

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1. Name of Property

historic name Cherokee State Park

other name/site number Kenlake State Park, ML-8

2. Location

street & town 542 Kenlake Road NA not for publication

city or town Hardin X vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Marshall code 157 zip code 42048-9737

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark Dennen 10/21/08  
Signature of certifying official/Title **Mark Dennen, Acting SHPO** Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper 1/9/2009  
James H. ... Date of Action

Cherokee State Park  
Name of Property

Marshall County, KY  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	4	5	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	X district	1		sites
X public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	1	1	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	6	6	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function  
(Enter only categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

Current Function  
(Enter only categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter only categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Other: Park modern

Materials  
(Enter only categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls Wood  
roof Asphalt  
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

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Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

### **Description:**

Cherokee State Park (ML-8) served as an African American park in the system of Kentucky State Parks from 1949 until 1963. The site lies one half mile north of Aurora, a village of Marshall County, Kentucky, and along the western shore of Kentucky Lake. Established as a State Park exclusively for use by African Americans, it functioned until Governor Bert Combs issued his Fair Practices Executive Order in June, 1963, which sought to end the era of segregation of public facilities in Kentucky. When fully completed, the Park consisted of approximately 300 acres; 13 buildings; 6 support structures; which included a boat house; a half court basketball court; swing sets; barbeque grills of concrete, brick, and iron; and concrete pads for picnic tables, as well as up to 10 concrete wood-topped picnic tables. The area proposed for National Register listing is approximately 200 acres, and was part of approximately 300 acres that originally comprised the Park. This area includes 4 contributing and 5 non-contributing buildings, 1 contributing and 1 non-contributing structure, and 1 contributing site. Several described features are numbered, to facilitate finding them on maps, but not counted.

A small paved road, named Cherokee Lane, which splits off from US Highway 68 just south of Aurora, gives access to the site. Eight of the park's cottages were dismantled and moved to other parts of Kenlake State Resort Park, to which Cherokee State Park's former acreage now belongs and from which it was carved.

### **Evolution of the land into Cherokee State Park**

Cherokee State Park and Kentucky Lake are part of the Jackson Purchase Cultural Landscape Region of Kentucky, made up of the 8 Kentucky counties lying west of the Tennessee River, south of the Ohio River, east of the Mississippi River, and north of the Tennessee state border. The larger area of Kentucky and Tennessee, west of the Tennessee River, which today contains 29 counties, was purchased from the Chickasaws in 1818 by Andrew Jackson. The term "Jackson Purchase" distinguishes the 8 Kentucky counties from the 21 Tennessee counties, known as "Western Tennessee" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson\\_Purchase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson_Purchase); [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West\\_Tennessee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Tennessee)).

The US Congress created the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1933 as a corporation to govern navigation of the Tennessee River and to undertake various economic development projects within that area ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee\\_Valley\\_Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Valley_Authority)). TVA began constructing Kentucky Dam in 1938, some 30 miles downriver from the future site of Cherokee Park. With the dam completed in 1944, the impounded waters of the Tennessee River began to create Kentucky Lake.

The TVA recognized the recreational opportunities along its banks and acquired other properties around the lake. As the waters began to fill the lake, TVA created a study committee made up of park professionals from the National Park Service and state park agencies, to investigate the development potential. The committee unanimously endorsed the establishment of a full compliment recreation park, Kentucky Lake State Park. At the same time, the committee recommended establishment of a separate park for the exclusive use by African Americans (Spindletop).

In May of 1946, Kentucky Governor Simeon Willis announced plans to develop a state park for African Americans, "the only one in the south" (Morris). Willis called for an appropriation of \$100,000 to build the park within two years. The early name for the development was Chickasaw, acknowledging the area's Native American inhabitants, but was subsequently changed to Cherokee.

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In 1947, TVA agreed to allow the Commonwealth of Kentucky to develop 1146 acres as a state park at the Eggner's Ferry Bridge, which stands within 2 miles of Aurora (information on the bridge at <http://prairiebluestem.blogspot.com/2007/08/old-bridges-at-land-between-lakes-ky.html>). Money was appropriated by the legislature, and approximately 300 acres were taken from Kentucky Lake Park to make Cherokee State Park.

The core of the area of Cherokee State Park, approximately 35 acres, draped over an elongated ridge, with small ravines that separated the 4 areas on smaller ridges where its buildings were constructed. The top of this ridge is approximately 100 feet above the summer pool shoreline. The small ridges reach down eastward into the waters of Kentucky Lake. On the western side of this core area is a small bay where Billy Branch Creek runs into the lake. South of that is a marshy thicket. A forest of mostly deciduous trees covered the ridge where the main features of the Park would be located (Spindletop).

In June 1950 construction on the Cherokee State Park bath house and other improvements began. On May 31, 1951, Cherokee officially opened to the public. At the end of the summer of 1963, Cherokee State Park closed as a result of Governor Bert Combs Executive Order to end segregation in public accommodations in Kentucky. In 1965, TVA deeded 1448 acres of Kentucky Lake Park to the Commonwealth, which included an additional 302 acres that Kentucky Lake State Park had expanded into from its initial area, as well as the 300 acres of the recently-closed Cherokee State Park.

### **Cherokee Park's Historic Collection of Features**

The following features defined the site as fully constructed in the 1950s:

- Dining hall near the park's northern point, affording views of the lake and Billy Branch lagoon
- a bath house with concession stand and first aid station
- surrounding the bath house is a patio and 2 stairs down to the beach
- a water fountain made of the same concrete bricks found around the park
- two areas where 10 rental vacation cottages were built along black top roads
- caretaker's cottage near a fork in the asphalted Cherokee Lane that included an office area
- a garage for the care taker's cottage
- picnic shelter with restrooms
- Scattered site features: concrete pads for picnic tables, iron barbeque grills, 5 concrete brick and iron barbeque pits, swing sets, a half court basketball court of asphalt that was also used to play tennis on and a boat house anchored off shore in Billy Branch Lagoon. Also near Billy Branch there were a couple of storage sheds built. Occasionally, staff stayed in these sheds overnight (Arnold).

### **Description of Features as they stood from 1951-1963:**

**1. The dining hall with kitchen** (May 1953) whose main façade faces just east of due north and on that point that is surrounded on three sides by water, was and still is the main focal point of the park. In the shape of a T, with the dining room forming the cross bar and the kitchen and storage areas making the base, the building is built on a concrete slab with 7 bays across the front. The knee walls of the building are concrete block topped with wood framing. Board and batten siding composes much of the wall of the kitchen and storage wing, as well as the gables above the windows. The interior walls were of pine tongue and groove boards.



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The windows form most of the wall above the knee walls in the dining area of the building and are triple awning windows with 3-pane sidelights on each. The main entrance is under a gabled porch with 3 doors, the center one being fixed. Each bay of the outer wall, between the window units, is defined by an approximately 10" square heavy timber upright support. The kitchen wing was expanded in 1954 to include more storage space; board and batten siding was again used on the exterior walls, and the windows in the kitchen wing matched the original windows on that elevation. The entire roof was covered with "autumn blend" color of asphalt shingles (Blue prints).

The interior of the dining area was and still is open, light and airy, with the heavy timber columns forming the interior bays supporting the exposed timber truss and rafter system for the roof. Between the kitchen area and the dining room was an L-shaped bar or counter top with 10 fixed stools. Around this counter was a series of coolers and food display cases, a hot and cold sandwich bar, a cashiers station. The back wall had a pass through window and swinging door leading in to the kitchen. When the building opened in 1953, the kitchen was of commercial quality, with cold storage, a large freezer, warmers and refrigerators, work tables, sinks and an ice-making machine. The 1954 kitchen expansion provided more storage off of the kitchen.

