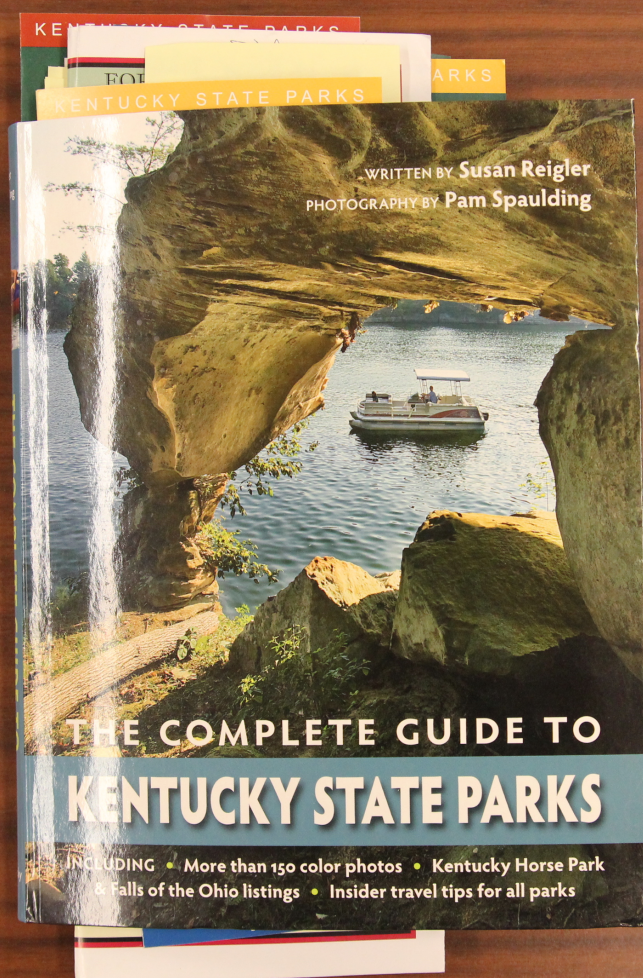




Written by **Susan Reigler**
Photography by **Pam Spaulding**

\$24.95

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

The Complete Guide to Kentucky State Parks is the one-stop resource for information on great places to view Kentucky's natural beauty, tour historical sites, golf, camp, fish, hike, backpack, swim, ride horseback, rock climb, and enjoy almost any other type of outdoor recreation. Whether you are a day tripper, weekend escapee, or weeklong camper, this unique guide is ideal for any one of the seven million visitors who enjoy Kentucky state parks each year.

Author Susan Reigler showcases all fifty-one state parks and historical sites, as well as the Kentucky Horse Park, the Breaks Interstate Park, and the Falls of the Ohio. The book contains vivid details and numerous lush photographs and is organized geographically to help with planning trips around the state. A comprehensive map is included for each region. For every park, the essential information is provided:

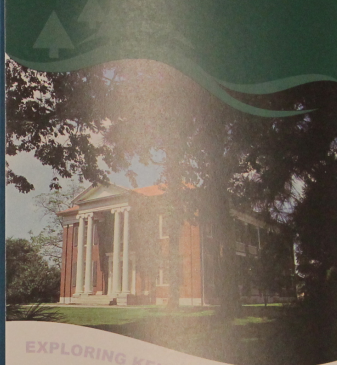
- Natural or historical attractions of the park
- Types of recreation available
- Camping and lodging facilities, museums, and gift shops
- Addresses and phone numbers
- Magnificent color photographs—158 in all

If you want to see the moonbow at Cumberland Falls, one of only two in the world, to listen for a ghostly bugle at Perryville Battlefield, or to explore the longest cave system in the world, let this book be your guide. Don't be without it when planning your vacation in Kentucky.

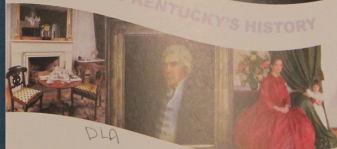
KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Waveland State Historic Site



EXPLORING KENTUCKY'S HISTORY



KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Kentucky
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EASTERN KENTUCKY PARKS 107

- Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park 110
- Carr Creek State Park 115
- Carter Caves State Resort Park 117
- Cumberland Falls State Resort Park 123
- Dr. Thomas Walker State Historic Site 128
- Fishtrap Lake State Park 131
- Grayson Lake State Park 133
- Greenbo Lake State Resort Park 137
- Jenny Wiley State Resort Park 142
- Kingdom Come State Park 148
- Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park 153
- Natural Bridge State Resort Park 157
- Paintsville Lake State Park 162
- Pine Mountain State Resort Park 166
- Yatesville Lake State Park 171

WESTERN KENTUCKY PARKS 175

- Ben Hawes State Park 178
- Columbus-Belmont State Park 181
- Jefferson Davis State Historic Site 184
- John James Audubon State Park 187
- Kenlake State Resort Park 193
- Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park 199
- Lake Barkley State Resort Park 204
- Lake Malone State Park 209
- Mineral Mound State Park 211
- Pennyrile Forest State Resort Park 215
- Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site 221

ADDITIONAL PARKS 225

- Breaks Interstate Park 228
- Falls of the Ohio State Park 233
- Kentucky Horse Park 237

Acknowledgments 243

Index 245

About the Author and Photographer 255

INTRODUCTION

BUCKSKIN-CLAD LONG HUNTERS (one who hunts for weeks or months at a time), dense woodlands that shelter bears, roaming herds of elk and bison, and wetlands where bald eagles perch in overhanging branches are all sights that would have been familiar to Kentucky's most famous early citizen, Daniel Boone.

