

Kentucky Dam & Lake

The idea of Kentucky Lake was born when the flood of 1937 struck the Tennessee and Ohio Valleys. The flood caused devastation to communities, farms, and families, causing some to relocate. The following year, in 1938, five years after TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) was created, the people living on the banks of the Tennessee River in Kentucky and Tennessee were told they would have to relocate once again - this time, forever.

Construction of Kentucky Dam began in 1938 and was completed in 1944. It began holding back the waters of the Tennessee River; slowly the river flooded its banks and crept up to 50 feet higher than its original location. The dam is used by TVA to help control floods on the lower Ohio and Mississippi rivers; it is the gateway to the Tennessee River waterway and is a major generating plant in the TVA power system. The five turbine-generators in Kentucky Dam powerhouse have a total capacity of 175,000 kilowatts. They harness the river's flow to generate up to 1.3 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity each year. Some of this water comes from the river's headwaters and already has helped to spin turbines at a dozen other TVA dams as it flows a thousand winding miles down the Tennessee Valley.

We welcome you to Kentucky Lake, the largest man-made lake in the Eastern United States. It covers 160,000 acres of water, is 184 miles long and has over 2,000 miles of beautiful shoreline.

Barkley Dam & Lake

Lake Barkley was impounded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1966. The dam impounds the Cumberland River near Grand Rivers, Kentucky, approximately 38 miles up stream from where the Cumberland empties into the Ohio River. One mile above the dam is a canal connecting Lake Barkley with Kentucky Lake, forming one of the greatest freshwater recreational complexes in the country. The lakes run parallel courses for more than 50 miles with Land Between the Lakes recreational area located between them. Lake Barkley is 134 miles long with a shoreline measuring 1,004 miles. The lake's level is fluctuated from summer to winter for flood control purposes. Summer pool (359 ft. above sea level) is normally reached by May 1. The water level begins dropping gradually on July 1, and winter pool (354 ft. above sea level) is reached by December 1. The spring rise starts April 1. The lake's water surface area varies accordingly from 57,920 acres at summer pool to 45,210 acres at winter pool.