**2. Bath house** (May of 1951). The bath house contained not only showers and restrooms for men and women, but storage bins in a locker room. Between the bath house's two wings was an office, a first aid station, and an area with a concession stand that opened out to the patio. This central portion of the building had a pitched roof and had asphalt shingles with gable ends facing the front and back. The restroom wings were flat roofed, and covered with built up roofing material layers. Each restroom area had 4 windows, double hung, in pairs. The shower area had wooden louvered covered ventilation openings to the outside. The building was built of concrete blocks resting on a concrete slab. The bathhouse was built facing almost due east, below the site of the later dining hall and above the beach area of the lake.

**3. Patio and stairs to the beach** (May 1951) On the east side of the building a large concrete patio with iron railing was built overlooking the beach area. Curving down from the north and south ends of the patio, two sets of concrete stairs provided access to the Kentucky Lake beach. On the north end of this patio is where the concrete brick water fountain was built.

**4. Ten Vacation Cabins** (1953) On the two central small ridges and which point east toward the lake, ten vacation cabins were built. Six cabins sat on the northern leg and 4 on the eastern leg. These ten cabins were built on concrete slabs, 38'4" x 15'4". Their construction was similar to that of the dining room: knee walls of concrete block topped with wood framing; outer walls of weatherboard and gables sided with board and batten. The gabled roof with eaves was topped with asphalt shingles. Each cabin had eight 8-light casement windows, a front entrance door, and a side door that opened upon a screened in porch. The interiors were finished with knotty pine tongue and groove panels, a kitchenette with cabinets, sink, stove and refrigerator, a water heater, two beds, closets, and a full bath. The floors were covered with asphalt tiles. Each cabin had its own septic system, and most appear to have had an iron barbeque grill outside. One of the cabins had two bedrooms.

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**5. Caretaker's Cottage** (May, 1953) Just below the highest elevation in Cherokee, and near where the main entrance road, Cherokee Lane, splits to the east to go to the vacation cottages, is the cottage that housed the manager of the park. It was built along the same lines and style as the park's other cottages. It rose above a concrete slab foundation, though entirely concrete brick exterior walls rather than concrete block knee walls below a wood frame. Asphalt shingles covered a modified hip roof that on the ends had small gables that were louvered for ventilation of the attic space. The interior walls were covered with a combination of Homasote wood/paper fiber board and plaster over lathe and painted. The floor was wooden planking over the concrete. There was a large covered porch on the south west corner of the cottage. There were two entrances off this porch, one into the one-room office area, the other into the cottage's living room. Over the entrances is the dentil molding, an interested architectural detail. Each of the two bedrooms had large closets. A full-sized bathroom was in this cottage as well. Some time during the Period of Significance, there was a garage located nearby to the east, perhaps it served as a maintenance building.

**6. Picnic shelter with restrooms** (1962) Just south of the cottage area a large 50' by 25' picnic shelter was built with 4 open bays the fifth bay was enclosed and contained two restrooms. The shelter was built with a roof line similar to the care taker's cottage and built of the same concrete bricks that are found throughout the park.

**7. Scattered Site Features** (1953) When the park was functioning, it contained numerous locations with picnic tables sitting on concrete slabs around the dining hall as well as concrete picnic tables with wooden tops. Also built were 5 large concrete brick barbeque pits with iron grills; one to the west, 2 to the south west of the dining hall and two north, across the parking lot. Along the road, to the west, there were 3 swing sets and an asphalt basketball court. On the north side of the patio, near the bathhouse is the water fountain. At an unknown time, a storage shed was built along the roadway on the Billy Branch side. On the highest point of the park, between the care taker's cottage, the rental cottages and the picnic shelter is a small concrete block pump house and a 50-foot-tall steel cylindrical water tower.

#### **Description of Features as they exist in 2008:**

**Note: The relatively large size of the site, and the numerous small-scale features, mean that resources listed below appear on either the District Sketch map or USGS quad map.**

**1. The dining hall with kitchen (1 Contributing Building)** Some time, perhaps in the 1990s, another small room was added to the kitchen wing towards the west so that the form of the building is no longer a true T shape. Board and batten siding was used in this addition so that it is compatible with the building's original appearance. While there is no longer a kitchen or counter in the building, the dining hall area is little changed. Some of the windows have been altered to accommodate a window air conditioning unit, or are no longer operable, but they are all still intact. The main entrance into the dining hall has been altered and has two very wide solid doors that meet in the middle now. The outside is no longer finished as natural wood, but has been painted a bright blue-green. Overall the building has been fairly well maintained and is recognizable as the historic building, inside and out. In spite of the few changes, this structure still maintains its historical integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship. Still being in a secluded and wooded area of the park, the charm of its setting, location and feeling are also still very much evident.

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**2. Bath house (non-counted feature).** In approximately 1975, the bath house building was torn down. Its concrete slab foundation remains however. Despite the fact that the building itself is no longer in existence, the foundation and intact setting still provide an important experience that supports some of the Park's integrity of feeling. The foundation, in conjunction with documentation and other physical features, help support an overall integrity of association for the entire historic park.

**3. Patio and stairs (1 contributing site).** Although a little over grown by grass coming up through the cracks, the patio remains totally intact, including its rusting iron railing. The stairs down to the beach, now overgrown with small trees and bushes, and with a few steps that have fallen out of alignment, are still present. Although slightly altered by the growth of trees, the view of the lake from the patio is still very beautiful. On the north side of the patio, near the stairs leading to the parking lot and dining hall, stands the unused and disconnected water fountain (**contributing structure**).

**4. Ten Vacation Cottages (2 contributing buildings).** In 1975, eight of the ten cottages were dismantled moved by barge out of the historic Cherokee State Park boundary, to join other rental cottages at Kenlake Resort Park, where they were rebuilt. They have continued in service since then. The asphalt drive and circle to the six cabins is still evident but in bad repair. The two cottages that remain have had their screened-in porches enclosed, making them two-bedroom cabins, using the same type of exterior weatherboard as the rest of the cabin, though without the concrete block knee walls. Rectangular holes have been cut into the wall under the front windows to allow the installation of a wall-unit air conditioner. The current windows may not be the originals. The remaining cabin closer to the lake also has a modern (although aged) pressure treated lumber deck across its back. The interiors of the two cabins remain largely intact except for new flooring and toilets. The kitchenette units have been removed and a regular sized stove and refrigerator have been installed, as has a new sink.

These two cabins retain many aspects that promote Cherokee State Park's historic feeling and associations, particularly the cabins' relationship to their surroundings and their still-very-evident workmanship. These cabin locations were selected to take advantage of the natural beauty of the views of the lake and the hilly wooded terrain. These two buildings retain much of their identity and have the greatest role in telling the story of the individual family experience at Cherokee State Park.

**5. Caretaker's Cottage (1 contributing building ; the garage site is not counted).** This building has seen little alteration since construction. The office exterior door onto the porch has been boarded and turned into a window. It has been used as staff housing for Kenlake State Resort Park almost since the closing of Cherokee State Park, but with very little renovation. Holes have been cut into the walls for the installation of window unit air conditioners. Only a small part of the gravel floor and concrete footers for the garage remain.

**6. Picnic shelter with restrooms (1 contributing structure).** Some of the last work done at Cherokee was the building of the picnic shelter and restroom facility. The rest rooms are no longer working and the 4 bays of the shelter have been boarded up or have had garage doors installed over the openings. Very little appears to have been done to this building otherwise.



**7. Scattered site features (all extant small historic features counted collectively as 1 contributing object).** Only one of the concrete pads for a picnic table exists, behind the kitchen wing of the dining hall, none of the concrete and wood topped picnic tables remains. The 4 concrete brick-and-iron barbeque pits that remain are also mostly intact, but in need of re-mortaring and in the original locations—two southwest of the dining hall and the two north of it. The one to the west is gone. The boat house in the lake, the shed and the swing sets are also gone now. The asphalt 1/2-court basketball court remains, although in poor repair; its cracks are covered in grass. It contains two holes along the sides, where posts were inserted to change the ball court into a tennis court.