Were Boone to return to the state today, he would find all these sights preserved and protected in Kentucky's state parks. Even his eponymous settlement, Fort Boonesborough, is still around, though rebuilt and moved a bit from its original site. And he might be tempted to take up golf or sailing, have a swim in an Olympic-size pool, or spend a warm summer evening outdoors enjoying a musical or a concert. The parks offer all these things, too.

Thanks to the foresight of Kentucky's citizens in the early part of the last century, the state's General Assembly created the State Parks Commission in 1924 and so began the preservation of unique scenic areas and important historic sites. It started with 4 parks. Today there are 52 if you include Pine Mountain Trail State Park, a 120-mile backcountry hiking trail under development, or 53 if you count the interstate park shared with Virginia. Together they constitute what has to be the best public "backyard" in the country.

They encompass almost 50,000 acres and include or are situated on the shores of almost 350,000 acres of lakes. They provide a combination of natural and historic preservation and recreation, from tiny Isaac Shelby Cemetery State Historic Site near Danville (only 0.25 acre, the resting place of the state's first governor) to Breaks Interstate Park (4,600 acres of rugged, forested mountain terrain covering parts of both Kentucky and Virginia through which the Russell Fork River has carved a five-mile-long, 1,600-foot-deep canyon). Hikers and backpackers will find 250 miles of trails to explore. Included in the system are many wonderful indoor assets, too, from graceful antebellum mansions to log meetinghouses. Kentucky classifies its parks in three categories.

Resort parks, of which there are 17 (more than in any other state), have lodges with dining rooms and cottages to accommodate visitors who go to

FORT BOONESBOROUGH STATE PARK

4375 Boonesborough Road
Richmond, KY 40475
(859) 527-3131
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/recparks/fb/>
153 acres

IF YOU ARE FASCINATED by the life and legend of frontiersman Daniel Boone, this should be your first Kentucky Boone stop. Not only is the fort here, but there is also a museum with exhibits on all aspects of Boone's life and career.

The replica of Fort Boonesborough, built using more than 10,000 logs, is imposing, the walls of the stockade rising high into the air. But it gives an impression of vulnerability, too, one that could well have been shared by the pioneer families who made their homes within the fort in the 1770s. It is hemmed in on three sides by the forest, and it is not hard to imagine the uneasiness its residents might have felt knowing that the walls had been built to protect them from both enemy British troops and hostile American Indians.

Numerous movies, television shows, books, paintings, and plays provide impressions of what life was like in Boonesborough. Thanks to the parks system, visitors to the fort can be immersed in the pioneer existence.

You can wander among the many cabins and other buildings where costumed interpreters, reenactors, and craftspeople toil away in an 18th-century mode from April through October.

Men and women are purposefully engaged in all the activities they would have needed to sustain themselves in the wilderness. The contents of iron kettles containing ash and lye are being stirred over fires. The result will be soap, not soup. Buckskin-clad carpenters and gunsmiths lean over their benches plying their respective crafts. Fabric is spun, woven on looms, and stitched into rugs and blankets. The fort smells of wood and charcoal smoke, and the residents themselves look as if they could use hot baths in the company of some of that newly made soap.

But the real residents would not have had to make quite everything. Although there was obviously no such thing as ordering up new outdoor gear from a favorite catalog, one of the buildings at Boonesborough contained goods from the Transylvania Company, the land and trading company founded by Richard Henderson that employed Daniel Boone to found

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Barron D.

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

H. Boone

Fort Boonesborough State Park

FORT BOONESBOROUGH

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Fort Boonesborough State Park

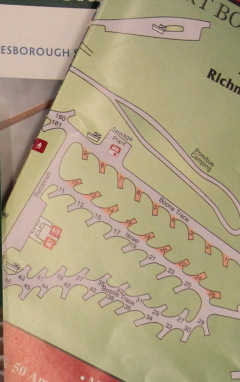


CAMPING • HIKING • FISHING • WORKING FORT • MINI GOLF



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1.800.255.PARK

FORT BOONESBOROUGH STATE PARK
4375 Boonesboro Road
Richmond, Kentucky 40475
Madison County
(859) 527-3131



- Miniature Golf
- Swimming
- Kentucky Riverwalk Trails
- Picnicking & Playground

Rules and Regulations
KRS 146.021, 146.051
others: 146.051

Use of the fort permits the use of one thousand sticks in campfire. The sticks must be cut to a length of 18 inches and a diameter of 1 inch. The sticks must be used in a fire ring or a fire pit. The sticks must be used in a fire ring or a fire pit. The sticks must be used in a fire ring or a fire pit.

Ground water and shall remain on the ground surface. If a person is found to be using a fire ring or a fire pit, the person shall be fined \$100.00. The person shall be fined \$100.00. The person shall be fined \$100.00.

Persons, if two (2) cars or two (2) RVs are provided. Campers may camp in the campground. Campers may camp in the campground. Campers may camp in the campground.

