grassland steep slopes. North of the creek, visitors will find gentle slopes. North of the creek, visitors will find gentle slopes. North of the creek, visitors will find gentle slopes. North of the creek, visitors will find gentle slopes.

**Natural Features**

Woodland that has long been appreciated by Effingham County residents is now an Illinois Department of Natural Resources habitat area. Wildcat Hollow State habitat area, located 15 miles south of Effingham and 2 miles north of Mason, is composed of 680 acres. Some of its oaks and sycamores approach state-record dimensions. Four designated parking areas allow walk-in access to the site's bedrock outcrops, springs and shelter bluffs.

**Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area**



**Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area**  
c/o Stephen A. Forbes State Park  
6924 Omega Road, Kinmundy, IL 62854 (618)547-3381

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. Please call ahead to the park office before you make your trip.
- We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember; take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to Department of Natural Resources, Clearinghouse, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, or visit our website at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us).
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217)782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other non-merit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resource Way, Springfield, IL. 62702-1271; 217/785-0067; TTY 217/782-9175.

State of Illinois  
Department of Natural Resources

**Wildcat Hollow**  
STATE HABITAT AREA

Wildcat Hollow



### Activities

■ *Hiking*—Wildcat Hollow is an undeveloped area that does not offer restrooms, picnic tables, campsites or other facilities. Hikers, however, will find a maintained 3.5-mile hiking trail, whose trailhead is at the south parking area. The trail winds past springs and among the bluffs common to the area. From one bluff, hikers can see the remains of the Kepley farm.

■ *Hunting*—The more open areas in the northern section provide some hunting opportunities for quail and rabbit. Among the species most pursued at Wildcat Hollow are deer, turkey and squirrel. Hunters are permitted to use only portable deer



stands, and stands must not damage trees. Please check DNR website for site regulations. The use of all-terrain vehicles and horses is prohibited.

### Directions

At the town of Mason, which is on Illinois Route 37, travel north on Main Street, which is also County Road 24. To get to the south entrance, turn right on the first crossroad after I-57 and continue until the road ends. Turn left on the gravel lane abutting the interstate fence and continue for 1 mile to the parking

area. To get to the north entrance, stay on County Road 24 to Road 550N, and then turn right. The first parking area is about ¼ mile after you make the turn and is located on the right. To get the second parking area follow the road until it makes a 90-degree turn to the north and park in the cleared area.

Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area is managed by staff from Stephen A. Forbes State Park, and on-site personnel are not present. For more information, contact Stephen A. Forbes State Park, 6924 Omega Road, Kinmundy, IL 62854 or phone (618)547-3381.