**Scattered site features and non-historic buildings (1 non-contributing structure and 4 non-contributing buildings, listed under numbers 8-13 below).** After Cherokee State Park was absorbed into Kenlake State Park, some of Kenlake's operations expanded into the original Cherokee acreage. This included recreation features, such as a modern campground with its own entrance off of US 68, as well as service structures, such as a new sewer plant. One of the images attached shows the water tower in June of 2007, just prior to demolition. Besides the addition of paved roads in the last 40 years, many of the camp sites also have paved trailer pads. The extant major features from this post-Cherokee development are listed below, with numbers that aid in locating the features on the sketch map.

**8. 4 Concrete anchors and boat lift (non-counted features).** In the Billy Branch lagoon, along the banks, are the large concrete remains of 4 anchors for the larger boat dock that was built and used here from the late 1970s into the early 1990s (see photos 0028 & 0029). The large foundation for the boat lift with ladders and hand railing are also here from the same period (photo 0044).

**9. Concrete boat ramp (non-counted feature).** At the north point of Cherokee, an extension of Cherokee Lane and the parking lot is a concrete boat ramp. It is assumed that it was also built in the 1970s, when Cherokee was the headquarters of the local yacht club and later the Murray State University rowing team (photo 0030).

**10. concrete block pump house (1 non-contributing building).** This pump house is no longer used, and park planners anticipate removing it. The building remains on site as of this nomination (photos 0045 & 0046).

**11. Bathhouse, laundry, vending, and recreation building (2 non-contributing buildings).** As a part of this expansion a campground office as well as a bath house, laundry, vending and recreation building were built as well (photos 0038, 0038 & 0040). The bath house is concrete block on a poured concrete foundation, the office is wood frame on a poured concrete foundations, both built in the 1970s or early 1980s for Kenlake State Resort Park.

**12. Telephone Exchange building (1 non-contributing building).** At the campground entrance is the AT&T telephone exchange building. It appears fairly new, 1990s and is wood frame over a concrete block foundation (photo 0042).



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Cherokee State Park  
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**13. Sewer plant (1 non-contributing building and 1 non-contributing structure).** Off of Cherokee Lane is the Park's modern sewer plant with a small office building and concrete and steel tanks and facilities. It is enclosed by a high chain-link fence. The building is wood frame, foundation appears to be concrete block piers. The structure is steel and concrete both built in the 1970s or early 1980s (photo 0041).

Cherokee State Park  
Name of Property

Marshall County, KY  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Black  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1951-1963  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1951, 1963  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person (only if Criterion B selected)**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder (use last names first for individuals)**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

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Cherokee State Park  
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### **Statement of Significance**

Cherokee State Park (ML-8) meets National Register criterion A and Criterion Consideration G. The property is exceptionally significant within the Area of Significance Ethnic Heritage: Black. This significance has been interpreted through the historic context "African American Recreation in Kentucky, 1900-1966." This span of time was chosen as the period when blacks began engaging in more public and organized past times, up until the period when Civil Rights generally were becoming available. Cherokee State Park was opened as an all-black state facility in 1952 and closed in 1963. The facility was conceived shortly after World War II, when blacks slowly began receiving more fair treatment under the "separate but equal" policies of the era. Its closure in 1963 occurred as result of growing sentiment within Kentucky's public, among both black and whites, that began to regard racial segregation as an untenable public policy. The Park's opening and closure show that the interests of Civil Rights grew to overshadow activities such as recreation. While many Civil Rights victories came through events involving conflict, there was no known friction at Cherokee State Park leading to its closure. Its closing indicates when, in Kentucky, public interest in Civil Rights began to move from the public arena into state politics. During its brief tenure, the Park served thousands of black citizens from Kentucky and other states in a climate of relative openness and freedom.

### **Context: African American Recreation in Kentucky, 1900-1966**

The period from 1865-1966 is commonly referred to as the "Jim Crow era," which was marked by a lack of opportunity and by illegal discrimination against blacks in almost every aspect of life. Legally, at least 21 States had laws permitting or requiring racial segregation of some activities, even as late as the middle 1950s (McKay, 700). The formal and informal social system of repression affected blacks on all levels of life, including how free time was spent. Understanding the role that Cherokee State Park played in the evolution of relations between white and black Kentuckians, requires some account of the social climate that began with the closure of the Civil War and the end of enslavement for a large sector of the American population.

Although racial segregation has its roots in English and Colonial American history, it became more institutionalized after the American Civil War by court cases, legislation, local convention and custom. Following the Civil War, the Reconstruction Period (1865 – 1877) began positively with Congress passing the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which gave blacks full citizenship and the promise of equal treatment under the law, and in 1867, the Reconstruction Act, which ensured protection for the political rights of blacks. The promises these acts presented did not become realities, particularly in states which had formerly depended upon slave labor.

With the 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson decision legalizing segregation, states were allowed to establish racially segregated facilities, as long as the facilities in public institutions were equal. The institution of segregation that supported "separate but equal" accommodations for African Americans was a part of a very broad aspect of American history that affected the lives of millions, not just the Black citizens of the south. Although the "separate but equal" doctrine was often cited and held up as ideal, it was obvious that while very much was separate, very little was equal. History shows opportunities afforded African Americans were minimal. While the struggle against segregation frequently centered on public education, the separation of the races in public accommodation was a much resented and demeaning practice that produced a growing climate of confrontation and conflict between whites and blacks after World War II (Garcia. 2004. p. 2).



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The discrimination that effectively denied African Americans access to adequate education, housing and employment also overflowed into recreational activities and opportunities. Before the Civil War, typical outdoor recreational activities for freed blacks might include hunting and fishing, but there were no formally organized activities. After the Civil War, recreational opportunities broadened. The geographical location of most blacks, particularly those residing in the rural South, meant that their recreation patterns followed those of rural Southern whites, which were generally limited. However, in the 1880s and 1890s there was a shift which continued through the Industrial Revolution and into the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. Team sports, polo, bicycling, and track and field events became popular. This expansion of recreation options arose partly from urban Americans seeking activities to relieve the effects of greater urbanization (Holland, 115).

Throughout the Reconstruction and industrial periods, the geographic distribution of blacks changed significantly. In 1900 nearly 90% of blacks lived in the South, the vast majority in rural areas. A migration to urban centers, both north and south, began in the late 1800s and continued in the early 1900s. "Significantly, the perception, that urban areas offered more recreation opportunities, was identified as one contributing reason for the migration" (Holland, 118). Also, many African Americans were eager to leave the south after the Civil War. Where some had resources and opted to leave their homes, others were forced to leave, but most chose their destinations carefully to reunite with family or to take advantage of opportunities in the West. The majority of migrating blacks relocated in urban areas both in the North and in the South. Between 1920 and 1950, the black population of Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and New York all quadrupled and other northern cities also had substantial increases (Riess 1989. p. 117). Those that remained in the South formed their own communities, contending with Black codes and the Ku Klux Klan. These two proved to have significant impact on African American recreational opportunities.

Black codes, known as Jim Crow laws, were enacted in most southern states. They varied in strictness from state to state but their intent was to restrict blacks and their movements. Additionally, by means of fear and intimidation, the KKK attempted to force blacks to remain close to home or within their own communities. With law and threat extending to maintain general control, very few states found a need to pass legislation bearing upon African American recreation particularly. Perhaps only 4 states—Virginia, Missouri, Louisiana, and Tennessee—had such laws by the mid-1950s (McKay, 701-702).

