



THREE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS

The Kentucky Wildlands is home to three designated National Scenic Byways. The Red River Gorge Scenic Byway takes you past magnificent canyons and natural wonders. The Country Music Highway Byway passes celebrated cultural sites connected to our strong musical heritage. And the Wilderness Road Heritage Byway traverses the path laid out by Daniel Boone when he blazed a trail through Cumberland Gap.



Scan for more information on
our Three National Scenic Byways



exploreKYwildlands.com

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THE KENTUCKY **WILDLANDS** ADVENTURE GUIDE



exploreKYwildlands.com



READY FOR A LITTLE ADVENTURE?

Whether your dreams of adventure lean to scaling towering cliffs, hiking deep canyons, fishing mountain streams, cruising crystal-clear lakes, rafting whitewater, kayaking quiet rivers, off-roading or listening to some sweet bluegrass harmonies, you'll find them all in abundance in the friendly hills and hollers of The Kentucky Wildlands where the rich Appalachian culture, natural beauty and heritage flow.

Visit exploreKYwildlands.com for more information

WELCOME TO THE KENTUCKY WILDLANDS.

Journey where extraordinary adventures and natural wonders abound.

What Is The Kentucky Wildlands?

Beyond Kentucky’s bluegrass and bourbon regions lies a 14,000 square mile natural paradise. Spanning eastern and southern Kentucky, The Kentucky Wildlands is a largely unspoiled wilderness filled with ancient mist-shrouded mountains, old-growth forests, soaring cliffs, stone arches, pristine lakes and waterfalls, and its own history, culture, folklore and traditions.



Did You Know?

From Cumberland Gap to Levi Jackson Wilderness Road Park, you can trace the actual footsteps of Daniel Boone.



Abundant Natural Treasures Hidden in Plain Sight

From Lake Cumberland to the sandstone cliffs of the Red River Gorge, from hidden canyons in the Daniel Boone National Forest to the majestic Appalachian Mountains, The Kentucky Wildlands is home to an abundance of wildlife, terrains, wetlands, natural areas, waterways and highlands.

In fact, it is one of the most diverse ecosystems and unique regions on the planet, offering many of the same breathtaking views and natural wonders Daniel Boone first set eyes on when he crossed the Cumberland Gap more than 250 years ago. It’s still waiting to be discovered.



> Jaw-dropping natural wonders await your discovery in The Kentucky Wildlands.
- Cumberland Falls

What Our Nature Can Do for You

Since it’s been proven that getting out and immersing ourselves in nature has strong positive effects on our physical, mental and emotional health, there may be no better place than The Kentucky Wildlands for generating a great sense of well-being, along with some pretty unforgettable magical memories.



> Thrill to majestic mountain views from a new angle.
- Ziplining in Pike County

Legendary, One-of-a-Kind Experiences

There is no other region filled with so much boundless adventure, diverse outdoor recreational experiences, breathtaking beauty, Kentucky Trail Towns and scenic views, in addition to all the musical legends, Appalachian folklore, and unique traditions that originate only from The Kentucky Wildlands.



> Pine Island Double Falls

How Did The Kentucky Wildlands Originate?

Known more for its abundant natural resources, such as coal and timber, this region’s spectacular natural wonders, beauty, and wildlife, as well as its history, traditions and cultural attractions have long been overlooked and under the radar. The Kentucky Wildlands was created and launched as a regional tourism initiative by Eastern Kentucky PRIDE, Inc., a nonprofit organization to showcase and promote the rugged natural beauty and rich, cultural heritage of southern and eastern Kentucky.



For more information on the origins and founding of The Kentucky Wildlands



JUST WHERE IS THE KENTUCKY WILDLANDS?

In less than a few hours, you'll feel like a million miles away.

Explore a Giant Hidden Gem

The Kentucky Wildlands spans more than 280 miles wide across eastern and southern Kentucky, all the way to the West Virginia and Virginia borders on the east and the Tennessee border on the south.

The Kentucky Wildlands is within a few hours' drive from Louisville, Cincinnati and Nashville, and less than an hour away from Lexington and Huntington, WV, which means you can access this gigantic playground in no time via major interstates and highways.