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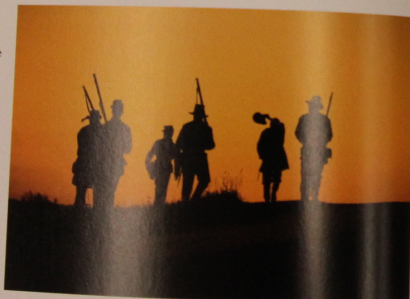
PERRYVILLE BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE

1825 Battlefield Road
Perryville, KY 40468
(859) 332-8631
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/histparks/pbl/>
669 acres

THE MOST IMPORTANT Civil War battle in Kentucky, the Battle of Perryville, took place on October 7-8, 1862. Even though the Bluegrass State had not seceded from the Union, slavery was legal, and regiments from Kentucky fought for both the North and the South. Lincoln was concerned that his native state could be lost at any time. Perryville was significant not only for the political fate of Kentucky, according to Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James McPherson, but also for the course of the war.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Confederacy would have won the war if it could have gained Kentucky, and conversely, that the Union's success in retaining Kentucky as a base for invasions of the Confederate heartland brought eventual Union victory.

Soldiers at a
ridgetop just
before the
beginning of the
reenactment.



KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Perryville

Barren River Lake
Sport Park

PERRYVILLE BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE

Confederate threat to the
piece of geography is
State Historic Site
seven miles of tra
describe the cou
hot summer
sional bird c

the account of the conflict, standing next to a Civil War monument. As you walk down the hill, you will imagine the explosions of men and horses.

Union Brigadier General William Terrill was in front of you, moving toward the Federal troops. To his surprise, thousands of Confederate troops were waiting Southern troops and the crescent hills.



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755 Ecton Rd. • Winchester

BARREN RIVER LAKE STATE RESORT PARK

1149 State Park Road
Lucas, KY 42156
(270) 646-2151 or (800) 325-0057
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/br/>
1,053 acres; 10,000 lake acres

THE BARRENS REGION of south central Kentucky got its name when the early settlers encountered vast stretches of tall grasslands (in other words, prairie) that extended over this part of the state. Since it was not covered in the dense woodlands to which they were accustomed, they assumed the soil was barren.

Far from being unproductive, the land was being managed by the resident American Indians, who preserved the prairie by regularly burning it. This practice maintained the grasslands for the herds of bison and elk on which they depended for food and hides. Today, the importance of agriculture in the region certainly demonstrates the inherent richness of the soil.

The wildlife at Barren River Lake State Resort Park is on a much more modest scale than bison and elk, though white-tailed deer are abundant. Keep your eyes peeled around your accommodation if you are staying at one of the lakefront beach cottages. You may glimpse a handsome little fence lizard (the male has a bright blue throat patch) darting up and down the exterior walls. Groundhogs are especially fond of the road culverts near the golf course. And at night in the summertime, you may hear the distinctive, haunting call of the chuck-will's-widow (a close relative of the whip-poor-will) just after sunset.

In contrast to many of the state's other resort parks, Barren River Lake is, appropriately, much less wooded and more open. Contemporary lodge rooms and cottages have tall windows that let in lots of sunlight. The lake, taking up almost 10 times the area of the parkland tucked alongside its eastern shore, dominates the park.

While it is certainly possible to spend quiet time here reading or socializing with friends in the spacious cottages or lodge rooms, Barren River Lake is a park for visitors interested in activity. There is a paved trail for bikers, as well as a couple of hiking trails. You can swim in the pool or at the beach. A marina serves boaters and anglers. And the park has an 18-hole golf course, as well as playgrounds and game courts.

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Barren River

Barren River Lake
State Resort Park

The native grasses
by the U.S. Army

A bench
lodge
Barren
Lake

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

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Kentucky
State Parks

BOATING • FISHING • SWIMMING • GOLFING • HIKING

DALE HOLLOW LAKE STATE RESORT PARK

6371 State Park Road
Burkesville, KY 42717
(270) 433-7431 or (800) 325-2282
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/dh/>
3,398 acres; 27,700 lake acres

SOUTH CENTRAL

THE THREE-STORY GLASS and limestone lodge at Dale Hollow State Resort Park is perched on a cliff hundreds of feet above the surface of the lake. From the water, especially at dusk, when electric light shines from its tall windows, the lodge looks like a futuristic castle standing guard over the islands beneath it.

You will find that the view of the water from those tall windows is wonderful, too. The dining room has floor-to-ceiling plate glass on three sides and a 37-foot-tall stone fireplace. Each light-filled room has a private balcony with lake views.

The lodge features excellent accommodation in one of the most contemporary designs in the parks system, but you may prefer to explore Dale Hollow Lake from the comfort of a houseboat. With more than 40 square miles of water and 650 miles of shoreline, it has seemingly countless inlets and coves you can float into and claim as your own for a few days. Tie up for the night, swim in the lake, and fall asleep to the woodland chorus of the multiple frog species that chirp and buzz after sundown.

The park is on the southern border of Kentucky, so much of the lake and portions of the larger islands you see from the lodge are in Tennessee. I once went houseboating with friends here, and every time we passed back into Kentucky from Tennessee, our patriotic Captain Ellen insisted we all stand and sing "My Old Kentucky Home."

