

POWELL RIVER PRESERVE
CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Claiborne

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Wheeler

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Ridge and Valley

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

ACREAGE: 15

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1995

DESCRIPTION: The Powell River Preserve is a 15-acre natural area located in Claiborne County bordering the Powell River. This small preserve occurs on moist calcareous slopes where wet seeps support large populations of state listed species. The most distinctive communities at the Powell River Preserve are the northern white cedar shrub community and white cedar mixed hardwood community. The shrub community is a discontinuous stand of shrubs and stunted trees that form a dense thicket around the rocky opening. The inside of the cedar stand is dark and the litter layer is of a "mor" type, often characteristic of conifers. Shrubs commonly associated with this rocky area include witch hazel, spicebush, fragrant sumac, and southern black haw. Trees in this community include hackberry, redbud, eastern red cedar, tulip poplar, chinkapin oak, and white cedar. Rare plant species that occur in the seep include shining ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes lucida*), maple-leaf alumroot (*Heuchera longiflora* var. *aceroides*), and grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia grandifolia*), along with more common species like cane, coreopsis, and false rue.

The seep area and white cedar shrub area are relatively small. Much of the natural area is a mixed mesophytic forest with oak species, white ash, red and sugar maple, buckeye, basswood, and tulip poplar. Chinkapin oak is the most dominant species at mid-slope, while tulip poplar is most prevalent on the lower slopes. There are also open areas down slope that occur on bedrock ledges where marl and loose stone create a medium that grows moss, parnassia, selaginella, sedges, and panic-grass. Barren species like little bluestem, sunflower, boneset, coreopsis, and goldenrods grow where soils tend to accumulate in open areas. Alder, cane, sycamore, Indian grass, and little bluestem occur in a riparian plant community near the river.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Division of Natural Areas, 401 Church Street, 7th Floor L&C Annex, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431; Division of Natural Areas – East TN office, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921, phone (865) 594-5601.

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