

Reelfoot Lake Scenic Boat Cruises

May – September 2022

Depending upon Lake Levels

Reelfoot Lake State Park invites you to enjoy the fascinating world of Reelfoot Lake by taking our Scenic Pontoon Boat Tour. Experienced Naturalists, who are eager to discuss the history and wonders of this natural phenomenon, will pilot our cruise boats.

Majestic cypress trees rise from the reflective waters of the lake. A variety of aquatic plants and flowers occupy the shoreline and saturate the shallow water. Hundreds of birds fill the air with their songs. You may see great blue herons, ducks, and an occasional bald eagle soaring above. All of this creates an exhilarating cruise and enhances the serenity and peacefulness of Reelfoot Lake. You will marvel at the awe-inspiring adventures this “Earthquake Lake” has in store for you. Guests are invited to bring soft drinks and snacks to make their trip even more delightful.

Times

- 2-hour cruises offered **Daily at 9:00am**
- 1-hour cruises offered **Weekends & Holidays at 1:30pm & 3:00pm**
- 2-Hour Sunset cruises offered **Saturday at 6:00pm**
- Special afternoon cruises available for groups of ten or more, Monday – Friday between the hours of 1:30pm and Sunset (**Reservations must be made in advance**)

Prices

- 2-hour
 - * Adults = \$20 per person plus \$3.50 Preservation Permit Fee per person
 - * Seniors = \$20 per person
 - * Children 12 & under = \$10 per person
- 1-hour Cruise:
 - * Adults = \$15 per person plus \$3.50 Preservation Permit Fee per person
 - * Seniors - \$15 per person
 - * Children \$10 per person
- 2-hour Sunset Cruise:
 - * Adults = \$20 plus \$3.50 Preservation Permit Fee
 - * Seniors 65 or older = \$20 per person
 - * Children 12 & under = \$10 per person

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR MORE DETAILS ON MAKING RESERVATIONS ONLINE

**To make tour reservations,
call 731.253.9652 have available credit card
and email address. Online reservations link
<https://tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake>**

**Click on RESERVATIONS or upcoming
events tab. All cruises depart from the Visitor
Center / Ellington Assembly Hall,
WEATHER PERMITTING.**

Thank you, RLSP

DEEP SWAMP CANOE FLOAT



JOIN OUR EXPERIENCED NATURALIST FOR A THREE HOUR CANOE FLOAT THROUGH SELDOM EXPLORED AREAS OF REELFOOT LAKE. OBSERVE OLD GROWTH CYPRESS FOREST, A HERON ROOKERY AND AN EAGLE NEST AS WE LEISURELY PADDLE THROUGH THE CYPRESS SWAMP. EXCITING SIGHTS INCLUDE LARGE FISH SWIMMING, DUCKS TAKING FLIGHT AND THE OCCASIONAL SNAKE MAKING AN APPEARANCE. A VARIETY OF BIRD LIFE SUCH AS SONGBIRDS, DUCKS, HERONS, OWLS, OR AN EAGLE USUALLY SHOWS UP TO CHECK OUT THE CANOEIST. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE ADVENTURES OFFERED IN WEST TENNESSEE!



CANOE FLOATS DEPART FROM REELFOOT LAKE STATE PARK'S VISITOR CENTER. THREE HOUR CANOE FLOATS WILL BE AT 1:00PM ON SATURDAY AND 9:00AM ON SUNDAY. CANOE FLOATS WILL BE EVERY WEEKEND IN MARCH AND APRIL. STATE PARK PROVIDES CANOE, LIFE JACKET, AND PADDLES. FEES ARE \$20 PER PERSON TO RENT CANOE KAYAK OR HAVE YOUR OWN CANOE OR KAYAK. OPTIONAL TO YOU BRING: SNACK, DRINK, CHANGE OF CLOTHES, CAMERA AND BINOCULARS IN A WATERPROOF, FLOATABLE CONTAINER. UPPER BODY STRENGTH IS NEEDED.

* FLOAT LOCATIONS MAY CHANGE DEPENDING UPON WIND AND WATER LEVEL.