The clear water and numerous inlets are also popular with anglers, both human and avian. Great blue herons are common. Dale Hollow Lake is one of the places in Kentucky where American bald eagles spend the winter.

Landlubbers will find much to do here, too. The park has about 15 miles of multiuse trails. If you bring your horse, there are some horse camping sites. If your visit time is limited, one of the most rewarding trails in the park system is the Eagle Point Trail, which winds gently, with just a couple of short and steep parts, to a bluff giving a view of the lodge to the right and of the lake and its islands straight ahead and to the left.

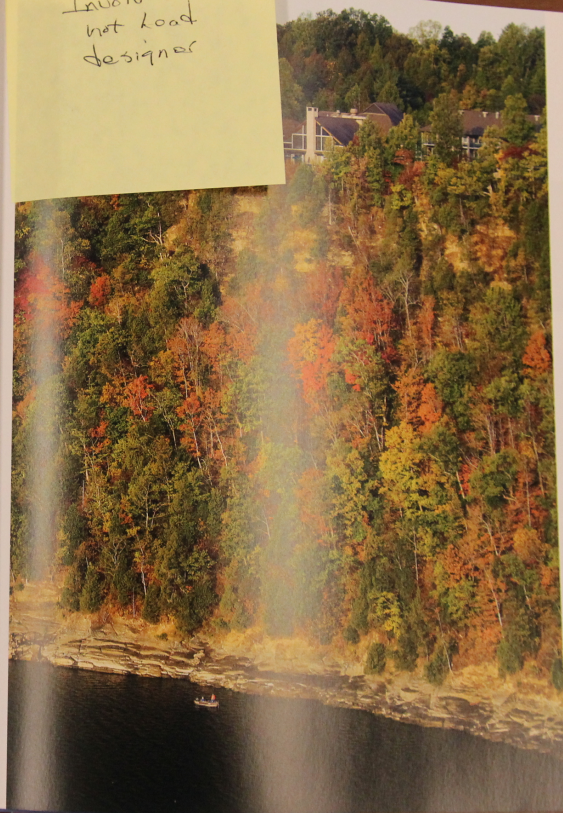
Facing page:
View of the
Mary Ray Oaken
Lodge from
the Eagle Point
Lookout.

86

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Buckhorn Lake
Dale Hollow Lake

Dale Hollow
Involved -
not local
designer



Kentucky
SUNSHINE BELT

90 DALE HOLLOW LAKE STATE RESORT PARK

ets, crayfish, and salamanders are among the residents. You can rent caving gear at the lodge desk.

Fishing and Boating: Dale Hollow Lake has yielded a big one that did not get away: the world-record smallmouth bass (1 ounce short of 12 pounds) was caught here. Other fish include bluegill, crappie, muskie, rainbow trout, and white bass. The park has a marina with a snack bar, dock, boat ramp, and 300 boat slips. Pontoon boats and fishing boats can be rented by the day. Privately owned marinas outside the park rent houseboats.

Golf Course: In addition to being X rated thanks to the amorous turkeys, the 18-hole championship golf course has been nationally ranked by *Golf Digest*. The design includes bentgrass tees and greens and zoysia fairways. It is very hilly, and its landscape challenges include springs, ponds, small caves, and numerous rock outcroppings. A new clubhouse, pro shop, and practice range opened in 2007.

Other Recreation: Picnic areas and playgrounds are located within the park, and various activities are scheduled in the summer.

Special Events: Eagle Watch Weekends (January–February), Road Rally (March), Geocache Weekend (April), Kids Fishing Derby (June), Dale Hollow 5-K Classic (August), Horsemen's Reunion (October), Beginning Caving Expedition (November).

MORE TO EXPLORE

The park is almost an hour and a half's drive from I-65, the closest interstate highway, so it takes some patience to get here. Luckily, there are many signs along the winding route that point the way.

A curious historical note: Close to the park, in Cumberland County, one of the first oil discoveries in the United States was made in 1829. Briny springs in the area were a source of salt; a well being drilled in search of saltwater hit oil instead, sending an impressive black geyser shooting into the air.

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Buckhorn Lake

General Burnside
Involved
not main
designer

AL BURN

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS General Burnside State Park

with the aid of a...
U.S. 27 crosses over the water of Lake...
park located entirely on an island. Ge...
at the far eastern end of the lake. A...
give you commanding views across...

And if the name Burnside is...
cessor of a bushy set of side-w...
Eponyms by Cyril Leslie Bee...

Ambrose Everett Burn...
generals of the Amer...
with the exception...
only one to have



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A mallard duck keeps watch over the floating cabins at the marina.

from the beach. Green River Stables, where you can hire a horse, is located next to the park; call (270) 789-4525 for information.

Special Events: Trick or Trot (October), 5-K Run or Walk (October).

MORE TO EXPLORE

The dividing line between the eastern and central time zones passes through Green River Lake. The park is in the eastern time zone, but the Lake Cumberland area, which is east of Green River, is in the central time zone. Confused yet? Just be aware that you might want to call ahead to a restaurant or other attraction to make sure you are arriving between opening and closing times.

