

KAYAKING IN AND AROUND WARREN COUNTY/BOWLING GREEN

<https://www.wku.edu/blueways/documents/wcky-blueways-map.pdf> -

Good printable map of all the Blueways in Warren County – put in and take out locations

<https://www.warrenpc.org/webmaps/>

COUNTY PARKS LAKES

1. Basil Griffin Park Lake (2055 Three Springs Road) – 33-acre lake
2. Shanty Hollow Lake (1200 Shanty Hollow Road) – 135-acre lake

WEST FORK OF DRAKES CREEK

1. Ditmore Road to Sadler Ford Road (Simpson County) 10 miles

This float begins near Franklin at the low water bridge on Ditmore Ford Road and concludes about 10 miles downstream at the Sadler Ford Road access. Paddlers may also launch upstream at the Franklin-Simpson Parks and Recreation Park in Franklin, but this requires an arduous portage around the low water bridge at Ditmore Ford Road. The park does provide wading access to the creek. Fisheries personnel with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife recommend this float for spring to early summer when West Fork is flowing considerably higher than fall. Paddlers should plan for considerable dragging and carrying of boats through the many long, shallow stretches found at this time of year on this float. It better suits straight paddling and its length leaves little time in fall for fishing. Paddlers should put in early and plan to take out late. The two bridges at KY 1171 (Blackjack Road) and KY 1434 (Salmons-Blackjack Road) encountered on this float are not public access spots. The West Fork of Drakes Creek is a great fall destination.

2. Sadler Ford Bridge (Simpson County) to Woody Atkinson Rd. Bridge (Simpson County) 5.5-6.5 miles

The first of the float begins at the Sadler Ford Road bridge access (also known as Clay Starks Road) and concludes roughly 5 ½ miles downstream at the Woody Atkinson Road bridge access (also known as Barnes School Road). Look for the sign for Berrylicious Orchards on KY 240 for Sadler Ford Road. Be sure to observe the posted signs concerning parking at both of these access spots and respect the posted private property. The first bend to the left (looking downstream) of this float reveals the gorgeous, exposed rock and gorge-like setting on the lower sections of West Fork of Drakes Creek. The creek makes several sharp bends in the first bit of this float. After a hard left bend, a little more than a mile into this float, the West Fork flows straight to the north for a stretch. The creek then enters into a series of bends with some exposed rock. The roar of commerce moving on I-65 soon surrounds paddlers as the West Fork flows underneath. Just after I-65, the creek bends to the right and soon back to the left. After the last bend to the left, the creek flows over a shallow bar and drops into a long, tranquil hole. At normal flows, the take-out at the low water bridge of Woody Atkinson Road comes into view. This style of bridge, called a slab in some parts of the country, allows water to flow through drainage culverts under the surface of the structure. Paddlers must avoid these culverts at all costs; the best take-out is on the left

3. 240 Woodburn Allen Spg. Rd. (Simpson County) to Johnson County Park on Mnt. Lebanon Church Rd. (Trammel Fork of Drakes Creek) (Warren County) – 4.5 – 6 miles

The next float begins at the Woody Atkinson Road access and ends about 4 ½ miles downstream at the KY 622 access (Plano Road) in Warren County. The shuttle for this float is to the north, via KY 240. The West Fork bends to the left at the beginning of this float before flowing back to the right and entering a more entrenched stretch with some tan-colored small bluffs. Anglers should

work the outside rocky bends for smallmouth bass in this section. The stream is relatively straight before flowing in an "S" shape. The fallen trees in the creek flows serenely for a good ways before making a series of bends with some gorgeous exposed rock. After making a long bend to the left, the West Fork makes a hard bend right and the KY 622 Bridge comes into view. The take-out is on the left, immediately downstream of the bridge. Warren County Parks and Recreation provides a small parking area on the north side of this bridge that parallels the road. Do not block private driveways or farm gates while using this access.

<https://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/West-Fork-of-Drakes-Creek.aspx>

DRAKES CREEK

1. 240 Woodburn Allen Springs Road (Allen County/Warren County Line) to Romanza Johnson Park (Warren County) 6 miles

This float is on the main stem of Drakes Creek. It begins at the KY 240 Bridge near Drake and concludes roughly five miles later at Romanza Johnson Park. Boaters need to paddle a short distance up Trammel Fork to the park which enters Drakes Creek on the right.

