

Cherokee Lake Sailing Club

Cherokee Lake Cruising Guide

Introduction

Highlights: No Barge Traffic – Deep Waters – Wide Open Navigation – Year- Round Sailing – Active Sailing Club!

For sailors, Cherokee Lake can be a real paradise. Not being part of the TVA navigable waterway system, there is no barge traffic. Since the lake is a relative deep one, there is sailing the year round, at least in the area near the dam. Although there are islands and bluffs, the normal wind direction (*out of the southwest*) is parallel to the main axis of the lake, providing an excellent sailing opportunity. Finally, from late spring to early fall when the lake level is up, it is a beautiful place to be. There is, of course, the curse of the 40 ft. annual tide, but that is the price to pay for TVA involvement.

This guide has been assembled by the members of the Cherokee Lake Sailing Club and is not intended to be comprehensive. Since the Cherokee Lake Sailing Club is located at Black Oak Marina, references will be from that point proceeding up the lake. The north side of the lake is in Grainger County, while the south side is in Jefferson County at the west end and Hamblen County to the east.

Long-time boaters on Cherokee Lake can attest that **Black Oak Marina** and docks are steadily improving with annual upgrades. Upgrades in the dock include dock lighting for night time use, electrical upgrades, daily dock monitoring for changing water levels, local restaurant, and dock store for supplies and fuel. Dockage includes the sailboat dock, covered dockage, and a houseboat dock. There is temporary dock space for boats wishing to come in for the use of the restaurant.

NAVIGATION NOTES

Charts:

The use of the TVA chart of Cherokee is vital to successful cruising and seamanship, particularly during periods of low pool, when several shallow areas can surprise not only the unwary, but sometimes even the wary. A depth finder can be crucial to the fixed keel sailor.

A review of the chart will show that the main channel winds strangely under the surface, and areas of apparent open water can have surprises lurking. Consecutive mile markers will move with the channel going from the south side Jefferson/Hamblen the north Grainger and the islands in between without apparent pattern unless you have the chart.

Lake Level Annual Chart

Attached is a TVA lake level graph, as an annual chart. It will be immediately apparent that TVA's claim that it begins taking the lake down in around mid-August has been found not to be totally accurate. The peak is reached in June, and the decline begins historically in mid-June. The chart is intended only as a planning tool for sailors; go hard aground in October and you might not float free till March, if then. Use the charts to avoid trouble.

Lake Levels

The lake level is published in the Citizen-Tribune and in the News-Sentinel. It is also available by toll free phone 800-238-2264 and by website (www.lakeinfo.tva.gov), and from Knoxville 423-632-2264.

The current lake level can also be checked at the following website link:
<http://www.cherokeelake.info/Level.asp>

Below is a listing of current lake level information for this specific date:



WARNING! Water release schedules can change without notice due to unanticipated weather changes or power system requirements. Large amounts of water could be discharged at any time. Use caution! Obey all posted safety regulations and precautions! [Vital safety information.](#)

GUNKHOLING

With many miles of available shoreline, numerous coves can tempt the overnigher. However, many of these involve subdivisions the sensation of anchoring in someone's backyard and some are in navigable channels leading to docks and boat ramps. The following are some that club members have found enjoyable. If you have VHF, you may be able to contact other overnighers on Ch 16 (for contact) or Ch 68 (conversation).

Panther Creek Park Cove

This cove is just past Island #9, approached by passing between the park and the island. The cove is broad and deep at the mouth, but narrows to an excellent, weather-proof anchorage, out the way of PWCs and skiers. If adventure awaits you, a dinghy ride to the shore will have you at one of the scenic trails in the park Lookout Point trail. This particular trail leads to the main road and a hikers parking area.

Anchoring depth is in the 20-30 foot range, depending on the time for the year and lake level. This is a beautiful, unspoiled cove and awakening there in the morning mist is one of life's simple pleasures. Do not be surprised to see deer walking through the woods.