Despite these efforts, African Americans still found ways to participate in recreational activities in the south, and even within organized sports in the northern states. In the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, there had been around fifty professional black baseball players, including two in the majors in 1884; in 1898, owners agreed upon a decision to bar blacks from the game. Blacks responded by forming their own professional teams, and by 1900 there were 5 salaried black teams. Black communities in larger cities supported at least two black baseball clubs.

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Black athletes could not compete with whites and seating at commercialized spectator sports like horse racing and baseball was segregated so, by necessity, black sporting life was centered within black neighborhoods. At a time when black professional athletes were being forced out of the thoroughbred racing, cycling and organized baseball, blacks were achieving considerable renown in the prize ring. Between 1890 – 1908 there were five black world champions (Riess 1989. p. 113-115).

However, these achievements did not increase the recreational opportunities available to everyday African Americans. Indeed, especially for the general public, whatever activity a black person could engage in had to take place close to his or her home and community. Consequently African Americans were limited to a narrow range of possibilities. “Typical games and activities included baseball, marbles, card-playing, swimming, dancing and church entertainments. Other recreational activities included participation in fraternal organizations, churches, and political rallies.

Politicians organized picnic games at black-owned fairgrounds or in black sections of municipal parks. For those few who could afford it, going to movies, attending local fairs and traveling minstrel shows, hunting, fishing and visiting with others provided additional recreational opportunities” (Holland 2002. p. 122).

When Americans began to realize that organized play added to the overall quality of life, commercial recreation in urban areas experienced significant growth. Additionally, the traditional 12-hour work day was eventually decreased; eight-hour work days, half days of work or all day off on Saturdays, and two-week vacations came within the grasp of more Americans (Holland. 2002. p. 115). Before these changes, adults were deeply involved with earning a living, so only children were free to engage in various types of recreation. With the arrival of leisure time, the focus shifted to organized group activities, with more attention given to adult recreation.

Although there was continued interest and growth in public recreation venues in the 1920s, virtually all new facilities were segregated, with few facilities established exclusively for blacks. Notable exceptions were black YMCAs established in the late 1800s in Boston, Brooklyn, New York and Philadelphia and in 1910 in Chicago (Riess 1989. p. 114).

McKay lists 6 types of facilities that blacks and whites could not share in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These included parks (including amusement parks), golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts, auditoriums and theaters, and libraries (pp. 709-723). Without public avenues for recreation, African Americans had to turn to private sources, hotels, restaurants, swimming pools and theaters but, here as well, discrimination occurred. Most of these were private entities that had little state intervention other than in regulating them as commerce. Simply having the funds to pay for services did not guarantee those services would be available. Nor was travel outside one’s home community, either to and from recreational facilities or as recreation itself, without risk. Racial segregation, inequality and prejudice within public transportation systems as well as along the way in unfamiliar territory were true and serious concerns.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

Section 8 Page 4

Kentucky had very few laws that explicitly mandated racial segregation—the 1905 Day Law separating the races in educational opportunity being the major one. In 1942, the legislature passed a law stating that all 2<sup>nd</sup> class cities in Kentucky (Lexington and Louisville) must have segregated parks. Segregated landscapes existed across Kentucky well before the state law was instituted. Most city parks in Kentucky were segregated by race by the 1920s—some much earlier. In 1894, Owensboro parks had designated separate areas; Lexington's parks were segregated in 1916; Louisville parks were legally divided by 1922 (Shearer, Wiggins & Jackson. 2002). These parks provided space for a multitude of activities, not just recreation. In Lexington, celebrations such as summer holidays, athletic tournaments and county fairs attracted many people from the black communities in surrounding counties. Not only were parks multifunctional spaces where people could communicate common experiences and frustrations, they supported community organizing and a wide spectrum of other programs such as recreation for adults and children, summer carnivals and parades, church and family reunions, band concerts and talent & entertainment programs. “. . . not just entertainment, reunions, or activism; all were fused together” (Shearer, Wiggins & Jackson. 2002).

Black and white populations within Kentucky began to have more contact in the 1940s and 1950s, which created frictions. Many whites regarded Louisville, as “progressive” because segregation was not as deeply rooted as in the deep south, but the continuation of segregation within many social spheres continued to be questioned (Wright 195). Governor Lawrence Wetherby (Democrat, 1950-1955) dismissed the official status of segregation in Kentucky, saying “no law, only local custom” kept Blacks and Whites eating at separate cafeterias (Kleber 256). That statement failed to acknowledge the effectiveness of unwritten customs of keeping Blacks out places of amusement and white institutions (Wright 195). Within Kentucky's emerging Parks Department, there was no written policy that segregated blacks or forbade mingling, but it was understood that Blacks were not welcome in certain areas, such as swimming and picnic areas. Blacks were certainly not excluded from visiting historic sites or natural sites, like Carter Caves or Cumberland Falls.

The popularity of the segregated urban parks in Lexington and Louisville led to discussions in the late-1940s for Kentucky to build a rural park for African Americans, as elsewhere in the United States. No later than 1952, 6 southern states had established 12 parks for African Americans. However, within these 6 states there were 114 parks for whites. The greatest racial disparity among southern states could be observed in Texas, with 45 parks for white and none for blacks, despite a population of nearly 1 million African Americans in 1952 (McKay, 704). Creating a state park for black Kentuckians became part of this emerging national dialogue over the appropriate way to provide greater Civil Rights and fairness, yet without also creating too much conflict within the existing social order.

### **Establishment of Cherokee State Park**

Kentucky created the State Parks Commission in 1924 that soon after took over its first 4 state parks. Local groups who had supported the creation of and purchased lands then turned them over to the Commission. Pine Mountain State Resort Park (at the time, called Cumberland Mountain Park) is considered the first state park. Second was the acquisition of Jefferson Davis birthplace site and monument, Old Fort Harrod (then the Pioneer Memorial) State Park was third. In 1926 the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company gave the land and lodge that is now Natural Bridge State Resort Park to the Commission. The fifth park was the monument, grave site and a few acres of land at the Battle of Blue Licks site (Spindletop, n.p.).



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CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section  8  Page  5

Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

In the 1930s the Kentucky state park system grew from 5 to 20 parks and shrines, known at the time as "historic sites." The Commonwealth also saw extensive work on the parks accomplished by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration, especially at Cumberland Falls State park, where another lodge was built, making 3 lodges (Pine Mountain, Natural Bridge and Cumberland Falls) in the system by 1939. The park budget was still extremely small, as virtually all the land, monuments, and historic sites, as well as over 6000 acres of land in the park system, had all been obtained from donation to the State (Spindletop, n.p.).

During the war years of 1939-1945 very little acquisition activity happened. The Federal Government gave Kentucky its greatest impetus for creation of the modern system of State Parks, with the damming of Kentucky rivers and making reservoirs all across the state. The Tennessee Valley Authority, the corporation empowered by the federal government in 1933 to develop not only energy, but also general commercial and tourist potentials in the area served by the Tennessee River, came to recognize the recreational opportunities within the area it served. TVA built Kentucky Dam in 1938-1944, and as the waters began to fill the lake, created a study committee made up of park professionals from the National Park Service and state park agencies, to investigate the development potential. The committee unanimously endorsed the establishment of a full compliment recreation park, Kentucky Lake State Park. At the same time, the committee seems to have followed cues that McKay observed in southern states, and recommended establishment of a separate park for the use by African Americans (Spindletop).

In May of 1946, Kentucky Governor Simeon Willis announced plans to develop a state park for African Americans. He proclaimed it "the only one in the south" (Morris, 1946), but at least three others preceded it: T.O. Fuller State Park in Tennessee (1937), Jones Lake State Park in North Carolina (1938), and a third in Birmingham Alabama (1943). Willis called for an appropriation of \$100,000 to build the Kentucky park within two years. The early name for the development was Chickasaw, acknowledging the area's Native American inhabitants, but was subsequently changed to Cherokee. It was planned to occupy space near the Kentucky Lake State Park.

