



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Nashville District**

Lake Cumberland

Lake Casts



Spring 2008

Tree Vandals Are Being Sought by Corps Rangers and U.S. Attorney

Trees and vegetation on public property surrounding Lake Cumberland are being severely vandalized or killed, often by adjacent landowners. A few of these individuals are simply misguided; however, we have found that most are deliberately performing a criminal act for personal gain.

The cutting of trees or the damage or removal of any vegetation for any purpose, including the creation of lake views, pruning, landscaping, mowing, or underbrushing is a federal crime and is punishable under the provisions of Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 327.14. Any person who violates the provisions may be punished by a fine, imprisonment, or both. These criminal acts may also be tried and sentenced in accordance with the provisions of Title 18, US Code, Section 3401.

Primarily due to the outstanding environmental quality and aesthetics of Lake Cumberland and the pristine forested shoreline, the lake and the surrounding public lands are well known to a diverse group of outdoor recreationalists and attract more than four million visitors annually from Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and many other areas too numerous to mention here. At normal summer pool, the 52,000 acre lake has 1,255 miles of beautiful forested shoreline adjacent to 50,000 acres of public lands. These scenic areas attract visitors and prompt them to add more than \$ 91.8 million to the regional economy as they pursue outdoor recreational activities such as wildlife viewing, photography, boating, fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, and sight-seeing.

The vast majority of the forested hillsides, including the privately owned lands adjacent to the public shoreline, once stretched unbroken for the entire 101 mile length of the lake from Cumberland Falls to Wolf Creek Dam. This natural landscape of trees and wildlife is rapidly disappearing and being replaced with development that includes individual cabins and sub-divided neighborhood complexes of homes and streets.

The relentless pressures of this residential development adjacent to public lands surrounding Lake Cumberland is resulting in a significant increase in the number of cases of damage and destruction of trees and vegetation on public lands. It appears that some adjacent lakeshore residents are willing to damage or destroy your public property for personal financial gain and/or to obtain improvements to their personal property in the form of lake views and vistas for their homes.



Actions by individuals that involve the destruction of the environmental features of the lake and surrounding forested shoreline can also create severe erosion problems. The presence of the natural shoreline is necessary to maintain the water quality of Lake Cumberland. Natural vegetation along the shoreline acts as a buffer and helps to purify runoff water and control erosion along the steep hillsides. People in the cities of Somerset, Nancy, Monticello, Albany, Jamestown, Whitley City, Burnside

and Russell Springs all depend on Lake Cumberland for their drinking water.

Individuals who illegally cut trees and vegetation in this important and sensitive buffer zone on public property are committing criminal acts of vandalism. It is the Corps' goal to maintain and preserve the outstanding features of Lake Cumberland for the full benefit of the general public and future generations. These violators are doing more than simply destroying government property – they are stealing. They are stealing from their neighbors, friends, and visitors to the lake by removing the picturesque and remote quality that attracts many varied users to Lake Cumberland.

In the past several years, the Corps has worked closely with violators to either restore the damaged areas or to collect the monetary value of the damages, sometimes equaling tens of thousands of dollars, and utilize the money to enhance or protect the natural resources at the lake. However, the prevention of tree vandalisms, not compensation after the fact, is the Corps' primary objective. Therefore, a more effective approach is necessary to deter the acts of vandalism and to ensure the long-term environmental quality of the lake and surrounding shoreline. For this reason, all future acts of vandalism will be investigated and all findings will be turned over to the United States Attorney's Office for prospec-

tive prosecution through the federal criminal court system. The Resource Manager and Park Rangers have identified this as a high priority and are working diligently to locate, investigate, and consider federal prosecution in all cases of destruction to public property. Punishment may include heavy fines, imprisonment, or both.

During recent investigations of tree vandalism cases, violators have intentionally provided false statements to Park Rangers concerning the facts of the cases. Any person who provides a false statement to a federal officer is subject to prosecution under Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 1001.

Here is how you can help stop this degradation of lake scenery. Although the Corps is making every effort to locate and take the appropriate action against offenders, our most important asset could be the eyes and ears of the general public. Community members are invited to help protect this important natural resource and provide timely assistance by calling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resource Manager's Office at Lake Cumberland if they hear a chainsaw or heavy equipment at work in an area they believe to be public property. The identity of all individuals reporting unauthorized activities on publicly owned lands

will be kept confidential, and all reported violations will be investigated.

Anyone who observes or has knowledge of theft, vandalism, or any other threat or suspicious activity against Corps property is also encouraged to participate in the "Corps Watch" program, which is a nationwide crime-watch program developed to protect public property managed by the Corps of Engineers. Each year, millions of your tax dollars are lost due to property damage from vandalism, larceny, arson, and environmental and cultural resource degradation. This program is designed to heighten public awareness of the impacts of crime within or around dams, lakes, locks, recreation areas, and other Corps of Engineers property and facilities.