* MAY HAVE TO HAVE A \$3.50 REELFOOT PRESERVATION PERMIT



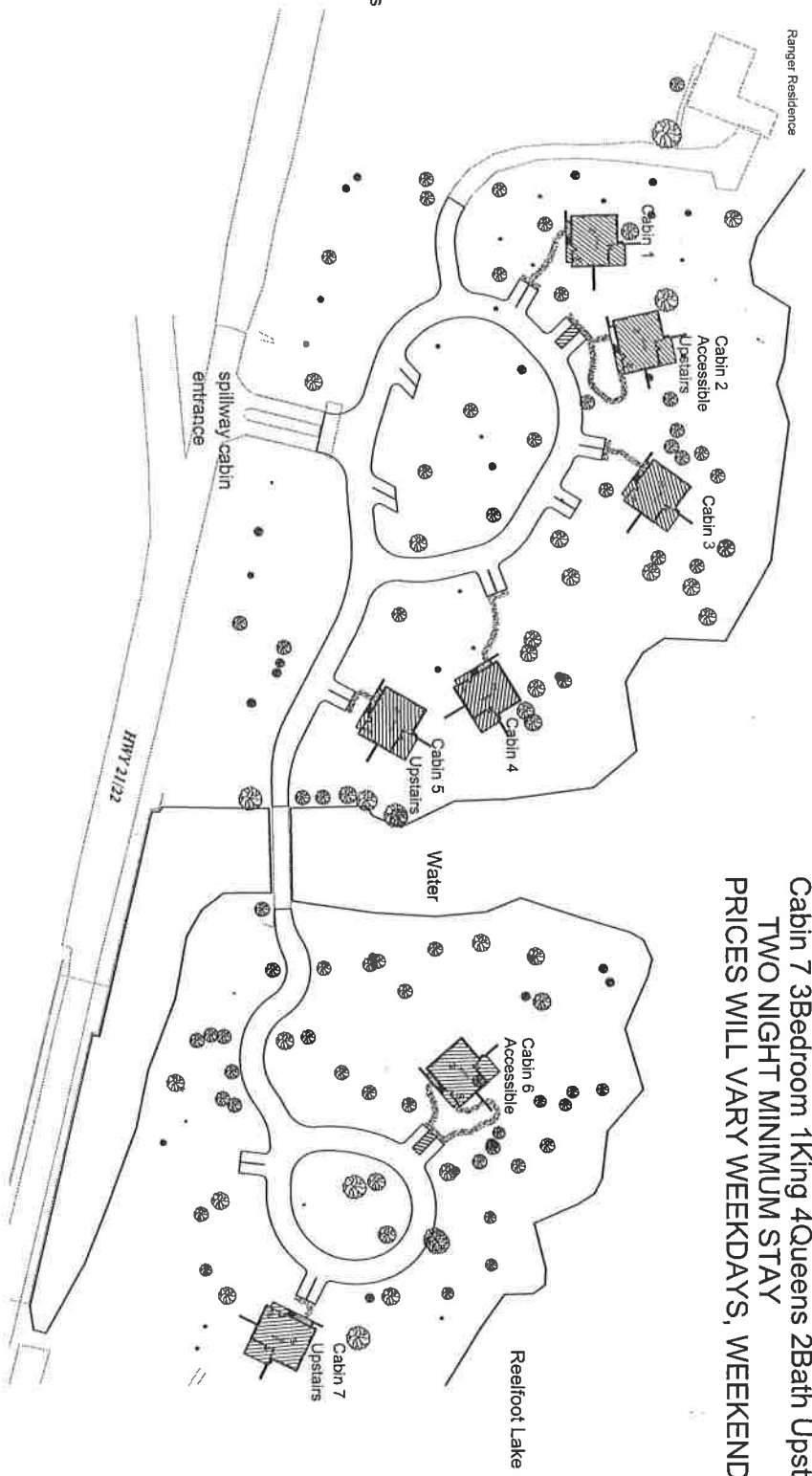
FOR RESERVATIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON EVENTS GO TO www.tnstateparks.com CLICK ON REELFOOT LAKE, UPCOMING EVENTS, FIND DATE & TIME, VIEW DETAILS, NUMBER OF PEOPLE, PAY DIRECTLY ONLINE.

CABINS, CAMPGROUNDS SOUTH AND NORTH CAN BE RESERVED ONLINE AS WELL.

