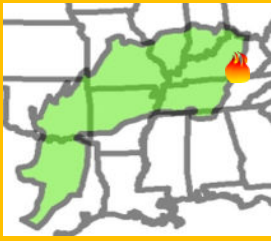


Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor—Pine Mountain

FIRE SCIENCE HOT SPOTS



In this feature, we bring into focus fire science on-the-ground

Located in the Cumberland Mountains, the Appalachian Highlands Wildlands Corridor includes Pine Mountain, a matrix of conservation lands along a 125-mile long ridgeline that stretches from Tennessee through Kentucky to Virginia. Named for the stands of pitch and Virginia pine found throughout its length, Pine Mountain is also home to the fire-dependent Hi Lewis Pitch Pine Barrens plant association (Pitch Pine / Little Bluestem - Indiangrass - Horseflyweed Woodland). See the NatureServe details about this community [HERE](#). Nearly 40% of Pine Mountain is included in different types of conservation protection, including state, federal, and non-profit ownerships (see a map of these protected lands [HERE](#)). [Kentucky Natural Lands Trust](#) (KNLT) manages 25% of these conserved wildlands and is a leader in this region-wide conservation effort. The south-facing slopes of Pine Mountain are home to a plethora of fire-adapted plant and animal communities, and prescribed fire management is critical to their continued presence.



Prescribed fire and mid-story forest thinning, along with unplanned wildfires, have maintained an open woodland canopy at Hi Lewis State Nature Preserve (top-left image). An abundance of fire-adapted plants occur on Pine Mountain, including yellow screwstem (*Bartonia virginica*), (inset, top-left panel) and rock harlequin (*Capnoides sempervirens*), often found associated with rocky outcrops (top-right panel and inset). Pine Mountain is one of the only locations in Kentucky where yellow wild indigo (*Baptisia*

tinctoria) (bottom-right) can be found, a host plant for the globally rare frosted elfin butterfly (*Callophrys inus*) (inset bottom-right). Additionally, American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) sprouts are fairly common on Pine Mountain, including individuals that live long enough to flower and fruit (bottom-left). Click on each photo for a full-size downloadable image, or view all [HERE](#). Photo credits: Heidi Braunreiter (fire, chestnut, screwstem, *Baptisia*), Harvey Tomlinson (butterfly), and OWFFC.

