

Kentucky's Mountain Lake Corridor GENERAL OVERVIEW

LOCATION:

The Mountain Lake Corridor, located in southeastern Kentucky's Cumberland Plateau, consists of the counties of Bath, Menifee, Morgan and Rowan. Major routes through the region include I-64, US Highways 60 and 460 as well as KY Highways 11, 32, 36, 172, 519 and 801. The area lies within the Eastern Coal Field, which stretches from the Appalachian Mountains westward across the Cumberland Plateau to the Pottsville Escarpment, a resistant sandstone belt of cliffs and steep sided, narrow crested valleys. Elevations vary from 1,435 feet at the highest points to 590 feet in the valleys.

DESCRIPTION:

The four counties in the Mountain Lake Corridor have a combined population of 54,700. Major towns include the county seats of Owingsville, Frenchburg, West Liberty and Morehead. Small towns are important to the area, too. Smile, Leisure and New Hope indicate that the early settlers were happy to make this region their home. Once they were there, the wildlife and the waterways surely inspired names such as Salt Lick, Cave Springs, Licking River, Grassy Creek and Cedar Lake. The terrain, too, was a challenge on an everyday basis; reminders are Slate Valley, Big Woods, Bluff City, Rocky Point and Rolling Hills. The northernmost portion of the Daniel Boone National Forest runs through the heart of this region with Cave Run Lake centrally located within. In addition to this shining jewel, the area includes an abundance of rivers and streams as well as the protected Red River Gorge Geological Area and part of the 269-mile Shelton Trace National Recreation Trail that extends across the entire length of the forest. The region also boasts Olympia State Forest, which consists of 780 acres. While nature alone provides many reasons to visit this corridor, the people that live here are among the richest treasures. They look to their past with pride and take every opportunity to showcase it. Throughout the area, there are ample opportunities to explore their history, appreciate their art, hear their music and listen to their lore.

HISTORY:

The history of the Mountain Lake Corridor, not coincidentally, dates back to the mid 1770s. It was then that Daniel Boone marked the Wilderness Road and settlers began to cross through the Cumberland Gap. Kentucky became the 15th state to join the Union in 1792, but the population in the southeastern portion of the state didn't begin to really grow until after the Civil War when northern companies bought lumber and mineral rights to much of the land. After harvesting the lumber, they began to build railroads and small towns to support their coal mining ventures; by the early 20th century, coal had, in fact, taken over the local economy. Today, with all of the recreational opportunities on and around Cave Run Lake, tourism is one of the corridor's major industries.

TRANSPORTATION:

Airports

Lexington Blue Grass Airport (859/425-3114) is served by ATA Connection, Continental Express, Delta, Northwest AirlinK, United Express and US Airways Express. The airport is located approximately 55 miles from Owingsville, 65 miles from Frenchburg, 95 miles from West Liberty and 70 miles from Morehead. From Lexington, the Mountain Lake Corridor is accessible by driving Interstate 64 East.

Major car rental companies are located at Lexington Blue Grass Airport.

Morehead/Rowan County Airport, (606-783-2119), located on US 60, five miles west of Morehead, is open to general aviation on a 2,600 ft. runway.

TIME ZONE:

Eastern Standard Time

THINGS TO DO:

Heritage sites and museums

The history of the Mountain Lake Corridor is well preserved at its museums and historical sites. Please refer to the heritage offerings feature for more information on:

Owings House
Gladie Creek Historic Site
Morgan County History Museum
Kentucky Folk Art Center
Swamp Valley Museum
Memory Hill Foundation Museum
Woodsbend Museum and Park
Bourbon Iron Furnace
Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School
C & O Passenger Train Depot
Rowan County Courthouse
Tater Knob Fire Tower
Clear Creek Iron Furnace
Bath County Court House
Cultural Venues

The Mountain Lake region offers many opportunities to experience its rich cultural heritage. Please refer to the culture offerings sheet for more information on:

Brenda's Country Creations
Claypool-Young Art Gallery
Kentucky Folk Art Center
Pine Grove Gallery
Flophouse Pottery
Morehead Theatre Guild

Recreational Activities and Areas

Almost entirely surrounded by the northern portion of Daniel Boone National Forest, the Mountain Lake Corridor offers a wide variety of outdoor activities that include boating, fishing, golfing, hiking and wildlife viewing. Please refer to the outdoor recreation sheet for more information on:

Daniel Boone National Forest
Olympia State Forest
Red River Gorge Geological Area
Cave Run Lake
Pioneer Weapons Wildlife Management Area
Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail
Shallow Flats Wildlife Viewing Area
Clifty Wilderness
Beaver Creek Wetlands
White Sulphur ATV Trails
Wrigley Arch and Waterfall/Twin Tunnels
Twin Knobs Recreation Area
Zilpo Recreation Area
Old Mill Park

Other Attractions

Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery (606-784-6872), the only state-owned facility in Kentucky, was completed in 1972. This impressive area covers over 300 acres, contains 111 rearing and brooding ponds as well as an exhibition pool. Large and smallmouth bass, walleye and muskellunge are produced at the hatchery.