REELFOOT LAKE STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER 731-253-9652 OR CAMPGROUND OFFICE 731-538-3356

Reelfoot Lake

- Cabin 1 2Bedroom 1King 2Queen 2Bath
 - Cabin 2 3Bedroom Accessible 1King 4Queen 2bath Upstairs
 - Cabin 3 2Bedroom 1King 2Queen 2Bath
 - Cabin 4 2Bedroom 1King 2Queens 2Bath
 - Cabin 5 3Bedroom 1King 4Queens 2Bath Upstairs
 - Cabin 6 2Bedroom Accessible 1King 2Queens 2Bath
 - Cabin 7 3Bedroom 1King 4Queens 2Bath Upstairs
- TWO NIGHT MINIMUM STAY**
PRICES WILL VARY WEEKDAYS, WEEKENDS, HOLIDAYS



RLSP Visitor Center
 2 miles from RLSP Cabins

Reelfoot Lake State Park Spillway Cabins
 4555 State Route 21 East Tiptonville, TN, 38079
<http://tnstateparks.com/parks/cabins/reelfoot-lake-state-park-Cabins> or 731.253.9652



Reelfoot Lake Auto Tour

Phone (731) 253-8003 www.tnstateparks.com



Thank you for visiting Reelfoot Lake State Park and the Reelfoot Lake area. We care about our visitors and want you to get acquainted with our natural surroundings and find out why we are proud of it. Buckle up, drive safely and have a wonderful day!

1. State Park Visitor Center – 2595 SR. 21 E. Tiptonville, TN. 38079

A trip to Reelfoot Lake would not be complete if you did not visit the Visitor/Interpretive Center. See exhibits that explore the formation, history, natural diversity, and future of Reelfoot Lake. Take a walk on our scenic boardwalk over Reelfoot Lake and through the majestic cypress trees. Nature programs are available: Jan/Feb eagle tours by bus, March/ April Canoe Floats and May-September pontoon cruises. The Visitor/Interpretive Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

2. Blue Bank State Park Picnic Area – 3375 SR. 21 E. Tiptonville, TN. 38079

Reelfoot Lake State Park has Four Lake front picnic areas. These scenic areas have picnic tables, grills, playgrounds, and fishing piers. There are two shelters available for rental.

3. Eagle Basin Park Picnic Area – 3975 SR. 21 E. Tiptonville, TN. 38079

Park has two shelters available for rent, grills, picnic tables, restrooms, fishing pier, Ninja playground, volleyball net and a walking track. Historically named after the Kiwanis Club and located across from the Pit BBQ. This location is a great area for weddings and receptions in the summer.

4. Reelfoot Lake State Park Spillway – 4555 SR. 21 E. Tiptonville, TN. 38079

There are a total of seven cabins: **Cabin# 1** has 1 king bed, 2 queen beds, 2 bathrooms; **Cabin# 2** Handicap accessible: 1 king bed and 4 queen beds 2 bathrooms; **Cabin# 3** has 1 king bed and 2 queen beds, 2 bathrooms; **Cabin# 4** has 1 king bed and 2 queen beds, 2 bathrooms; **Cabin# 5** has 1 king bed and 4 queen beds, 2 bathrooms; **Cabin# 6** Handicap accessible: 1 king bed and 2 queen beds, 2 bathrooms; **Cabin# 7** has 1 king bed and 4 queen beds, 2 bathrooms. Cabin reservations can be made at www.tnstateparks.com

5. Reelfoot Lake State Park Campground – 6812 Hwy. 21 W. Tiptonville, TN. 38079

Our campground on the south end of the lake is full of nature, beautiful scenery, and offers an escape from the today's world. Campground has 86 sites with electric, water and grills. There are two bathhouses two of which contains shower facilities, picnic shelter and boat ramp. Lake side campsites are located among the cypress trees which make for a great place to see the sunrise and sunset over the lake. The south campground is open year-round, and you may make reservations online at www.tnstateparks.com or by phone at (731) 538-3356. Campground Nature Trail is approximately ½ mile also enjoy the side trail that overlooks Reelfoot Lake. Great spot for photos when the moon is full.

6. Kirby Pocket State Park – 5026 W. Hwy. 22 Hornbeak, TN. 38232

Photographers can see a beautiful sunset, great area for canoe/Kayakers to see the lotus in full bloom in June and an awesome area for fishermen/duck hunters to use boat ramp & cleaning station. Big fish is on display at this location for photos.