2. Romanza Johnson Park to Phil Moore Park (Warren County) 6 miles (this is the most popular float in Warren County)

This float begins at Romanza Johnson Park and ends about six miles downstream at Phil Moore Park in U.S. 231 near Bowling Green. This stretch is perfect for paddlers who want to spend a day on the water without worrying about time or difficulty of paddling. Both of these parks close at dusk. Two take-outs await paddlers at Phil Moore Park. One is on the left just upstream of the U.S. 231 Bridge. Warren County Parks and Recreation installed a concrete pad for paddlers to land boats and gain their footing in current before ascending the steps to the parking area. The other take-out is about one mile downstream around a bend to the left. Look for a small set of concrete steps.

3. Phil Moore Park to 231 Old Scottsville Road (Warren County) 6 miles

The last float on Drakes Creek begins at Phil Moore Park and ends about five miles downstream at the KY 2629 Bridge on Old Scottsville Road. The KY 2629 Bridge access has extremely limited parking and a long carry. Do not block the farm gates while parking vehicles here.

<https://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Trammel-Fork,-Middle-Fork-and-main-stem-of-Drakes-Creek.aspx>

BARREN RIVER

Above Dam

1. Tailwater Recreation Area to KY 101 Bridge (Allen County) 13 miles

The float begins at the Tailwater Recreation Area just below Barren River Lake dam and ends roughly 13 miles downstream at the Barren River #3 Voluntary Public Access Area (VPA) under the KY 101 Bridge. The Tailwater Recreation Area lies near the historic ford at the lost community of Port Oliver, where bison and Native Americans crossed Barren River for centuries before the arrival of Europeans. This section is ideal smallmouth bass habitat with long stretches of gravelly shoals rimmed with water willow. Several small islands and sandbars punctuate the river in this stretch at lower water levels. Those who plan to float this section should launch at daybreak and plan to take out near dark.

2. KY 101 Bridge to Martinsville Ford Road off 234 (Allen County) 4 miles

The next float begins at the Barren River #3 VPA at the KY 101 Bridge and ends at the Claypool Ramp on Martinsville Ford Road off KY 234 (Cemetery Road) in Warren County. The road to Martinsville Ford runs on the north and south sides of Barren River, but for shuttle length and parking, the Claypool Ramp on the south side of the river is much better. This section of Barren River has many subtle turns with outside bends strewn with gravel. This stretch also has several islands and rock bars that pinch the Barren and increase its flow. About three-quarters of the way through this float, Little Difficult Creek enters the Barren on the left (looking downstream). Just downstream of Little Difficult Creek, the Barren flows around a large island. This island should be run on the right. A short distance downstream from the island, Bays Fork enters Barren River on the left.

3. Martinsville Ford to Iron Bridge Road (Warren County) 6 miles

Martinsville at one time was an important shipping center for tobacco, timber and farm produce bound for Evansville and Louisville. It was one of the most economically vibrant cities on Barren River in the early 1800s until Bowling Green rose in prominence and Martinsville faded into extinction. The river flows into what old timers call Wickliffe Bottom just after the put-in. A long-forgotten legend held that Native Americans in the decades before the arrival of the pioneer's buried gold and treasure in a cave in this area. A newspaper account from the early 1900s stated several local people searched for this lost treasure, but like the legendary Swift's Silver Mine in the Red River Gorge region, the treasure remains elusive to this day. This stretch of Barren River grows more scenic as it flows toward Iron Bridge. About two miles downstream of Martinsville Ford, the Barren makes a sharp turn to the right, forming impressive bluffs. After a straight stretch, the Barren turns back to the left and flows around some islands. The Barren again turns left around an arching bend with a large, scenic bluff greeting the paddler on the north shore of the river. The take-out at Iron Bridge is just downstream. The carry-out for boats at Iron Bridge is on the south side of the Barren; however, extremely limited parking exists at this access.

4. Bays Fork of Barren River – Cemetery Road to Martinsville Ford (Warren County) 4 miles

A fun, roughly 4-mile side float is on Bays Fork of Barren River. The put-in is on the KY 234 (Cemetery Road) Bridge with the take-out on Barren River at Martinsville Ford. The Bays Fork flows small and intimate. Parking at the KY 234 Bridge is limited and requires a substantial carry to put in a boat.