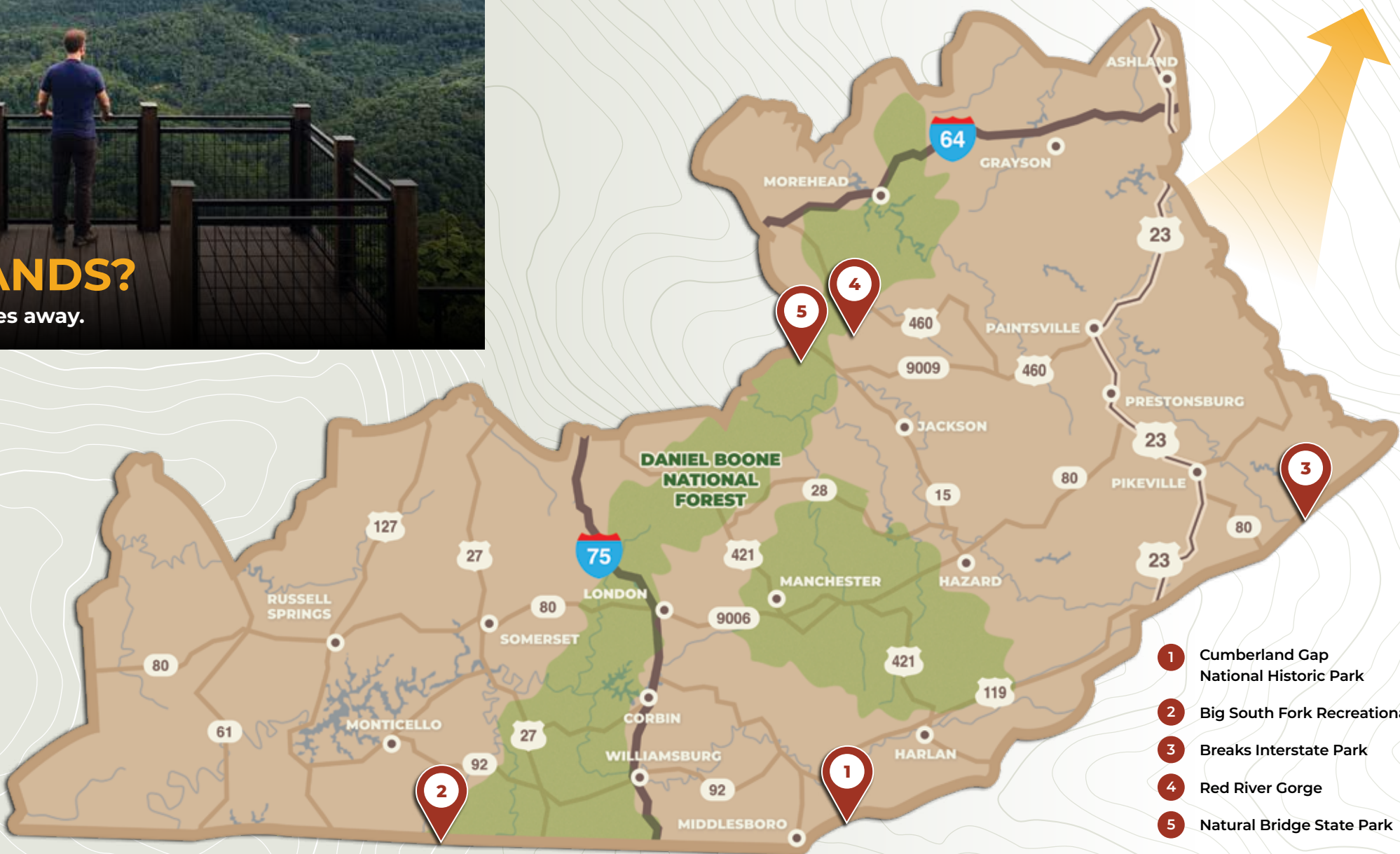
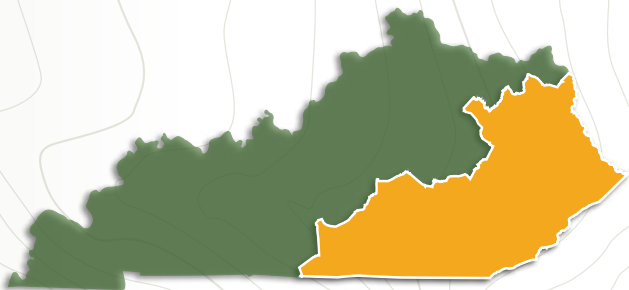
Did You Know?



The Kentucky Wildlands is larger than Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks combined.



> Scan for a more detailed interactive map of The Kentucky Wildlands.
exploreKYwildlands.com/plan/maps



- 1 Cumberland Gap National Historic Park
- 2 Big South Fork Recreational Area
- 3 Breaks Interstate Park
- 4 Red River Gorge
- 5 Natural Bridge State Park

280 Miles Wide



WE'RE A LITTLE RUGGED, A LOT LAIDBACK AND WAY MORE ADVENTUROUS.

In The Kentucky Wildlands, natural wonders elevate your fun.