Morehead State University Main Campus (606-783-2031) was established in 1887 and nine of its buildings are considered part of a National Historic District. Morehead Christian School was founded in 1887 for the United Christian Missionary Society of St. Louis by Mrs. Phebe Button and her son Dr. F. C. Button. It became the eastern-most State Normal School in 1922, became the Morehead State Teachers College in 1930 and was named Morehead State University in 1966.

Championship Miniature Horse Farm (606-743-4436), located in Morgan County, allows you to tour the barn and get a close-up view of Grand National and National Champion Miniature Horses. Reservations are required.

Iris and Daylily Gardens (606-768-9909 or 606-768-3260), during bloom season, offer breath-taking displays of modern varieties of iris and daylilies.

Festivals & Events

There is truly something for everyone's tastes at the festivals and special events held in the Mountain Lake Corridor. The offerings include, but are not limited to:

Americana Crossroads Live, last Friday of each month, Morehead
Bath County May Day Festival, second Saturday in May, Owingsville
Rock-n-Blues-n-BBQ Festival, last weekend in May, Morehead
Menifee Mountain Memories Festival, first weekend in June, Frenchburg
Bluegrass 'n More, first weekend in June, Morehead
Appalachian Celebration, last full week in June, Morehead
Bath County Agricultural and Horse Fair, weekend after Labor Day, Owingsville
Poppy Mountain Bluegrass Festival, third weekend in September, Morehead
Harvest Festival, third weekend in September, Morehead
Cave Run Storytelling Festival, fourth weekend in September, Morehead
Morgan County Sorghum Festival, last full weekend in September, West Liberty
October Court Days, weekend preceding third Monday, Preston
Christmas Arts and Crafts Market, first Saturday in December, Morehead

SHOPPING:

A wealth of treasures can be found in the shops of the Mountain Lake Corridor, allowing visitors to take a bit of Kentucky home with them. At Brenda's Country Creations in Salt Lick is a wealth of handmade Kentucky crafts while Creekside Leather can take care of every tack need and even offers ladies' leather handbags. In nearby Farmers, you can shop for antiques at Freida's Antique Shoppe or Shaving Horse Antiques and, in Morehead, Main Street Antiques. And in Brown's Department Store in Sharpsburg you'll find a bit of history, as well; founded in 1874, it still has the fixtures that were used when Brown Mule Chewing Tobacco was first made there. Finally, don't forget to stop by the museum store at the Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead, where you'll find original works by contemporary folk artists.

LODGING:

Visitors to the Mountain Lake Corridor will find the accommodations just as warm and welcoming as the people. Options include bed and breakfast inns, independently owned motels, familiar chain lodging properties, lakeside resorts, plus a number of campgrounds, cabins and houseboats for rent.

DINING:

There's something quintessentially Kentucky about its country-style cooking. Throughout the region, one-of-a-kind restaurants offer their own versions of the cuisine. In Salt Lick, try Greene's or the Clear Creek Restaurant.

If you're in the mood for just a light bite, there are plenty of eating establishments that will fill the bill. D's Main Street Bistro in Morehead is just one example. Don't let the casual "bistro" part of the name fool you, though; this is one of the most elegant—and unusual—restaurants in Kentucky.

In the town of Farmers, visitors will find Southern-style hospitality and mouth-watering temptations at the Ole Thyme Sweet Shop Tea Room & Gifts.

No dining experience would be complete without some barbeque along the way. One of the best options can be found at Morehead's Pig Out BBQ.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE MOUNTAIN LAKE CORRIDOR:

Southern and Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association
(SEKTDA)
2292 S. Highway 27
Somerset, KY 42501
(877) 868-7735
www.tourseky.com.

Morehead Tourism Commission
150 East First Street
Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 784-6221

Owingsville/Bath County Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 360
Owingsville, KY 40360
(606) 674-2266

Menifee County Tourism Office
70 Walnut St.
Frenchburg, KY 40322
(606) 768-9000

West Liberty Tourism Commission
565 Main St.
West Liberty, KY 41472
(606) 743-3330