

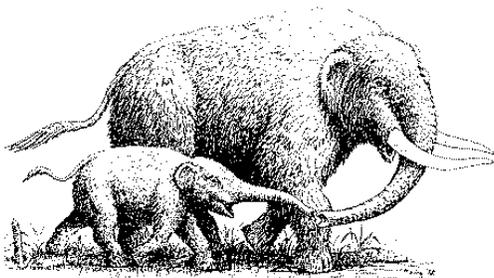
# Kentucky Vacations in your own Backyard

*Today there are more than 50 Kentucky state parks, including **Resort Parks** that feature lodges, cottages, restaurants, campgrounds and trails for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. There are **Historic Sites** that tell about Kentucky's history from prehistoric times to the days of the Civil War, Native Americans and the early pioneers. Many of these historic locations have museums or historic buildings that make great places for family visits. **Recreation Parks** feature campgrounds, picnic areas, swimming areas and trails. One park is an **Interstate Park**, shared with the Commonwealth of Virginia.*

State Parks are parks or protected areas managed by the states. Usually they are established to preserve a location because of its natural beauty, historic interest or recreation potential. The development of state parks in the United States generally paralleled the development of the U.S. national parks. The oldest state park in the United States is Niagara Falls, established in 1885. The first U.S. National Park was Yellowstone, established in 1872.

Until the development of parks in the United States, the great areas of land with natural beauty and historic significance had only been set aside for the wealthy, such as kings and noblemen. National parks and state parks reserved the lands for everyone. The parks movement began in the United States and has since been accepted and copied throughout the world.

During WW I, visits in Europe were closed to tourists from the United States and other countries. The theme, "See America First," was promoted as never before and concentrated on the beauty of the American landscape, especially those in the western states. The American scenery



Big Bone Lick State Park

The development of many parks date to the 1930s, when federal job creation programs, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration, assisted in the building of structures and facilities at many state parks. There are currently 6,624 state parks in the United States with 723 million visitors each year.

The Kentucky State Parks system maintains more resort parks than any other state park system in the United States. They include nearly 50,000 acres of land and water and attract more than 7 million visitors each year. Throughout the United States, the Kentucky State Parks

are known as “our nation’s finest.” Kentucky State Parks annually attract more people than Keeneland, Churchill Downs, Kentucky and Louisville basketball games and Bourbon Trail tours combined.

Words cannot describe the many points of natural beauty in Kentucky. The proposal to establish a group of well selected, widely distributed parks in Kentucky began early in the development of the parks. Serious intentions to federalize Mammoth Cave indicated a popular desire for outdoor recreation in Kentucky where physical uniqueness and natural beauty were found.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s Kentucky was experiencing growth of its cities and development of a state and federal highway system. Leaders of that time feared the loss of some of Kentucky’s most famous areas, such as Mammoth Cave and Cumberland Falls, to federalization or worse to industrialization and commercial interest. With these reasons in mind a well organized state-wide public park movement began with the creation by the 1924 Kentucky Legislature of the Kentucky State Park Commission. The three member Commission was instructed to examine all available park sites and to make recommendations to the 1926 legislature regarding those that might be suitable. The report was also to include how to secure the locations. No state funds were appropriated to acquire the sites. The locations would need to be acquired by gift or donations of money for purchase.

This program is not a travelogue or a tour guide full of pretty pictures or lists of places to stay or restaurants to visit. It is the story of people from diverse backgrounds, rich and poor, famous and totally unknown who often set aside their own needs to save some portion of Kentucky that they loved. Parks are meant to inspire, motivate, energize and educate. We want you to understand the activities and events that helped shape the Kentucky State Parks and recall memories of your visits to the parks with family and friends throughout the years.

