

Heartland Waterways Corridor General Overview

DESCRIPTION:

When famed naturalist John Muir traveled through the Heartland Waterways Corridor, he was so impressed by its breathtaking beauty that he described it in his book *Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*. The man known as "the father of our national parks" wrote: "The scenery on approaching the Cumberland River becomes still grander...Burkesville, in beautiful location, is embosomed in a glorious array of verdant flowering hills. The Cumberland must be a happy stream. I think I could enjoy traveling with it in the midst of such beauty all my life."

The early pioneers must have felt the same when they saw the area and knew it would be their new home. Some of the men who poured into the great Kentucky wilderness were soldiers who had fought in the Revolutionary War. In return for their service in Virginia, the veterans were given land grants in the wilderness. With their families, the war-weary men sought a better life, a peaceful place where they could raise their children and enjoy the great natural bounty surrounding them. They found it in the Heartland Waterways Corridor.

Today, the counties that make up the corridor – Adair, Cumberland, Green, Metcalfe, Monroe and Taylor – reflect the legacy of these pioneers. The history is written on the land and in the faces and lives of the people who live here. Their forefathers practiced fierce independence, held fast to traditions and exhibited tremendous pride in their homeplace. They stood firm in the face of adversity and valued self-reliance – the ability to do things for themselves. Though these pleasures may appear simple, they, in fact, go back to America's core values – a sense of place, a bonding with the land.

That sense of place and respect for the past is seen in the reverence given to historic sites and museums. These include the Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site in Tompkinsville, Trabue Russell House in Columbia, Janice Holt Giles House in Adair County, Tebbs Bend Battlefield in Taylor County, Green County Courthouse (built in 1802, the oldest courthouse west of the Alleghenies), Greensburg Academy, the 1918 Friendship School one-room schoolhouse in Campbellsville and Jacob Hiestand House in Campbellsville. The area's arts and crafts heritage can be seen in the fine handmade cherry furniture made by four Campbellsville companies. Other artists and shops include painter Gerald Myers, woodcarver Roger Blair, Highland Raku Studio, Heart's Image, Outback Glass and Arnold's Upstairs.

Barns are a distinctive feature of the Kentucky landscape but the older forms are rapidly vanishing. The stretch of SR 163 between Edmonton and Tompkinsville still preserves some good examples of older barns, an excellent type of folk architecture. The area's farming influence also can be seen in the magnificent John B. Begley Chapel, located on

the Lindsey Wilson College. Designed by world-renowned architect, E. Fay Jones, the chapel is reminiscent of a silo with the use of skylights to bring in the sky and heavens.

The great beauty of the area is reflected in its name, the Heartland Waterways. The Heritage Highway from Green River to the Cumberland is a drive through gently rolling farm country on scenic byways, looping through a part of Kentucky that's often overlooked by folks in a hurry. The drive south from Campbellsville towards Columbia on Ky. 55 is part of the Cumberland Cultural Heritage Highway with a spectacular overview of the Green River basin. The watershed is so significant that the Trust for Public Lands has purchased the development rights to preserve it for future generations.

The Cumberland River flows past rolling hills, hardwood forests, high bluffs and farmland. Dr. Thomas Walker, the famed explorer who documented the location of the Cumberland Gap in 1750, named the river after the Duke of Cumberland in England. In the early 1940s, the creation of Dale Hollow Lake and the 1969 construction of Green River Lake brought new possibilities to the area. Recreation and tourism grew along the lakeshores. Marinas, docks and resorts became popular draws. It's no wonder. Dale Hollow Lake is one of the most beautiful, clear highland lakes in the country. With 620 miles of shoreline and 48 square miles of surface water, the lake straddles the Kentucky and Tennessee border. The water is deep and so clear that Dale Hollow Lake is one of the top spots for scuba diving.

The 8,200-acre Green River Lake offers 33 miles of picture perfect water lying between 250 miles of shoreline. With an average depth of 50 feet and at its widest point, 1 mile across, Green River Lake is perfect for fishing, skiing and boating. Not surprisingly, houseboating is a top attraction in the Heartland Waterways Corridor and several excellent marinas thrive on providing rental houseboats for vacationers who want to relax on the corridor's great waterways.

Food is an integral part of any gathering in the Heartland Waterways Corridor. Almost every hill and holler, every main street and dusty back road, every big city and tiny country community has its own special eatery. Ask the locals. They can tell you which spot dishes up the best of any regional specialty. In little Tompkinsville, population 1200, there are an amazing 10 barbecue restaurants, each serving up its own twist on the theme. Mention barbecue and most folks can readily name their favorite – Paul & Nora's, R&S Barbecue, Frances Barbecue, The Smoked Pig and others. Tompkinsville also hosts a gem of Southern folk culture. Every day local men play marbles, each player uses his own handmade flint marbles for an unusual game of rolley-hole marbles.

