



ADRIENNE YANCY ILLUSTRATION

Meadow Creek WMA

MEADOW CREEK WILDLIFE Management Area highlights, on a small scale, how a larger expanse of the surrounding landscape appeared long ago.

The 232-acre property in Wayne County sits on the divide of two ecoregions just south of Lake Cumberland and was once part of a sprawling wetland complex.

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet restored the property's wetland habitat as part of a mitigation project then donated it to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. It opened for public use in August.

"It's a small piece of property but, boy, it is a unique piece of property," said Mike Strunk, Southeast Wildlife Region coordinator for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

The wildlife management area (WMA) will appeal to hunters, birders and naturalists.

It is open for public hunting under statewide regulations for nearly all seasons; it is closed, however, for the October muzzleloader and modern gun deer seasons.

"You might find a honey hole for some deer," said Mike Hardin, an assistant Fisheries Division director who worked on the mitigation project before joining Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

Meadow Creek WMA is a relatively flat property surrounded by farmland. A finger of a hardwood wetland forest extends onto a portion of the property, offering a glimpse of what the mitigation project sought to achieve with extensive plantings

of native wetland trees. Restored areas are in the early successional phase and the vegetation is dense.

"Deer can get into the thickets and find refuge, and if we have typically dry fall conditions, they may be in there after the moisture in some of the plants that are still growing," Hardin said. "You could find some squirrels and deer in that back section of woods. It's not very big but there are some oaks in there and some of those bottomland oaks produce big acorns."

Visitors will note coastal plains species of oaks typically found in western Kentucky.

"Keep in mind, this is in south-central Kentucky in the Upper Cumberland," Hardin said. "You have willow oak, swamp white oak, swamp chestnut oak and water oak. Water oak typically is found in a coastal plain, which in Kentucky only exists in the Jackson Purchase. For that to occur in Kentucky so far away from its normal distribution is pretty unique."

The WMA is also one of a few places in Kentucky that harbors the least trillium wildflower. Another curiosity is the presence of sphagnum moss. Sphagnum moss is most associated with northern latitudes and higher elevations, so seeing it in close proximity to coastal plains species is rare, Hardin said.

"If you like to get outside, it's a nice little place to get away," Hardin said. ■

HOW TO GET THERE

From Monticello, travel east on KY 90 for 9.5 miles, turn right (south) onto KY 1619 and proceed 1.8 miles to the parking area on the right. From Burnside, travel west on KY 90 for 7 miles, turn left on KY 1619 and proceed 1.8 miles to the parking area on the right.

GPS coordinates:
36.9264, -84.7197