7. National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center – 4343 US Hwy. 157 Union City, TN. 38261

The visitor center provides information about the diversity of flora and fauna that call Reelfoot home. The museum has excellent exhibits on waterfowl and other wildlife. A "backyard" trail is open dawn to dusk on the visitor center property. Nature programs are available.

8. Grassy Island Wildlife Drive – 4836 Walnut Log Rd. Union City, TN. 38261

Woodland birds and mammals can be seen on a leisurely drive or walk through this portion of the Wildlife Refuge. Along the way there is a gravel/boardwalk trail. The drive ends at an observation platform overlooking Reelfoot Lake and provides an awesome view of sunsets over cypress filled waters. Round trip approximately 5 miles.

9. Bayou De Chein

The "River of the Dogs" flowed through this area long before the earthquakes formed the lake and it can still be traced through the lake to the Obion River. The farm road along the bayou makes an excellent walking trail for observing wildlife. The walk is about a 3-mile round trip. Area is closed Oct 15- March 15.

10. Long Point Unit of National Wildlife Refuge – 9 Long Point Rd. Hickman, Ky. 42050

Several gravel roads provide outstanding wildlife drives through open fields and woods during the spring and summer months. Mammals and birds can often be seen, and it is a migratory bird hotspot. Thousands of ducks and geese call the refuge their winter home and can be seen from the observation tower.

11. State Park Airpark (North End) 3120 SR. 213 Tiptonville, TN. 38079

The airpark area includes a 14-site campground with bathhouse, 3500' airstrip no fuel, and a hiking trail approx. 2 miles long. If you want seclusion this area is excellent for tent & RV camping. Sites include electric, water, picnic table, fire ring, a dump station and a nearby boat ramp for lake access.

12. Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area (Black Bayou & Phillipy)

The wildlife management area (WMA) provides a home for several species of birds, making it a bird watchers paradise. Ducks and eagles can be seen in the winter months and early spring while herons and other wading birds walk through the shallows.

13. Black Bayou Observation Tower Area – 710 Choctaw McKutchen Rd. Tiptonville, TN. 38079

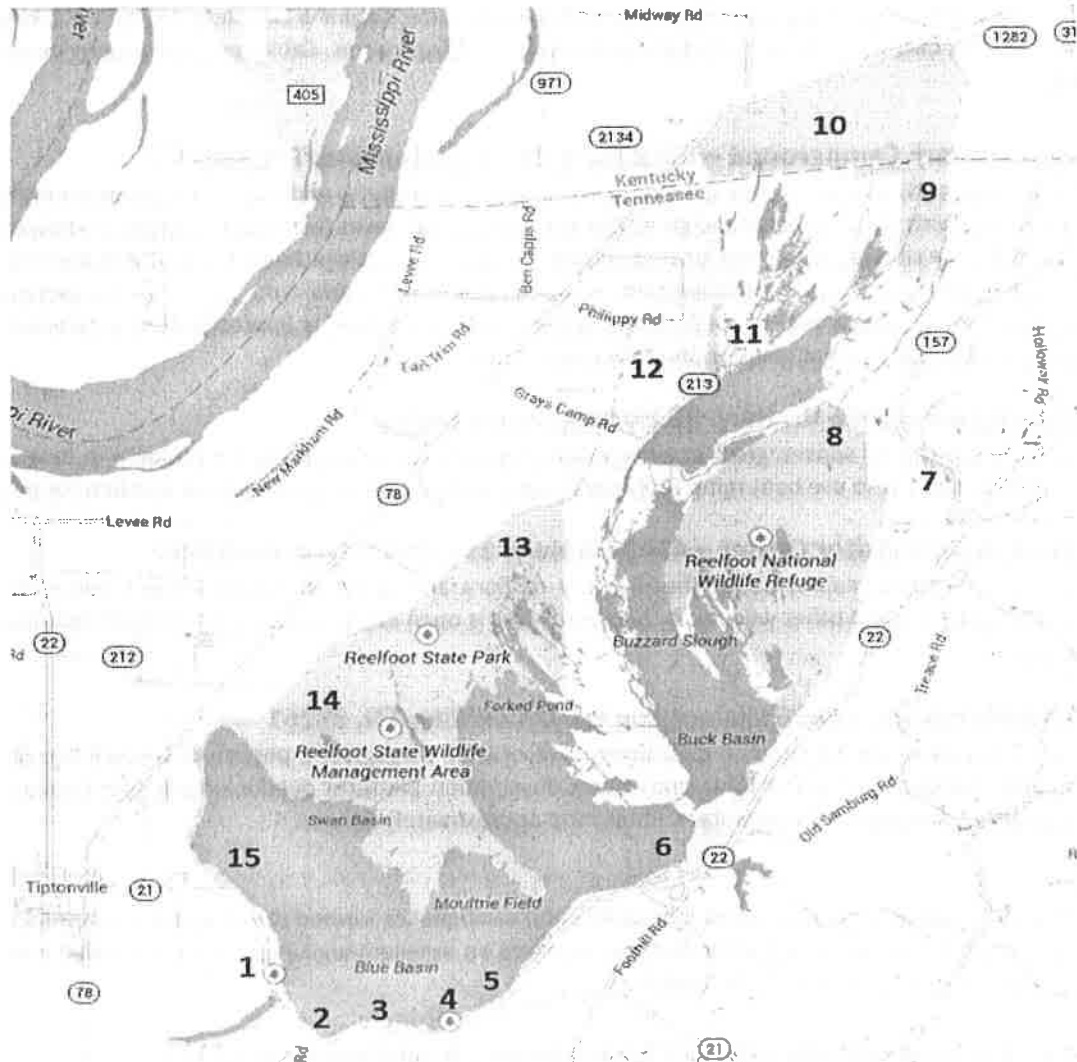
Observation tower looks over the landscape in a field and is handicap accessible. Second section of Black Bayou is down the road and has a gravel road along Black Bayou Waterfowl Refuge is another great area to observe wildlife. A trail is available for hikers to walk from the parking area. It is a great place to see woodland birds and mammals from the observation deck. Approx. 2 miles.

14. Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area (Carrington Rd.) -

A gravel road leads back to an old roadbed near Little Ronaldson and Donaldson Ditch. This trail goes through fields and large stands of bottomland timber. Approximately 2 miles round trip. Canoe Floats conducted weekends March/April.

15. Keystone Hiking Trail – 270 Keystone Park Lane Tiptonville, TN. 38079

Cypress and hardwood timber prevail on Reelfoot Lake's only lake shore trail. This 1 ½ mile trail is a wonderful spring and fall birding area. This spot also has a boat ramp, fishing pier, and a picnic shelter with restrooms available to rent.



The New Madrid Earthquake Formed Reelfoot Lake

New Madrid, Territory of Missouri, March 22, 1816

Dear Sir,

In compliance with your request, I will now give you a history, as full in detail as the limits of the letter will permit, of the late awful visitation of Providence in this place and vicinity.

On the 16th of December, 1811, about two o'clock, A.M., we were visited by a violent shock of an earthquake, accompanied by a very awful noise resembling loud but distant thunder, but more hoarse and vibrating, which was followed in a few minutes by the complete saturation of the atmosphere, with sulphurous vapor, causing total darkness. The screams of the affrighted inhabitants running to and fro, not knowing where to go, or what to do - the cries of the fowls and beasts of every species - the cracking of trees falling, and the roaring of the Mississippi - the current of which was retrograde for a few minutes, owing as is supposed, to an irruption in its bed -- formed a scene truly horrible.

From that time until about sunrise, a number of lighter shocks occurred; at which time one still more violent than the first took place, with the same accompaniments as the first, and the terror which had been excited in everyone, and indeed in all animal nature, was now, if possible doubled. The inhabitants fled in every direction to the country, supposing (if it can be admitted that their minds can be exercised at all) that there was less danger at a distance from, than near to the river. In one person, a female, the alarm was so great that she fainted, and could not be recovered.

There were several shocks of a day, but lighter than those already mentioned until the 23d of January, 1812, when one occurred as violent as the severest of the former ones, accompanied by the same phenomena as the former. From this time until the 4th of February the earth was in continual agitation, visibly waving as a gentle sea. On that day there was another shock, nearly as hard as the proceeding ones. Next day four such, and on the 7th about 4 o'clock A.M., a concussion took place so much more violent than those that had proceeded it, that it was dominated the hard shock. The awful darkness of the atmosphere, which was formerly saturated with sulphurous vapor, and the violence of the tempestuous thundering noise that accompanied it, together with all of the other phenomena mentioned as attending the former ones, formed a scene, the description of which would require the most sublimely fanciful imagination.