Lake
Cumberland

Left

IT WAS a very quiet, early summer morning when the weekend crowds had left, and the wooded cottages overlooking the lake were deserted. From the wooden deck of one of the cottages, I saw a tiny, spotted fawn tumbling down the center of the cottage circle. Legs flailing, fur still shining wet, this little deer made the sound of an animal crashing through the brush taken off into the woods where it belonged.



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Kentucky
State Parks

situated incongruously on the floor of the tall hickory and oak forest that has grown up on what was once a homestead. The carving in the stone identifies this as the grave of two of Confederate general Stonewall Jackson's cousins.

FACILITY DETAILS

Gift Shop: The shop stocks books on the history of the Old Mulkey Meetinghouse as well as a selection of Kentucky-made crafts and candies.

Recreation: There are two picnic sites. One has a covered shelter, which can be rented for groups, and playground equipment. The other consists of tables in a tree-shaded area. The path to the Jackson family grave is 0.1 mile long.

Special Events: A handful of annual events include a cornhole tournament (October) and a Halloween celebration (October).

MORE TO EXPLORE

If you are interested in the history of the frontier in this part of the state, known as the Barrens, visit the South Central Kentucky Cultural Center in Glasgow, about 45 minutes' drive from the historic site. It has many exhibits on pioneer life in the region. The museum's Web site is <http://www.cityofglasgow.org/skccc/>.

SOUTH CENTRAL
SOUTH CENTRAL

Buckhorn

DLA



On a map, Carr Creek looks pretty close to Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park, which is actually 39 road miles away. This can take you an hour or so to navigate, given the twisting mountain roads. But that park does not have a campground, so if you are camping your way through the region and want to visit Buckhorn, Carr Creek is your best overnight option.

FACILITY DETAILS

Campgrounds: All of the 39 sites have utilities hookups. The large central building with showers, restrooms, and laundry facilities is well maintained. Open from mid-March to mid-November.

Fishing and Boating: A marina, which is not part of the park, is located across Highway 15. You can rent a boat there. Walleye, bass, and crappie are among the fish stocked in the lake. Marshy habitat along some portions of the lakeshore is unusual for this mountainous part of the state, and you may spot herons and ducks more often seen in flatter areas.

Swimming: Carr Creek's is the longest sandy beach in the Kentucky state parks system. Open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Other Recreation: There are picnic tables located in the campgrounds.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Carr Creek State Park is about 15 miles south of Hazard. It is worth a side trip to the town to see one of the most unusual buildings anywhere. The Mother Goose House is built of sandstone and topped with a green-shingled roof in the shape of a goose's head and back. The windows are egg shaped. This bit of architectural whimsy was completed in 1940. Since it is a private home, you cannot tour it, but it is a great photo op. For more information, go to <http://www.hazardkentucky.com/more/goose.htm>.

Cumberland Falls State Park

Carter Caves State Park

collaborative

ES STATE RESORT PARK

A Carter Caves State Park, and if you have never been in a cave before, the tours here provide a splendid introduction to the underground world. Guided tours of four caves are offered. Cascade Cave and X Cave are open year-round. Tours of Saltpetre Cave and Bat Cave are added in the summer. Experienced spelunkers can get permits to explore several of the park's other caverns, too.

The tour of Cascade Cave begins with a slightly Gothic touch. Your guide will open a creaking metal door set in the hillside and, with a wave of his flashlight, usher your party into a vast underground room. This is the Dance Hall, where, before it became part of the state park, the previous owner held regular dances. Today, visitors are invited to bring lawn chairs for summer evening movies.

There is plenty of headroom, but the ceiling is low in proportion to the space, and that makes it all the easier to spot some of the cave's inhabitants. The guide keeps an eye out for favorite roosting places, and a flashlight beam, skating across the nooks and crannies in the ceiling, often picks out a sleeping cluster of little bats clinging with their hooked claws to cracks in the stone, snuggled together for warmth. They are probably the common *Myotis lucifugus*, the little brown bat, explains the guide. But they could be *Myotis sod-*



The federally endangered Indiana bat is protected in a Kentucky state nature preserve within Carter Caves State Resort Park.

Other Recreation: The park has a 9-hole golf course with pro shop, an 18-hole miniature golf course, two tennis courts, and guided nature walks with the park naturalist. Picnic tables, grills, and playgrounds are scattered throughout the park. Two shelters are available for rental.

Special Events: Crawlathon (January), Pioneer Life Week with Revolutionary War and War of 1812 reenactments (July), Mountain Music Gathering (September), Haunted Trail (October).

MORE TO EXPLORE

The utterly charming Kentucky Folk Art Center is located in Morehead, about 40 minutes from the park. Its gift shop is filled with items made by many of the artists whose work is on display here. Go to <http://www.morehead-st.edu/kfac/> for a preview.

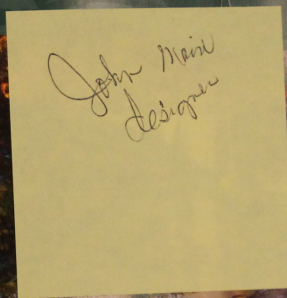
EASTERN

CUMBERLAND FALLS STATE RESORT PARK

7351 Ke
Corbin
(606) 5
<http://www.ky.gov>
1,776 ac

Cumberland Falls State Resort Park

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Zambe



HIKING • FISHING • WHITE WATER RAFTING • SWIMMING

Kentucky
UNBROKEN SPIRIT

www.parks.ky.gov
1.800.255.PARK

Exploring the
river just below
the falls.

