

# *On the lakes*

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*For The Tennessean*

Water, water everywhere, and on just two local bodies of water — J. Percy Priest Lake and Old Hickory Lake — a total of almost 16 million recreation visits were reported in 2004.

Visitors enjoying these lakes boated, fished, swam, skied, jet-skied, sailed, rowed and paddled about. They camped alongside the lakes and enjoyed picnics with families and friends. They went horseback riding and hiked.

That's not all. They also dined on the water, in the floating restaurant at Fate Sanders Marina on Percy Priest, and they sampled "the best catfish in town" at Four Corners Marina, also on Percy Priest.

Some sought to catch their own dinner, grabbing their tackle boxes and aiming to outsmart bass, crappie, catfish, bluegill, bream and trout.

There is no doubt water lovers have water to love in Middle Tennessee. Todd Yann, resource manager at Percy Priest Lake, said visits on the U.S. Corps of Engineers-run lake — Old Hickory is also run by the U.S. Corps of Engineers — have gone up yearly. In 2002, visits were just under the six million mark, rising to slightly over six million in 2003. Then, it took a jump in 2004, and expectations are the trend will continue.

"I think one reason this is happening is that the population in the area is growing," Yann says. "The lakes are just very attractive."

Visitors to Percy Priest Lake this summer won't see any significant differences to the areas as far as Corps improvements. Yann says they have repaved the fitness trail at the Anderson Road Recreation Area and made improvements to the overlook area at the dam.

"We have renovated that area and rerouted the traffic flow to make it safer," he says.

Improvements at Old Hickory Lake come under the heading of playgrounds. Three new ones have been added. One at the Cages Bend Campground, one at Laguardo Day-Use Area and one at the Cedar Creek Recreation Area. Kenny Claywell, conservation biologist on Old Hickory, says they also have improved campground sites at Cages Bend Campground by paving the paths.

Metro Parks has completed the Stones River Greenway, at the base of the dam on Percy Priest Lake.

At the Metro Parks-owned Hamilton Creek Marina, the Nashville and Vanderbilt rowing clubs have morning workouts. This is a sailboat area and the Percy Priest Yacht Club has several events throughout the year. More information about those and the club may be obtained by logging onto [www.ppyc.org](http://www.ppyc.org).

Meanwhile, there are new owners of Shady Cove Marina. Lucy Conyer, along with her husband and another couple, purchased the marina 10 months ago. The restaurant is open seven days a week and they have a swimming pool, camping area, laundry room, general store with food and bait, and boat rentals. They rent fishing boats, paddle boats, pontoon boats and canoes.

Both lakes have an abundance of public access areas for boat launching. The U.S. Corps of Engineers Web site, [www.lrn.usace.army.mil](http://www.lrn.usace.army.mil), has profiles of all the area lakes and a full list of marinas, campgrounds, boating access areas and other information. Maps also are included, making it extremely easy to get in on the fun.

The Corps operates 185 campsites on Percy Priest and 103 sites on Old Hickory. They range in price from \$12-\$25 per night.