

Woodlands Trace

Running along a ridge of land between Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley, Woodlands Trace is a beautiful, easy drive in rolling terrain with opportunities to pull off and explore on your own or at developed interpretive facilities. This outdoor setting includes the seasonal splendors of nature, with blossoming trees and flowers, a green canopy, brilliant fall foliage, and the open view in the forest in the winter.



Local Information

For more information on the Land Between the Lakes, send an email to lblinfo@fs.fed.us or call 1-800-525-7077.

Length: 43 miles / 68.8 km

Time to Allow: 1.5 hours to drive or one day to enjoy the byway

Visitor Services



Accessibility

Accessible restroom facilities, picnic areas, and close proximity to trailheads of the N/S Trail are a few of the amenities offered. The Golden Pond Visitor Center and Planetarium offers accessible restrooms and picnic areas as well as interpretive exhibits, a planetarium, and an observatory.



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

A two-mile, paved hike/bike route between Hillman Ferry Campground and the North Welcome Station runs parallel to the byway. A hiking trail, “The North South Trail” roughly parallels it, but is usually not next to the byway. No other sidewalks or other pedestrian/biking features exist. The route has little to no shoulder for bicyclists to retreat to when encountering vehicular traffic. Also, more walkers and joggers are using the area for these activities, due to its ease of access in the evenings.



Camping

There are places to camp along this byway.



Information

The North Welcome Station is located at the northern entrance and the South Welcome Station at the southern entrance of the byway. These centers are open 9 am-5 pm, March-Nov. and are closed on Thanksgiving Day. The Golden Pond Visitor Center and Planetarium is located at the central entrance off Highway 68/80. It is open 9 am-5 pm year-round, closed Thanksgiving,

Christmas, and New Year's Day. Welcome Stations offer visitors information about the area shared by trained staff. Permits and souvenirs are also available.

Restrooms



There are toilet facilities along this byway.

Retail



There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

During prescribed burns, smoky conditions could result in closed sections of the byway, but these closures will not typically last longer than one day.

Kentucky and Tennessee provide snow and ice removal during infrequent events of freezing weather.

Watch for deer crossing the byway, especially at night.

No restaurants or fuel facilities are available along the 43 miles of this byway. Camping, restrooms, and picnicking are available at various locations along the way. Food and fuel are available in the portal communities.

Restrictions

There is occasional ice in winter. There is also occasional smoke when prescribed burning is taking place, but it would be in limited sections not the entire byway. These two closures are typically for one day or less.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Blossoming trees and flowers in spring, a green canopy all summer long, brilliant fall foliage, and open views into the forest in winter-- the byway is great in any season!

High Season

Holiday weekends around Labor Day and Memorial Day are busiest but are not a traffic problem on the byway.

Winter

Roads are occasionally icy in winter.

Map and Directions



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

- Begin at the intersection of Interstate 24 and SR 453/The Trace Rd, southwest of Grand Rivers, KY.
- Drive southwest on SR 453 to SR 49/The Trace at the state line of Kentucky and Tennessee.
- Continue southwest on SR 49/The Trace.
- End at the border of the Land Between the Lakes and the end of SR-461 near Dover, TN.

Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities

Hopkinsville, KY (31 miles / 49.89 km, 40 minutes)

Start: ● Hopkinsville
N 36.850° W 87.487° [?]

Directions:

- Head west on State Highway 68/80
- Turn left onto Woodlands Trace

Junction with byway: * Intersection of State Highway 68/80 with SR 453
N 36.775° W 88.062° [?]



Murray, KY (30 miles / 48.28 km, 35 minutes)

Start: ● Murray
N 36.611° W 88.315° [?]

Directions:

- Head north on KY 641.
- Turn right onto State Highway 68/80.
- Turn right onto Woodlands Trace.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of State Highway 68/80 with SR 453
N 36.775° W 88.062° [?]



Nashville, TN (89 miles / 143.23 km, 1 hour 34 minutes)

Start: ● Nashville
N 36.159° W 86.782° [?]

Directions:

- Take I-24 W toward Clarksville.
- Take the US-79 S exit (exit 4) toward Clarksville/Ft Campbell.
- Turn left onto US-79S/Wilma Rudolph Blvd/TN-13 S.
- Take a slight right onto TN-374 N/101 St Airborne Division Pkwy.



- Take the US-79 ramp toward Dover.
- Turn right onto Dover Rd/US-79 S.
- Continue to follow US-79 S/TN-76 S.
- Turn right onto The Trace (TN 461) into Woodlands Trace.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of US-79 and TN 461 (The Trace)
N 36.481° W 87.889° [?]

Paducah, KY (27 miles / 43.45 km, 32 minutes)

Start: ● Paducah
N 37.071° W 88.639° [?]

Directions:

- Take I-24 E toward Nashville.
- Take the KY-453 exit (exit 31) toward Smithland/Grand Rivers.
- Turn right onto KY-453 S (The Trace) into Woodlands Trace.

