The Bear Creek Water Control Project is a system of four beautiful lakes and their surrounding woodlands near Russellville, Ala. The area is well-known across the southeast for offering high quality sport fishing for largemouth bass and crappie. Other popular species stocked in the waters include channel cat, spotted bass, and Florida bass. Bear Creek Lakes has also been recognized over the years for having some of the cleanest recreational waters in Alabama.

This secluded natural haven offers a full selection of family outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities. These include everything from leisurely boating, clean sand beaches, group pavilions, and designated lake swimming areas, to modern waterfront cabins, hunting, developed camping, picnicking and hiking. A 30-mile canoe float stream is located between Upper Bear and Big Bear Reservoirs. The five campgrounds are open April through mid-October and the lakes are open year-round.

The four lakes (Cedar Creek, Little Bear, Upper Bear and Bear Creek) are rated as some of the cleanest recreational waters in the South. The lakes produce smallmouth over 5-pounds. and largemouth bass over 15-pounds.

Persons between the ages of 16 and 65 must have a user’s permit to take advantage of the lakes and related facilities. The annual permit is $30 and offers unlimited use of all the camping, fishing, swimming and boating areas. A 1-day permit is $6, a 3-day permit is $10, and a lifetime permit is $300. Camp site fees range from $10 to $20 per night. (Prices are subject to change.)

Located on a peninsula extending into Little Bear Creek Reservoir are 11 modern cabins perfect for your next getaway. Each cabin features a natural rock exterior, hardwood floors and cypress walls. The cozy cabins offer all the comforts of home including heating/air conditioning, outside grill, outside electrical outlets, two private bedrooms, full bath with hairdryer, a living area with TV/VCR combo, satellite TV, wireless internet, a porch with picnic table, and a full kitchen. Kitchen appliances include refrigerator, microwave oven, stove with oven, coffee maker, and dishwasher. Sheets, towels, cooking and eating utensils are included. Seven piers are shared by cabin guests.

Rates: Peak season (Memorial Day thru Labor Day): 1 bedroom - $105 per night, 2 bedroom - $140 per night. Off season rates: 1 bedroom - $85, 2 bedroom $110. Three night minimum for holiday weekends during peak season. Advance reservations are available. Limit 6 people to 1 bedroom; limit 8 people for 2 bedroom. VISA and Mastercard accepted. Deposit required. (Rates subject to change.)
Local Fishermen have landed many large bass and crappie with the record bass weighing in at 15 lbs. 10 oz. It is not uncommon to see fish snared in the lakes in the 10-12 pound range. Access to lakes has been rated excellent.


Camping

Campgrounds are open mid-March thru mid-October. Fees range from $10 to $20 per night. Monthly rates: $200 - $230 at Horseshoe Bend; $200-$300 at Williams Hollow ($100 primitive); $200 at Piney Point; and $300 at Slickrock and Elliott Branch. All campgrounds have a camp manager and camp store on site, bathhouse, swimming area, boat ramp, water hookups, electric hookups, picnicking and fishing pier. Elliott Branch and Slickrock Bend also have a pavilion, fishing pier, and playground. Pavilion reservations $20 half-day; $40 all-day.

The Bear Creek Floatway is considered one of the best trips a canoeist can take in Alabama. Access is allowed at designated points only.

Releases from Upper Bear Reservoir are made to provide adequate flow on all weekends and holidays, Memorial Day thru Labor Day. Releases shut off at 4 p.m. on Sunday. If traveling long distances, please call ahead to check current conditions at (800) 882-5263.

The Floatway is considered a Class I course with exceptions. Take Special Note -- Upper Factory Falls and Lower Factory Falls are CLASS VI and are dangerous.