

Kentucky River WMA

New Henry County tract offers fishing and hunting

By Lee McClellan

TRAVELERS IN HENRY County may notice a sign for Marshall Bottoms Road as they drive along KY 389 near the Kentucky River.

Family names are commonly reflected in the names of roads and river bottoms in Kentucky. In this case, the family is one of the most storied in American and Kentucky history.

“The name Marshall Bottom comes from the great-grandson of John Marshall, the fourth Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,” said Henry County Attorney Jennie Lee Harrod, who lives nearby. “The property stayed in the Marshall family until Stephen Boone bought it in the 1980s.”

Marshall served as chief justice from 1801 to 1835 – the longest term in the court’s history.

Marshall Bottom Road forms the southern boundary of the newly acquired 926-acre Boone Tract of Kentucky River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The tract isn’t named for explorer Daniel Boone, but for former owner Stephen Boone. He painstakingly worked the property for years to build lakes and improve the farm.

This popular new area encompasses Kentucky River bottomland with an 88-acre lake formed from an old backwater of the river. Fittingly, this lake was named in honor of former Fisheries Director and Deputy Commissioner Benjy Kinman, who retired



EDDIE ROBERTS PHOTO

Geoff Roberts with a bass caught in Benjy Kinman Lake.

A sign at the ramp advises anglers that Benjy Kinman Lake currently is catch and release for largemouth bass, and that boaters can only use their trolling motors while on the lake.

“We are pleasantly surprised by the quality of largemouth bass and crappie in these lakes, especially in Benjy Kinman Lake,” said Ron Brooks, director of fisheries for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. “People are catching lots of bluegill. It is pleasing to see how many people are using these lakes and enjoying the great fishing.”

Just across the road lies a 6½-acre lake with abundant black crappie, bluegill and many medium-sized largemouth bass. A parking lot is located next to this lake. A gated road at this lot leads to another 15-acre lake, which is currently accessible by foot travel only. The upper lake has a healthy

population of bluegill and black crappie. Largemouth bass here generally run under 15 inches.

A 4½-acre lake, separated by a small dam from Benjy Kinman Lake, holds many eating-sized bluegills.

Lakes are open under statewide regulations for fishing, but anglers must observe the information on signs posted at each lake.

The property also gives Kentucky hunters a new place for deer, turkey, squirrels and waterfowl. “It is an incredible piece of property for wildlife,” said Derek Beard, wildlife coordinator for the Bluegrass Region. “It is close to hunters in Louisville, Lexington and northern Kentucky as well.”

Initial surveys by wildlife biologists in-

earlier this year from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Three other fishing lakes on the tract also offer excellent fishing for bluegill, crappie, largemouth bass and catfish.

“It is a wonderful property, one of the best we’ve acquired since I’ve been here,” said Tony Wheatley, land acquisition coordinator for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. “The public now has a premier place to come hunt, fish and enjoy outdoor recreation.”

Anglers reported catches of largemouth bass in excess of 5 pounds from Benjy Kinman Lake last summer. Boaters may access the lake via a gravel ramp that will be upgraded this winter to a concrete ramp more suited for larger boats.



EXPANDS

dedicate a healthy population of white-tailed deer and wild turkeys on the property. Beard said workers marking the boundaries saw many nice deer. The area is open for archery, crossbow and youth firearms deer hunting.

Wild turkeys inhabit mainly the 576 acres of woodlands located in the southern section of the area. "The big wooded ridge up from the croplands to the south of KY 389, we see turkeys every time we go there," Beard said.

Squirrels are abundant due to the number of nut bearing trees, especially red and white oaks. "It wouldn't take long to get a limit of squirrels," Beard said.

Some rabbits live along the edges of

Lakes on the WMA are great places for anglers in kayaks and canoes.



OBIE WILLIAMS PHOTO

crop fields and fence rows. To improve habitat for rabbits and quail, the department plans to plant 30- to 50-foot wide strips of native warm season grasses and other plants along field borders.

Plans also call for shrub corridors of wild plums, dogwoods and more to connect isolated or fragmented habitat. Approximately 10 percent of the small grains crops grown on the area will be left for wildlife.

Waterfowlers will be able to hunt the area when duck and goose seasons open Thanksgiving Day. "A 100 meter buffer will be marked around the eagle nest on Benjy Kinman Lake," Beard said. "The area will close to waterfowl hunting at 2 p.m."

Great fishing, ample deer and turkey populations, waterfowl hunting – the new Boone Tract offers a feast of fall outdoor opportunities. ■



RICK HILL PHOTO

BENJY KINMAN

The state's newest public lake at Kentucky River Wildlife Management Area is named in honor of Benjy Kinman.

Kinman served as a fisheries biologist, research biologist, fisheries director then deputy commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources before retiring in February after 38 years with the agency.

While he spearheaded efforts to establish a trophy striped bass fishery in Lake Cumberland and trophy trout in the lake's tailwater, his most lasting legacy is the development of Cedar Creek Lake.

Kinman realized a road realignment project in Lincoln County could be used as a dam to create the state's first new lake since Taylorsville in 1983. Once the idea was accepted, he worked to ensure Cedar Creek Lake would be built from the bottom up as a bass lake. Kinman even closed the valve to begin filling it.

Today, Cedar Creek is the state's only designated trophy largemouth bass lake, drawing anglers from throughout the region.