Unspoiled, Untamed Wilderness as Far as the Eye Can See

When you've got so many amazing natural wonders right outside your door, it's hard to pick a favorite. Naturally, it's hard to top the ruggedly majestic Appalachians, some of the world's oldest mountains, for jaw-dropping beauty, spectacular views, hiking, climbing, caving, paddling, fishing, ATV riding, unique heritage and culture. You could also spend weeks in the immense Daniel Boone National Forest with its old-growth hardwoods, waterfalls, ravines, cliffs, abundant wildlife and 600+ miles of backcountry trails and never see it all.

Hidden Gems:



The massive Natural Bridge at Carter Caves State Resort Park
– Olive Hill

Chained Rock
– Pine Mountain *(great photo op)*

Kingdom Come State Park
– Cumberland, KY

Colorful Sand Cave
– Cumberland Gap

The Big South Fork Makes for a Great South Adventure

The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area sits in the most rugged terrain of the Cumberland Plateau where backcountry trails lead to secluded overlooks and mountain streams flow into the Big South Fork River, a popular whitewater rafting destination. Venture here for horseback riding, rock climbing, wildlife viewing and nature programs.



> Rock Climbing in Red River Gorge



> Natural bridges form sidewalks in the sky.
- Natural Bridge, Natural Bridge State Resort Park

More Stone Arches Than Anywhere in the Eastern U.S.

Tucked inside the Daniel Boone National Forest, the expansive Red River Gorge National Geological Area (The Red) is home to hundreds of natural sandstone arches and bridges, such as Grays Arch, Princess Arch and Rock Bridge, as well as towering cliffs and overhangs that are world-renowned to sport climbers.

One of the Red's largest, most popular arches is Natural Bridge, found in Natural Bridge State Resort Park. At 65 feet high and 78 feet long, you can either hike up and walk across it, or ride the Skyliift on an unforgettable mile-long journey up steep terrain over the forest canopy to the top for even more awe-inspiring views of nature's wonders.



> See the view that hasn't changed in hundreds of years.
- Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

A Legendary Passageway That Transformed a Nation

More than 250 years ago, native Americans, Daniel Boone and early pioneers made their way through Cumberland Gap where the Appalachian Mountains open to reveal a gateway into the vast 24,000-acre wilderness where Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia converge. Today, this legendary passageway to the West is home to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park with more than 85 miles of trails, the Pinnacle Overlook, an Appalachian living history museum and a stalagmite-filled cave that attract modern day adventurers.



> Sunset from the Overlook Trail at Breaks Interstate Park

Yes, There Is a Grand Canyon of the South

In the largest gorge east of the Mississippi, at the northern end of Pine Mountain lies Breaks Interstate Park spanning Kentucky and Virginia. This 5-mile-long geological phenomenon is an outdoor adventurer's paradise offering mountain biking, hiking, rock climbing, paddling, fishing, canyon rim ziplining, elk tours, birding, Class III - V whitewater and a water park.



Did You Know?



The Red River Gorge is considered the best place in the U.S. for overhung sport climbing.

TO MULTIPLY YOUR ADVENTURE, JUST ADD WATER.

In The Kentucky Wildlands, water makes an excellent playground.

More Than 800 Waterfalls Waiting to Be Discovered

Across the region, beautiful waterfalls lie in wait along forest trails or at the end of mountain paths. Follow The Kentucky Wildlands’ new Waterfall Trail to be rewarded with some breathtaking views.

A must see on the trail is Cumberland Falls, known as the Niagara of the South. If you happen to be there on a full moon night, you may catch the moonbow, a rare occurrence that happens only in one other place in the world. Then venture to nearby jaw-dropping Eagle Falls.

Hidden Gems:



- The freshwater jellyfish at Fishpond Lake - *Jenkins*
- The Wrigley Taproom - *Corbin*
- The underground waterfall at Carter Caves State Resort Park



Scan to Explore All the Falls on The Kentucky Wildlands Waterfall Trail

Some Pretty Tall Falls

Head to Yahoo Falls to see Kentucky’s tallest (113 feet) in the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. Just down the road you’ll find both the enchanted-looking Princess Falls and Deer Lick Falls.

In the Daniel Boone National Forest, a hike to Vanhook Falls rewards you with rock formations, bluffs and water that plummets into a sandstone cathedral. Flat Lick Falls, easily accessible for any age and ability offers unforgettable scenery.

> Awe-inspiring Princess Falls



> Sandstone cliffs and forest bridges lead you to breathtaking falls.
- *Bad Branch Falls*

Hidden Falls to Chase

At Pine Mountain, high cliffs and giant hemlock pines lead you to Bad Branch Falls. To experience the hidden fairly-tale like Grotto Falls at Grayson Lake, you’ll need a kayak, canoe or paddleboard.



> Spend a peaceful day gliding across a pristine forest-lined lake.
- *Sailing on Cave Run Lake*

Every Kind of Water Play

Learn to sail on Cave Run Lake at an ASA sailing school. Catch the amazing mountain views, cliffs and coves surrounding Grayson Lake. Swim, boat and tube on Yatesville Lake.