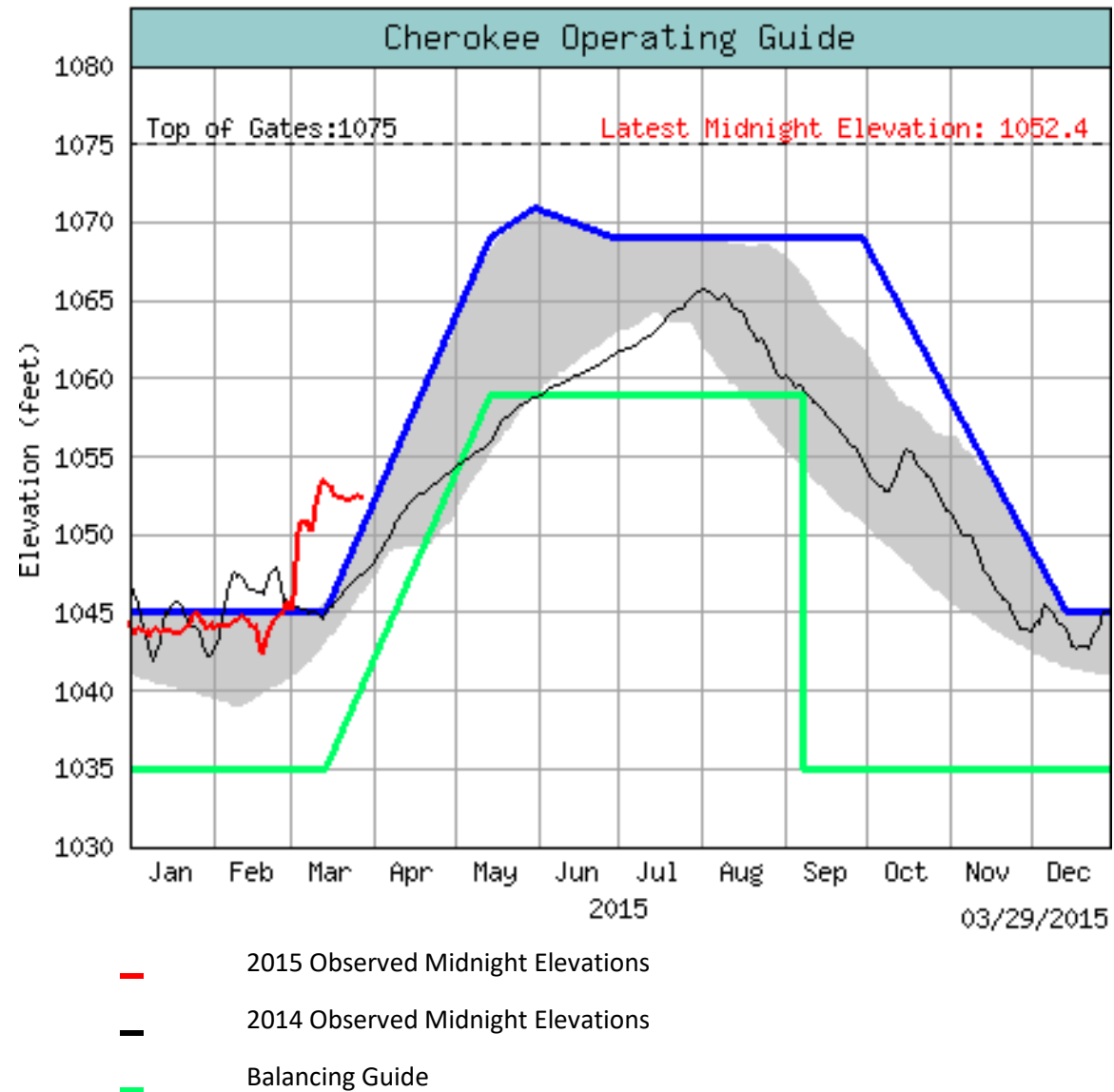
Panther Creek Boat Ramp Cove

The boat ramp cove is entered from the inlet just east of the channel to Cedar Hill. There are several good anchorages, and the cove is weatherprotected. However, it is relatively deep which may mean anchoring in mid-channel to avoid swinging into the rocky shoreline. The area straightahead after entering may be the best choice. Early morning fishermen can also be a distraction for overnighers.

Others

Obviously, the many islands in Cherokee offer good anchorages, although wind and weather considerations make the location choice a crucial one. During holiday weekends, many power boaters camp on the islands, and anchoring near one of these campsites.

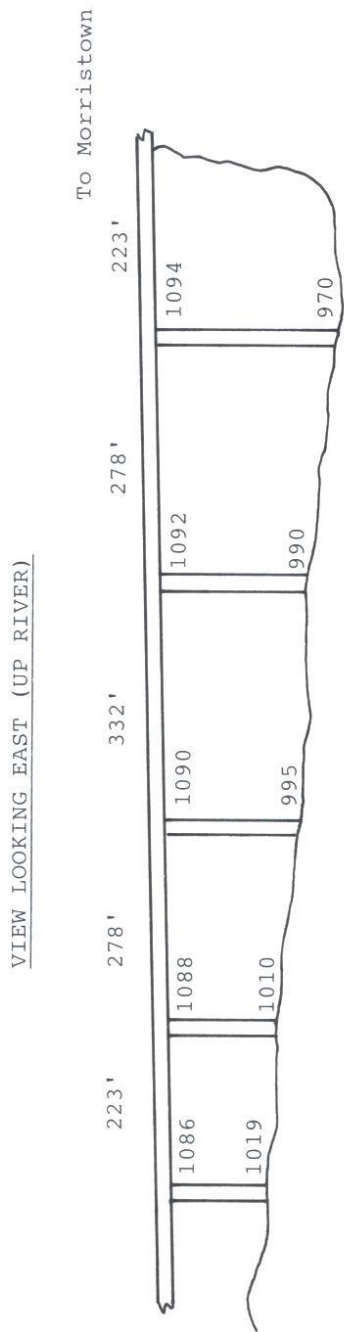
CHEROKEE RESERVOIR



CHEROKEE LAKE SAILING CLUB

CLEARANCES AT OLEN MARSHALL BRIDGE

(Highway US 25E)



The sketch above was redrawn from information in the 1981 CLSC Yearbook. The bridge contractor provided the elevations for the top of each pier and the lake bottom at each pier. If the lake elevation is known on the date of intended passage the mast clearance and water depth are easily calculated.

Typical lake elevations: Full Pool 1075
Summer 1065
Winter 1040

Scale: Horizontal: 200'/inch Vertical: 100'/inch