Between 1948 and 1956, the Commonwealth of Kentucky began, with intense drive and expense, to create large number of resort parks and lodges for the benefit of its citizens and as economic development tools in more remote areas of the state, spending \$8 million on park and resort development, of which Cherokee was a part (Nelson). At this time and in the general location of Cherokee State Park, the Commonwealth of Kentucky also built and developed 3 parks with lake recreation and accommodations around the recently created Kentucky and Barkley lakes. By establishing Cherokee State Park, the state offered an accommodation to the growing cry for greater Civil Rights: providing a separate and equal facility rather than racial integration of all facilities.

It is reasonable to ask whether Cherokee State Park was regarded and funded inadequately, as had been the case with many black schools relative to their white counterparts during the era of segregation. Records indicate that Cherokee State Park received funding equal to that of other parks being developed in the area at that time. It was included on regular maintenance requests and updates (e.g., sewer and septic work in 1960) and had a compliment of employees and supplies that appear to be in line with the size and business of the park in relation to the others. The staff salaries were on par with the staff of other parks as well.

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Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

When the dining facilities and the cabins opened for business in May of 1953, they were comparable in style, size and in price, to the cabins at nearby Kenlake State Park. The park was advertised as being a Mecca for boating, fishing and swimming and was featured in state park publications as the 11<sup>th</sup> vacation park in Kentucky. With the facilities being open only in the summer months, as almost all park facilities were in those days, the staff and supervisor for the park were local hires to work through the summer. Lester Mimms was the first park supervisor; a school principal from nearby Earlington, he was hired for the summers. Joe Creason of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* writes glowingly about the park and its facilities in the summer of 1953. The ten cabins were rented a total of 55 times in the first two month. Prices were later cut significantly to allow access to the cabins by a wider range of people.

Jacob White, superintendent of Cherokee Park from 1961 until its close, and James Stubblefield a lifeguard with the park, were interviewed for a televised history of Kentucky's black parks. They offered a positive portrait of Cherokee, stating that the park was always very busy, that buses came from as far away as west Tennessee and central Kentucky, loaded with school kids and vacationers. Some individuals came from as far away as St. Louis, even New York. White also noted that Labor Day was always a very well attended time; both men recalled that numerous visitors came for picnics on weekends throughout the year. Stubblefield said he believed the Black community enjoyed it there because they could "feel at home" and be themselves and enjoy the facilities without concern or having to watch over their shoulders. (Interview. Kentucky Educational Television. *At Leisure's Edge: A Journey Through Kentucky's Black Parks*. 2001)

### **Evaluating the Significance of Cherokee State Park**

At least two views were found in response to the opening of a segregated state park for blacks. The official word, not surprisingly, saw the wisdom of continued segregation for the races. In 1953, Commissioner of Conservation Henry Ward, keynote speaker at the opening ceremonies for Cherokee State Park, said, "Those of us charged with the responsibility of developing a park program for Kentucky do not claim that we have the final answer. But there is one thing that is clear and that is that while the debate over segregation rages, the colored people of Kentucky are entitled to a park they can enjoy without confusion, conflicts or race riots" (Bolser, *Courier-Journal*, May 31, 1951).

Ward went on to say that he believed that in a democracy, all men are equal before God. "And some of these days, the fight for segregation will be settled, but until it is, I feel it is the obligation of the State to provide equal recreation facilities for all of its people." Another speaker at that grand opening, the Reverend L. W. Munday of Paducah's Washington Street Baptist Church, asked the gathered crowd "to struggle ceaselessly that the better things in life will be ours" (Bolser, 1951). For many, establishing Cherokee State Park demonstrated the willingness of the Commonwealth to make good on the pledge for separate but equal accommodations.

A very different view of the opening of the park was taken by Frank L. Stanley, Sr., then editor of *The Louisville Defender* newspaper, the region's weekly Black periodical, when Cherokee Park's bath house and first facilities opened in 1951. Stanley also estimates that there were 2000 people present at the opening, saying that, "those Negroes, who were literally starved for recreational advantages, grovel(ed) for the crumbs which fell from the white man's table abundantly supplied by our state.



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Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

(We) know what they are entitled to and many of them will continue to fight for their just rights and refuse to accept the humiliation and stigma of segregated State Parks" (Stanley, 1951).

Cherokee State Park may have been established to maintain the practice of segregation, but its closure points to fractures within Kentucky's willingness to continue practicing the doctrine. On June 26, 1963, Governor Bert Combs forced the issue, promulgating an Executive Order, "Desegregation in Places of Public Accommodation." The order affected many commercial operations under state government control, such as public places regulated, supervised, or licensed by agencies of state government. The order also mandated the end of racial segregation in places owned by the Commonwealth, such as Cherokee State Park (*The Louisville Defender, June 26, 1963*). Combs, a lame duck governor in the summer of 1963, knew that the decision would fuel the rhetoric of the heated campaign between the two candidates for governor, Democrat Edward Breathitt and Republican Louie Nunn.

Both candidates appealed to populist sentiment, criticizing Combs' decision for making policy that ignored the legislature, and by extension, the people (*Courier-Journal, October 24, 1963*). In March of 1964, new governor Breathitt rescinded Combs' Executive order, on the grounds that the 1964 Kentucky legislative session was considering a bill to end segregation (*Courier-Journal, March 13, 1964*). That bill died in the session. The state did not pass its own version of the national Civil Rights Act of 1964 until the legislative session of 1966. While Cherokee State Park continued to operate during the summer of 1963, and into the fiscal year 1963-1964, for all intents and purposes, Combs' executive order, and the ensuing political furor, ended the life of the segregated park. Cherokee State Park's acreage was annexed to Kentucky Lake State Park.

This episode is evaluated to have exceptional historic significance in the context of African American recreation in Kentucky, for it shows extremely well how certain social actions—recreation activities—became politicized within a larger category of Civil Rights activity. The events that took place at Cherokee State Park from 1958-1963, occurred within the last 50 years at the time of this nomination's writing. During this time, for example, Kentucky high schools began to integrate racially, offering Kentucky's youth their first chance time to engage in sports with both white and black students on the same playing field. These experiences were nominally recreation activities, but in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they also helped fuel a public push for greater Civil Rights for blacks. The growing public pressure for greater Civil Rights for African Americans spilled over from the public to political arena, resulting in the decisions in 1963 that resulted in the closure of Cherokee State Park. Thus, Cherokee State Park's relatively brief lifespan indicates, as a recreation site, two very important benchmarks in the social relations between whites and blacks. The conception of the park in the 1940s indicates a social acknowledgement that African Americans should be accommodated in a greater manner than prior to World War II; the establishment of the Park as a segregated facility in the early 1950s shows what was regarded as appropriate accommodation; and by the early 1960s, the policy of segregation had become no longer tenable, causing such segregated facilities to be closed. In just a dozen years, this drama played out at Cherokee State Park, remarkably, without a violent incident at the site.



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Section   8   Page   8  

Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

### **Summary of Significance**

Cherokee State Park was the only state park in the Commonwealth of Kentucky built specifically for African Americans, and so is important as a visible statement of a public policy of racial segregation in 1950s Kentucky. The Park proved useful to that social/political purpose, and its prescribed audience enjoyed its availability. In the middle-1960s, when public policy makers in Kentucky began to consider new ideas about the interaction of blacks and whites—ideas which had already been implemented in states outside of Kentucky—Cherokee Park fell victim in the fallout from those political debates. The Park's significance fits within a context of African American recreation during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its closure as a state park demonstrates the challenges of American society to implement a greater practice of racial integration which took nearly a century after the close of the Civil War which, to some participants of that conflict, attempted to resolve in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the status between whites and blacks.

