

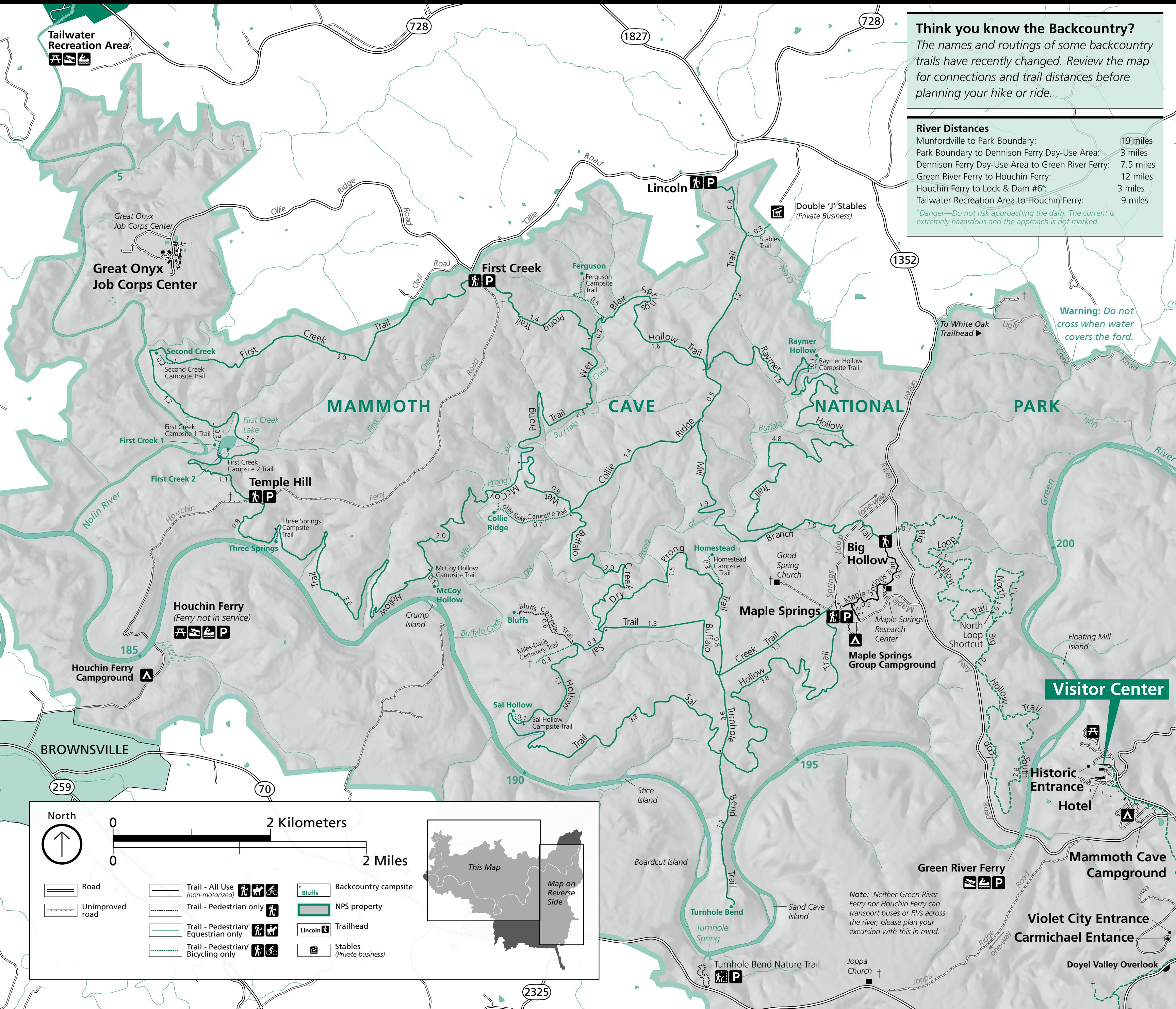


Mammoth Cave  
National Park  
Kentucky

# Backcountry Map & Guide



# Mammoth Cave National Park Backcountry Map



## Think you know the Backcountry?

The names and routings of some backcountry trails have recently changed. Review the map for connections and trail distances before planning your hike or ride.