Smaller lakes, such as Wood Creek Lake and Dewey Lake offer breathtaking views, quiet getaways and excellent fishing opportunities.

Several lakes in The Kentucky Wildlands, such as Buckhorn Lake, Paintsville Lake, Carr Creek Lake and Lake Cumberland are located in beautiful state parks offering abundant recreational opportunities and campgrounds, as well as restaurants and lodging.

Did You Know?



Both Cumberland Falls and Eagle Falls are considered sacred to indigenous people.

Nothing Like a Day on the Lake

The unspoiled, scenic lakes of The Kentucky Wildlands naturally attract all kinds of water sports and recreational adventurers and offer unending fun for leisure boaters, jet skiers, wakeboarders, anglers, kayakers, paddleboarders and more.



> Paddling on Lake Cumberland

Your Place on the Water

The Kentucky Wildlands is home to the Houseboat Capital of the World, Lake Cumberland, with its hundreds of houseboat rental options. Pristine Laurel River Lake, a mecca for scuba divers, also offers houseboat and leisure boat rentals.

Bring Your Own Boat or Rent One

Many lakes in the region have full-service marinas with docking and launching facilities where leisure and fishing boats are available to rent, along with kayaks, canoes and paddleboards.



Check here for more information.





HERE, THE TRAILS AREN'T THE JOURNEY, BUT THE DESTINATION.

Better pack your free-spirited sense of adventure.

Find Your Own Path

From treks among the stunning sandstone arches, rock formations and cliffs that soar over the Red River in the Red River Gorge to the canyons of Breaks Interstate Park and the hundreds of miles of backcountry trails in the Daniel Boone National Forest, there are few hiking destinations that compare with The Kentucky Wildlands. In the Red River Gorge, trails range from easy walks (Silvermine Arch) and casual hikes (Rock Bridge) with incredible views to moderate (Chimney Top) and strenuous/difficult (Buck Trail) for more advanced hikers.

Hidden Gems:



Henson’s Arch Trail
- *Natural Bridge State Resort Park*

Dawkins Line Rail Trail – *Paintsville*

Prestonsburg Passage Rail Trail

Rockcastle Narrows Trail
– *Daniel Boone National Forest*

Local Honey – *London*

Amazing Trails, Amazing Views, Amazing Rewards

Turtle-shaped trail blazes mark the way on Kentucky’s longest trail, the 323-mile long Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail as it traverses through the Big South Fork National River & Recreational Area, Cumberland Falls, the Red River Gorge, Cave Run Lake, Laurel Lake and many wildlife areas on its way north through the national forest.

For an unforgettably breathtaking view, hike up to Pinnacle Overlook in Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, offering both easy and challenging routes to the top. The Wilderness Road Trail follows Daniel Boone’s actual route.

Cycling’s in Our Nature

Start in London, the Cycling Capital of Kentucky, for epic biking trails and scenic routes. Both Levi Jackson Wilderness Park and London-Laurel Wellness Park offer trails for all cycling levels, whether riding with the family or shredding some half-pipes. Cruise the town’s surrounding rural roads to take in even more natural beauty.

Peddle over jaw-dropping mountains on the 20-mile Sugarcamp Mountain Trail System and along a pristine lake on the Cave Run Lake Trail. Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, the Sheltowee Trace and Daniel Boone National Forest feature hundreds of miles of multi-use trails.



> Cyclist of all skill levels descend on Kentucky’s Cycling Capital.
- *London’s annual RedBud Ride*

Lakeside Riding at Its Best

Laurel Lake Trail is considered one of the best trails in the state, attracting mountain bikers of all skill levels. The trail winds through the forest around the lake’s shoreline offering awe-inspiring views of towering cliffs, stone arches and waterfalls.



> Bikepack into places less traveled on gravel and forgotten roads.
- *Gravel Riding in Big South Fork*

Gravel roads that go on for miles

Experienced gravel cyclists challenge themselves on Black Mountain Road’s doubletrack. The Limestone Loop in the Cave Run area includes the Sheltowee Trace Trail and a new singletrack section. Ride on 60 miles of gravel back roads, hills and farmlands in Lick Falls. In the winter, head to Indian Creek Road and Spaas Creek Road trails in Red River Gorge.



Trail Towns - Easy Access to Adventure

Center your hiking, cycling and outdoor adventures in The Kentucky Wildlands around one of Kentucky’s designated Trail Towns that connect trail users to spectacular natural environments and wonders from the Red River Gorge and Daniel Boone National Forest to Breaks Interstate Parks, the Cumberland Gap and Cave Run Lake.

These picturesque historic towns filled with charming locally owned shops and restaurants connect you to adventurous hiking, biking, climbing, paddling, horseback riding and off-roading trails, as well as local culture and events.