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Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

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Joe Arnold, Interviewed by John Downs, May 10, 2008. Notes taken of the meeting and after the interview are stored at the Kentucky Heritage Council in the Cherokee State Park National Register nomination file.

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee\\_Valley\\_Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Valley_Authority)  
<http://prairiebluestem.blogspot.com/2007/08/old-bridges-at-land-between-lakes-ky.html>



Cherokee State Park  
Name of PropertyMarshall County, KY  
County and State**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property approximately 200**UTM References**1 16\_ 397 950 4071 940  
Zone Easting Northing3 16\_ 398 340 4069 780  
Zone Easting NorthingUSGS Topographic Quad name Fairdealing2 16\_ 399 080 4069 850  
Zone Easting Northing4 16\_ 397 250 4071 400  
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (See Page 10-1)

Boundary Justification (See Page 10-1)

 See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10**11. Form Prepared By**name/title John Downs, Tressa Brown, L. Martin Perryorganization Department of Parks; Kentucky Heritage Council date 7/1/08street & number Capital Plaza Tower 300 Washington St. telephone 502-564-7005Frankfort Frankfort Frankfort state KY zip code 40601email address john.downs@ky.gov; tressa.brown@ky.gov; marty.perry@ky.gov**Additional Documentation**

The National Register requires each nomination consist of the following beyond this 4-page cover form:

- Continuation Sheets for narrative
- A **USGS topographic quad map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts or properties having large acreage or numerous resources
- A **Photo identification map** for districts; one map can serve both as sketch and photo ID map.
- black and white photographs** of the property. See policy statement for acceptable use of digital photographs

The Kentucky Heritage Council requires the following for all nominations:

- An **additional set of black and white photographs** that remains at the KHC
- Floor plans** of properties whose significance is based on their plans
- Color slides or PowerPoint images** and presentation of the property to the Kentucky State Review Board

**Property Owner**name/title Gerry van der Meer, Commissionerstreet & number 500 Mero Street, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502-564-4930city or town Frankfort state KY zip code 40601email address (if available) gerry.vandermeer@ky.gov

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section  10  Page  1

Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The area nominated for listing includes most of the original area included in Cherokee State Park, approximately 200 acres. This area appears on the USGS quad map and attached sketch map, both of which present scales smaller than the 1" = 200' required by the National Register, and are attached to illustrate the relatively large area. This Boundary Description follows physical and legal lines. The district's boundary begins at the point where highway US 68/State Route 80 crosses the eastern shore of Kenlake, in Marshall County, Kentucky. From that point, the highway forms the property's southern boundary, following the highway to a point where it departs from the highway, and begins following the Kenlake State Park's legal boundary line, going northward. The western boundary of the nominated property runs from the highway to the point where that legal boundary joins the drainage labeled on the USGS quad map as Billie Branch. The nominated area follows the eastern bank of Billie Branch to the point where the Branch spills into Kenlake. The eastern boundary of the nominated property coincides with the shoreline, which forms the eastern boundary of Kenlake State Park, travelling in a southeasterly direction until it meets the point of beginning.

, defined by the State Park's western the coincides with the precise definition of this area, consult the attached sketch map. This land is all north of U.S. Highway 68, from the Eggner Ferry Bridge at the lake's edge to the limit of the village of Aurora. This area proposed for listing excludes approximately 100 acres of land north of Billy Branch Creek and lagoon, what was originally a nominal part of Cherokee State Park but which was never actually an integral part of the property.

### **Boundary Justification**

Cherokee State Park was originally approximately 300 acres of the original 1100 acres area of land given by the TVA to the state of Kentucky. Most of that 1100 acres was turned into Kenlake State Resort Park, except for the extreme northern portion, above US Highway 68, which became Cherokee State Park. Within the area proposed for listing remain all the historic features of the park, as well as the setting which retains integrity of feeling and association. Nearly one-third of the original Cherokee State Park acreage has been developed as modern expansions of Kenlake State Resort Park, which includes the modern campground, and therefore does not support the integrity of association with the historic Cherokee State Park. Thus, approximately 200 of the original 300 acres are viewed to have the integrity to warrant listing.

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CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section \_\_\_Photos\_\_\_ Page 1

Cherokee State Park  
Marshall County, Kentucky

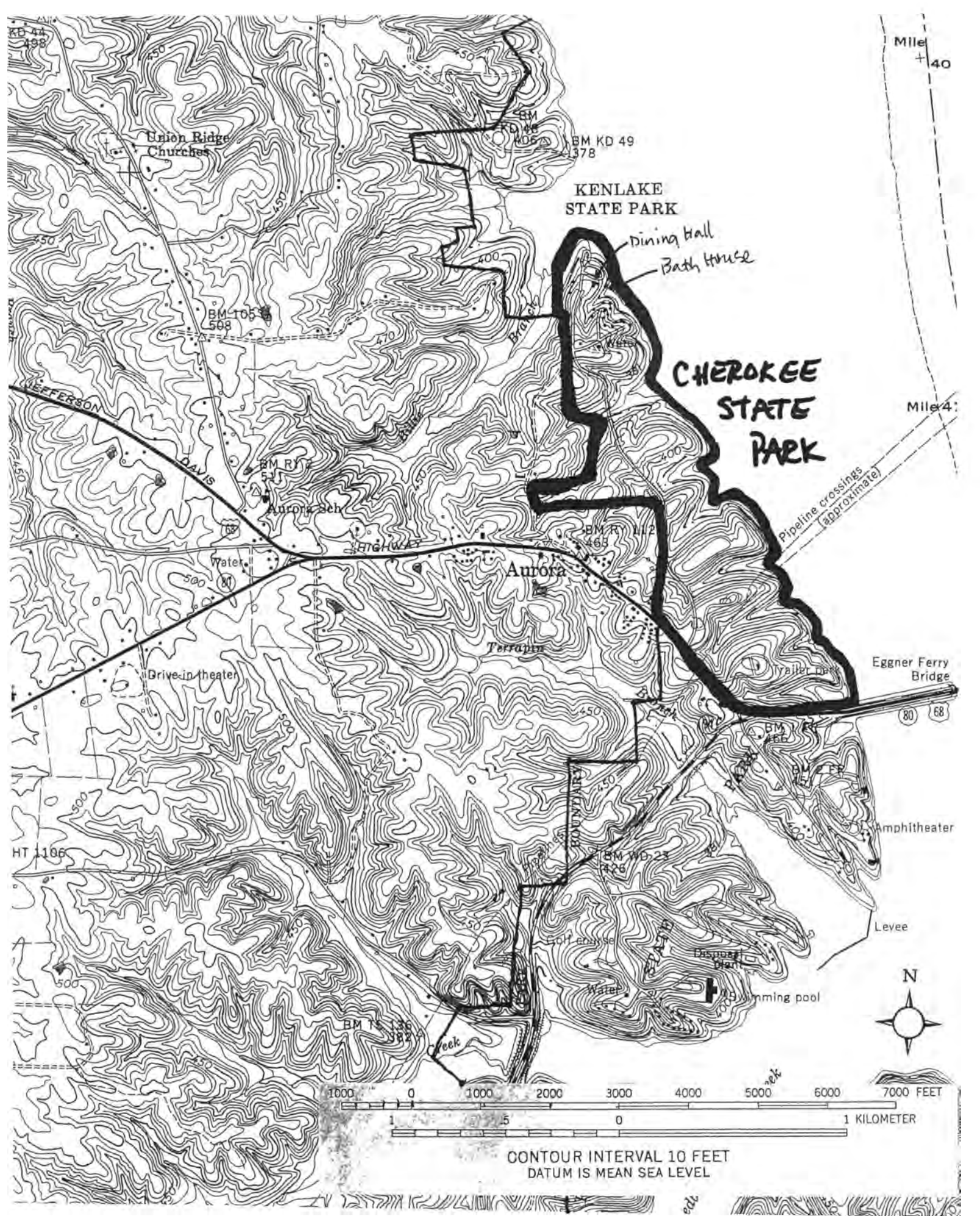
**Same information for all photographs:**