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## Kentucky State Parks by Date of Establishment

1924	Pine Mountain Jefferson Davis Monument	1960	Big Bone Lick
1926	Natural Bridge	1961	Buckhorn Lake Kingdom Come Rough River
1927	Old Fort Harrod Blue Licks Battlefield	1962	Lake Malone
1931	Dr. Thomas Walker General Butler Butler-Turpin Cumberland Falls Old Mulkey Meeting House Levi Jackson	1963	Fort Boonesborough
1934	Columbus-Belmont John James Audubon	1964	Lake Barkley
1936	My Old Kentucky Home Perryville Battlefield Lincoln Homestead	1965	Barren River Lake
1937	Constitution Square	1968	White Hall
1938	William Whitley House	1969	Green River Greenbo Lake
1946	Carter Caves	1970	Grayson Lake E.P. Tom Sawyer
1948	Kenlake State	1971	Waveland
1949	Kentucky Dam Village	1978	Dale Hollow
1951	Lake Cumberland	1983	Taylorsville Lake
1954	Jenny Wiley Pennyrile Forest Breaks Interstate	1986	Paintsville Lake
1958	General Burnside Kincaid Lake	1991	Mineral Mound
		1992	Yatesville Lake Boone Station
		1997	Carr Creek
		2001	Nolin Lake
		2003	Fishtrap Lake
		2004	Wickliffe Mounds

# State Parks in Kentucky

**RESORT PARKS** — Kentucky offers a wealth of resort parks, each featuring a full-service lodge and dining room. Some have conference facilities, outdoor theaters or golf facilities. These excellent facilities are responsible for the Kentucky park reputation as "the nation's finest state park system." Kentucky offers 17 state resort parks, more than any other state. Many also offer cottages, campgrounds, marinas, swimming facilities, tennis courts and other amenities.

- Blue Licks
- General Butler
- Rough River
- Barren River Lake
- Dale Hollow Lake
- Lake Cumberland
- Buckhorn Lake
- Carter Caves
- Cumberland Falls
- Greenbo Lake
- Jenny Wiley
- Natural Bridge
- Pine Mountain
- Kenlake
- Kentucky Dam Village
- Lake Barkley
- Pennyrile Forest

**HISTORIC SITES** — State Historic Sites or State Historic Parks are where Kentucky's unique and colorful history and heritage comes alive. Some State Historic Sites are known as Historic Homes. You can also visit many of the State Resort Parks and the State Recreation Parks, many which have their own history to tell. Kentucky offers 11 State Historic Sites.

- Boone Station
- Butler-Turpin House
- Constitution Square
- Perryville Battlefield
- Waveland
- White Hall
- William Whitney House
- Old Mulkey Meeting House
- Dr. Thomas Walker Home
- Jefferson Davis Memorial
- Wickliffe Mounds

**RECREATION PARKS** — The Kentucky State Parks system operates Recreation Parks that offer a variety of activities for visitors. Whether you have a few hours, a day or a week to spend, you can visit these parks and enjoy camping, fishing, golf, boating, hiking, picnicking, tennis, mini-golf, horseback riding, historic sites and much, much more. The Kentucky State Parks operate 22 recreation parks. Many of these Recreation Parks also offer significant historic and cultural backgrounds and resources. These are noted with an asterisk\*.

- Big Bone Lick \*
- E.P. Tom Sawyer
- Fort Boonesborough \*
- Kincaid Lake
- Lincoln Homestead \*
- My Old Kentucky Home \*
- Nolin Lake
- Old Fort Harrod \*
- Taylorsville Lake
- General Burnside
- Green River Lake
- Carr Creek
- Fishtrap Lake
- Grayson Lake
- Kingdom Come
- Levi Jackson Wilderness Road \*
- Paintsville Lake
- Yatesville Lake
- Columbus-Belmont \*
- John James Audubon\*
- Lake Malone
- Mineral Mound\*

**INTERSTATE PARK** — An immense gorge, largest east of the Mississippi River, lies across both Kentucky and Virginia. Kentucky shares this park with the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- Breaks Interstate Park