### River Distances

Munfordville to Park Boundary:	19 miles
Park Boundary to Dennison Ferry Day-Use Area:	3 miles
Dennison Ferry Day-Use Area to Green River Ferry:	7.5 miles
Green River Ferry to Houchin Ferry:	12 miles
Houchin Ferry to Lock & Dam #6*:	3 miles
Tailwater Recreation Area to Houchin Ferry:	9 miles

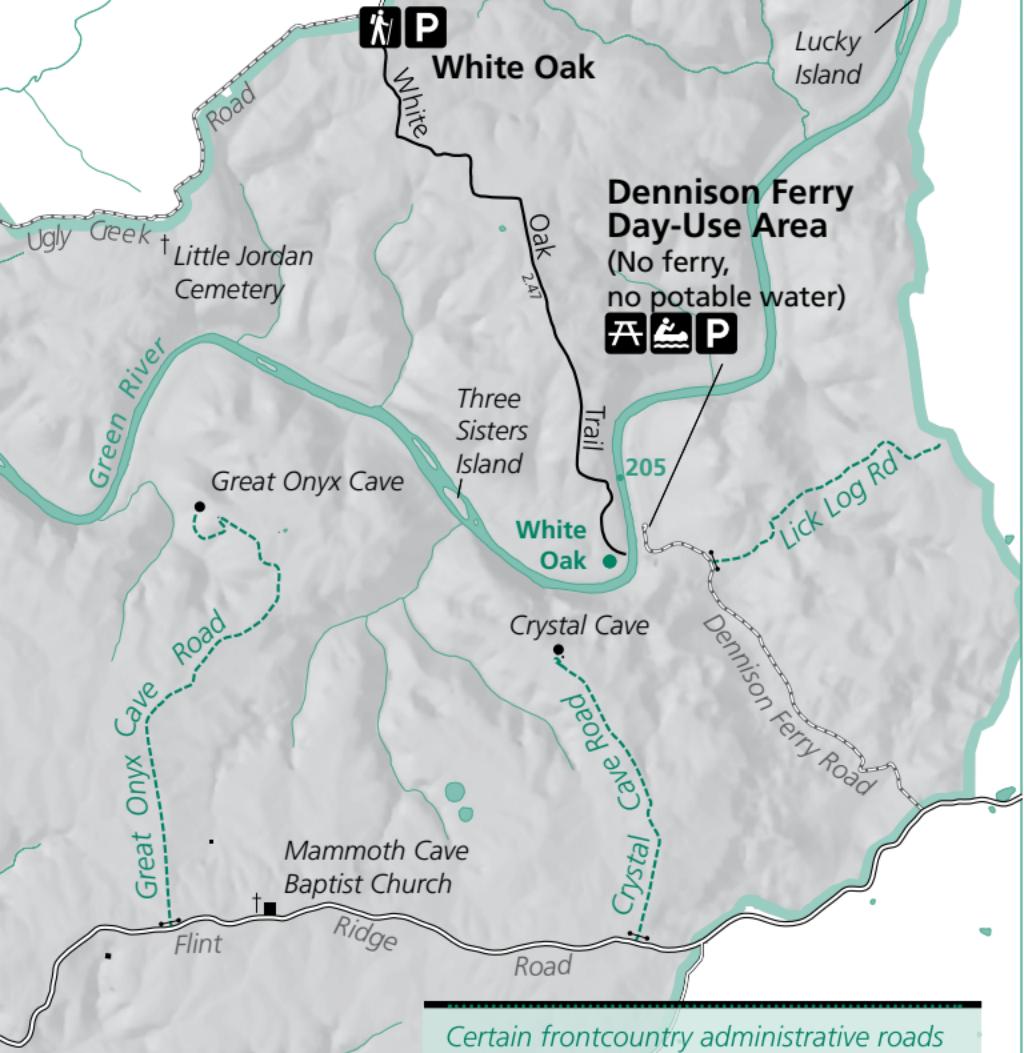
\*Danger—Do not risk approaching the dam. The current is extremely hazardous and the approach is not marked.

Warning: Do not cross when water covers the ford.

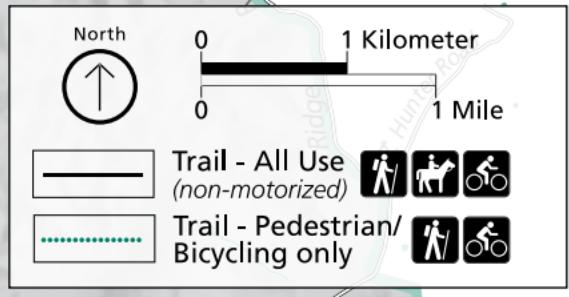
Visitor Center

Note: Neither Green River Ferry nor Houchin Ferry can transport buses or RVs across the river; please plan your excursion with this in mind.

