

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge  
0137 Rustic Campus Drive  
Ullin, IL 62992  
618/634 2231

People with hearing impairments  
may reach Cypress Creek NWR through  
the Federal Information Relay System at  
1 800/877 8339

Website address:  
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/cypresscreek>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Cypress Creek

## *National Wildlife Refuge*



Bullfrog, *K. Harris*



*This blue goose, designed by Ding Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

### **Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS)**

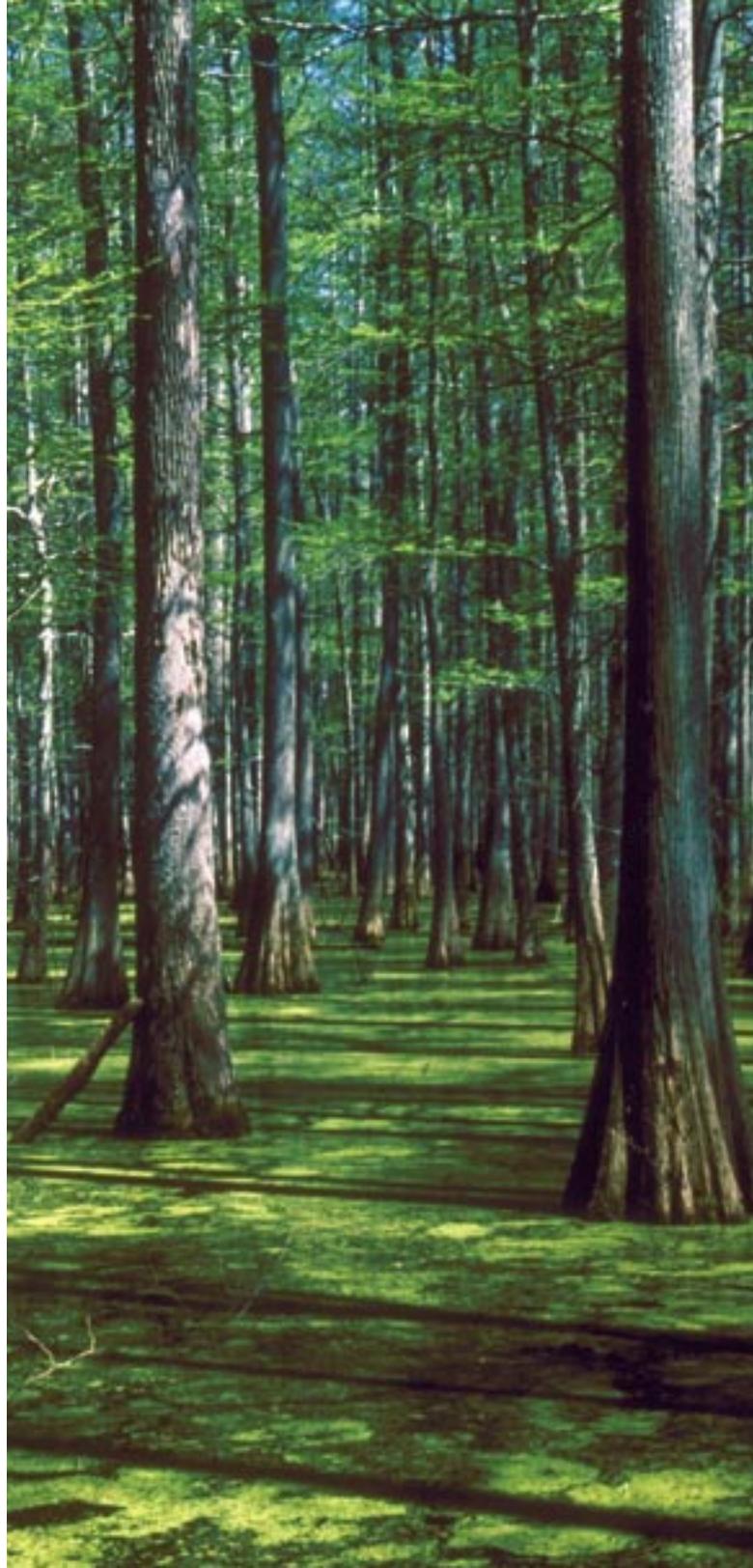
Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge is nestled between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, a biologically unique area within the Cache River basin. It is one of over 545 refuges across the nation and was established in 1990. The refuge will eventually encompass 35,000 acres. Management emphasis is placed on acquiring land, restoring habitat, and providing opportunities for the public to experience and learn about the Cache River Wetlands.