Property: Cherokee State Park  
Location: Marshall County, KY  
Photographer: John Patrick Downs  
Date of photograph: May 2008.  
Location of Digital Media: Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, KY

**Information specific to photographs:**

- 0001 Dining hall (feature 1) façade, looking South
- 0002 Bath house foundation (feature 2) and patio (feature 3), looking East
- 0003 Stairs to the beach (feature 3), looking North
- 0004 Northern cottage (feature 4) looking North
- 0005 Eastern cottage (feature 4), looking North
- 0006 Back side of eastern cottage, looking West
- 0007 Caretaker's cottage (feature 5), looking North Northeast
- 0008 Concrete picnic pad (one of the features grouped under feature 7), looking North
- 0009 Picnic shelter with restrooms (feature 6), looking East
- 0010 Concrete anchor (feature 8), looking North Northwest
- 0011 Bath house foundation (feature 2), looking North Northwest
- 0012 Barbeque grill (one of the features under feature 7), south of kitchen, looking West
- 0013 Sewer plant (feature 13), looking East
- 0014 AT&T telephone exchange building (feature 12), looking East
- 0015 Water tower (demolished since photo taken) and pump house (feature 10), looking North West





Mile 40

Union Ridge Church

KENLAKE STATE PARK

Dining Hall  
Bath House

CHEROKEE STATE PARK

Mile 4

Pipeline crossings (approximate)

Aurora Sch

Aurora

Terrace

Eggner Ferry Bridge

Drive-in theater

Amphitheater

Levee

Swimming pool

BM 136  
382

Creek

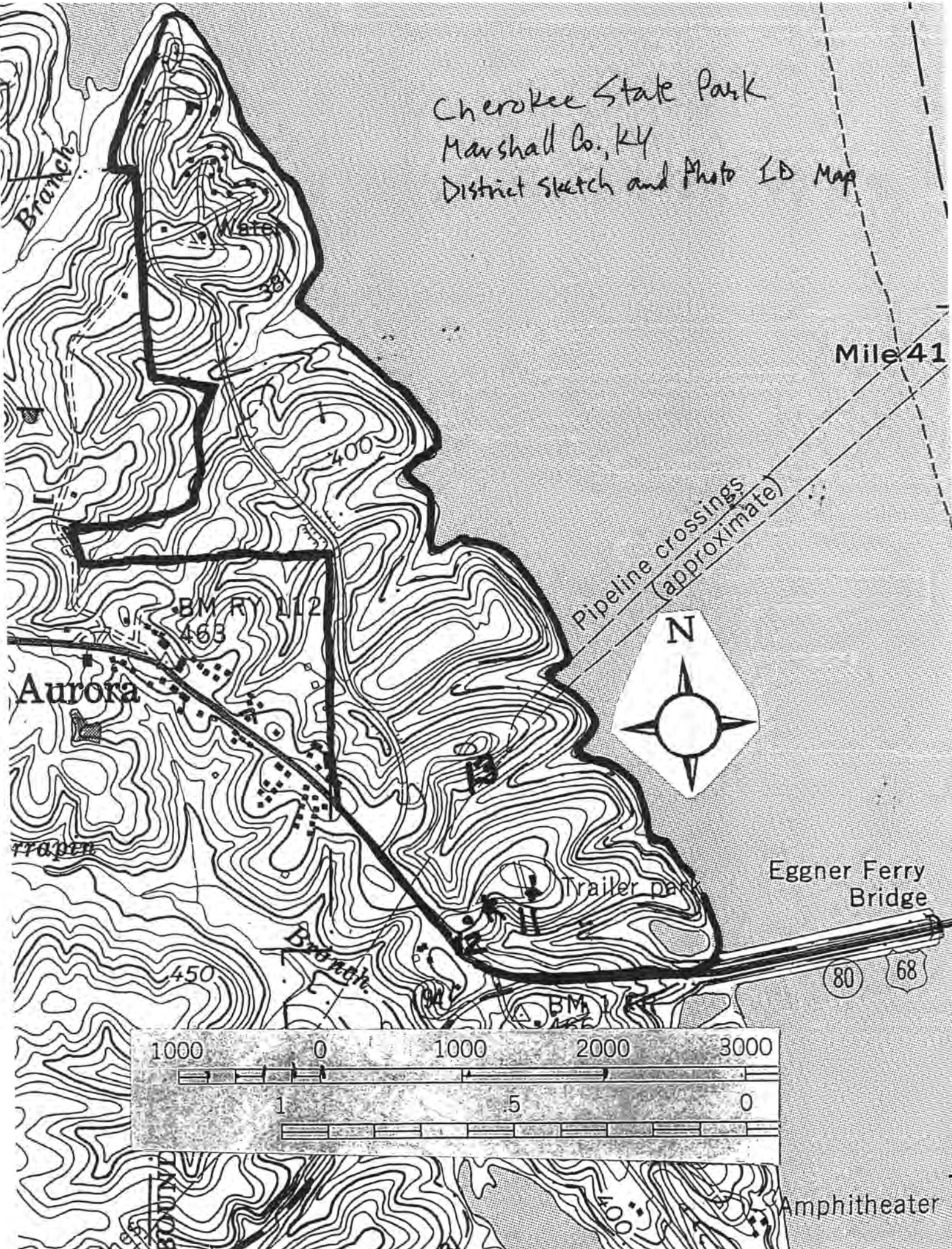
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 0.5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



Cherokee State Park  
Marshall Co., KY  
District sketch and Photo ID Map





Cherokee State Park  
 Marshall County, Ky  
 District sketch map [partial]







Cherokee State Park  
Marshall Co., KY  
Photo Identification map

Cherokee State Park  
Marshall Co., KY  
Photo 1b map  
Photos of outlying features

Mile 41

Pipeline crossings  
(approximate)



Aurora

BM RY 112  
463

Trailer park

Eggner Ferry Bridge

80 68



Amphitheater

Branch

Branch

Trapan

450

400

BM

1000  
500  
0

400

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET



REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Cherokee State Park  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KENTUCKY, Marshall

DATE RECEIVED: 10/24/08      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/10/08  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/25/08      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/07/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08001120

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    12/4/08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*See Attached Comments*

RECOM./CRITERIA Return - Patrick Andrews  
REVIEWER J. Rabbar      DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 12/4/2008

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments  Y /  N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240



## The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Return/Evaluation Sheet

Property Name: Cherokee State Park, Marshall County, KY

Reference Number: 08001120

The nomination form for the Cherokee State Park, Marshall County is being returned for technical and substantive issues.

The park appears to meet Criterion A, for its significance in Ethnic History (Black). There are a number of technical issues that need to be addressed and some clarification of the historic context.

#### Technical issues:

Section 6: The correct historic and current functions for this property are RECREATION/CULTURE: outdoor recreation. This encompasses the use and activities within the park. COMMERCE/TRADE and DOMESTIC are inappropriate functions for the park. See the National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, pages 19-21.

Section 7: Clarification of the contributing and non-contributing resources will also affect the resource count in Section 5. Resources #2 (Bathhouse) and #5 (former garage at caretaker's cottage) are no longer extant. The foundations that remain, while marking the site of former buildings, do not retain the integrity necessary to interpret the buildings or their role in the development and use of the park. These could be considered non-contributing or noted but not counted. The dock anchors and boathouse foundation (#8) and ramp (#9) could also be treated the same. Resource #7 is better classified as one collective Object. By my count, the totals would be: Contributing - 4 Buildings, 1 Site, 1 Structure; N/C - 5 Buildings, 1 Structure.