JENNY WILEY STATE RESORT PARK

75 Theatre Court
Prestonsburg, KY 41653
(606) 889-1790 or (800) 325-0142
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/jw/>
1,498 acres; 1,150 lake acres

AS YOU FOLLOW the road leading into the park, you may notice a yellow and brown sign with three human outlines stenciled in black. Two of the figures are tall American Indian warriors. They flank the third, smaller figure of a woman wearing a bonnet, her long skirt almost reaching the ground. She is Virginia Sellards Wiley, whose story is one of the most harrowing in the history of the early American frontier.

On October 1, 1789, a band of American Indians from four tribes attacked the Ballard County, Virginia, log cabin where Jenny lived with her husband Thomas and their four children. Thomas was away, but Jenny's brother was in the home, and he and three of the children were killed. The pregnant Jenny and her infant son were taken captive.

Claimed by a Shawnee chief, she traveled for the next several months throughout eastern Kentucky with her captors. They killed her son because he slowed their progress. When it was born prematurely, the infant she had been carrying met the same gruesome fate.

For nine months, she was forced to work tending camps and planting crops for the American Indians, who tied her up when they went into the forest to hunt. On a rainy summer morning while camped at the falls of Little Mud Creek in what is now Johnson County, the American Indians set off on another hunt. Jenny purposely got her rawhide bonds soaked in the rain, allowing her to pry them loose and escape. She fled to nearby Harman's Station, where a party of long hunters protected her and escorted her back to Virginia.

Jenny and Thomas Wiley had five more children. They eventually settled in Johnson County, Kentucky, where Jenny died and was buried in 1831 at age 71.

A portion of the Jenny Wiley Trail, which stretches north through the mountains from the park named in her memory to Greenbo Lake State Resort Park, can be followed here. If you are a driver, not a hiker, the Jenny Wiley Scenic Byway loops along eastern Kentucky roads. The staff at the lodge desk can give you a map.

142

755 Ecton Rd. • Winchester

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Kentucky
UNLIMITED ADVENTURE

Jenny Wiley

Slides
DLA main
designer

KS
PARKS

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS
Jenny Wiley
State Resort Park

Sunset over the marina

Despite the
park. The
ing man
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company

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

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Kentucky
UNLIMITED ADVENTURE

143

FACILITY DETAILS

Campground: The large, wooded campground has 136 sites, all with utilities hookups. It is supported by a grocery store and three central service buildings with activities room, showers, restrooms, and laundry facilities. There is also a group camping area with special rates. Open year-round.

Museum: The Mountain Life Museum is open from April 1 to October 31. There is an admission fee. The park gift shop is located at the entrance.

Trails: Portions of the Wilderness Road and Boone's Trace make up 8.5 miles of two looping hiking trails.

Swimming: The park has a community swimming pool open daily from Memorial Day to mid-August and on weekends through Labor Day.

Other Recreation: Eighteen-hole miniature golf course, horseshoe pits, and volleyball and basketball courts. Picnic tables, grills, and playgrounds are located throughout the park. There are also four picnic shelters.

Special Events: Laurel County Homecoming (August).

MORE TO EXPLORE

The blacksmith shop in the Mountain Life Museum has bars on the windows, but not because it contains anything of special value that needs protecting. In 1955, some of *The Kentuckian*, starring Burt Lancaster in the title role, was filmed on location here. The little log building was used as a jail in one scene. The movie marked the film debut of Walter Matthau, who played the bad guy.

Natural Bridge
Campground
Dogs

NATURAL BRIDGE
STATE RESORT PARK

SPRING IS A FINE SEASON to visit Natural Bridge State Resort Park, located near Red River Gorge Geological Area on the edge of the vast Daniel Boone National Forest. That is when more than 100 species of wildflowers, delicate pink and yellow lady's slippers among them, bloom in the woods. In summer, flocks of goldfinches and other songbirds cover the hanging birdfeeders on the porch just outside the lodge restaurant. The park's sky lift is predictably popular in the autumn, when the cable ride whisks visitors up a steep mountainside for panoramic views of fall foliage.

But winter may be the best time of all to visit Natural Bridge State Resort Park. With the leaves off the trees, the rocky skeleton of the landscape is laid bare, and the dramatic sandstone arches, including the one that gives the park its name, are fully in view.

By far the busiest trail is the 0.75-mile Original Trail that



Pink lady's slipper blooms in May at Natural Bridge State Resort Park.

PINE MOUNTAIN STATE RESORT PARK

1050 State Park Road
Pineville, KY 40977
(606) 337-3066 or (800) 325-1712
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/pm/>
1,519 acres

PINE MOUNTAIN STATE RESORT PARK opened in 1924 as the system's first state park. Trails, shelters, and accommodations were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and many of these structures still serve the park, which combines a stunning natural setting with many annual traditions that have developed through its decades of operation.

Certainly the foremost of these is the Mountain Laurel Festival, held every May at the height of the flowering shrubs' blooming season. Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) is evergreen and so provides color against the rocky outcroppings of the mountains year-round. In May, June, and July, it blooms with clusters of oddly geometric little pink and white flowers,

shaped like squat Japanese lanterns when closed and resembling tiny inverted umbrellas when open.