At first the Mississippi seemed to recede from its banks, and its waters gathering up like a mountain, leaving for the moment many boats, which were here on their way to New Orleans, on bare sand, in which time the poor sailors made their escape from them. It then rising fifteen to twenty feet perpendicularly, and expanding, as it were, at the same moment, the banks were overflowed with the retrograde current, rapid as a torrent - the boats which before had been left on the sand were now torn from their moorings, and suddenly driven up a little creek, at the mouth of which they laid, to the distance in some instances, of nearly a quarter of a mile. The river falling immediately, as rapid as it had risen, receded in its banks again with such violence, that it took with it whole groves of young cotton-wood trees, which ledged its borders. They were broken off which such regularity, in some instances, that persons who had not witnessed the fact, would be difficultly persuaded, that it has not been the work of art. A great many fish were left on the banks, being unable to keep pace with the water. The river was literally covered with the wrecks of boats, and 'tis said that one was wrecked in which there was a lady and six children, all of whom were lost.

In all the hard shocks mentioned, the earth was horribly torn to pieces - the surface of hundreds of acres, was, from time to time, covered over, in various depths, by the sand which issued from the fissures, which were made in great numbers all over this country, some of which closed up immediately after they had vomited forth their sand and water, which it must be remarked, was the matter generally thrown up. In some places, however, there was a substance somewhat resembling coal, or impure stone coal, thrown up with the sand. It is impossible to say what the depths of the fissures or irregular breaks were; we have reason to believe that some of them are very deep.

The site of this town was evidently settled down at least fifteen feet, and not more than a half a mile below the town there does not appear to be any alteration on the bank of the river, but back from the river a small distance, the numerous large ponds or lakes, as they are called, which covered a great part of the country were nearly dried up. The beds of some of them are elevated above their former banks several feet, producing an alteration of ten, fifteen to twenty feet, from their original state. And lately it has been discovered that a lake was formed on the opposite side of the Mississippi, in the Indian country, upwards of one hundred miles in length, and from one to six miles in width, of the depth of ten to fifty feet. It has communication with the river at both ends, and it is conjectured that it will not be many years before the principal part, if not the whole of the Mississippi, will pass that way.

We were constrained by the fear of our houses falling to live twelve or eighteen months, after the first shocks, in little light camps made of boards; but we gradually became callous, and returned to our houses again. Most of those who fled from the country in the time of the hard shocks have since returned home. We have, since the commencement in 1811, and still continue to feel, slight shocks occasionally. It is seldom indeed that we are more than a week without feeling one, and sometimes three or four in a day. There were two this winter past much harder than we had felt them for two years before; but since then they appear to be lighter than they have ever been, and we begin to hope that ere long they will entirely cease.

I have now, sir, finished my promised description of the earthquake - imperfect it is true, but just as it occurred to my memory; many of, and most of the truly awful scenes, having occurred three or four years ago. They of course are not related with that precision which would entitle it to the character of a full and accurate picture. But such as it is, it is given with pleasure - in the full confidence that it is given to a friend. And now, sir, wishing you all good, I must bid you adieu.

Your humble servant,
Eliza Bryan

There is one circumstance which I think worthy of remark. This country was formerly subject to very hard thunder; but for more than twelve months before the commencement of the earthquake there was none at all, and but very little since, a great part of which resembles subterraneous thunder. The shocks still continue, but are growing more light, and less frequent. -E.B.

Reelfoot Lake State Park Hiking Trails

1. **Campground Trail:** The campground trail begins in the spillway area and ends in the RLSP Campground. This trail offers wildlife viewing opportunities as well as many different species of flora and fauna. (Approx. 0.5 mi.)
2. **Keystone Trail:** Keystone Trail offers excellent views of Reelfoot Lake in addition to a shelter and picnic area at the trail's head. Waterfowl and Shorebirds are abundant along this trail. (Approx. 1.5 mi.)
3. **Black Bayou Trail:** This trail is for the more adventurous at heart. This trail winds through the cypress swamp as it follows the Black Bayou Slough. Songbirds and Owls are commonly sighted along this trail. (Approx. 2.0 mi.)
4. **Airpark Trail:** This trail begins at the Airpark Inn and leads you through a Cypress and Hardwood forest before meandering back through several open fields that are flourishing with wild flowers. (Approx. 1.5 mi.)