Junction with byway: * Intersection with I-24 and KY-453
N 37.039° W 88.268° [?]



Road Trip: A Day of Play at Land Between the Lakes

Departure: South Welcome Station, Tennessee

Destination: Kentucky Lake Drive, Kentucky

Time to allow: 1 day

Traveling north on the Woodlands Trace from historic Dover, TN to the resort town of Grand Rivers, KY through Land Between the Lakes (LBL) National Recreation Area, families can enjoy a day discovering historical sites, enjoying scenic vistas, watching for wildlife, and hiking through the forest.

Day 1

- **Start: South Welcome Station**

Traveling north on The Trace from Dover, TN visitors find the LBL South Welcome Station, which provides information, maps, a gift shop and restroom facilities. Hikers and backpackers utilize the welcome station and the nearby trail head parking area to access the North/ South and Ft. Henry National Recreation Trails.

- **Stop 1: Great Western Iron Furnace**



From previous stop: 19 minutes / 9.6 mi (15.4 km)

Directions: Go 9.6 miles North on the Woodlands Trace.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

Continuing north a few miles through the countryside, visitors will find the Great Western Iron Furnace, a remnant of the area's iron industry. The iron industry once included eight iron furnaces scattered throughout LBL and at its peak from the 1820s to the Civil War, it was the primary industry in the area.

- **Stop 2: South Bison Range**

From previous stop: 5 minutes / 0.5 mi (0.8 km)

Directions: Travel 0.5 miles north on the Woodlands Trace.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

Across the Woodlands Trace from the Furnace is the South Bison Range, an enclosed pasture that houses about 60 bison. The bison can usually be seen from the byway or from a side road bordering the range. The first bison reintroduced to LBL are descendants of a historic herd found in Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota.

- **Stop 3: The Homeplace**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.25 mi (0.4 km)

Directions: Go north for 0.25 along the Woodlands Trace, then turn right into The Homeplace.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour 30 minutes

Near the north end of the South Bison Range is the entrance to The Homeplace, a living 1850s-era farm. The Homeplace shows how small, family farms were run in the antebellum period using period tools and livestock. The Homeplace is located on an 1800s land grant and all buildings are original or reconstructed log structures. Interpreters are on-hand to explain the daily lives of the family and regularly scheduled demonstrations show how they used the land to farm and raise livestock. The Homeplace is open March through November. Special events are held throughout the year. The Homeplace is surrounded by the southern Oak-Grassland Demonstration Area, an active resource management project designed to reintroduce the oak-grassland ecosystem that was found throughout western Kentucky and Tennessee before European settlement.

- **Stop 4: Cedar Pond Picnic Area**



- From previous stop:** 5 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)
- Directions:** Go three miles north on the Woodlands Trace.
- Suggested time at this stop:** 30 minutes

Located near the Kentucky/Tennessee state line, the Cedar Pond picnic area is a quiet place to bring a picnic and enjoy the solace of LBL's natural beauty. A short trail circles its way through the woods and the pond is open to fishing.

- **Stop 5: Golden Pond Visitor Center and Planetarium**

- From previous stop:** 25 minutes / 12 mi (19.2 km)
- Directions:** Travel 12 miles north on the Woodlands Trace.
- Suggested time at this stop:** 1 hour

Continuing north on the Trace visitors come to the Golden Pond Visitor Center and Planetarium. The Golden Pond Planetarium and Observatory offers planetarium shows throughout the day. Shows rotate on a regular basis and cover subjects ranging from far off galaxies, and the International Space Station, to wild weather right here. The planetarium is open March-December.

- **Stop 6: Elk and Bison Prairie**



- From previous stop:** 5 minutes / 0.5 mi (0.8 km)
- Directions:** Go half a mile north along the Woodlands Trace.
- Suggested time at this stop:** 1 hour

Just north of the Golden Pond Visitor Center is the Elk & Bison Prairie, an active restoration project designed to return the land to the prairie habitat found here 300 years ago. The prairie features a three-mile paved loop with three interpretive stops explaining the history of the plants, animals and people of the prairie. The prairie lets visitors see the animals up close from the safety of their vehicles.

- **End: Kentucky Lake Drive**



From previous stop: 48 minutes / 19.1 mi (30.6 km)

Directions: Travel north along the Woodlands Trace, then head east on RD 101.

The Kentucky Lake Drive is a 1-mile loop that takes travelers along the coast of one of the largest man-made lakes in the United States. From the drive, visitors are able to see Kentucky Dam, built in 1944 by the Tennessee Valley Authority to provide hydro-electric power to the region and to control flooding on the Tennessee River. The drive is a prime spot to watch for Bald Eagles, which nest nearby for the winter, and other water fowl.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 44.95 miles / 71.9 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 48 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 4 hours 30 minutes