<https://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Barren-River-Below-the-Dam.aspx>

<https://fw.ky.gov/Fish/Pages/Lower-Barren-River.aspx>

Below Dam

5. State Street Bridge (State Street turns in to River Street) to Boat Landing Park (1212 Boatlanding Road) – (Warren County) 6 miles

*speed depends on how fast river is moving
A gravel ramp and bank fishing access is located below the pedestrian bridge on the opposite side of the river of Riverview Park. This site is suitable for small john boats, canoes and kayaks. Boater should use caution if boating upstream toward the dam. Please follow all posted signs and do not block the driveway to the river.*

6. Boat Landing to Lonnie White Park at Thomas Landing (Warren County) 8 miles

This section of Barren River is pooled from the influence of Lock and Dam 1 located near Greencastle, KY. There is a single lane concrete ramp that is suitable for all boats. A gravel parking lot provides plenty of parking. There is an area adjacent to the ramp that is suitable for bank anglers. Please respect the boundary marks and take notice that this park closes at dusk.

<https://fw.ky.gov/Fish/Pages/Lower-Barren-River.aspx>

GASPER RIVER

1. Old River Road to Hullett Lane (Logan County) 4-6 miles

The first six-mile float begins in northeastern Logan County on the River Road Bridge (also listed as New Harmony-Richelieu Road on some maps) near the defunct community of Richelieu. The take-out lies at the end of Hullett Lane off KY 1083 (Galloway Mill Road). This take-out holds room for only two vehicles and is close to a home, so users should tread lightly and ask permission. This section of the Gasper flows through rolling farmland with fairly high banks composed of rock and dirt. The Gasper breaks apart forming flowing braids of water around islands in this section and may require some dragging in summer. The take-out is on your left (looking downstream) and easily missed. Look for several power lines crossing the river.

2. Hullett Lane to 1083 Access (Warren County) 3 – 3 ½ miles

The next float begins at Hullett Lane and concludes roughly three and one-half miles downstream at the KY 1083 Bridge. This float features stream drops, rock gardens, islands and plunge pools. The take-out at the KY 1083 Bridge is steep with minimal parking. Paddlers must carry out their boats on the right upstream side of the bridge and should get landowner permission. Paddlers may continue for about five miles to the next take-out at the KY 626 Bridge (Jackson Bridge Road) for a full day of floating. Just before the KY 1083 Bridge, Clear Fork of Gasper River meets the main Gasper River on the right, adding flow, depth and width to the river. The river begins to change character at this juncture as more exposed bluffs greet the paddle. The last few miles of this run have sizeable rock gardens that grow to interesting rapids with higher flow. The most scenic stream bluffs in southern Kentucky rise above the paddler from the Gasper carving its way through the millennia down into the Barren River hills in this part of Warren County.

3. Jackson Bridge (626) to Morgantown Road (Warren County) 4 miles

This float of a little over three and one-half miles begins at the KY 626 Bridge and ends at the U.S. 231(Morgantown Road) Bridge near the community of Hadley. Paddlers using this access must park on the north side of KY 626 between a metal fence post and the bridge with room for three vehicles. A working farm surrounds this access and users must not park on the south side of KY 626 or block farm gates. Tread lightly and do not linger when using this access. Just after flowing under the KY 626 Bridge, the Gasper takes a hard left into a rapid that rises to Class II at higher water levels. This rapid is known as Put-In Rapid and followed by what whitewater paddlers call Surfers as the Gasper takes a bend to the right. Surfers Rapid has some standing waves for whitewater kayakers to surf. A short way downstream is a series of standing waves known as Retreat Rapid, named for the Catholic Retreat Center on the left side of the river. Retreat Rapid is followed by Barking Dog Rapid as the river turns hard to the left. These rapids present a fun, but fairly easy, challenge to experienced whitewater paddlers, but can upset the boats of the inexperienced. If you can hear Put-In Rapid roaring and the river is full of the right-hand bluff to the left bank at the KY 626 Bridge, then only experienced whitewater paddlers should launch. At normal summer flows, these rapids become rock gardens that may require a walk through and drag. The Gasper flows tranquil for the remainder of this float with the take-out on the right at the U.S. 231 Bridge. Ample parking exists at this access, but don't block other vehicles.

