



File Code: 1900

Date: July 1, 2010

Dear Friend of Land Between The Lakes:

The US Forest Service Land Between The Lakes (LBL) National Recreation Area is seeking your involvement for proposed backcountry, day-use, and lake access area changes per the National Environmental Policy Act. This proposal incorporates comments from two previous public involvement efforts. No decisions have been made and the Forest Service would like to receive input on the specific changes proposed.

Background

LBL's Land and Resource Management Plan (Area Plan) outlines the fact that long-term sustainability of recreation areas such as backcountry campsites, day-use areas, and lake access areas represent a significant challenge to the Forest Service. Backcountry campsites are typically more isolated than developed campgrounds and usually have boat ramps. They are very popular amongst visitors seeking solitude and easy access to the lake. The dispersed, unplanned, and scattered nature of these backcountry campsites makes them increasingly difficult to maintain. Certain backcountry areas are underutilized, are not universally accessible, or don't meet the needs of today's users. With the backcountry, day-use, and lake access area project, LBL aims to reallocate resources in order to deliver the mix of sustainable recreational experiences that visitors want. Proposed changes could include consolidating or relocating lake access ramps to meet visitor demands. The development at Level 2 and 3 campgrounds would also be evaluated for possible consolidation, decommissioning, or change in use emphasis based on user need and cost effectiveness.

Purpose and Need for Action(s)

Numerous backcountry sites were never planned, but instead were "user made". Sites were simply established where roads ended after the lakes were built. In some cases this led to sites being built in environmentally unsuitable locations. The dispersed nature of these sites makes it very difficult to maintain all necessary infrastructure, combat erosion, and prevent vegetation degradation. During LBL's Area Planning process visitors voiced a desire for more swimming areas and modernized boat ramps. LBL could improve overall lake recreation by increasing trailer parking in certain areas, facilitating boat launching and retrieval by improving boat ramps, or improving access to existing fishing and swimming areas. In order to offer users the recreational opportunities they desire, LBL will work with communities to determine how best to efficiently allocate resources.



Proposed Action(s)

LBL Staff proposes over the course of 5 years making changes to backcountry, day-use, and lake access areas. These changes could include converting some camping areas to day-use areas or reducing services. At other campgrounds, amenities such as electricity, picnic tables, playgrounds, shower buildings, and fire rings could be upgraded. Certain 24-hour generator areas may be moved in order to provide for people who need access to electricity. Annual Backcountry fees could be raised from \$20 to \$30 and the 3-day permit could be raised from \$5 to \$7; changes would take effect March 2011. Some roads could be improved in order to facilitate recreation opportunities; others may be closed because they are not sustainable. Re-vegetation and erosion control measures would occur in some areas.

See attachment for a complete list of proposed changes.

Project Area

The project area includes backcountry, day-use, and lake access areas scattered throughout LBL. For a list of sites in which changes are proposed refer to the attached list of this document.

Public Involvement

The public scoping process is to determine alternatives to be considered and issues to be addressed in the development of these proposed actions. These proposed actions are not decided matters. I invite your comments and suggestions about this project. Sharing specific concerns with us early in the process will lead to a collaborative approach in resolving those concerns. Please send your comments to: Janice Wilson, Land Between The Lakes NRA, 100 Van Morgan Drive, Golden Pond, KY 42211; e-mail: comments-southern-land-between-lakes@fs.fed.us; or telephone (270) 924-2034.

To be most useful, your comments should be received by **Monday, September 6, 2010**.

Sincerely,

/s/ William P. Lisowsky
WILLIAM P. LISOWSKY
Area Supervisor

Enclosure

PROPOSED LBL BACKCOUNTRY, DAY-USE, & LAKE ACCESS AREA CHANGES

1. **Increase Annual Backcountry Fee**—Increase fee from \$20 to \$30 per person over the age of 18. Money from fee increase will be used for general maintenance and operations at backcountry and dispersed camping sites.
2. **Bacon Creek Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--Close and decommission boat ramp and camping area. Wranglers Campground will utilize it as a wagon/horse riding destination/picnic area. However, this area will not close until Devil's Elbow Ramp is reopened.
3. **Bards Lake Access (Road 384-Bards Lake)**--This was the unofficial ramp to the northern access to Bards Lake. We will leave this as is, if it is possible to launch from Gatlin Point. If it is not possible to launch from Gatlin, the boat ramp on Rd 384 will be improved, placed on maps, signage will be provided on the Trace indicating a ramp. The area around the ramp will be closed to camping to facilitate launching and retrieval of boats.
4. **Birmingham Ferry Campground and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--When we do a site plan we will use evaluation criteria to look at high maintenance sites in Yale as candidates for rehabilitation or closure. It will remain open for camping.
5. **Bison Hideaway Trailhead (Model Trail)**--Trailhead will remain open until equestrian reroute of the Model Trail is complete. The trailhead will then be decommissioned.
6. **Boswell Landing Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--Look for other trailer parking opportunities, keeping all campsites open. Example: graveling the clearing east of the cemetery. Will require additional project level NEPA.
7. **Cravens Bay Campground and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--Close back section (sites 22 to 31) from November to March 1, annually. Gate seasonally.
8. **Demumbers Bay Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--No change to campground and boat ramp. Improve road by repaving and reworking road drainage. Encourage use as a swimming area.