The refuge and surrounding watershed has been designated a “wetland of international importance” because of its diversity of plants, animals, and natural landscapes seldom matched anywhere else in the Midwest. The Cache River basin is one of only six areas in the U.S where four regions of different soils, terrain, and climate overlap. The most dramatic region is the Gulf Coastal Plain; its northern reach includes the southern tip of Illinois creating conditions that support rich floodplain forest, wetlands, and cypress-tupelo swamps. These areas provide resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and diversity of other migratory wading birds as well as resident wildlife like deer, turkey, mink, bobcat, and others. With such diversity the refuge provides many opportunities to watch wildlife, hunt, fish, canoe and hike.

Snowy Egret,  
*M. Jeffords*©



Cypress Trees, *M. Jeffords*©



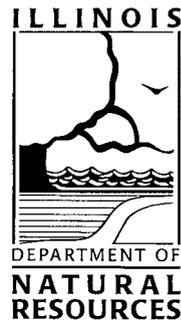


### **Bringing it Back**

Over the last 100 years, 230,000 acres, more than half of the former wetlands in the Cache watershed have been lost to land-clearing and drainage projects. The Post Creek cut-off, completed in 1916, was especially damaging to the wetlands because it diverted the upper segment of the Cache River directly into the Ohio River and isolated 40 miles of the shallow lower channel. After World War II, the forests of southern Illinois began to disappear at an alarming rate; followed by a 10 year period between the 1960s and the 1970s, where thousands of acres of floodplain forest in the Cache watershed were cleared, drained, and converted to agriculture.

With the loss of habitat, increased sedimentation, and large scale fish kills it became clear that the health of the Cache River Wetlands was in critical condition. As a result, local citizens organized the Citizens Committee to Save the Cache to protect what remained of the Cache River Wetlands. By 1990, this citizen-based conservation effort received a significant boost with the establishment of the Refuge and the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture. Today, through cooperative conservation, the tide of wetland destruction is being reversed.

*Working  
Together!*



### **Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture Project**

The Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture Project is a unique partnership with the refuge, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited. This partnership shares a common goal of restoring 60,000 acres along the Cache River and its major tributaries and is uniquely positioned to address the scale and complexity of the efforts needed to protect and restore the Cache.

### **PARTNERS**

#### **Cache River State Natural Area (SNA)**

This state-owned area borders the refuge to the east and includes over 15,000 acres. The SNA boundaries include outstanding natural features that include massive 700-1000 year cypress trees and rich upland and bottomland hardwood forests. The SNA also owns and operates the Cache River Wetlands Center which is an excellent first stop to gather information about the area and lands managed by the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture.

#### **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**

The Nature Conservancy is an international conservation organization which strives to protect habitat for native plants and animals. The Illinois Chapter has been active in preservation and restoration efforts along the Cache River since 1970. The Nature Conservancy shares headquarters with the refuge, and owns and manages Grassy Slough Preserve.

#### **Ducks Unlimited (DU)**

Once the owner of 1,000 acres along the Cache River, Ducks Unlimited developed shallow water wetlands on the Frank Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve. Today this area is owned by the refuge and managed for a diversity of migratory birds. Ducks Unlimited no longer owns land within the project, but remains a strong supporter of the Cache River Wetlands.



Bluebird,  
D. Menke, USFWS

## Recreational Opportunities

Over 15,000 acres of refuge lands are accessible for recreational opportunities year round. Acceptable outdoor uses include hunting, fishing, nature photography, wildlife observation, and boating (10 mph limited). The refuge, along with the SNA, also offer many educational opportunities through school programs and special weekend events.

Hunting and fishing is permitted in designated areas throughout the refuge. Information and specific regulations are available at the refuge office or Wetlands Center. Viewing platforms, boat ramps, trails and parking accesses are found throughout the refuge and offer opportunities to explore and experience Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

*Hickory Bottoms Access* (USFWS)  
Hickory Bottoms is located off Mount Olive Road in the north central portion of the refuge. The site highlights a 200 acre tract of contiguous forest and has received national recognition for its songbird populations. The site is a popular hunting and wildlife watching spot. Trail Length: 1.5 miles, Difficulty: Easy

*Cypress Pond Access* (USFWS)  
This short, forested trail provides access to the Cypress Pond fishing platform and opportunities to watch wildlife. Deer, turkey, and a diversity of birds can be observed from this site. The access is located off Cypress Road, east of Friendship Church Road.

*Frank Bellrose Wildlife Viewing Area* (USFWS)  
Dedicated to internationally known waterfowl biologist, this viewing area provides year-round access to the Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve for wildlife watching. The Bellrose Reserve is managed specifically for waterfowl and shorebirds but also provides important habitat for deer, beaver, mink, kingfishers, and a variety of wading birds. The site is located off Cache Chapel Road.