The Kentucky Wildlands Trail Towns: *Elkhorn City, Harlan, Hazard, Liberty, Livingston, London, Manchester, McKee, Morehead, Olive Hill, Pikeville, Prestonsburg, Royalton, Slade, Stearns*



Did You Know?



You can stand in 3 states at once on Tri-State Peak at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.



CATCH THE BIG ONE AND RIDE SOME WAVES.

In The Kentucky Wildlands, water sports are king.

Find Your Favorite Fishing Hole

Great fishing comes naturally in The Kentucky Wildlands, home to some of the world’s premier fishing spots and award-winning catches. From the cliff-lined shores of crystal-clear highland lakes and rivers to mountain streams and creeks, as well as fully stocked dams, this region is a year-round anglers’ wonderland. All you need is a Kentucky fishing license to get started. No pole? No problem. Many parks, such as Jenny Wiley State Resort Park have fishing loaner programs for checking out free equipment.

Hidden Gems:



- The Grotto at Grayson Lake**
- Fishtales Restaurant at Wolf Creek Marina – Lake Cumberland**
- Sailing on Spruce Pine Lake**
- *Hyden*
- Brent’s Catfish** - *Whitesburg*
- The Drive In** - *Olive Hill*

You May Need a Bigger Boat

Known as the Houseboat Capital of the World, Lake Cumberland is a mecca for houseboating and leisure boating of all kinds. Cruise the beautiful shores of the lake from a houseboat dinner cruise or rent a houseboat for a relaxing laidback day, weekend or week on the water.

Many lakes in The Kentucky Wildlands offer easy accessibility to the water and feature full-service marinas with houseboat rentals to suit any size group, as well as pontoon, fishing boat, jet ski, kayak, canoe, paddle board and tube rentals.



> Sunset over Lake Cumberland



> Scenic rivers with great flow offer paddling all year round.
- *Kayaking in Pike County*

Up a Creek with a Paddle

Launch your kayak or canoe from the banks of the Red River, Kentucky’s only National Scenic River. Lined with cliffs, caves and waterfalls, Grayson Lake is considered the best blueway east of the Mississippi for world-class paddling. Kayakers can also take a guided tour through a darkened mine in the Red River Gorge.

Advanced paddlers can put in on the Rockcastle River while flatwater paddlers can enjoy the serene waters of Buckhorn Lake, Wood Creek Lake and Green River Lake. Paddle boarders looking for more thrills can get up close to Cumberland Falls on the Cumberland River.



> Clear lakes, mountain streams and rivers are an angler’s dream.
- *Casting for the big one.*

Record Breaking Catches

If you’re into fly fishing, Cumberland River, particularly below Wolf Creek Dam, is one of the most popular trout fishing destinations in the world with state record catches for brown and rainbow trout. Cold water Hatchery Creek is another trout fishing paradise where you can keep up to five trout from the Upper Hatchery Creek section.

Dale Hollow Lake holds the world record for the largest caught smallmouth bass, and Dewey Lake is home to Kentucky’s largest caught musky ever recorded. Head to Wood Creek Lake for record-setting largemouth bass and to Laurel River Lake’s clear deep water for black bass and walleye.

Did You Know?



Lake Cumberland has 1,255 miles of shoreline, more than mainland Florida.



> Surfing on Lake Cumberland

It’s Okay to Make Waves

If you’re looking for thrills on the water, The Kentucky Wildlands is the perfect destination. The lakes and rivers throughout our region provide some of the most exciting and exclusive water sports adventures anywhere. Cause nothing beats the feeling of the wind and spray in your face while speeding across the glassy water of a mountain-ringed lake.

If your thrills lean towards waterskiing, wakeboarding, jet skiing, tubing or even wakesurfing, Lake Cumberland, Dale Hollow, Cave Run, Carr Creek and Laurel River Lakes are all great places to make waves.

> Marina, Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park



SOME ADVENTURES CAN ONLY HAPPEN IN THE KENTUCKY WILDLANDS

Up the Action a Notch

The Climbing World’s Best Kept Secret

Few places in the world equal the Red River Gorge, a world-renowned climbing destination, for its variety of sports climbs for climbers of all skill levels. Spectacular sandstone walls, overhangs, 100 cliffs and more than 3,000 routes continuously challenge climbers, along with iconic single pitch climbs, such as The Golden Ticket and Pure Imagination.

Exceptional climbing routes can also be found in the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. If you’re a beginning climber, Via Ferrata is the perfect place to start for climbing guides and instruction. For great bouldering, head to McKee or Campton.

