METROPOLIS LAKE State Nature Preserve in western McCracken County is one of the most popular preserves in the nature preserve system. Named for the 50-acre lake on the Ohio River floodplain, the preserve provides 123 acres of important habitat for rare species and recreational opportunities. The land and 48 acres of the lake were purchased in 1984 by the Commission with the help of The Nature Conservancy. The Tennessee Valley Authority owns the westernmost two acres of Metropolis Lake and the adjacent land. Through a voluntary, non-binding registry agreement, TVA has agreed to help protect the natural integrity of the lake. Since 1984, the Commission has worked with local citizens to maintain the delicate balance between rare species protection and consumptive recreation use.

Metropolis Lake is one of the few remaining naturally formed bodies of water in the state that has not been developed. Despite its tranquil appearance today, Metropolis Lake has had an exciting past. From 1922 to 1951 the lake was a thriving recreational area run by a local family. At one time the area had a concession building that sold cold drinks, sandwiches, and fishing supplies. Nearby were several rental cabins and a lighted baseball field. Metropolis Lake became a major stepping-stone in the political circuit. People came from hundreds of miles away to hear the politicians, including former Kentucky Governor Happy Chandler and former U.S. Vice President Alben Barkley, speak at rallies held on the grounds.

The shouts of crowds are now replaced by the rattling calls of kingfishers echoing across the water as the birds flit from tree to tree. The bald cypress and swamp tupelo trees that have encircled the spring-fed lake for hundreds of years are solemn sentinels mirrored in the still waters. Ouachita map turtles and red-eared sliders can be seen basking on fallen logs. Bald eagles and osprey are occasional visitors here and turkeys can be seen foraging through the woods ahead of quiet hikers. Beavers work diligently, their presence betrayed only by a spreading V behind a floating branch and the paths worn between the water's edge and freshly cut trees. An array of colorful spring wildflowers trace the roadside and carpet the wooded slopes rising up from the floodplain. In the spring, the preserve offers great opportunities to observe the migration of warblers. Watch for the golden flash of prothonotary warblers as they build their nests in tree cavities. Summer brings out the brilliant red of cardinal flowers along the lake's edge and the accompanying chorus of frogs. The tardy visitor will hear the calls of barred owls as dusk falls on the preserve.

A short interpretive trail meanders through the preserve's uplands and follows the lakeshore back to the parking area. The underlying geology here consists of Quaternary alluvium (silt, sand, and gravel) but the higher bluffs and slopes also contain wind-blown silt and clay called loess. This basin lies parallel to the Ohio River and in flood conditions the water level of the lake can reach the base of the bluffs, inundating the parking area to a depth of ten feet or more!

Due to the long history of use by anglers, fishing is an authorized activity at this preserve. Protecting the water resources at Metropolis Lake is vital to the survival of several rare fish species that inhabit the lake. These include the cypress minnow, the red-spotted sunfish, and the taillight shiner, shown on the cover of this brochure. The rules adapted for use on the lake must be followed if fishing is to remain an acceptable activity on the preserve. These rules include: electric motors only; rod and reel only (no gill nets, jugs, or trotlines); no camping or picnicking; no hunting or trapping; and please be off the water and out of the preserve by dusk.

For more information please contact:

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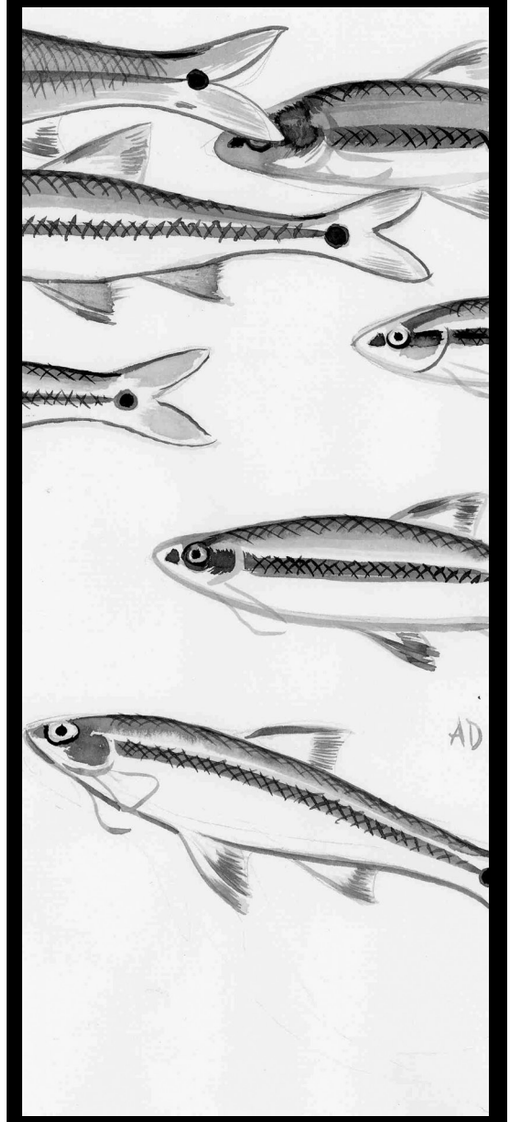
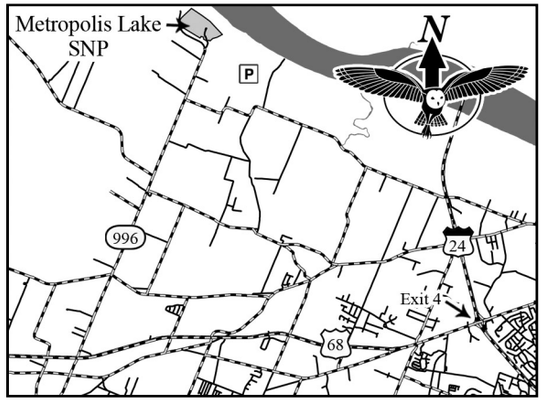
Kentucky UNBRIDLED SPIRIT