# White Oak Trail and Frontcountry Bike Roads



Certain frontcountry administrative roads are open to bicycle use. These include Great Onyx Cave Road, Crystal Cave Road, MCNP-Lick Log Road, and Union City Road. Bicyclists may also use the Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike & Hike Trail. Horses are not permitted in these areas.



Mammoth Cave National Park was created not only for its caves, but also for its forested hilly country and scenic rivers. In the park's backcountry, 37 square miles of this rugged, inviting landscape await you along more than 66 miles of trails, and the winding turns of the Green and Nolin Rivers.

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## Horseback Riding

- Horseback riding is permitted on all designated trails north of the Green River except Big Hollow Trail.
  - Horses are prohibited at Bluffs Campsite and on its access trail.
  - Horseback riding is prohibited on all park roads, and on all trails south of Green River.
  - Travel by horseback off of designated trails is prohibited. Ride single file in small groups; do not use switchbacks or shortcuts.
  - Walk horses through mud on trails—not around it.
  - Hitching horses to trees is prohibited. Use a picket line or hobble horses during breaks.
  - Scatter horse manure at least 200 feet from trails, water sources, and campsites.
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## Mountain Biking

- Mountain bikes are permitted in the backcountry on Big Hollow Trail, Maple Springs Trail, and White Oak Trail only.
  - Note that bicycles may also be used on the Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike and Hike Trail, and on the following frontcountry access roads: Crystal Cave Road, Doyel Valley Road and its spur road, Great Onyx Cave Road, and MCNP-Lick Log Road. No horses are permitted on these roads.
  - Excessive speed is prohibited. Do not exceed 15mph.
  - Downhill riders yield to cyclists riding uphill.
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## Sharing Multi-Use Trails

- Passing can present hazards on narrow trails, and communication is essential. Be respectful of other trail users and work together.
  - Horses have the right-of-way, and must remain on the designated trails to lessen the impact on the land. Hikers and bicyclists yield to horses. Riders should advise other trail users if there is the possibility of spooking the horse.
  - Hikers yield to bicyclists, as hikers have a lighter impact on the land than bicycles.
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## Camping

- A Backcountry Use Permit is required for all backcountry camping, including riverbanks and river islands. A free permit may be obtained at the Park Visitor Center.
- Overnight camping is permitted at designated campsites, islands, and along the floodplains at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away from ferry crossings or developed campgrounds, and within 100 feet of the river. Floodplain camping is allowed by boat access only.

- Maximum group size is limited to 8 people per campsite, and no more than two tents.
- Camping must not exceed 14 consecutive days.
- Do not dig, trench, or level ground at your campsite.
- Keep fires small. Build fires only in established metal fire rings. Use only dead wood that is down. Put out campfires completely. Use a backpacking stove. Leave no flame unattended.
- You can reach Houchin Ferry Campground by boat or by car. Houchin Ferry Campground has 12 sites with picnic tables, fire grates, chemical toilets, fresh water and an adjacent picnic shelter. The campground fee is \$12 per night per site, not available by reservation. No large trailers or RVs.
- When setting up your campsite on islands or on the riverbank, remember that sudden rainstorms can cause rapid flooding.
- Dispose of human waste at a depth of 6 to 8 inches and 200 feet – approximately 70 large steps – away from water sources. Dispose of wash water at least 100 feet away from water sources, trails, and campsites.
- Carry all trash out of the backcountry and properly dispose of it. “Pack it in: Pack it out.” Never bury or burn trash.
- Store food so wildlife cannot access it.

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## River Recreation

- The Green River, dotted with sandbars, islands, and submerged springs, runs 26 miles through the park, averages 200 feet wide and ten feet deep. The Nolin River, running six miles in the park, also averages about ten feet deep, but with a narrower channel. At normal water levels, the Green River runs at about five miles per hour; the Nolin runs slightly slower.
- Access the Green River at Dennison Ferry Day-Use Area, Green River Ferry, or Houchin Ferry. The put-in point at Dennison Ferry is steep and specifically designed for small craft such as canoes and kayaks. Launch boats on trailers at Green River Ferry or Houchin Ferry; coordinate your launch with the ferryman. The best take-out points are at Green River Ferry or Houchin Ferry. If you prefer a longer overnight trip, launch upstream at Green River Park and Arboretum at Munfordville. On the Nolin River, launch just below Nolin River Dam at Tailwater Recreation Area, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. When you reach the Green River, paddle upstream against a gentle current and take out at Houchin Ferry.
- ***Caution: Lock & Dam #6 lies downstream from Houchin Ferry, outside the park, and the approach is not marked. Do not risk approaching the dam; the current is extremely hazardous.***
- When the rivers flood, the current can be very swift. Launching canoes or kayaks is discouraged in the park when the river level at Green River Ferry is at 10 feet or greater. Commercial canoe and kayak liveries are not permitted to conduct operations on the river in the park when the river rises over 10 feet. Above this level, rangers may also prohibit floodplain camping. To check park river levels, go online

at [www.nps.gov/features/maca/saferivers.html](http://www.nps.gov/features/maca/saferivers.html). Regardless of water level, always be alert to hazards such as submerged trees and rocks, drifting debris, and the two ferries that carry vehicles and passengers across the Green River.