Carnival rides and food, concerts, a golf tournament, and a parade are among the attractions in Pineville and the park. The climax of the festival comes with the crowning of the queen of the Mountain Laurel Festival, chosen from young women from colleges around the state who have been selected as festival princesses. The ceremony, on Saturday afternoon, takes place in the Laurel Cove Amphitheater, ringed by blooming shrubbery. Even more mountain laurel is carried in the



The queen of the Mountain Laurel Festival is given an elaborate laurel bouquet.

166

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Pine-Mountain Trail State Park

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KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Pine Mountain State Resort Park



www.parks.ky.gov
1-800-255-PARK

Visitors can ride an elevator to the top of the 351-foot-tall monument, the world's tallest concrete obelisk and the United States' fifth-tallest monument. The panoramic view from the top is more than fair.

FACILITY DETAILS

Visitor Center: Exhibits in the center recount Davis's life and career and the history of the Confederate States of America's association with Kentucky, including information about Confederate regiments that were organized in the state. A short DVD about Davis provides a good introduction to the site. Open from May through October.

Gift Shop: As you might expect, there are many Civil War–related products here, including flags, models, figurines, and even chess sets. Book selection leans heavily toward a southern perspective on the war.

Recreation: The park has two modern picnic shelters and a small playground.

Special Events: Jefferson Davis Birthday Commemoration (June).

MORE TO EXPLORE

For another aspect of area history, visit the Trail of Tears Commemorative Park, located in Hopkinsville, about 10 miles west of the Jefferson Davis State Historic Site. It is on a portion of land that is one of the few known campgrounds for the infamous Trail of Tears, along which, in 1838 and 1839, Cherokees were forced to walk from their homelands in the Carolinas to "Indian territory" in Oklahoma. Two chiefs who died on the journey, White Path and Fly Smith, are buried here. A national powwow takes place here every year on the weekend after Labor Day. For more information, go to <http://www.trailoftears.org/>.

John Jones
Audubon

AUDUBON STATE PARK

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS
John James Audubon
State Park

warblers dart about in the highest branches, while diminutive downy to the crow-sized pileated

This is just a snapshot of the bird life via Audubon State Park, encompassing more of the River. America's most famous wildlife area from 1810 to 1819. Its woods, blue studies and paintings of birds and

The park is located along a major road, and casual ornithologists are today the norm rather than the exception of bird life. A checklist available to the public, which Audubon would have seen as a threat to his work, allowed some new ones to be added.



KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

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187

Cottages: The five one-bedroom cottages around the recreational lake have working fireplaces. Numbers 101 and 102 have the best lake views. One two-bedroom ADA-compliant cottage of more recent vintage is also available.

Campground: Located by the entrance off heavily traveled U.S. Highway 41, the campground is not exactly bucolic. But it is shady, and campers using its 69 sites, all with utilities hookups, have access to a bathhouse, picnic tables and grills, and a playground.

Trails: There are eight, ranging from the 0.25-mile Museum Trail that loops behind the museum to the 1.6-mile Back Country Trail that involves a total of 3.3 miles of walking since you have to get to it from other trails.

Fishing: Fishing is permitted on the 28-acre recreational lake for catfish, bluegill, largemouth bass, and other species stocked by the state. No fishing is allowed on the 12-acre Wilderness Lake. It is strictly for the birds and other wildlife, including turtles basking in the sun on logs.

Recreation: Nine-hole golf course, tennis courts, picnic shelters, playground, paddleboats for the recreational lake in season.

Special Events: Bird Migration Walk (May), Creative Arts and Homegrown Music Festival (May), Monarch Migration Tag (September), Adult Artists Workshops (several times a year).

MORE TO EXPLORE

Richard Rhodes's excellent, award-winning biography, *John James Audubon: The Making of an American* (Vintage Books), is highly recommended reading if you want to know more about Audubon's life and times. To read the artist's own words, *Audubon: Writings and Drawings* (Library of America) is the best one-volume collection. Both are available in the park's gift shop.

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

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LAKE STATE

KENTUCKY STATE PARK

Kenlake
State Resort Park

tucky along which many stars were born. Y
preme every summer when thousands of
Park for the annual Hot August Blues F

For the better part of a steamy summer
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the stage reads, "Welcome to
Warning: The Blues Is Cont
catches a severe case.

At the end of each nu
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TENNIS • BOATING • GOLFING • FISHING • SWIMMING

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS
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1.800.255.PARK
Kentucky
UNDISCOVERED

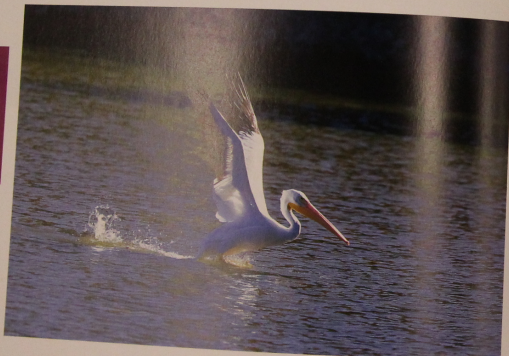
LAKE BARKLEY STATE RESORT PARK

3500 State Park Road
Cadiz, KY 42211-0790
(270) 924-1131 or (800) 325-1708
<http://www.parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/lb/>
3,700 acres; 57,920 lake acres

A CANAL CONNECTS Lake Barkley to Kentucky Lake, forming the largest engineered body of water on earth. Together, the lakes have just over 1,000 miles of shoreline and almost 187,000 acres of water. No wonder they attract birds migrating along the Mississippi Valley flyway. The presence of wintering American bald eagles in the area is well known. But on trips here in spring and fall, you will spy birds not commonly associated with Kentucky.