Hidden Gems:



Miguel’s Pizza and Rock Climbing Shop – *Red River Gorge*

The Narrows of Rockcastle River for whitewater

Black Mountain Thunder Zipline – *Evarts*

H&M Stables for horseback riding – *Pikeville*

Go with the Flows

A great family introduction to whitewater rafting in Kentucky are the class II and III rapids of the Cumberland River where the run begins at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park just below the mighty falls. The class I and II rapids of Little Sandy River provide a 27-mile multi-day rafting adventure ending at Grayson Lake State Park.

The granddaddy of them all is the Russell Fork, one of the most challenging stretches of runnable whitewater in the U.S. With intense drops of more than 500 feet in 2.5 miles, rapids go from Class II to an exhilarating Class V, reserved for more advanced rafters.



> Pikeville Horseback Riding Trail

Take the Reins and Go

You’ll find some of the Appalachian region’s best horseback riding right here, starting with the Bert T. Combs Equestrian Trail and its miles of mountain and forest trails. Whisper Valley Trails in Beattyville and both Cumberland Falls and Carter Caves State Resort Parks offer guided trail rides, great for families and first-time riders.

Take Your Horse to Camp

You can even bring your horse along on your camping adventure by staying at one of several campgrounds and resorts, such as Barren Fork Horse Camp or Blair Creek Horse Camp & Resort.



> Raft to the base of Cumberland Falls.



Tear Up Some Dirt

Our breathtaking mountains, ragged peaks and rocky highlands make for amazing off-road shredding. Abandoned mine routes through forests and rugged trails make off-roading in The Kentucky Wildlands the place to satisfy your adventurous spirit, whether driving an ATV, UTV, Jeep or dirt bike.

A great stop for any rider is Mine Made Paradise Adventure Park with 43,000 acres of reclaimed coal lands. 7,000-acre Black Mountain Off-Road Adventure Park offers 150 miles of off-roading trails. Turkey Bay Off-Highway Vehicle Area is perfect for beginner and advanced riders. Four OHV riding districts in the Daniel Boone National Forest feature 150+ miles of scenic multi-use trails.



Did You Know?



Pike County has one of the largest trail systems for ATV and UTV riding in the U. S.

THE ADVENTURE KEEPS GOING IN THE KENTUCKY WILDLANDS.

Play and stay for unforgettable memories.

Take a Walk on Our Wild Side

It’s no surprise one of the world’s most diverse ecosystems is filled with abundant wildlife. But you may be surprised to know that the largest wild elk population east of the Rockies can be found grazing on reclaimed mining lands in The Kentucky Wildlands.

A great place to view elk, bear, deer and turkeys is near Hazard at the Jewel Ridge Wildlife Viewing Area. Elk View Drive near Hindman is a popular elk-viewing spot, while the largest elk herd can be seen from the South Fork Elk View near Jackson.

Hidden Gems:



Cascade Cave Tour
– *Carter Caves State Resort Park*

The Appalachian Horse Project
– *Jackson*

Dewey’s Bar & Grill
– *Jenny Wiley State Resort Park*

**Minor E. Clark
Fish Hatchery for birding**
– *Morehead*

See Nature from a Naturalist’s Point of View

Naturalist-guided wildlife tours to view elk and other wildlife are available through both Jenny Wiley State Resort Park and Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park.



> Viewing wild elk close up

Did You Know?



The oldest continuously played golf course in the country is Middlesboro Country Club, est. 1889.



> Teeing off at General Burnside Island Golf Course

Play Where the Hazards Are the Spectacular Views

Gorgeous courses surrounded by dense forests, majestic mountains and amazing views make golfing in The Kentucky Wildlands a one-of-a-kind experience. Nationally ranked, public, private and resort championship courses, as well as state park courses, such as General Burnside Island Golf Course, challenge golfers at all levels.

Tee Off from a Mountain Top

Challenge yourself on courses nestled deep in the grand Appalachians, such as Wasioto Winds Golf Course at Pine Mountain, Raven Rock Golf Course in Jenkins and StoneCrest Golf Course in Prestonsburg that sits atop a mountain. Play on Kentucky’s second oldest course, Stearns Heritage Golf Course, or at Historic Paintsville Golf Course, opened in 1929.



> Beautiful Raven Rock Golf Course

Go Primitive or Go Glamping

With all our rich natural beauty, forests, lakes and mountains, The Kentucky Wildlands is a camper’s dream destination offering many options for all kinds of camping, from primitive to glamping and RVing.

Our scenic state parks provide unique camping experiences ranging from peaceful and more laidback at Buckhorn Lake State Park to more adventurous featuring caves tours, rugged hiking, climbing and gem mining at Carter Caves State Resort Park. Many state parks have multiple campsites, such as Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, located in the Daniel Boone National Forest, along with Cave Run Lake and its nearly 400 campsites.