9. **Devil's Elbow Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**—Close area to camping following construction of the 68/80 highway. Bank fishing access improvements are part of the 68/80 highway project. Camping around the ramp and developed recreation area boundary will be prohibited. Day-Use only. Additional fishing access will be provided. Also proposing to close area east of Devil's Elbow along Rd 159 to camping to reduce resource impacts.
10. **Eddyville Ferry Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--Close to camping; boat access only.
11. **Fenton Campground and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**—Redesign campground once the 68/80 bridge construction is complete. The ramp may be expanded in conjunction with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. This would be completed with the bridge construction.
12. **Fords Bay Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**—Improve gravel ramp. Ramp will be improved. Ramp will be placed on maps and directional signage will be added. The area around the ramp will be closed to camping. However, this would not be done until Bacon Creek Backcountry Area is closed. Need to clear more area for truck/trailer parking. Camping would be allowed outside parking area.
13. **Gatlin Point Campground and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--The access to Bards Lake will be improved within the campground (next to site 11). However, if we are unable to do so because of shallow water (insufficient for launching), there will not be any changes to Gatlin Point (See Bards Lake Access-Rd 384).
14. **Ginger Bay Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--Develop rehabilitation plan for continued Backcountry Camping. Close a small area around the boat ramp to facilitate launching and retrieval of boats.
15. **Grays Landing Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**—Close area to camping and become a Day-Use Area with an allowance for night fishing. Develop rehabilitation plan to repair highly impacted/eroded areas.
16. **Hematite Picnic Area and Trail System (Hematite Lake)**--Add parking curbs to define trailhead parking. Add bollard post (removable) to block access to road beyond SST. No vehicle access to Hematite Lake. Currently, vehicles drive up that road and gradually park farther and farther off the road, compacting soil and inhibiting vegetation growth. The current road was never intended to be a road. Add sign for trailhead direction.

17. **Honker Lake Day-Use Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--Add a sign to existing signs on roadways and add to maps, as this area is good for fishing and swimming (currently, there is not a sign or publication that directs the public to this area). Would upgrade with picnic tables and toilet if we drop either South Bison Picnic Area or South Trailhead (by The Homeplace), as the Area Plan called for no net effect on picnic areas. Continue no camping.
18. **Jones Creek Campground and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--Close area around the boat ramp to camping to allow for boat trailers. Area will become a dispersed area, remove all tables and fire rings, and stop mowing (except around ramp). Backcountry rules and regulations will apply. Could become part of a larger Day-Use Area proposal being considered in the long-range Rushing Creek Facility Plan.
19. **Kuttawa Landing Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**— Remain open to camping, remove all tables, fire rings, stop mowing, and remove from publications. Will become a general dispersed area. No maintenance.
20. **Moss Creek Day-Use**--No change proposed.
21. **Neville Bay Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--Upgrade camping area with more tables and fire rings. Encourage use as a swimming area.
22. **Nickell Branch Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Barkley Lake)**--No change proposed.
23. **Pisgah Point Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--Close off access to user made roads along the water's edge. Re-vegetate impacted area once closure is in place. Re-open re-vegetated area to foot traffic and tent camping only once re-established. Evaluate the area around the cemetery fence; possible closure to camping due to vandalism of fence.
24. **Redd Hollow Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--Allow 24-hour generator use in the campground. This is mitigation for closing Jones Creek (currently a 24-hour generator area).

25. **Rushing Creek Campground**--The Forest Service will complete a business plan to evaluate the feasibility of electrical hookup upgrades, playground improvements, and a replacement all-season shower house.
26. **Shaw Branch Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**—Decommission boat ramp, remove from maps, and remove signage.
27. **Smith Bay Campground and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--Change status from Lake Access Area to Backcountry Area, which will require a Backcountry Camping Permit for each camper 18 years and older.
28. **Sugar Bay Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--No changes proposed.
29. **Taylor Bay Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Lake Barkley)**--No change to current status as Backcountry Area. Consider upgrade to level 4 when the status of Turkey Bay camping is decided.
30. **Twin Lakes North Backcountry Area (Kentucky Lake)**--Add tables and fire rings from other areas to popular camping spots in Twin Lakes North.
31. **Twin Lakes South Backcountry Area and Boat Ramp (Kentucky Lake)**--Close area with gate November 1 through March 1, annually. Place boulders to close out existing, badly eroded camping area near water. Re-vegetate area after closed. Camping allowed on top of hill above boat ramp. After area is rehabilitated, allow tent camping and foot traffic only.
32. **Road 232**-- A new trailhead and reconstruction of a trail with interpretative panels is proposed from Road 232 to highlight the historical Fort Henry site. There is also a no camping area proposed between Piney Bay, Panther Bay, Forest Service Road 205, and Pickett Loop Trail to protect some of the historic features of the Fort Henry site. Boswell Landing Backcountry Area is not part of the camping closure.