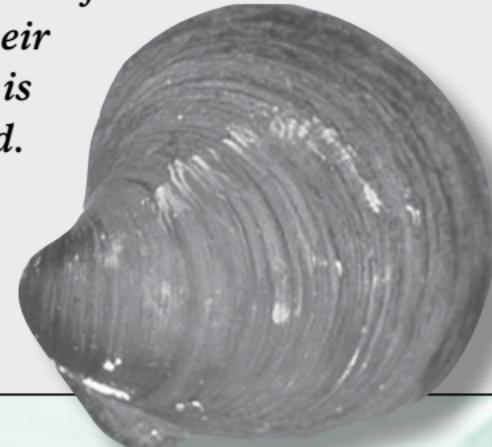
- When taking out at the ferry landings, ensure you have the attention of ferry operator before landing. Land downstream of ferry operations. Keep landing area clear so as not to impede traffic.
- Swimming is discouraged at any time, and swimming and wading are prohibited within 100 feet of the ferries.
- Each vessel, including canoes and kayaks, must have a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal floatation device (PDF) for each person and all children under 13 are required to wear a PDF any time a vessel is underway.
- Do not leave boats unattended for longer than 24 hours without written permission from the Chief Ranger. Boating accidents resulting in property damage, personal injury or death must be reported to a park ranger as soon as possible.
- Never dump or discharge refuse into the water.
- All other U.S. Coast Guard and Kentucky state boating regulations apply.

## Fishing

- Among the more than 100 fish species inhabiting the park's rivers are many you will find familiar: Largemouth, smallmouth, and rock bass; bluegill and longear sunfish; black and white crappie; walleye; channel and bullhead catfish; and muskellunge.
- Park visitors may fish at any point along the Green and Nolin Rivers, and at First Creek Lake. Fishing is not permitted at the ferry landings during operating hours; stay at least 100 feet away from the ferries during these times.
- No fishing license or permit is required within the boundary of Mammoth Cave National Park.

### A Special Note About River Mussels

Green River is home to more species of freshwater mussels than any other river in North America, and seven of these mussel species are endangered. ***Do not touch, pick up or collect live mussels or their shells at any time. Possession of live mussels or their shells in the park is strictly prohibited.***



Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife regulations regarding fish size and possession limits apply to all fish caught within Mammoth Cave National Park. Please refer to the current *Kentucky Sport Fishing & Boating Guide*, which can be obtained free where fishing licenses are sold, the park visitor center, and at [www.fw.ky.gov](http://www.fw.ky.gov).

- Worms are the only form of live bait that may be used at First Creek Lake. Live minnows and worms may be used in all other permitted waters. Dispose of excess bait on land.
- Trotlines: A *trotline* is a line with multiple baited hooks. Such lines may have no more than 50 single or multi-barbed baited hooks set no more than 30 inches apart, and must be set at least three feet below the water's surface. One person may use no more than two trotlines at any one time. All trotlines must be permanently labeled with the name and address of the user and must be checked and fish removed at least once every 24 hours, and must be removed from the area when fishing ceases.
- Other Methods: *Noodling* or *tickling* (catching fish by hand) is permitted at all times of the year.
- Prohibited Methods: Gigging fish with gig or spear; taking fish by bow and arrow; snagging (hooking in the body by a baitless hook); jugging (a single baited line attached to any floating object); and set lines or limb-lines (a single baited line tied to a tree limb or other stationary object on the river bank).
- Other Aquatic Animals: **Only fish may be taken** from Green River in Mammoth Cave National Park. All other aquatic animals are protected in the park and may not be taken by any method at any time.

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## Ferries

- Green River may be crossed via the park's ferries when in operation. When the ferries are out of service, access to the park backcountry is by bridge at Brownsville, or at Munfordville.
- Call (270)758-2166 for the current status of the ferries.
- Neither ferry can transport buses or RVs; low water levels may also restrict traffic of long trailers.