RVers have a choice of several RV parks in The Kentucky Wildlands, including Renfro Valley RV Park along the Country Music Highway and Lago Linda Hideaway for RV camping in Beattyville in the heart of the Red River Gorge.



> Kingdom Come State Park

There’s Good Reason Our State Parks Win Awards

From the crest of Pine Mountain in Kingdom Come State Park to the top of the Skyway at Natural Bridge State Resort Park, from the quiet mountain lake at Yatesville Lake State Park to the big water thrills of Lake Cumberland State Resort Park, The Kentucky Wildlands is home to 20 state parks that offer outdoor adventures and family fun for everyone.

Filled with pristine forests, lakes, rivers and streams, breathtaking waterfalls, mountain views and abundant wildlife, each state park offers something unique.

WE'RE BURSTING WITH MUSIC, ART, FOLKLORE AND CULTURE.

There's a creative renaissance happening in eastern Kentucky.

Legends Are Built on Dulcimers, Fiddles and Banjos

From Loretta Lynn and renowned banjo stylist Lee Roy Sexton to Chris Stapleton, there must be something in the mountain air for so many music legends and country greats to have hailed from here. So much musical heritage lies embedded in our hills and hollers that just driving down U.S. 23, the Country Music Highway conjures up the sweet sounds of mountain dulcimers and fiddles. Start at the U.S 23 Country Music Highway Museum for the stories of our celebrated country and bluegrass stars, then head down the road to The Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum for more legendary music history and lore. Pay homage to country music's queen, Loretta Lynn with a visit to her Butcher Hollow homeplace.

Hidden Gems:



Hindman Settlement School
– *Hindman*

15th Street Mural – *Ashland*

Masterpiece Café & Painted Cow Gallery – *Louisa*

The Appalachian Center for the Arts live show – *Pikeville*

Get Your Foot Tappin'

For unforgettable live musical performances, hit the Renfro Valley Entertainment Center or Billie Jean Osborne's Kentucky Opry in Prestonsburg. From the Paramount Arts Center in Ashland and Appalachian Wireless Arena in Pikeville to Summit on Main in Whitesburg, the towns and venues of The Kentucky Wildlands are creative havens and hotbeds for all genres of live music.



> Kentucky Music Hall of Fame



Mountain Arts Weave a Rich Tapestry

Stories come to life in many ways in The Kentucky Wildlands and are woven through the arts and handicrafts rooted in our rich cultural heritage. For generations, weavers, woodcarvers, instrument makers, quilters, painters, ceramicists, photographers and more have captured the spirit and resilience of our people and this special place.

One-of-a-kind museums, such as the Museum of the Mountain Dulcimer and arts centers, such as the Folk Art Center and The Appalachian Artisan Center in Morehead and the Godby Appalachian Cultural and Fine Arts Center in Cumberland feature the works of local and regional artists and makers.

Take a Piece of The Kentucky Wildlands Home

You can view or purchase the works of primitive, folk, contemporary, realist and abstract artists and crafters at our many galleries, studios, downtown arts districts, festivals and crafts fairs.



> Pick-your-own farms and orchards dot the region.

Experience More Local Flavor

Farmers markets throughout The Kentucky Wildlands showcase the locally grown produce and products that are part of our strong agricultural heritage. For a taste of local flavor, try the farmers markets in Ashland, Liberty, Manchester, Williamsburg or the Letcher County Farmers Market, Farmacy. Check out seasonal corn mazes and pick-your-own farms, such as Haney's Appledale Farm in Nancy.



Did You Know?



Middlesboro is the only U.S. city built inside a meteor crater.

THE VEINS OF AMERICAN HISTORY RUN DEEP IN THE KENTUCKY WILDLANDS.

Our past laid the groundwork for America’s future.

A Country Built on Coal

American industry and economic prosperity were built on coal as a rich natural energy resource embedded in the Appalachian mountainsides. Many of today’s charming mountain towns began as coal mining villages and centers located near mines. And today you can learn about and experience coal’s legacy here firsthand. Several museums, including the Kentucky Coal Mine Museum in Benham and Stone Heritage Museum in Pikeville offer exciting interactive exhibits and displays. You can ride a genuine rail car and experience life in a coal miner’s shoes at the Portal No. 31 Underground Mine Tour (Lynch), or visit Barthell Coal Mining Camp (Strunk), restored to its original 1902 state.

Hidden Gems:



Big South Fork Scenic Railway
– *Stearns*

Kentucky Mist Moonshine Distillery
- *Whitesburg*

Levi Jackson Mountain Life Museum
– *London*

Laurel Gorge Cultural Heritage Center – *Sandy Hook*

Giant Legends and Enduring Lore

Some of history’s most legendary figures originated from or have strong ties to The Kentucky Wildlands, beginning with Daniel Boone who blazed a trail through the Cumberland Gap to open America’s great westward expansion. Today, you can stand at the Pilot Knob Overlook in Cumberland Gap National Historic Park to look out on the same awe-inspiring view he himself laid eyes on back in 1769.

