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NEW HAMPSHIRE
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Photography, nature united

◆ Canterbury:

Environmentalist Kathie Fife discovered there was a market for all of the beautiful images she captured in the wild.

By ROGER AMSDEN

Sunday News Correspondent

CANTERBURY — Kathie Fife, whose entire adult life has been geared toward protecting the environment and preserving wildlife habitat, is continuing with that same sense of mission in her new career as a photographer.

The one-time executive director of SPACE, a nonprofit group devoted to current-use policies that help keep large tracts of land from being developed, she started her own company, Artemis Natural Resource Designs LLC, three years ago.

The initial focus of the company was natural resource consulting, specializing in botanical surveys and GIS mapping, making good use of Fife's background in horticulture and environmental conservation.

Fife had worked for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services as a technician for six years, starting in 1995, while consulting in the horticultural field designing and creating gardens using native plant materials. In 2001, when she earned her degree in environmental conservation from UNH, she backpacked the Maine Appalachian Trail with her dog to raise money to help build handicap-accessible ramps for the Elkins Public Library in her hometown of Canterbury.

She had visited half of the national parks in the country by 2005, when her interest in photography and graphic design led her to invest in professional design and photography courses and software.

She says photography is now the major part of her work.

"My company evolved from my love of photography and the growing demand from friends and townies who wanted to buy my work. I handmade photo cards and sold them at my local store. Sales were fantastic, and I was always asked to take more photos of specific places," Fife said.

She said she wanted to do more than be the typical handmade photo greeting card company so she added history and information to each card which are, of course, handmade



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Kathie Fife spent two days in sweltering weather to capture a photo of the Karner Blue butterfly, below left, on a wild blue lupine, below right. Both the plant and the butterfly are endangered species.



ROGER AMSDEN

The Karner Blue, an endangered species, is the official butterfly of the state of New Hampshire.

in New Hampshire on 100 percent recycled paper.

One of her most recent cards, which is also an educational piece of artwork, features two rare species, the threatened wild blue lupine and the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

Fife says it took her two long days in the hot, glaring sun, camera in

hand, waiting patiently for the small and evasive little creatures to sit still for just a couple of seconds, just long enough to get the shot she needed.

"I only had six shots left on my photo card and it was starting to look like it wasn't going to happen for the second straight day," she said.

"Then, right in front of my camera lens, a Karner blue butterfly landed on a wild blue lupine and just sat, posing just perfectly and looking right into the lens of my camera."

The Karner blue, the state's official butterfly, is found in New Hampshire only in the Concord Pine Barrens in East Concord, and depend on the wild blue lupine for survival.

Blue lupine, a member of the legume, or pea, family, got its name as the wolf flower because Native Americans thought that it wolfed up all of the nourishment in the immediate area in order to grow, Fife said.

Actually, it's the other way around, Fife said, as the lupine, like other legumes, puts nitrogen into the soil in order to promote its own growth.



COURT

The wild blue lupine is an endangered plant species and the sole food for Karner Blue Butterfly larva.