

COUNTRY MUSIC HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

Outdoor Recreation

DESCRIPTION:

Rich in natural resources, the Country Music Highway Corridor is an unspoiled playground providing a wealth of outdoor activities for everyone in the family. Choices range from high-energy thrills like whitewater rafting and mountain biking to more peaceful pursuits like bird watching and wildlife photography.

Visitors can enjoy camping and fishing, hiking and biking, boating and swimming, golfing and sightseeing amid some of the most beautiful scenery in the nation. Or they can just kick back, relax on a front porch rocker and watch the rising sun sweep the mist from mountaintops.

For many boating devotees, Kentucky is the place to be. Millions enjoy America's number one family sport, and there's plenty of room on Kentucky's vast waterways for boats of all kinds – motorboats, houseboats and pontoons. In this corridor area, houseboats on Fishtrap Lake near Pikeville and Paintsville Lake are a popular way to enjoy water activities on a floating cabin. Pontoon boats are available as well.

With its steep cliffs and wooded coves, Paintsville Lake provides a 1,140-acre haven for water sports. Paintsville Lake State Park has a full-service marina with 84 open slips, 80 covered slips, a launching ramp and rental fishing boats, houseboats, pontoons and pedal boats. Privately owned marinas, restaurants and accommodations also provide services on the lake.

Fishtrap Lake covers 1,131 acres and extends about 18 ½ miles. It was completed in 1968 and is a popular spot for fishing and boating. Fishtrap Dam on the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River is 1,100 feet long and 195 feet high. Jenny Wiley State Resort Park covers 1,771 acres with a lodge, cottages and camping sites. The park has a summer theater and a marina with 199 open slips and rental pontoons. Completed in 1950, the 1,100-acre Dewey Lake at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park near Prestonsburg covers 1,000 acres, extends 18 ½ miles and has 52 miles of shoreline.

Fantastic fishing awaits anglers in this water world of lakes, creeks, ponds and rivers, all of which are teeming with fish waiting to be caught. Something is always in season for anglers. The fishing spots are legendary and the species caught is a long list of popular game fish, including smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, crappie and catfish. Dewey Lake is known as a great bass lake. Paintsville has plenty of crappie, redbreast sunfish, trout and walleye. Fish Trap Lake offers good fishing for crappie, largemouth bass and smallmouth bass.

Yatesville Lake, a tributary of the Big Sandy River, is said to offer the best bluegill fishing in Eastern Kentucky. The 2,300-acre lake also has a fair number of bass and crappie. Pleasure boaters and anglers can access the lake from the park boat launch and full-service marina. The Yatesville Marina, named the nation's "Most Outstanding Project" in 1999 by the States Outdoor Boating Association, offers everything needed for lake fun.

Kentucky is fast becoming a premier golfing destination. Most communities have nine- and 18-hole courses open to the public. Golfers are finding that the number of challenging and interesting courses along the County Music Highway Corridor is growing each year and that it is possible to play multiple courses within a short driving distance of each other.

The tiny town of Prestonsburg came up with a creative solution for salvaging a mountain whose top had been blown off for strip mining. StoneCrest Golf Course is one of the most unusual and good looking in the country. At an altitude of 1,250 feet, the StoneCrest Golf Course is bordered mostly by air and mountain vistas that golfers say are unmatched. The stunning mountain view overlooks the Big Sandy Valley in

eastern Kentucky. The course is set on Maggie Mountain between Jenny Wiley State Resort Park and downtown Prestonsburg and, on a clear day, views of 50 miles or more can be seen from the serene mountaintop.

For some golfers, one of the most difficult challenges at the Paintsville Country Club is getting across the old swinging bridge. Established in 1929, Paintsville was one of the first 18-hole golf courses in the Kentucky Highlands. In order to play holes 10 through 16, golfers must tee off for the par-five 10th hole, and then, either by foot or cart, get across the 155-foot swinging bridge. The creaky wooden bridge hangs 50 feet or so above the muddy Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River.

Opened in Sept. 19, 2003, the Eagle Ridge Golf Course is a mountainous site that features a number of holes overlooking Yatesville Lake and the surrounding natural wooded areas. Steep hills offer exciting play on this 6,630-yard course. Some holes feature changes in elevation of up to 200 feet.