4. Morgantown Road (Hwy 231) to Gasper/Barren Confluence (1435) (Warren County) 11 miles

This is a good run for beginners and families, but requires an early morning put in and a take-out at dusk if paddlers also plan to fish. A large parking area that holds up to 25 vehicles awaits at confluence of Gasper and Barren rivers at the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' Barren River #2 Voluntary Public Access (VPA) site. Paddlers should continue past the KY 1435 Bridge (Barren River Road) for a short distance and take out on the right-hand point

where the Gasper and Barren meet. The carry out is much easier than the steep one at the KY 1425 Bridge. On the downstream side of the Gasper River and Barren River confluence is the bluff known as Sally's Rock, named for Sally Beck. Her father was postmaster and owned a store near Barren River. Sally would wave a white handkerchief to steamboats passing on the river to send mail or announce news via a megaphone around the turn of the 20th Century. Steamboat captains and passengers alike looked forward to passing Sally's Rock, although a large portion of it fell into the Barren River in 1910. An interesting six-mile side float is to put in on Browning Road on the Clear Fork of Gasper River and paddle to the KY 1083 Bridge on the main Gasper River.

<https://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Gasper-River.aspx>

GREEN RIVER

1. **Dennison Ferry to Green River Ferry (Edmonson County) 8 miles**

Canoeists and kayakers may float the Green River right through the heart of Mammoth Cave National Park and witness one of the most unique geological areas on Earth. Mammoth Cave National Park is a World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve - recognition of the ecosystem's international importance. **The Dennison Ferry to Green River Ferry** float through the park gives paddlers an intimate experience with the power of flowing water and nature. The flow of Green River makes for an easy, relaxing float, perfect for families, beginners and anglers. about 3 - 4 hours-Good for beginners

2. **Nolin River Dam to Brownsville Ramp (Edmonson County) 11 miles**

This trip begins in the tailwaters of Nolin Lake, with the launch site at the foot of the beautiful Dismal Rock. A picturesque canopy of trees keeps you shaded through most of this trip, as it once did in the 1900s when steamboats transported asphalt downriver. The entire trip is abundant with many forms of wild plant and animal life. As you enter Green River at the mouth of Nolin, turn right and paddle downstream for three miles to Brownsville Ramp, where your trip ends. Geology instructors at Western Kentucky University often take their students on this excursion as a field trip to study the area's unique geological formations. 4 – 4 ½ hours

3. **Green River Ferry to Houchin Ferry (Edmonson County) 12 miles**

This trip begins at the Green River Ferry and lets you canoe the stream that helped form the mighty Mammoth Cave. It takes you through deep gorges and wooded hills with abundant wildlife. When the skies are clear, you'll experience a sunny day and pass sandy beaches and quaint islands where you can take a break or have a picnic. Approximately 5.5 hours

<https://greenrivercanoing.com/canoe-trips-cave/>

SUGAR CREEK

1. **The Slab by the Barren** (10820 Bugtussle Road, Fountain Run, KY) (Monroe County)

2 – 2 ½ miles (they have kayaking and tubing)

- Kayak rentals - \$40/all day – includes shuttle
- Tenting and kayaking rentals all year
- Tubing rentals and Water slide rentals – Each are \$15/all day separately
- To rent both tubing and water slide - \$25/all day
- Multiple floating options
- Tubing and water slide runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day
- Saturday and Sundays 10am – 4pm
- Contact # (812)653-0102
- Facebook - The Slab By The Barren Campground

<https://paddling.com/paddle/trips/the-slab-on-the-barrenBoat>

Boat Rentals

Drakes Creek Canoe LLC

Rafting/kayaking, Boating

Phil Moore Park, Alvaton, KY · (270) 781-3938

Shanty Hollow Rentals

875 Shanty Hollow Rd. Bowling Green, KY

(270)392-9981 · jgoodwin762@gmail.com

Green River:

Big Buffalo Crossing Canoe and Kayak

(270)-774-7883

Green River Canoeing

(270)-773-5712

Cave Country Canoe

(270)-773-5552

Mammoth Cave Canoe and Kayak

(877)-59-CANOE

Questions

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