The descriptions reference photographs that are not included. Please delete or correct.

Property Name: Cherokee State Park, Marshall County, KY  
Reference Number: 08001120

Section 10: The verbal boundary description references a sketch map. This map is at a scale smaller than the 1" to 200' size requirement as noted in the Bulletin on page 58. Please provide an appropriately scaled map, or provide a verbal boundary description (perhaps noting the boundaries as coinciding with the property lines, the shoreline, the highway, etc.

The UTM coordinates recorded on the Topographic map need to be revised. Due to the curves of the highway and the undulating nature of the shoreline, if the UTM points are each connected by a straight line, there are parts of the district that will lie outside of the boundaries depicted by the points. All parts of the district must lie within a polygon created by the points. Please correct the UTM points.

Substantive issues:

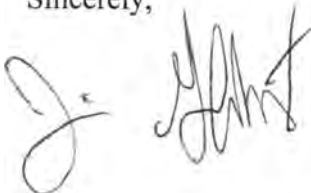
The context for the park is good but raises a few questions. When was the Kentucky state park system begun? How many state parks were in existence prior to the creation of Cherokee/Kentucky Lake parks? How many were created during the time these two were built? Prior to the creation of Cherokee State Park, were African American's restricted from all Kentucky state parks (assuming that there were any), or were there segregated accommodations within all or some of these parks?

Cited throughout Section 8 is a reference to "Spindletop;" however, there is no corresponding reference in the bibliography. Please provide the proper bibliographic entry for this reference.

Please check the box for criteria consideration "g."

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at [James\\_Gabbert@nps.gov](mailto:James_Gabbert@nps.gov).

Sincerely,



Jim Gabbert, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
12/8/2008

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY Cherokee State Park  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KENTUCKY, Marshall

DATE RECEIVED: 12/31/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/13/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08001120

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 1/09/2009 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Issues brought up in Return have been satisfactorily addressed.

Cherokee State Park was conceived and planned as the Commonwealth's first state park for African-Americans. Late into the game of creating separate parks, KY did not construct this park until after WWII. Its lifespan as a separate park was short - 1951-1963. It would be folded into Kentucky Lake Park when de jure segregation ended. As the state's only such facility, it meets the exceptional significance threshold for ethnic heritage: Black.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Crit A

REVIEWER J. Calbert

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N









































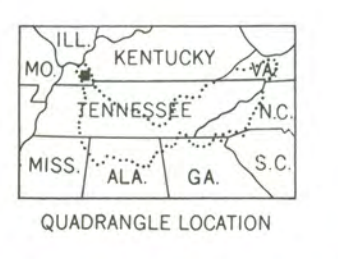




Mapped and edited by Tennessee Valley Authority  
Published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USC&GS, USGS, and TVA  
Complete field revision by TVA 1955, using aerial  
photographs taken 1955 and by reference to USGS  
quadrangle dated 1938-1939. Original map compiled by  
planimetric methods utilizing photogrammetric  
(multiplex) base from aerial photographs taken 1936.  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Kentucky (South)  
rectangular coordinate system  
1,000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator Grid ticks,  
Zone 16, shown in blue  
— 30' — Indicates Kentucky Lake Easement Boundary

UTM GRID AND 1911 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET  
0°43' 13 MILS  
3° 53 MILS  
FINE PURPLE DASHED LINES INDICATE SELECTED  
FENCE AND FIELD LINES VISIBLE ON AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY.  
THIS INFORMATION IS UNCHECKED

SCALE 1:24,000  
1 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET  
1 1 5 10 15 20 KILOMETER  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242.  
KENTUCKY GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40506  
KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601  
U.S. TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY, CHATTANOOGA, TENN. 37401 OR KNOXVILLE, TENN. 37902  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ..... Poor motor road .....  
Medium-duty ..... Wagon and jeep track .....  
Light-duty ..... Foot trail .....  
U. S. Route      State Route

FAIRDEALING, KY.  
N3645-W8807.5/7.5  
1955  
PHOTOREVISED 1971  
AMS 3357 1 SW-SERIES V853



Cherokee State Park  
Marshall Co, KY  
Fairdealing quad  
Zone 16  
Easting/Northing  
① 397 950/471 940  
② 397 060/406 850  
③ 398 340/406 780  
④ 397 290/471 900  
⑤





COMMERCE CABINET  
KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL



Steven L. Beshear  
Governor

The State Historic Preservation Office  
300 Washington Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
Phone (502) 564-7005  
Fax (502) 564-5820  
www.kentucky.gov  
October 20, 2008

Marcheta Sparrow  
Secretary

Jan Snyder Matthews, Ph.D., Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

Enclosed are nominations approved at the August 27, 2008 Review Board meeting. We are submitting these Kentucky properties for listing in the National Register:

- Wurtland Union Church, Greenup County
- Cherokee State Park, Marshall County
- Battle of Mill Spings Historic Areas (Boundary Increase), Pulaski and Wayne Counties
- New Zion Historic District, Scott and Fayette Counties

The following nomination was returned, and have been revised according to comments provided by the National Register staff reviewer. We are resubmitting these Kentucky properties for reconsideration and listing:

- Dr. Edwards House, Garrard County NR ID: 08000650

The following properties are submitted for listing. Their owners previously had objected to their listing, so these properties currently have Determined Eligible status. Included are notarized letters from owners withdrawing any objections to listing:

- Stoddard Johnston Elementary School, Jefferson County NR ID: 82005031
- Creel, Elijah, House (Green County MRA), Green County NR ID: 85003589

We appreciate your consideration of these nominations.

Sincerely,

Mark Dennen, Acting Executive Director  
Kentucky Heritage Council and  
State Historic Preservation Officer



COMMERCE CABINET  
KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL

Steven L. Beshear  
Governor

The State Historic Preservation Office  
300 Washington Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
Phone (502) 564-7005  
Fax (502) 564-5820  
www.kentucky.gov  
December 23, 2008

Marcheta Sparrow  
Secretary

Jan Snyder Matthews, Ph.D., Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

Enclosed are nominations approved at the December 9, 2008 Review Board meeting, submitted for listing:

- **James E. Pepper Distillery**, Fayette County
- **Buffalo School**, LaRue County
- **Kenmil Place**, McCracken County

This form, approved by the Board on August 27, 2008, required additional work, and is submitted for listing:

- **Black Bottom Historic District**, Logan County

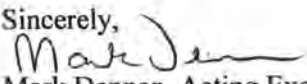
The following nomination was returned, and has been revised according to comments provided by the National Register staff reviewer. We resubmit it for reconsideration and listing:

- ✓ • **Cherokee State Park**, Marshall County NR ID: 08001120

The following nomination has a bit more complicated history of processing. It is a property that involves land in both Kentucky and Tennessee. The property was initially submitted for review in 2006, with Kentucky SHPO signing the form and the Tennessee SHPO disputing eligibility and submitting comments; the Register returned the form to the Kentucky SHPO on 12/29/06. The Kentucky SHPO revised the nomination as per return comments, reducing the boundary and strengthening the integrity evaluation, and resubmitted the form to the Register in May of 2008. Learning that the Tennessee SHPO had not reviewed the revised form, the Register returned the form, instructing the Kentucky SHPO to send the form to the Tennessee SHPO for comment. The Tennessee SHPO has reviewed the revised version, maintains their position of non-eligibility, and has enclosed comments. This property resubmitted for reconsideration and listing is:

- **Jesse Whitesell Farm**, Fulton County, KY and Obion County, TN; NR ID: 06001200 and 06001199

We appreciate your consideration of these nominations.

Sincerely,  
  
Mark Dennen, Acting Executive Director  
Kentucky Heritage Council and  
State Historic Preservation Officer