Marbled Godwit,  
J. Mattsson



Turtles,  
M. Jeffords©

*Limekiln Springs Trail* (USFWS)  
Limestone outcrops, floodplain forest, two boardwalk crossings, and several springs highlight this diverse trail. The cold clear water of Limekiln Springs maintains water in the swamp and provides habitat for waterfowl and a variety of fish, reptiles, and amphibians. The trail access is located off Cache Chapel Road. Trail Length: 2.5 miles, Difficulty: Easy

*Brushy Unit* (USFWS)  
This 320-acre wetland highlights waterfowl, shorebirds, and a diversity of wetland species. Opportunities exist for wildlife observation and hunting throughout the year. Access into the area is off Mallard Lane, east of Century High School.

*Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve*  
This area, owned by SNA, includes a boardwalk that extends through a floodplain forest that features large bald cypress and tupelo trees. The site provides a safe haven for a diversity of birds, frogs, and true swamp fish. The site is located off Highway 37, south of the Cache River Wetlands Center.

*Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center*  
The Wetlands Center, owned by the SNA, is jointly staffed by Service and SNA resource specialists and a good first stop for area information. The building features the natural and cultural history of the area through interactive exhibits, life-size dioramas, a wildlife viewing area, and an audio-visual production. The site is located off Highway 37, north of Section 8 Woods and is also accessible off the Tunnel Hill State Bike Trail.

*Cache Levee Boat Access* (USFWS)  
This access off Highway 3, south of Cache, provides access to approximately 3 miles of old river channel. A silt bar on the east end of the channel maintains the water level throughout the year providing opportunities to fish, hunt, canoe, and watch wildlife.



Gray Tree Frog,  
M. Jeffords©



Raccoon,  
M. Jeffords©





*Old Cache Channel Boat Access*  
(USFWS)

This site provides access to approximately 3 miles of river channel bordered by bald cypress, river birch, and other floodplain forest trees. A silt bar on the east end and the Ohio River floodgate on the west end maintain water in the channel most of the year. The access is located off Highway 51 and Redmond Road and provides opportunities to fish and watch wildlife.



American Bittern,  
*J. Mattsson, USFWS*



Wood Thrush, *S. Maslowski*

## Area Rules and Regulations

The following regulations were established to protect the area's natural resources and insure safe and enjoyable experiences for visitors.

### *Hunting & Fishing Permit*

Refuge hunting and fishing seasons generally follow state seasons and regulations. It is important to note an annual permit is required and needs to be signed and on the person while hunting or fishing on refuge property. This permit is free and located on the Refuge Hunting and Fishing brochure; additional information and refuge specific regulations are also described in this publication. Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing brochures are available at the refuge office, outdoor kiosks, Wetlands Center, or on the Cypress Creek web-site ([www.fws.gov/midwest/cypresscreek](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/cypresscreek))



Fishing!,  
G. Gage,  
USFWS



## Signs to Know

Refuge property is marked with special regulatory signs. It is important to know the meaning of these signs.

### *Refuge Boundary Sign*

These signs mark the boundary of the refuge. It is important to understand they DO NOT prohibit access, only unauthorized uses.

### *Area Closed Sign*

These signs mean no public access.

### *Motor Vehicles*

Motorized vehicles, including off-road vehicles, horses, and ATVs can destroy fragile habitat and are not permitted within refuge boundaries.

### *Camping & Fires*

Camping or building fires on the refuge are not permitted.

### *Closed Areas*

Certain portions of the refuge may be posted with "Area Closed" or "Restricted Area" signs. These places are sensitive wildlife areas and may not be entered.

### *Collecting*

Disturbing, injuring, or collecting plants, animals, or objects of antiquity are prohibited.

