

**“The Breath of the South Blows Over This Valley”: Relict Species and Plant Migrations Over Time in
Arkansas**

Theo Witsell

Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

A number of the species on the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission’s list of Plants of State Conservation Concern (aka the State Rare Plant List) are species that are either removed from or on the extreme edge of their primary geographic range. These “disjunct species” are very often associated with specialized and/or rare habitats such as fens, acid seeps, riverscour grasslands, natural depression wetlands, bluffs, dry acidic woodlands, glades, prairies, saline barrens, mesic hardwood forests, and high elevations. The presence of these species in these places often indicates ancient connections with distant landscapes and species migrations over long time periods. This presentation will use specific examples to illustrate these connections and explore some of these unusual and interesting habitats and species.