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## Prohibited Activities – General

- Collecting or digging plants. All plants in Mammoth Cave National Park are protected.
- Feeding or harassing wildlife. All wildlife in the park is protected.
- Possessing, destroying, removing, digging, or disturbing archeological resources.
- Entering any cave within the park without a permit.
- Firearms must be carried in accordance with Kentucky state law, but all other weapons are prohibited. The possession of concealed firearms requires a valid concealed weapons permit recognized by the state of Kentucky. Possession of firearms in park buildings and the cave is prohibited. The use of firearms is prohibited anywhere within Mammoth Cave National Park.
- Use of motorized vehicles, including ATVs and motorcycles, on park trails.

## Pets in the Backcountry

- Pets are permitted in the backcountry, but at all times must remain on a leash of a maximum 6-foot length, and under physical restraint at all times. *Note that this requirement makes it impractical to bring your pet if you are riding a horse or bicycle.*
- Do not leave pets unattended.

## Think Safety!

- Leave your itinerary with someone and sign in at a trail register. Include your destination.
- When leaving your car, always lock the door and store all items out of sight.
- Carry a map or guide, a compass, and know where you are. Stay on designated trails.
- Carry enough water for your trip. *All water from natural sources found in the park must be treated before use.*
- Be prepared for emergencies. Take a small first-aid kit, pocket knife, flashlight, matches, and appropriate clothing for weather possibilities.
- Obtain a weather forecast and observe weather conditions. To hear the National Weather Service forecast in the area, tune your radio to AM 530 or go online to [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov).
- Streams may rise rapidly in heavy rain. Use extreme caution crossing flooded streams.
- Cellular telephone service may be unavailable.
- Avoid poisonous snakes (rattlesnake and copperhead). Killing of snakes is prohibited.
- Learn to identify and avoid poison ivy and stinging nettles.
- Use an insect repellent and check yourself carefully for ticks – ticks can carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme Disease, and both have been reported from the park.



## Trail Stewardship – Get Involved!



If you use and love the trails of Mammoth Cave National Park, you can make a difference in keeping them in good condition. Contact the Park Volunteer Coordinator at (270)758-2143 or go online to [www.nps.gov/maca/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm](http://www.nps.gov/maca/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm) to find out how you can help.

## Report All Accidents & Emergencies!

Police, Fire or Ambulance: **911**

Mammoth Cave NP Ranger Station: **270-758-2115**

To report suspicious activity in the Park, contact **ParkWatch**

Toll-Free, **(888)219-1599** or email [PWatch@nps.gov](mailto:PWatch@nps.gov). You may remain anonymous.

**Park Info:** (270)758-2180 | [www.nps.gov/maca](http://www.nps.gov/maca)

# Backcountry Trail Distances

Trail	miles	km
Big Hollow Trail North Loop	5.3	8.6
Big Hollow Trail North Loop Shortcut	0.1	0.2
Big Hollow Trail South Loop	3.7	6.0
Blair Springs Hollow Trail	1.8	2.9
Bluffs Campsite Trail	0.6	1.0
Buffalo Creek Trail	4.4	7.0
Collie Ridge Trail	3.8	6.2
Collie Ridge Campsite Trail	0.7	1.1
Dry Prong Trail	2.4	3.9
Ferguson Campsite Trail	0.6	0.9
First Creek Trail	6.3	10.2
First Creek Campsite 1 Trail	0.3	0.5
First Creek Campsite 2 Trail	0.1	0.1
Homestead Campsite Trail	0.3	0.4
Maple Springs Trail	1.0	1.6
Maple Springs Campground Trail	0.2	0.3
McCoy Hollow Trail	6.4	10.3
McCoy Hollow Campsite Trail	0.2	0.2
Miles-Davis Cemetery Trail	0.4	0.6
Mill Branch Trail	3.0	4.8
Raymer Hollow Trail	6.3	10.0
Raymer Hollow Campsite Trail	0.1	0.2
Research Center Trail	<0.1	<0.1
Sal Hollow Trail	8.6	13.8
Sal Hollow Campsite Trail	0.1	0.2
Second Creek Campsite Trail	0.2	0.3
Stables Trail	0.3	0.4
Three Springs Campsite Trail	0.1	0.2
Turnhole Bend Trail	1.8	2.9
Wet Prong Trail	4.6	7.4
White Oak Trail	2.5	4.0

## “Leave No Trace” Guidelines

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors

## Let Us Know Where You’re Going

Even if you only plan on a short hike or a quick ride, take a moment to sign in at the trailhead register.

The backcountry can be hazardous, and in the event of an emergency, the information you leave in the register will allow rangers to bring help more quickly. *Remember – your cell phone may have no reception in the backcountry’s hills and hollows.*