Authorized by Section 205 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 and the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535), national funding is available to issue rewards of up to \$1,000 to individuals for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of offenders. "Corps Watch" uses a 24-hour-a-day toll free hotline that assures the identity of the caller is protected and the proper authorities are notified. To report theft, vandalism, or any threat or suspicious activity against Corps property, please call the "Corps Watch" hotline at 1-866-413-7970.

Together, we can protect the natural shoreline around Lake Cumberland as an unspoiled, natural, and timeless beauty. Please call the Lake Cumberland Resource Manager's Office at (606) 679-6337, Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET

for additional information or to learn how you can help protect the outstanding environmental quality of the land and water resources of Lake Cumberland. As always, your assistance with our efforts to better manage these resources is greatly appreciated.

Lake Cumberland Drawdown Challenges Make for New Opportunities

Recent issues regarding the safety of Wolf Creek Dam and subsequent drawdown of Lake Cumberland to elevation 680' msl. left many visitors and local businessmen concerned. This action also left the Corps of Engineers with the task of minimizing impacts to recreation and the regional economy.

The lower lake levels left many boat ramps around the lake temporarily unusable. Corps personnel worked diligently to assure that visitors to Lake Cumberland have an adequate number of launching sites to gain easy access to the water. The staff at Lake Cumberland identified potential challenges early in the process and began collecting elevation and ramp data. Each stakeholder responsible for maintaining potential problem access points were contacted and made aware of the likely impacts.

Working closely with all our partners to expedite work on access ramps, Corps staffers have been directly involved in 46 ramp extensions and related improvements. Today, all 46 access

ramps are open for the public's use.

The lower lake elevation has made it possible to remove more man-made debris and driftwood from the lake than has ever been possible in the past. Corps park ranger and cleanup coordinator Judy Daulton explained that between the efforts of P.R.I.D.E., Friends of Lake Cumberland (FOLC), local volunteers, and the Corps of Engineers work barge 'PRIDE of the CUMBERLAND', piloted by Gary Burke, we have removed several hundred cubic yards of debris from the lake. With future cleanup efforts planned, the Corps in cooperation with P.R.I.D.E., FOLC and other groups, expects to continue making progress in the removal of trash and debris from the lake.

Recreational activities have also increased on the lake. With the water down, opportunities for day-hikes are abundant due to the open shoreline. Fishermen are reporting good fishing conditions and boaters and skiers are enjoying a lake with less driftwood. Camping is still popular around the lake with all 5 campgrounds operated by the Corps reporting excellent visitation last season.

Vegetation now establishing itself on the newly exposed shoreline will first deliver a wide variety of spring wildflowers and young trees and increased wildlife viewing opportunities. Once the lake resumes its normal sum-

mer pool and the young vegetation is inundated, the area will experience excellent fishing for years to come. As the good news about Lake Cumberland continues to spread, we will also see continued economic recovery, and increased visitation to levels not previously seen around the lake.

Today, Lake Cumberland is still just over 100 miles in length and averages a water depth of 43'. The lake presently contains approximately 39,000 acres of water to be enjoyed by young and old alike. With 63,000 acres of public lands and over 1,000 miles of forested shoreline land-based recreation can be enjoyed by all. Visitation to the lake in FY07 was almost 4 million visits, drawing more than \$91.8 million into the local economy. In fact, visitation over this past Labor Day Weekend was a staggering 205,000 people. So by meeting the needs of our customers, the Corps of Engineers have met the challenges of lower water levels and in turn offered additional recreational opportunities.

Before you Burn....

Generally, open burning is prohibited on public land. The burning of materials such as household or commercial garbage, tires, plastic, floatation materials or treated wood products is prohibited. Under certain circumstances, burning of natural driftwood may be approved. Specific location(s) for burning must be approved by the Resource Manager, and burning must be in accordance with all government burn requirements.

**Resource Managers Office
Lake Cumberland
855 Boat Dock Road
Somerset, KY 42501**

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Meet the Staff Ranger

The Ranger Staff at Lake Cumberland is available to assist you, the public. If you have questions regarding Lake Cumberland, contact the Resource Manager's Office at (606) 679-6337. If your questions pertain to a particular area of the lake, you can talk with the Ranger responsible for that area. The areas of responsibility are as follows:

Ranger Judy Daulton – East side of Hwy 90 bridge downstream to, and including the east side of Otter Creek

Ranger Tasha Alexander – West side of Otter Creek to Wolf Creek Dam to the West side of Caney Fork Creek

Rangers Amy Cline & Adam James- East side of Caney Fork Creek to right descending bank of White Oak Creek

Ranger Marshall Jennings – Left descending bank of White Oak Creek to the downstream side of Waitsboro Recreation Area

Ranger Troy Hawks – Waitsboro Recreation Area upstream of the Cumberland River (North Fork), including Pitman and Buck Creeks

Ranger Brant Norris -- Highway 90 Bridge to Highway 27 Bridge, including the Big South Fork and Little South Fork Rivers