WELCOME TO BELLS BEND PARK

TRAIL RULES AND REGULATIONS

HELP PROTECT BELLS BEND PARK

While Bells Bend Park is a second home to hikers, runners and cyclists, this beloved place is a first home for a diversity of native plants and animals. Responsible and ethical behavior protects habitat, reduces trail damage and ensures a safe and enjoyable experience for all who visit.

VISITOR RESPONSIBILITIES

PARK HOURS: Dawn to Dusk

RULES OF THE TRAIL

Bells Bend Park contains earthen and gravel hiking trails and mountain bike trails. Please show courtesy to other trail users and follow the rules for your trail type.

- Hiking is permitted only on hiking trails
- Biking is permitted only on mountain bike trails
- Consult the trail conditions sign at the entrance before embarking
- Helmets are required
- Do not remove plants or disturb wildlife
- Put trash in receptacles
- Stay on designated trails – shortcuts cause damage
- Keep pets on a leash not exceeding six feet

PROHIBITED

- Motorized or power assisted vehicles
- Drugs and alcohol
- Firearms and hunting
- Horses

SAFETY

- Mountain biking can be dangerous. Use the trails at your own risk
- Enjoy the park with a friend
- Leave valuables at home
- Take car keys with you

EMERGENCY

- In case of emergency: 911
- Non-Emergency Police: (615) 862-8600
- Bells Bend Outdoor Center: (615) 862-4187
- Address: 4187 Old Hickory Blvd., Nashville, TN 37218



LEGEND

- T Trailhead
- P Parking
- R Restrooms
- Campground
- Outdoor Center & Office
- ROADS
- FLOODPLAIN
- RIVER LOOP TRAIL (2.5 MILES)
- DOVE FARM LOOP TRAIL (2 MILES)
- BARN LOOP (1.25 MILES)
- QUAIL LOOP (0.95 MILES)
- OLD FARM ROAD TRAIL (0.65 MILES)
- POND LOOP (0.89 MILES)
- POND TRAIL (0.20 MILES)
- BUCHANAN LOOP (1 MILE)
- MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS (4.5 MILES)

Red-winged Blackbird

Hay Barn

Eastern Meadowlark

Passionflower

Pasture

McCord Hollow Creek

Tent Camping

BELLS BEND
NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

Located in western Davidson County, this park takes its name from a peaceful arc of the Cumberland River known as Bells Bend. This rural preserve is defined by its agricultural history, its bountiful opportunities for viewing wildlife and a landscape shaped by the river.

Early History

With its rich floodplain, gentle rolling hills, streams, and wetlands, Bells Bend has attracted human activity since the Paleo Period over 10,000 years ago. The first people were primarily transient hunter-gathers, but by the Mississippian Period (900 A.D.-1400 A.D.), Native Americans developed cities, trade, and advanced agricultural practices along the Cumberland River. Evidence of a village with year-round habitation and a number of artifacts make Bells Bend Park the most archaeological significant location in the Metro Parks system.

In later years, farming dominated Bells Bend. The 1842 house built by John Bell but inhabited for decades by the Buchanan Family is still on site. The nearby Civil War river battle, the Battle of Bells Mill, took place near the edge of the property. After the war, farming and rural living continued well into the 1980s.

A New Park for Nashville

In search of a site for a new municipal landfill, the city identified this 808-acre tract as a possibility in the late 1980s. For the next few years, the city was met with opposition by neighbors and other concerned groups in a much publicized legal battle. Other sites were considered as opposition grew, but the city acquired the land in 1994 and land-banked it. In 1999, Mayor Bill Purcell declared the site would be transferred to the Metro Parks and Recreation Department and preserved forever as green space. Opened to the public in 2007, it is one of the largest parks in the Metro Parks' system.

Nature Abounds

The Cumberland River forms the parks' western boundary and is its dominant natural influence. Thirty percent of the property is in the floodplain and floodway. Several streams, farm ponds, and wetland areas can be explored. Upland areas are characterized by gently rolling slopes, former pasture with woody fencerows, and tree-covered knobs.

Years of farming have impacted the diversity of vegetation found here today. Common trees include sycamore, cottonwood, bur oak, hackberry, beech, and a variety of hickories and other oaks. The unmowed fields are spectacular in the fall with vibrant ironweed, bright yellow goldenrods, and many-flowered asters. In winter, look for a blanket of showy, bronze-orange broomsedge.

The variety of habitats provides home to a plethora of wildlife species. Meadowlarks, bluebirds, buntings, woodcocks, quail, sparrows, orioles, woodpeckers, and hawks are just a few of the common bird species. Many migratory birds stop through during their long journeys north and south. Deer, beaver, muskrat, coyote, and skunk are a few of the mammals that can be found here. Beginning in February, frogs can be heard singing, and a variety of other species of amphibians and reptiles also inhabit the site.

LEAVE NO TRACE OUTDOOR ETHICS

Bells Bend Park, Outdoor Center Trailhead

4187 Old Hickory Blvd.

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