

TRAVEL TIPS for Persons in Wheelchairs

Kentucky Parks: Part II



A RESOURCE MADE AVAILABLE BY THE
KENTUCKY APPALACHIAN RURAL REHABILITATION NETWORK

Wheelchair accessibility of Kentucky parks and recreation areas

State Parks Covered in this Edition

1. *Fishing Creek Recreational Area*
2. *Fishtrap Lake State Park*
3. *Fort Boonesborough State Park*
4. *General Burnside Island State Park*
5. *Jenny Wiley State Park*
6. *Kingdome Come State Park*
7. *Lee's Ford Marina*
8. *Old Fort Harrod State Park*
9. *Paintsville Lake State Park*
10. *Pennyrile Forest State Park*
11. *Pulaski County Park*
12. *Rough River Resort State Park*
13. *Trail Water Recreational Area at Rough River*

The following park descriptions are meant to act as a guide for persons in wheelchairs, so that these individuals may more fully enjoy Kentucky's beautiful and diverse state parks and recreation areas. It is always recommended to call the park prior to arrival to check on current conditions and find out if any changes have occurred, especially if you plan to go boating or fishing as water levels can greatly change the steepness of dock ramps. Remember that even if a park does not have some wheelchair-friendly features in place, there are many tools that you can bring or make to help you to enjoy your visit— see Travel Tips edition 1 for ideas. Be creative, stay safe, and enjoy the great outdoors!



Key to the park descriptions:

| |
|---|
| Parking: Are there handicap-designated parking spots with adequate width and aisles? |
| Bathrooms: Do bathrooms have adequate door width, stall size, and commode height to accommodate wheelchairs? |
| Food/Drink access: Are drinking fountains and picnic pavilions wheelchair accessible? |
| Boating/Fishing: Is there a ramp to access docks? |
| Trails: Are any trails in the park wheelchair friendly? |
| Camping: Is there a concrete pad and/or paved camping spots available? |
| Lodging: Do park lodgings (hotels, cabins) have rooms designed to accommodate wheelchair users? |
| Pool: Is there a ramp and/or a chair lift into the pool? |

Y= Yes, meets ADA guidelines for accessibility **N** = Not designed for wheelchair accessibility
n/a = amenity not available at this park

***If you see an asterisk (*),** it means that accessibility may be questionable or requires further explanation; see the written description of the park, and call ahead to check park conditions.

TRAVEL TIPS for Persons in Wheelchairs

1. Fishing Creek Recreational Area

1611 Highway 1248, Somerset, KY, 42501 · (606) 679-5174

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y* |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y* |
| Trails: | n/a |
| Camping: | N |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

Fishing Creek is a small recreational area which offers camping, picnicking, and lake access. The camping area is accessible via a paved road with graveled parking for campers. The campground offers direct access to the lake; however, it is a steep ramp. A handicap designated parking area is adjacent to the picnic tables. The headquarters of the park are located at the entrance to the campground and are drive-up. Restrooms are available when the camping area is open; however they are located on a hill and may be difficult or require assistance to access. Lake access may also be difficult because of the incline of the ramp as well as the integrity of the floating loading dock. Calling ahead for lake level updates is a must before trying to board a boat or visit the beach at Fishing Creek.

2. Fishtrap Lake State Park (FTLSP)

2204 Fishtrap Road, Shelbiana, KY, 41562 · (606) 437-7496

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y* |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y* |
| Trails: | n/a |
| Camping: | n/a |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

FTLSP is a manmade lake with a dense forest and a beautiful mountain range located in Pikeville, KY. FTLSP also features an abundance of wildlife and a marina. Picnic areas and basketball courts are available to rent up to one year in advance. Most picnic areas are wheelchair accessible via concrete sidewalks, but others are not readily accessible due to creek crossings and large rocks. Calling in advance and asking the park attendant about the availability and accessibility is advised as muddy conditions may cause some shelters to be inaccessible. The marina is handicap accessible, but the parking lot has small to medium size pebbles covering it, which could cause propulsion issues depending on the type of wheelchair you own. Fishing, swimming, and boating are permitted and are some of the main attractions. Designated handicapped

fishing areas are not marked, but many areas on the bank have hard packed dirt/concrete surfaces that a patron could wheel on. These fishing areas are manmade by fishermen with few adaptations conducive to wheelchair accessibility. Have a friend scout the area before you wheel down and use extreme caution because each spot has varying difficulty.

