

## Take a “Prescription Hike” at Harrison Bay

By Louise Zepp

“Take two miles and call me in the morning,” suggests Harrison Bay State Park Manager Don Campbell. As it turns out, this “prescription” is also the recommendation of several doctors these days to prevent or treat a range of health problems, from heart disease to attention deficit disorder.

A perfect place for a self-prescribed hike, for both the beginner and advanced hiker, might be the 4.5-mile Bay Point Loop Trail along the shoreline of Chickamauga Lake at Harrison Bay State Park.

Campbell, who hikes about four miles a day with his dog, says he sees lots of hikers in the park, even in the pouring rain or blowing snow, walking the trails or the roads there.

First, stop by the park office for a trail map. Along with the loop trail that gives hikers a woods and lake experience, the park offers a one-mile long nature trail and a .5-mile walking trail around a field often populated by deer and birds. The Bay Point Loop Trail was built with assistance from the Southeast Off-road Bicycle Association and is rated for all bike

abilities, but is also used by hikers. It’s a wide trail with distances clearly marked and is popular, well cleared, and maintained. There are some uphill climbs with some downhill terrain as well. As you walk along, you might see Kingfishers gathering near the water’s edge along with many other species of birds. In the months of late March through early May, be on the lookout for the native pink azalea that flowers at that time along the trail.

The Civilian Conservation Corps originally developed Harrison Bay State Park as a Tennessee Valley Authority recreation demonstration area in the 1930s. You can still see examples of the CCC work throughout the park. The park takes its name from the Tennessee River bay that covers the old town of Harrison. The original town site was the last Cherokee Campground that consisted of three villages ruled by one of the last great Cherokee Chieftains, Chief Joe Vann.

Harrison Bay offers both rustic tent camping and RV camping as well as picnic, boating and fishing opportunities.

The park office phone number is 423-344-6214.



Tennessee State Parks

### Directions

**From Chattanooga:** Take Exit Four off of I-75 onto State Route 153. Go north on Highway 153 and at the sixth exit, Highway 58, turn north. Travel about 12 miles to Harrison Bay Road on the left. Follow the signs to the park entrance, located about one mile on the left.

**From Knoxville:** From I-75, take Exit 25, Highway 60. Go about nine miles on Highway 60 to Highway 58. Turn south at Highway 58 and travel about 15 miles to Harrison Bay Road. Turn right onto Harrison Bay Road and the park entrance is about one mile on the left.

#### Harrison Bay State Park



Tennessee State Parks

This native pink azalea was seen blooming trailside at Harrison Bay State Park. This species typically blooms from late March into early May. Above, right: The Bay Point Loop Trail at Harrison Bay State Park.

(The late *Fran Wallas*, avid hiker and attorney for the Department of Environment and Conservation, contributed the “Great Hikes in Tennessee State Parks” column from 2005-2010, which you can read online at [www.tn.gov/environment/greathikes](http://www.tn.gov/environment/greathikes). The series continues as “More Great Hikes in Tennessee State Parks.”)