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National Park Service

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 3, 2009
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Four New National Natural Landmarks Designated

WASHINGTON – A rare ecosystem in Pennsylvania, the sixth longest cave in Texas, and major fossil sites in Kentucky, New York, and Vermont were recently named National Natural Landmarks.

The National Natural Landmarks Program, administered by the National Park Service, recognizes significant examples of natural history and supports property owners and managers in conservation efforts. There are now 586 listed sites.

“Nottingham Park Serpentine Barrens, Cave Without a Name, Big Bone Lick, and Chazy Fossil Reef are the newest additions to the National Natural Landmarks Program,” announced acting National Park Service Director Dan Wenk. “Each of these sites has been identified, evaluated, and designated through a scientific process that formally acknowledges their outstanding biological or geological features.”

The Nottingham Park Serpentine Barrens in Chester County, Pennsylvania support unique vegetation communities that contain many rare and endemic species, including one of the northernmost occurrences of fame flower. The site also has one of the state’s largest stands of pitch pine forest.

Cave Without a Name in Kendall County, Texas contains exceptional cave formations, a rare and threatened salamander, and significant paleontological deposits.

Big Bone Lick in Boone County, Kentucky is unique for its combination of salt springs and associated Late Pleistocene bone beds. The site has been referred to as the birthplace of vertebrate paleontology in North America. The Big Bone fossils played a very important role in the development of scientific thought regarding the idea of extinction and the relationship of geology and paleontology.

The Chazy Fossil Reef in Grand Isle County, Vermont and Clinton County, New York contains surface exposures of an Ordovician fossil reef. The reef recounts the tropical, marine environment that existed approximately 450 million years ago on the continental shelf of North America. This paleontological treasure represents the oldest known occurrence of a biologically diverse fossil reef in the world, the earliest appearance of fossil coral in a reef environment, and the first documented example of the ecological principle of faunal succession.

Since 1962, the National Natural Landmarks Program has supported the cooperative conservation of important natural areas on private, state, municipal, and Federal land. The decision to participate in the program is completely voluntary and inclusion in the program does not dictate activity or change the ownership of an area.

A complete list of National Natural Landmarks and additional information about the program can be found at www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/.

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