3. Fort Boonesborough State Park

4375 Boonesborough Road, Richmond, KY, 40475 · (859) 527-3131

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y* |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | n/a |
| Trails: | N* |
| Camping: | Y |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | Y |

Fort Boonesborough Park consists of a main campground, overflow campground, boat dock, beach, picnic pavilions, pool and open grassy areas. The park offers a 10% campground discount for all individuals with disabilities. The two campgrounds are accessible, as well as the playground adjacent to the overflow campground, which has no barrier and mulch surfacing. The bathhouse within the overflow campground is the only one marked as accessible. Bathroom accessibility in the main areas of the park may be limited; plan accordingly. The small grocery store near the campgrounds is accessible with adequate parking, ramp, and door width. The interior of the store is spacious enough to accommodate wheelchair access. The putt-putt golf course near the grocery store is inaccessible due to numerous steps. Of two trails in the park, the Fort

Trail is the only one designed to be accessible to a standard wheelchair; use caution as it has a number of steep inclines. The parking and playground near the main office and beach are both accessible by ADA guidelines, with the playground having a grass surface. There is also an accessible picnic shelter, grills, and trash cans in this area. Up the hill from the beach is a pool with handicap accessible parking near the entry, a paved access ramp into the pool area and a concrete ramp that leads down into the water. A special feature of the park is the reconstructed fort with live reenactments of pioneer life; included with tour admission is entry into the museum. This historic fort tour is accessible, as is the first floor of the historic museum.

4. General Burnside Island State Park

8801 S. Highway 27, Burnside, KY 42519 · (606) 561-4104

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y* |
| Trails: | n/a |
| Camping: | n/a |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

General Burnside Island is a large park nestled on the shores of Lake Cumberland. Burnside offers many recreational opportunities with wheelchair accessibility. The campground within the park has paved slots for campers with paved roads throughout the area. The park offers accessible bathrooms, bath houses and several picnic areas. Boating is also an option at Burnside Island; however, use caution as lake levels can change the steepness of the ramp leading to the floating dock. Calling prior to planning an outing on the lake is recommended. For early season picnic outings, calling ahead to check restroom availability could be useful.

5. Jenny Wiley State Park (JWSP)

75 Theatre Ct., Prestonburg, KY, 41653 · (606) 889-1790

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y* |
| Trails: | Y* |
| Camping: | Y |
| Lodging: | Y |
| Pool: | Y |

This park is located in Prestonsburg, KY and is a very beautiful place to visit during each season. Jenny Wiley features an assortment of activities to partake in during your stay. You can visit Dewey Lake to fish, swim, boat, or even picnic for the day. However, if it is a relatively 'busy' boating day, the lake will shut down certain fishing areas, possibly including the areas that are deemed handicap accessible. Dewey Lake has ramps and piers that allow access boats, but due to the pier design, transferring to the boat may be difficult without assistance. The picnic areas are very accessible. Most are on flat ground, with grass and concrete being the surfaces you will encounter from your car. Dewey Lake also features concreted parking lots with large access lanes, concreted patio areas, and a relatively steep boat ramp that has guarding rails for safety. If

the lake doesn't spark your interest you can venture off to the private 9 hole golf course, which is relatively flat. Jenny Wiley State Park also has an outdoor theater that provides entertainment from June 12th through August 14th. The theater has its own handicap accessible row at the top of the theater and is very easy to wheel there because of smooth, flat, concrete sidewalks, and conveniently placed hand rails. JWSP offers many hiking trails and bike loops with each trail having a different degree of difficulty, length, and terrain type. Some trails feature gravel, dirt, concrete, and woodchips exclusively, but some trails have an assortment of each. You can read about each trail and terrain type before embarking on your adventure at the visitors' center or by reading the JWSP paper brochure to determine if you deem this trail appropriate for yourself. One unique opportunity that JWSP offers is a guided disability hunt put on by The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. This hunt allows handicapped persons the opportunity to experience the excitement of game hunting.



Image of Dewey Lake by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

TRAVEL TIPS for Persons in Wheelchairs

6. Kingdome Come State Park (KCSP)

502 Park Road, Cumberland, KY, 40823 · (606) 589-2479

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | N* |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | N |
| Trails: | Y* |
| Camping: | Y* |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

KCSP is located on the top of Pine Mountain in Eastern Kentucky near the Kentucky-Virginia border. KCSP has many attractions that show the real beauty of Eastern Kentucky whether it be the active wildlife in the area, mountains, or Little Shepherd Trail. KCSP features four mountain-top overlooks with two being wheelchair accessible via concrete and dirt trails. There are two large picnic shelter areas that are accessible and have portable restrooms at each site. The shelter areas are flat, with grassy, dirt, and concrete surfaces. KCSP also offers camping, a 3.5 acre fishing lake, and the Little Shepherd Trail. While not all camping sites are wheelchair accessible, if you request a wheelchair accessible site upon your reservation they will be glad to assist you. However, restroom accessibility is limited in this park so plan ahead before making the trip. The

lake is accessible and a beautiful place to spend the evening watching the sun set. Little Shepherd Trail could very well be one of the main attractions at KCSP. It's a trail that can be traveled in a car or transportation of choice while observing all the beauty surrounding you. The trail spans 38 miles going from Harlan to Whitesburg.