## For More Information

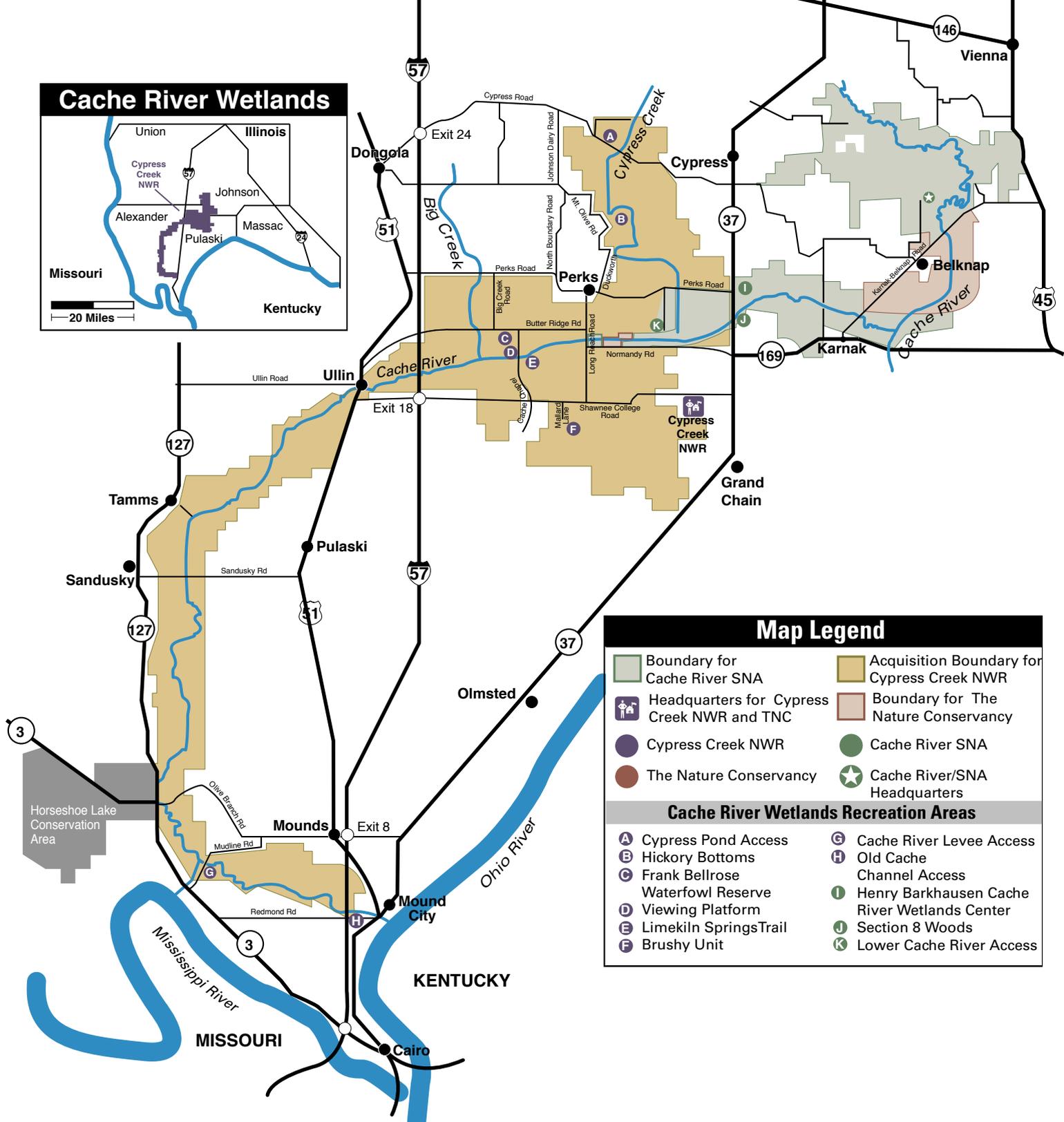
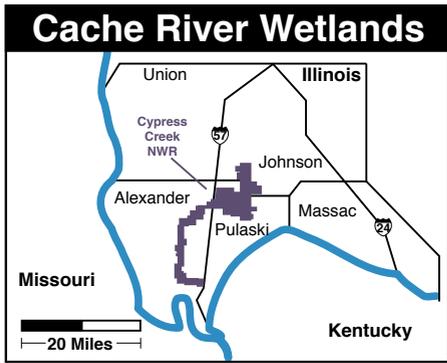
The Cypress Creek NWR office (located at Shawnee Community College) is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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*The Cache River meanders slowly through a wide, flat floodplain created over 13,000 years ago by the ancient Ohio River, providing water essential for the floodplain forests, swamps and sloughs that support some of the oldest living stands of swamp trees east of the Mississippi.*





### Map Legend

Boundary for Cache River SNA	Acquisition Boundary for Cypress Creek NWR
Headquarters for Cypress Creek NWR and TNC	Boundary for The Nature Conservancy
Cypress Creek NWR	Cache River SNA
The Nature Conservancy	Cache River/SNA Headquarters

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### Cache River Wetlands Recreation Areas

Cypress Pond Access	Cache River Levee Access
Hickory Bottoms	Old Cache Channel Access
Frank Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve	Henry Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center
Viewing Platform	Section 8 Woods
Limekiln Springs Trail	Lower Cache River Access
Brushy Unit	