With miles of marked, maintained trails, the Country Music Highway Corridor is a premier destination for hiking. Bring along the hiking boots and hit the road for casual walks, day hikes or wilderness backpacking adventures. The 185-mile long Jenny Wiley National Recreation Trail traces the route Jenny and her Indian captors took in 1789 as they made their way from Prestonsburg to the Ohio River. Hikers love a reconstructed wetlands area on a high bluff near the entrance to the Yatesville Lake Wildlife Management Area. Camping is available in the park.

Known as the "Grand Canyon of the South," Breaks Interstate Park has the largest canyon east of the Mississippi. It's five miles long and 1,600 feet deep. Estimated at 250 million years old, the Towers is an imposing rock of over one-half mile and one-third mile wide. For the folklore lover, there are stories of a vast silver fortune said to have been hidden in the Towers area by Englishman John Swift. For the history buff, there is Pow Wow Cave near the Stateline Overlook that was used by the Shawnee Indians.

The County Music Highway Corridor is blessed by being named part of the National Scenic Byways system. US 23 with its four lanes and wide-green median feels like an interstate, a wide smooth highway with amazing mountain scenery. It's hard to imagine how truly tough the early settlers must have been to have traversed these hills and hollers without the benefits of modern technology. A leisurely drive along the corridor features some of the most beautiful scenery in the Bluegrass State – winding roads, outcroppings and rock formations, forests in dazzling autumn finery, huge limestone road cuts, wildflowers, quaint towns, clean waterways, well-tended farms, white spired churches, steep cliffs and awe-inspiring mountains. From Pikeville to Prestonsburg, US 23 travels through great mountain scenery on both sides of the road, hugging the sides of the mountains while traversing the narrow Levisa Fork valley. Beyond the second Louisa turnoff, the view broadens out. The trees are now more on a level with the highway rather than up the hillsides. The changing scenery of the County Music Highway Corridor provides a rich backdrop for travel whatever the season.

Whatever the interest in wild things and wide open spaces, wildlife areas and nature preserves along the Country Music Highway Corridor provide plenty of chances to enjoy the outdoors and glimpse a multitude of critters in stunning surroundings. Set out on a woodland trek or relax aboard a boat or on a state park bench and be amazed at the variety of species all around. For a sample of Kentucky's excellent birding trails, the Jenny Wiley Heritage Trail is an excellent trail that winds through Jenny Wiley State Resort Park and Yatesville State Park. Jenny Wiley is a great place to learn about access to bird watching opportunities along the trail. For an early morning treat, eat breakfast in the dining room of Jenny Wiley State Resort Park and watch the birds at feeders outside the window. Park brochures help identify birds and park guides are available to lead a birding trek through the park.

One of this hemisphere's largest engineering and earth-moving achievements is located on the Country Music Highway Corridor. Second only to the Panama Canal, the Pikeville Cut-Thru is a channel 1,300 feet wide, 3,700 feet long and 534 feet deep. *The New York Times* called it "the eighth wonder of the world." The massive rerouting of highways, railroads and rivers took 14 years of labor, millions of dollars and tons of blasted and hauled rock and dirt. Completed in 1987, the cut-thru with its spectacular views is something that must be seen to be believed.

Just west of Greenup, the Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve allows visitors to walk the hills and fields where the late poet laureate of Kentucky walked and enjoy the beauty of nature. More than 700 acres have been made into a pastoral museum and maintained as Stuart knew it in the state he called the "heart" of the nation.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

- * Eagle Ridge Golf Course, Louisa: 606/673-4300.
- * Paintsville Lake State Park, Staffordsville: 606/297-8486.
- * Fishtrap Lake, Grapevine Recreation Area, Pikeville: 606/437-7496.
- * Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, Prestonsburg: 606/886-2711.
- * StoneCrest Golf Course, Prestonsburg: 606/886-6777.
- * Paintsville Country Club, Paintsville: 606/789-4234.
- * Yatesville Lake Wildlife Management Area, Grayson: 606/920-9119.
- * Yatesville Lake State Park, Louisa: 606/673-1492.
- * Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve, Greenup: 606/329-1007.
- * Breaks Interstate Park: 276/865-4413, ext. 244.