7. Lee's Ford Marina

451 Lees Ford Dock Road, Nancy, KY, 42544 · (606) 636-6426

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y |
| Trails: | n/a |
| Camping: | n/a |
| Lodging: | Y |
| Pool: | N |

Lee's Ford Marina offers many different opportunities ranging from lodging to boating. The marina offers accessibility to each of the different houseboat docks and marina shop. The ramp from the parking lot to the lake can be rather steep depending on lake levels, so calling ahead for current information can save some hassle. Lee's Ford offers a shuttle service for parking and transportation from the marina, at lake level, to restaurant or lodging at the top of the hill. Most amenities are easily accessible at Lee's Ford including the Harbor Restaurant, the marina, and docks. The pool is offered to lodging patrons; however the only pathway to the pool is via stairs with a hand rail. Overall, the park offers many different options for experiencing Lake Cumberland.

8. Old Fort Harrod State Park

100 S. College Street, Harrodsburg, KY, 40330 · (859) 734-3314

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y* |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | n/a |
| Trails: | n/a |
| Camping: | n/a |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

Old Fort Harrod offers picnic areas, a historic museum, an amphitheatre, a playground, and a view into pioneer life during the late 1700's. There are 2 available parking lots for visitors; neither of the parking areas are near the amphitheatre, picnic pavilion, or playground. The fort was reconstructed near the original site and is wheelchair accessible to enter and traverse the interior pathways. However, all of the cabins within the fort have at least 3 wooden stairs to navigate in order to view the different trades of the time period. Inside each cabin a person sits awaiting visitors to demonstrate various skills that were essential to survival during the 1700's: woodworking, blacksmithing, soap making, cloth weaving, etc. The historic grave yard is surrounded by a 3 foot tall stone wall that is only accessible via 3-5 stone steps. The temple

Abraham Lincoln's parents were married in was transported to the fort grounds, but has 4 stone steps to enter. Also on the grounds is a historic museum that is a two-story building. The first floor of the museum is accessible and presents information pertaining to the civil war era. The second floor can only be entered via a narrow wooden stairway and consists of a vast gun collection. The only accessible restrooms on the premises are at the museum. The playground is accessible by mulch and grass. Call ahead for details about reenactments.

9. Paintsville Lake State Park

1551 KY 2275, Staffordsville, KY 41256 · (606) 297-8486

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y* |
| Trails: | N |
| Camping: | Y |
| Lodging: | Y |
| Pool: | Y |

Paintsville Lake offers accessibility to many different options for recreation. The park consists of camping area, marina, playground, trails, picnic areas, viewing pier, and amphitheater. With so many options for recreational activities, the park has done a good job with making all the areas accessible for individuals in wheelchairs. The camping area has paved access to each site, with a paved slip for camper parking. Bathrooms around the area have handicap parking availability with access lanes and accommodative bathroom features. For those individuals interested in boating, the park offers an accessible loading ramp for lake access. The marina has a ramped entrance with a rather steep threshold, which may require assistance. The amphitheater is another option offered by the park. Patrons in wheelchairs are able to

propel on a paved surface to an accessible viewing area. Overall, this park offers many different options for patrons. There seem to be very few limitations or difficulties for individuals in wheelchairs around the park.

10. Pennyrile Forest State Park

20781 Pennyrile Lodge Road, Dawson Springs, KY, 42408 · (270) 797-3421

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | N* |
| Trails: | N* |
| Camping: | Y |
| Lodging: | Y |
| Pool: | Y |

Pennyrile Park offers campgrounds, 1 cottage, and 2 lodge rooms that are wheelchair accessible. The parking, pool, lobby, and restaurant at the main lodge are accessible for wheelchairs. The lobby is very spacious and has automatic doors, the restaurant has a chairlift, and the pool has paved access pathways and a ramp leading down into the water. There is a winding 8 mile paved road that makes its way throughout the Pennyrile Forest that allows access to many picnic pavilions and a tour of the scenic and historic sites. The 9 hiking trails throughout the forest are rugged and may present severe challenges for wheelchairs; many consist of stairs leading up or down the hillside and all are very narrow dirt and grass paths that wind through the uneven terrain. The beach and paddle boat rental areas are inaccessible, but

the golf course, basketball and tennis courts are accessible via paved pathways. All of the bathhouses were wheelchair accessible and equipped with padded shower chairs, adjustable shower nozzles, and grab bars. The newest bathhouse located in the horse campground was, also, fully automated, making it the most user friendly. Accessible water spigots and water fountains are available in the horse campgrounds and at the main lodge. Call ahead for campground and lodging availability.

