

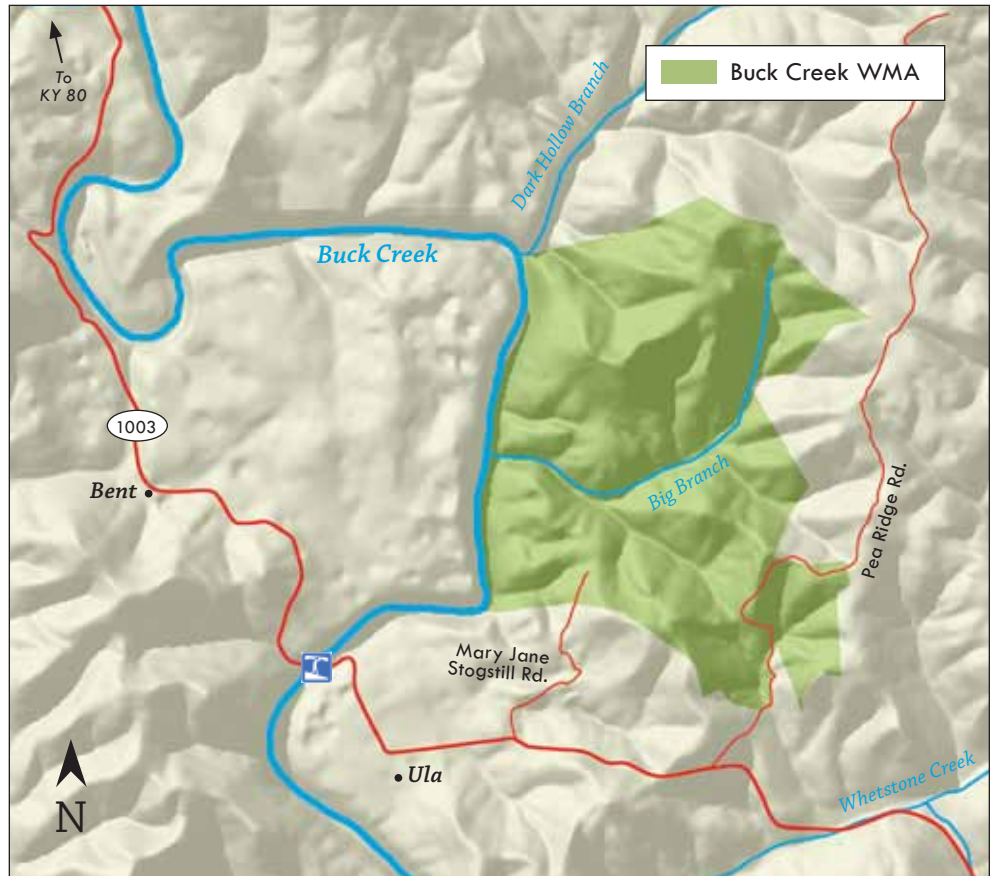


# Buck Creek WMA

BUCK CREEK WILDLIFE Management Area, Kentucky's newest public hunting area, also includes an overlooked gem of a stream.

Limestone cliffs rise to form the banks of the creek, while caves at the water's level ooze fog over the surface. Flowing through the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains in eastern Pulaski County, Buck Creek holds excellent populations of smallmouth bass, rock bass, longear sunfish and even an occasional walleye.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources recently acquired 859 acres for the Buck Creek Wildlife Manage-



KEITH WETHINGTON/OBIE WILLIAMS ILLUSTRATION

ment Area (WMA) through the Kentucky Wetland and Stream Mitigation Fund to protect this unique site and to make it available to the public.

This program uses the Mitigation Fund to compensate for stream losses in each river basin across Kentucky as authorized by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits. An Interagency Review Team - headed by the the Corps and comprised of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the state Division of Water and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - approved the use of these funds.

"No sportsman's dollars were spent to purchase this property," said Tony Wheatley, land acquisition coordinator for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

Buck Creek is home to several unique plant communities and many federally endangered mussel species. It will also serve as a mussel restoration site.

Anglers will enjoy access to one mile of some of the highest stream quality in the state. Long, deep pools punctuated by riffles define Buck Creek. Larry Estes, a major in Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's law enforcement division, has fished the creek since childhood and knows it well.

"I've caught smallmouth up to 3 pounds in there," he said. "A lot of times, we just use a Roostertail in orange-crawdad color. The current in Buck Creek is quick and you can cover a lot more water with that style of lure as opposed to a soft plastic lure or a jig."

The area possesses no developed facilities at this time. "Access points and parking will be developed by late summer," said Chris Garland, assistant director of the wildlife division of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "Currently, there is no hunting on the area, but we will be developing regulations and setting hunting seasons and dates in the near future." ■

### HOW TO GET THERE

From Somerset, take KY 80 east. Turn right (south) onto KY 1003. Turn left (north) onto Pea Ridge Road. The property lies about one mile north on Pea Ridge Road.