Trace Daniel Boone’s path along the Wilderness Road Heritage National Scenic Byway and on the trails in the Daniel Boone National Forest. Follow the path of another Kentucky legend, Colonel Harland Sanders with a visit to the very first KFC restaurant, the Harland Sanders Café and Museum in Corbin, and sample his original recipe fried chicken.

Did You Know?



The bitter feud between the Hatfields and McCoys raged on for more than 5 decades.



> The Hatfield Family

The World’s Most Infamous Feud

Tour the historic sites of America’s notorious generations-long feud on the Hatfield & McCoys Feud Historic Driving Tour through Pike County.

Looks Like You’ve Seen a Ghost

Between spooky legends, hauntings, ghost tours and Big Foot sightings, The Kentucky Wildlands has more than its fair share of mysterious tales and eerie lore.



> Portal 31 Coal Mine Tour - Lynch



> Middle Creek National Battlefield - Prestonsburg

The Civil War’s Sacred Grounds

Kentucky’s strategic location put it at the heart of a divided nation during the Civil War with brothers fighting on opposing sides of the conflict, honored at the Pound Gap Civil War Memorial and Brothers Once More monument on Pine Mountain. Kentucky’s first Civil War battle is commemorated at the Battle of Barbourville Civil War Interpretive Park.

The Mill Springs Battlefield, a designated national monument in Nancy and the Middle Creek National Battlefield in Prestonsburg are both preserved battlefield sites that provide interpretive centers and trails, as well as battle and encampment reenactments.

> Big South Fork Scenic Railway - Stearns



THE BEST KEPT VACATION SECRET THIS SIDE OF THE MISSISSIPPI

Plan your perfect getaway.

Unique Festivals You Won't Want to Miss

Authentic Appalachian culture and traditions are on full display at the wide range of one-of-a-kind, fun-filled festivals and events throughout the year in The Kentucky Wildlands. Plan a visit around some of the world-renowned festivals celebrating our heritage, such as Hillbilly Days, the Daniel Boone Pioneer Festival, the Moonshine, Music & Makers Festival, or the Mountain Heritage Festival. Music fans won't want to miss the chance to hear songs ring out under Appalachian skies at the Master Musicians Festival in Somerset, the Black Gold Music Festival in Hazard, the Bluegrass Festival of Renfro Valley, or the Moonshiners Ball in Livingston.



Explore All of the Events in The Kentucky Wildlands

Hidden Gems:



- Canopy Crew Treehouses – Red River Gorge
- Mine Made Paradise Adventure Park & Campgrounds – Leburn
- Bear Track Lake Cabins – Red River Gorge

Celebrate the Historic and Weird

Other truly unique festivals honor the Colonel's fried chicken legacy, beer cheese and wooly worms at the World Chicken Festival in London, the Kentucky Beer Cheese Festival in Winchester and the Wooly Worm Festival in Beattyville, respectively.



> World's Largest Frying Pan – World Chicken Festival



> Ride the Skylift to amazing views at Natural Bridge State Resort Park

Stay in a Natural Treasure: Our State Parks

Get away to one of our nine beautiful state resort parks, such as Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, Natural Bridge State Resort Park, Carter Caves State Resort Park and Jenny Wiley State Resort Park offering historic lodges and cabin rentals in stunning locations along with special amenities, restaurants and fun, family-oriented activities all year long.



> Polar Express – Stearns

Holiday Traditions Only Found in The Kentucky Wildlands

The holidays provide a special backdrop for a visit to The Kentucky Wildlands with many small- town traditions, festive celebrations and a heaping helping of southern hospitality on full display, from Fourth of July 4th Fest in Harlan to Christmas with the Winter Wonderland of Lights in Ashland and the beloved Polar Express Train in Stearns.



> Shelton Trace Adventure Resort Covered Wagons

Or Stay Somewhere Else Unforgettable

Cabin, cottage and yurt rentals with breathtaking cliffside, mountain or lake views can be found across The Kentucky Wildlands, from the Red River Gorge to the Appalachian peaks. Historic inns, B&Bs and home rentals dot the landscape, in addition to resorts and chain hotels.

More adventurous travelers can choose to stay in a real treehouse, or in one of the Shelton Trace Adventure Resort Covered Wagons, or even on a houseboat on Lake Cumberland, Dale Hollow or Laurel River Lakes. With campgrounds and RV parks tucked in the forests and alongside our many lakes and rivers, you're bound to find the perfect place to kick back and stay awhile.



> A Red River Gorge treehouse

Did You Know?



The Knott County Gingerbread Festival is home to the world's largest gingerbread man.