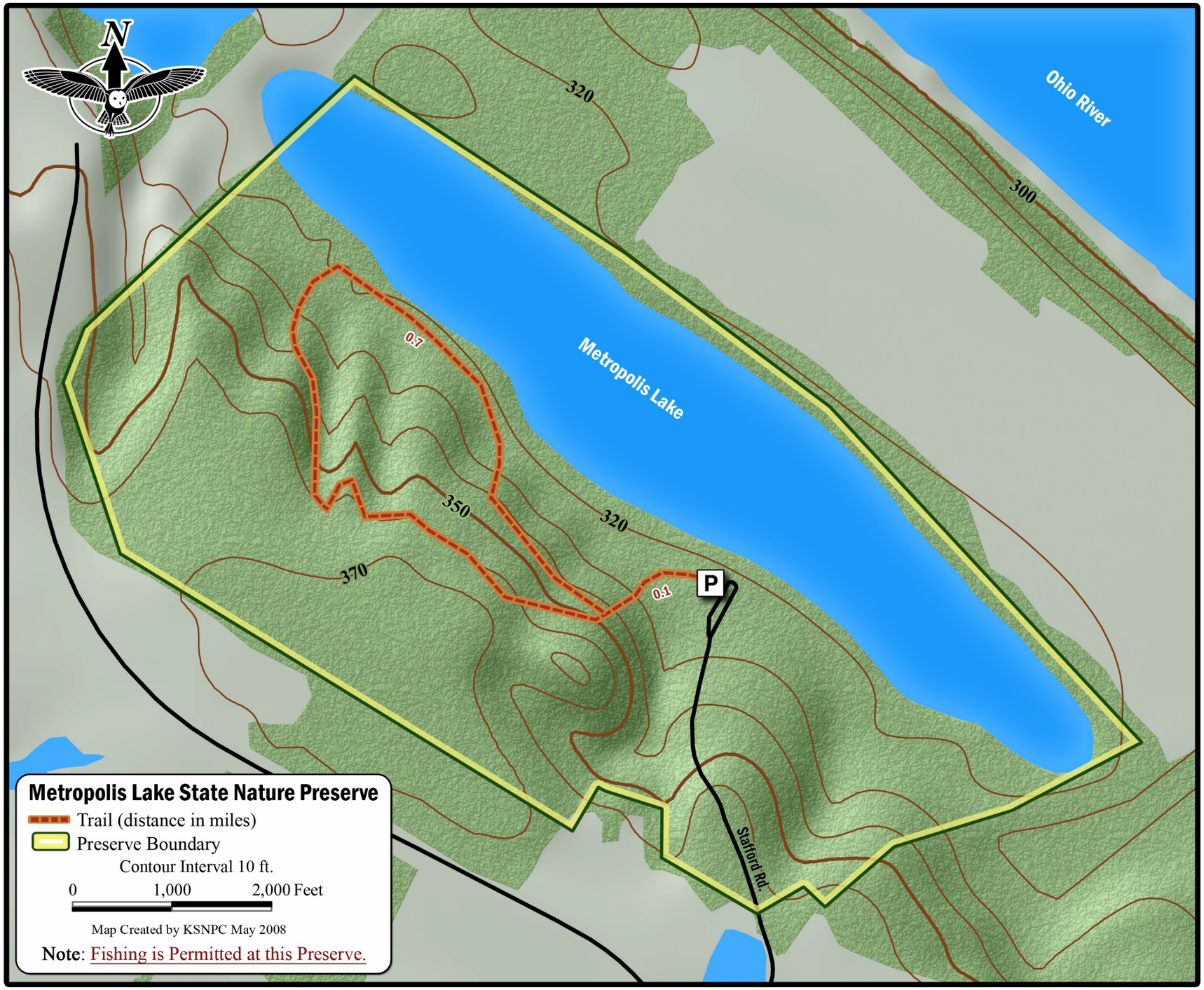
METROPOLIS LAKE
STATE NATURE PRESERVE





The preserve is in McCracken County. From the Junction of I-24 and US 60 in Paducah, follow US 60 west for 7.0 miles, then turn right on KY 996 for 5.5 miles. Turn right onto Stafford Road and veer right. Drive past the gate to the lake parking area.

Help protect Kentucky's natural heritage by observing State Nature Preserves rules.

1. Preserves are open sunrise to sunset.
2. Trails are open to **foot-traffic only**. The established trail system provides the safest and best way to travel through the preserve. Visitors must not re-route or shortcut the existing trail system.
3. Motorized vehicles, as well as horseback riding, biking, climbing and rappelling are prohibited because of their destructive impacts to trails and natural features.
4. Possession of drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
5. Possession of firearms is prohibited.
6. Hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting of plant, animals, rocks, artifacts and other items are prohibited.
7. Camping, picnicking, building fires, audio equipment and pets are prohibited.
8. Remember to pack out your trash.

These RULES are established by 400 KAR 2:090. Any person in violation of this regulation may be liable for a civil penalty of $1000 per day and possible criminal prosecution as provided for in KRS 224.