White pelicans stop off at Lake Barkley during their spring and fall migrations.

I was having breakfast in the lodge dining room on a clear, early November morning when I was intrigued to see a line of large white birds, wings edged black, flying in an undulating, single-file line over the lake. It was almost as if they were choreographed. Even their wings beat at the same



204

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KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

Kentucky
UNBROKEN SPIRIT

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KENTUCKY STATE PARKS
Lake Barkley
State Resort Park

TENNIS • BOATING • FITNESS CENTER • HIKING

www.parks.ky.gov
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Kentucky
UNBROKEN SPIRIT

WESTERN

the lakeshore.

President Andrew Johnson for his role in the conflict. They then returned to Kentucky.

After Machen's death, dairy farmer George Catlett owned Mineral Mound until he sold it to R. S. Mason, who also farmed on the site until just after World War II. The house that had survived a 19th-century artillery attack caught fire early on the morning of February 3, 1947, and burned to the ground. Only the overgrown ruins of the foundation, visible along part of the golf course, remain.

FACILITY DETAILS

Clubhouse: The handsome, three-story clubhouse was finished in 2007. Painted cheerful yellow with white trim and a green roof, it has wraparound balconies with views of the lake where you can sit and sip a soft drink after your golf round. The clubhouse is also equipped with a snack bar and a pro shop. Carts, clubs, and any other needed equipment can be rented here.

Fishing and Boating: A boat ramp off the parking lot gives access to Lake Barkley. There is also a fishing pier from which you can cast your line.

Other Recreation: There are a couple of picnic tables near the water.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Adsmore House and Gardens, billed as a living house museum, is about half an hour from the park, in Princeton. Home to several generations of a wealthy local family, the rooms change settings with the seasons to illustrate life here in the years between 1901 and the Great War. The Web site is <http://www.adsmore.org/>.

WESTERN

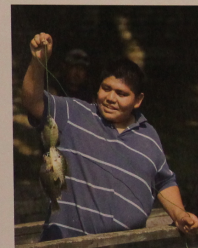
PENNYRILE FOREST STATE RESORT PARK

A member of the mint family (*Pennyroyal purgatorius*) is a member of the mint family. It grows in pungent, foot-high patches and is usually more noticeable by scent than by sight until late summer. That is when its slender stalks are covered with tiny, pale purple flowers. When settlers arrived in western Kentucky, pennyroyal grew abundantly in sunny fields and open areas of woodlands. So the region, now known as the Pennyroyal, was named after the plant.

Today, botanists classify pennyroyal's distribution as infrequent. One of the few places wildflower lovers can find it is along the Pennyroyal Trail in Pennyryle Forest State Resort Park. ("Pennyroyal" with a Kentucky accent becomes "pennyryle." Local pronunciation won out in the naming of the park.) And in some ways, the park resembles the flower.

Compared to other state parks in the region, Pennyryle is small and inconspicuous. It is nestled inside the 15,331-acre Pennyryle State Forest, and you have to make a point of finding it. The state has thoughtfully provided signs along the route from the Western Kentucky Parkway exit to the park entrance. It is the park's small scale that makes it especially appealing if you are looking for a quiet getaway.

The 24-room stone lodge and eight of the park's cottages overlook the lake, which is ringed on all sides by wooded hills. Beautiful any time of the year, the woods and water combination is especially striking in the spring, when the hills are painted with the deep pink and bright white of redbuds and dogwoods, and in the fall, when the mixed hardwood forest leaves blaze red and gold.



A young angler shows off his catch from the lake at Pennyryle Forest State Resort Park.

WESTERN

BREAKS INTERSTATE PARK

Kentucky/Virginia Highway 80
Breaks, VA 24607
(276) 865-4413 or (800) 982-5122
<http://www.breakspark.com/>
4,600 acres; 12 lake acres

The view from the Tower Overlook shows where the Russell Fork of the Big Sandy River carves out the Grand Canyon of the South.



228

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KENTUCKY STATE PARKS

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BREAKS INTERSTATE PARK 229



more than 100 kinds of songbirds, and you may very well see golden eagles riding the thermals above the canyon. Stay alert for glimpses of secretive animals when you are walking here. My one brief peek at a bobcat came on a visit to the Breaks.

There are several different overlooks at which you can stand to look down at the river or across the canyon to the water-ringed mountain formation called the Towers. It looms large in the Breaks treasure legend.

The story goes that in the 1760s, John Swift, a former English sea captain, abandoned his



Whitewater kayaking and rafting on El Horrendo rapids, a portion of the Russell Fork of the Big Sandy River.

ADDITIONAL