Date: Wed, 26 Feb 2003 12:56:37 -0400
From: "Fike, B" <bfike@state.pa.us>
To: PABIODIV@webmail.upb.pitt.edu
Subject: PABIODIV: Natural Heritage Network website improvement

Greetings All,

Here is a recent piece of news from Natureserve - the international network of Natural Heritage Programs. For those who are not aware, the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) is the Natural Heritage Program for Pennsylvania, and we are a member of this international network of similar program sharing common data standards and methodologies and thus able to assess the status of species and natural communities across their range without regard for state, provincial or national boundaries. Their website has much more than what is described here, I'd encourage anyone who is interested to check it out. If you have any questions about PA's natural heritage program or Natureserve, please let me know!

Jean Fike
Chief, Ecological Services
Natural Heritage (PNDI) Coordinator
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

717-783-0383

1101 Wilson Boulevard, 15th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209
TEL   703-908-1800
FAX   703-908-1917
www.natureserve.org

PRESS RELEASE   FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 31, 2003
Contact: Rob Riordan, NatureServe, 703-908-1831 or rob_riordan@natureserve.org

NatureServe Website Adds County and Watershed-Level Distributions of At-Risk Species

Arlington, Virginia: NatureServe, a conservation organization that is a leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems, has launched a completely redesigned website that is a major biodiversity information resource for those in the conservation, scientific, and education communities. The new website, www.natureserve.org, includes the popular NatureServe Explorer (http://www.natureserve.org/explorer) web product, a searchable database offering detailed information on more than 50,000 plants, animals, and ecological communities of the United States and Canada. NatureServe Explorer now provides county and watershed distributions for more than 5,000 at-risk U.S. species-information never previously available online.

"NatureServe's new website organizes in one place our network's vast online data offerings. It's a rich trove of biodiversity data, particularly for scientists and natural resource professionals," said Dr. Bruce Stein, NatureServe's Vice President for Programs. According to Dr. Edward O. Wilson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Future of Life, "NatureServe has established an impressive record of accomplishments in the area of biodiversity information. There is no other information resource comparable to its authoritative database of species occurrences, compiled over 25 years by natural heritage programs."

Development of NatureServe's new website was made possible through support from the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII), which is coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey. Online access to county and watershed distributions was supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to greatly improved graphic design and ease of use, the website has a number of features that will make it a valuable online destination for the scientific and conservation communities, including:

*   A portal to the online data offered by the 76 natural heritage programs and conservation data centers in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America that comprise the NatureServe network. These include numerous searchable biodiversity databases, local, state, and province-level data on at-risk species, and extensive information on ecological community classifications [see Get Data http://www.natureserve.org/getData/programData.jsp].
*   Searchable databases providing conservation information for U.S. and Canadian plants, animals, and ecosystems [see NatureServe Explorer http://www.natureserve.org/explorer] and for the birds and mammals of Latin America [see InfoNatura http://www.natureserve.org/infonatura]. Distributions for at-risk species at county and watershed scales are now provided in text format; funding is being sought to provide the data through an Internet map server that can be directly queried and downloaded.
*   A monthly feature providing biodiversity insights and analyses through informative maps and charts. The first feature is a state-by-state view of U.S. species at risk [see Biodiversity Insights http://www.natureserve.org/conservation/usSpeciesatRisk.jsp].
*   Technical details of NatureServe's standards and protocols for biological inventory and information management, includingsystem diagrams and data dictionaries for the network's core data management software, Biotics [see Natural Heritage Methodology http://www.natureserve.org/prodServices/heritagemethodology.jsp].
*   Access to ecological classification and mapping work, including the U.S. National Vegetation Classification [see Ecosystem Mapping http://www.natureserve.org/prodServices/ecomapping.jsp].
*   A directory to the more than 800 staff working across the NatureServe network, with links to every natural heritage program home page [see Local Program Websites http://www.natureserve.org/visitLocal/index.jsp].

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NatureServe is a non-profit conservation group dedicated to providing the scientific information and tools that form the basis for effective conservation action. NatureServe represents a network of 76 natural heritage programs and conservation data centers in the United States, Canada, and Latin America that collect and analyze information on plants, animals, and ecosystems. NatureServe is a leading source for detailed scientific information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. Visit us on the web at www.natureserve.org.

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The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Listserve encourages open discussion about biodiversity issues in the state. It is hosted by the Allegheny Institute of Natural History, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and is moderated by the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership. The opinions expressed in messages are those of the authors and NOT the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership.