

High water plays havoc on tourism

Campgrounds at Green River remain closed

BY DENNIS GEORGE
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Taylor County’s most popular tourist attraction has fallen victim to the heavy rains that have drowned Central Kentucky in the past few months. The campground at Green River Lake has been closed all season and is not expected to reopen Aug. 1, if then.

That is not the only place at the lake closed to the public. Green River Marina typically opens April 1, but manager Julie Byrne says the parking lot and other areas of the marina are still under water. It is not accessible to any customers. “It has been one of those really tough years,” Byrne said. “We don’t know if and when we will be able to get open.” Wes Lanham, manager at Green River State Park, said the situation is improving. “I know it has been tough for some people to get their boats in the water because of the high water,” Lan-

ham said. “The water is going down slowly but surely and it is getting better where you can get in and use the ramps.” The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers posted a recreation update last week saying its Holmes Bend and Smith Ridge campgrounds are now open but Pikes Ridge will be fully closed through July 3. Through May, data from the Kentucky Mesonet weather network showed Taylor County had received 40.36 inches of precipitation, which makes 2025 as the wettest start to a year ever. Including the rain Monday

afternoon, another 2.4 inches has been recorded locally in June. A lack of visitors to the lake is impacting other areas of the community. “We can see it in our lodging because of the transient tax we receive,” said Jason Keltner, executive director of Taylor County Tourism. “When you look at March and April numbers and compare it to previous years, it is down 15-20%. We won’t see May num or around three feet and five inches, according to Mesonebers until the end of the month.” Keltner said he has spoken

to several owners of Airbnb properties and they report a large number of cancellations because of the wet conditions. The local lodging industry stays busy during the school year with the many activities at Campbellsville University, but depends on traffic at Green River to keep their rooms filled during the summer months. Although some ramps are becoming accessible to boats, Keltner expects the slowdown in tourism dollars to continue through June, and perhaps even longer if the campground doesn’t not meet the August opening date. According to a state report

released last week, the local tourism industry generated \$45.3 million for the county in 2024, an increase of nearly \$4 million from the previous year. Those dollars equate to 353 jobs in the area. Keltner, who also heads the Campbellsville-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, thinks it will be difficult for local tourism efforts to overcome the slowdown of visitors to Green River Lake. “This slowdown at Green River is definitely going to impact us this year,” Keltner said. “We can’t pull out the numbers for the months the lake has been slow.”

JAIL LOGS JUNE 17-19

Lyndsey Lynette Broaddus, 25, failure to appear.	appear.	Nelson County Jail. These are only a
Leslie Nicole Burkhead, 39, failure to appear.	Samantha Kay Yocum, 25, fourth-degree assault dating violence (minor injury).	record of arrests. All individuals arrested are presumed innocent unless proven otherwise in a court of law. The bookings state the persons arrested and the charges against them. This information is public record.
Maegan Korah Jamiolkowski, 40, failure to appear.	Note: The information above is a compiled list of daily booking logs from the	
Lazaro Legon, 59, failure to		

ANALYSIS

FROM PAGE A4

For all we know, driving the car along the BG might have already been a back-up plan. Steve testified that Joey showed up at the Thompson Ridge chop shop earlier that day, and the father told his son to get the car off of the property because he didn’t want to cause problems for the owner. The pair were likely not thinking too clearly that night, anyway. Steve testified he started drinking early that afternoon, and that Joey had gone at some point to get high. Steve said he continued drinking throughout the night, so by the time Joey called him from the side of the BG, Steve was probably a good seven to eight hours into his bender. It was Steve’s call to Houck that caught investigators’ attention only days after Rogers’ disappearance. Houck was in an interview with former Nelson County Sheriff’s Detective Jon Snow when Houck even called Steve to ask him what the call had been about. Prosecutors say that interrogation-room call was a set-up planned in advance to try to undo the damage of Steve’s call the night of the crime.

CELL PHONE, PURSE RAISE SUSPICION EARLY

Steve and Joey’s decision to abandon Rogers’ car alongside the highway and leave her purse and cell phone in the car only compounded their mistake. The most charitable interpretation of that decision was to make it appear as if Rogers had been driving, broken down and then grabbed by someone that night. But as Snow mentioned to Houck in his interrogation, it “makes no sense” why Rogers’ purse and phone would still be sitting in the car if she had broken down and then sought help. Even if some stranger had come along and she had gotten out of the car, she would likely have grabbed her purse and phone. Same logic if she had set off walking on her own to look for help. It seems the decision to leave her personal items was intentional. Steve acknowledged he grabbed Joey’s miniature baseball bat out of the car before they left it, and he moved the seat forward to make it seem as if Rogers was the last person driving. That points to an intent to cover up their presence and create an impression that Rogers had been the last person in the car. The only reason for leaving the items would be to rein-

force that impression. That intention seemingly backfired on them, though. The items’ presence in the car could also bear on the upcoming trial. Steve has said Joey got Rogers’ car from Houck, to move it or work on it or for some other reason. The timeline is still somewhat unclear. But here is what does not line up, as far as I can tell: • Rogers is believed to have gone to the Houck family farm on July 3 and never returned. • Investigators say (publicly in the past, at least) that they have corroborated through video that Houck went to the farm earlier that day and returned around midnight. • Joey was driving Rogers’ some time during that day, roughly around the same time that Rogers and Houck were supposed to be at the family farm.

SO THAT LEADS TO SOME NEW QUESTIONS:

• How did the Lawsons get Rogers’ purse and keys? If the same logic holds that she would not go anywhere without her purse and keys, isn’t the same true for a trip to the

farm? • If Joey had Rogers’ items before her alleged trip to the farm, then did Rogers even go to there? Or if she did, was she alive when she went? • If she did go to the farm willingly, then how did Joey get her phone and purse? Joey and Houck are scheduled to go to trial Tuesday. Perhaps prosecutors will provide more clarity to those questions, either through past interviews with the suspects or through the extensive geolocation evidence they have collected from cell towers. The decisions that night, by a father and son with serious substance abuse issues who were likely under the influence, could prove to be the weak links in the accused’s defense. *Editor’s Note: Former Standard editor Forrest Berkshire is helping with coverage of the Joseph Lawson and Brooks Houck trial, and also assisted the paper with coverage of the Steven Lawson trial. You can sign up for his newsletter with additional coverage at rogerscase.substack.com.*

PLANE

FROM PAGE A1

only gave him new knowledge but skills he can carry over in a career. Barnett said connecting to the local airport is also an advantage most students don’t get. Barnett said for many students who begin the program, they are almost on the same level, learning new skills together. Carson King, another BHS graduate, said one of the most difficult parts of the process was the fabric for the plane. When it comes to making a mistake, King said they happen — the key is learning to work through the problem. “Obviously, people do make errors,” he said. “Going through the process of patching it or fixing it, trying to get these wrinkles out and fix what we had down was difficult or harder than expected.” Vernon said the program has grown in its fourth year at the airport, with young people in the space it sets a new tone for the air traffic hub. He said not very many counties have a place like Samuels Field, especially not one that connects with the youth. This year’s build program was the final one for the group to build a cub plane, with Vernon stating they will be moving on to building slings. He said not only will students get to experience a more modern plane, but it will present new skills for them to learn in the aviation industry. Each year the plane — built

by the small group of students — is purchased by a community member. The profit from the sale is put right back into the airport’s education programs to purchase next year’s build kit and fund the flight program. “The thing that, to me, makes the makes the program work is local businessmen are like, ‘Yeah, I want to buy that plane,’” he said. “Because if we don’t sell the plane, you can’t buy the next one. I think it is important to say that all the planes (from previous years’ programs) are still here. They’re all here on this field. They’re all flying.” Dick Roby bought this year’s build program plane after hearing about it more than a year ago and being impressed by the students’ work. Roby said he’s happy with his decision to buy the plane and happy to see an instructor like Markle teaching the next generation in aviation maintenance. “I was so impressed,” he said. “They were just doing an excellent, incredible job. They were all interested. It just is amazing, really. I don’t know that I could have done that when I was in high school.” David Mattingly, outgoing Chairman of the Board, said the program has changed the whole culture at the airport. He said this program has brought so many young adults to the airport, now that they’ve made the connection, they continue to come back. “It’s a big community,” Mattingly added. “... It’s changed this airport dramatically, and our board has changed it a lot too.”

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