11. Pulaski County Park

1200 Highway 3189, Nancy, KY, 42544 · (606) 636-6450

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | n/a |
| Trails: | n/a |
| Camping: | Y* |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

Pulaski County Park offers the widest variety of options for recreational activities around the Pulaski County area. The park offers camping, lake access, picnic areas, volleyball, disc golf, archery and trail access. Camping at the park is on gravel and dirt surfaces with access to the community bathrooms as well as portable restrooms. Within the park, there are several picnic shelters, requiring reservations, but are accessible with a wheelchair. This park allows for the ultimate outdoor experience around the Pulaski County area. Before travel, you should call ahead for trail and camping area conditions. You should inquire about current accessibility concerning dirt and gravel surfaces of the trails as well as restroom availability in early season.

TRAVEL TIPS for Persons in Wheelchairs

12. Rough River State Resort Park

450 Lodge Road, Falls of Rough, KY 40119 · (270) 257-2311

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y* |
| Bathrooms: | Y |
| Food/Drink access: | Y |
| Boating/Fishing: | Y* |
| Trails: | Y* |
| Camping: | n/a |
| Lodging: | Y |
| Pool: | Y |

Rough River offers a main lodge with a restaurant which are both wheelchair accessible. The doors, bathrooms, and aisle ways all meet ADA guidelines for wheelchair accessibility. There are an adequate number of handicap delineated parking spaces; however, some of these are not accessible for vehicles that utilize a chair lift on the passenger side. Rough River Resort also offers a public beach, picnic pavilions, concessions, playgrounds, and three walking trails. The beach is not easily accessed because the area leading to the water is all sand. There is a pool near the beach which has a ramp leading down into the water, but does not have a chair lift. One of the picnic pavilions is accessible, with a paved path leading from the roadway to the shelter. The playgrounds do not appear to be wheelchair accessible due to sand and a large barrier which

establishes the perimeter. The boat docks are all floating, with ramps of adequate width to allow wheelchair accessibility; use caution as there is no edge protection. Two of the walking trails are accessible with paths that are wide enough for wheelchairs, but persons may experience difficulty maneuvering on the dirt and grass surfaces. Accessibility to the walking paths and docks changes with the water level. This park also offers lodging in cabins. The newer cabins are wheelchair accessible with paved driveways and sidewalks. Calling ahead to reserve lodging or check lake levels prior to arrival may be beneficial.

13. Trail Water Recreation Area at Rough River

450 Lodge Road, Falls of Rough, KY 40119 · (270) 257-2311

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Parking: | Y |
| Bathrooms: | Y* |
| Food/Drink access: | Y* |
| Boating/Fishing: | n/a |
| Trails: | N |
| Camping: | Y* |
| Lodging: | n/a |
| Pool: | n/a |

Trail Water is the campground area within the Rough River resort park. The campground is divided into two sections. The area where campers and tents are located is accessible with paved sidewalks and roads. The grills are not wheelchair accessible and the surface within the campground varies between paved, gravel, and dirt. The bath house is not wheelchair accessible— it is set upon a two-foot-high concrete pad at the top of a very steep hill, and inside the bathroom there is no handicap stall or shower. The other area at the campground is newer and is adjacent to the dam. The dam overlook meets ADA guidelines for accessibility; however, caution must be taken when the dam unlocks and allows water to pass through. The bathrooms and picnic pavilion near the dam are both accessible via a path of broken pavement. Unfortunately,

the water spigot and playground are not accessible. The basketball and tennis courts are accessible via a flat grassy area that spurs from a paved road near the overlook. Call ahead to reserve a camping spot.



Charro Badger via Wikipedia



Eric Engbretson via Wikipedia



Kevin Cole via Wikipedia

Uncharted Observations

Analysis of each park suggested potential limitations that may have not been covered in the ADA Guidelines chart. The following items are common issues that may be encountered when visiting some of these parks:

- It was noticed that surface terrain was inconsistent in many cases, not only on trails and camping areas, but also throughout the rest of the parks.
- In many places, uneven pavement with cracks and buckling could present an obstacle, as well as uneven dirt and gravel surfaces.
- It is likely that trails and other areas of the parks will have downed trees or branches that pose an issue for mobility to desired areas.
- Navigating steep and winding pathways can pose problems for many of the larger, less mobile wheelchairs.
- Access to bathrooms and other park features may require maneuvering along steep inclines or lengthy ramps on hills.
- Many parks had automatic flushing systems in the restrooms, however some used handles, touch buttons and levers.

Additional Resources

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Kentucky Department of Parks | www.parks.ky.gov | (800) 255-PARK |
| KARRN | www.karrn.org | (859) 218-0515 |

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