The strong backbone of the Heartland Waterways Corridor is built on hospitality and neighborliness. No matter the size, almost every community has its festival or fair or homecoming. Music fills the air, dancers invite others to join in, singers perform old familiar tunes, storytellers recount tales of the past. And the welcome mat is always out. When folks say, "You all come back," they mean it.

COUNTIES:

Adair

Located in south central Kentucky, Adair County was formed in 1821 and named for Gen. John Adair. The county seat is Columbia. Its 407 miles of rolling countryside are drained by the Green River and its principal local tributary, Russell Creek. The 8,200-acre Green River Lake, constructed in 1969, draws visitors to a state park in Adair and neighboring Taylor County. One of the founders of Columbia was Daniel Trabue, whose house was built in 1823 and serves as the Adair County Historical Museum. Literary lovers will enjoy the log home of the late Henry and Janice Holt Giles. Janice wrote 20 books with characters immortalizing Kentucky history. The home is on the National Register and open to the public.

Cumberland

Established in 1799, Cumberland County was named after the Cumberland River. The river was named by surveyor and physician, Dr. Thomas Walker, as a tribute to the Duke of Cumberland in England. In 1769, Daniel Boone explored the area that later became Cumberland County. The county seat is Burkesville. The principal water sources are the Cumberland River and the northern portion of Dale Hollow Lake. The Cumberland River offers some of the best fly-fishing for trout and striper in the South. The inlets and islands of Dale Hollow Lake attract boaters, anglers and other outdoor lovers. Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park offers a wealth of activities and boasts one of the state's prettiest dining rooms – with panoramic views of the lake through three walls of glass.

GREEN

Established in 1798, Green County was named after Revolutionary War hero, Gen. Nathaniel Greene, known as the "Quaker General." Greensburg is the county seat and home of the oldest surviving courthouse west of the Alleghenies. It was built in 1802 and in use until 1931. The topography of Green County is hilly with numerous streams. Green River, which flows through the central portion of Green County, is the largest water source. The county has a fine collection of Federal-style architecture, reflecting a phase in the Western Movement from the latter part of the 18th century and first two decades of the 19th.

METCALFE

Metcalf County was established in 1860 and named after Thomas Metcalfe, stonemason, Kentucky representative, Kentucky governor and officer in the War of 1812. Edmonton is the county seat. Metcalfe County has no large cities, only small villages and rural communities. But the county is home to some beautiful old barns, excellent examples of folk architecture, found along KY 163 south of Edmonton. The county also has the Sulphur Well Park where sulphur water continues to flow freely from a spout in a concrete arch at the river's edge as it has since 1845. The water contains sulphur, magnesia, salt and iron and was valued for its medicinal qualities. Sulphur Wells once was the location of a health spa where people came to drink the sulphur waters.

MONROE

Established in 1820, Monroe County was named for James Monroe, President of the United States who issued an important contribution to U.S. foreign policy in the Monroe Doctrine, a warning to European nations against intervening in the Western Hemisphere. The county seat is Tompkinsville, named in honor of James Monroe's vice president, Daniel Tompkins of New York. The major water source is the Cumberland River which makes a large loop in the southeastern section of the county. The Big Barren River also courses through the county. One of the oldest church buildings in Kentucky is located in Monroe County – the Old Mulkey Meetinghouse, built in the late 18th century by Baptists. Located about two miles south of Tompkinsville, the church cemetery is where Daniel Boone's sister Hannah is buried. The county is well known for its fine barbecue restaurants.

Taylor

Established in 1848, Taylor County is named for Zachary Taylor, hero of the Mexican War and President of the United States. Taylor County is truly the "Heart of Kentucky." In addition to being shaped like a heart, the county is near the geographic center of the state. Filled with history and charm, the county seat of Campbellsville is a great place to find fine handmade cherry furniture. There are four companies in town that manufacture the furniture and Campbellsville Cherry graces houses all over the world. The 8,200-acre

Green River Lake offers a wealth of water recreation, including houseboating in scenic surroundings. During the Civil War, Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan campaigned extensively in Taylor County but was defeated by 260 Union soldiers at Tebbs Bend which marks the only battleground in the county.

TIME ZONE:

Eastern

CONSUMER CONTACT INFORMATION:

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www.tourseky.com

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Columbia, KY 42728
270/384-6020
www.columbia-adaircounty.com

Cumberland County Tourist and Convention Commission
PO Box 7117
Burkesville, KY 42717
270/433-5133
www.burkesville.com/tourism

Green County Chamber of Commerce
105 W. Hodgenville Avenue
Greensburg, KY 42743
270/932-4298

Edmonton-Metcalf County Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 42
Edmonton, KY 42129
270/432-3222

Monroe County Economic Development Center
202 N. Magnolia Street
Tompkinsville, KY 42167
270/487-1314

Taylor County Tourist Commission
PO Box 4021
Campbellsville, KY 42719
800/738-4719