

Chapter 11
A CLOSER LOOK

A more thorough analysis of both Knott County and Clay County was conducted which resulted in a number of other wildlife viewing opportunities being discovered and inventoried. (See Section “a” and Section “b” in this chapter.) The researchers would highly recommend a similar analysis be conducted for each of the counties within the 16-county elk restoration zone that also includes a detailed plan for interpretive signs (similar to those highlighted below and in section “c” of this chapter) as well as directional and “special” signs (similar to those featured below).

See ACTION PLAN: RECOMMENDATION #4

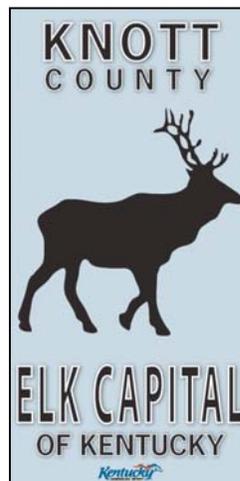
- a. **KNOTT COUNTY, KENTUCKY**
Elk and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities
- b. **CLAY COUNTY, KENTUCKY**
Elk and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities
- c. **A NEED FOR INTERPRETATION**
Letting visitors know they are in a unique place



There is a need for interpretive signs and wayside exhibits for elk and other wildlife. The interpretive signs above provide information on eagles.



An example of a directional sign



Examples of “You are entering a unique place” signs.

A Need for Interpretation
LETTING VISITORS KNOW THEY ARE IN A UNIQUE PLACE

There is a need to develop and install interpretive signs and wayside exhibits that provide information on the many wildlife viewing opportunities in each of the counties. More in-depth research needs to be conducted in every county to determine where signs should be located in each of the communities and what should be said on each of them. A detailed map and brochures need to be developed that highlight the locations of each of the sites thus encouraging people to travel throughout the region. See *ACTION PLAN - RECOMMENDATION #4*

Below are examples of some of the signs one can find within the 16-county area that feature nature and wildlife viewing.

Martin County is the only county within the 16-county elk restoration area found to have a wayside exhibit featuring elk.



This wayside exhibit featuring elk is in front of the Cloud Nine restaurant next to the airport in Martin County where elk can often be found.

Leslie County has an excellent wayside exhibit in front of the courthouse featuring a redbud tree which are numerous throughout the county.

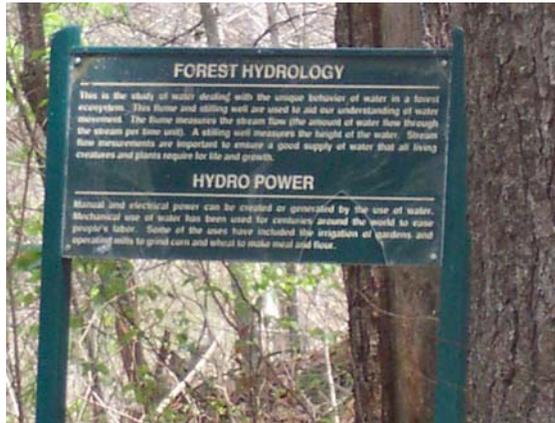


This wayside exhibit encourages visitors to come back in the Spring to see the redbuds and dogwoods when they are in full bloom.

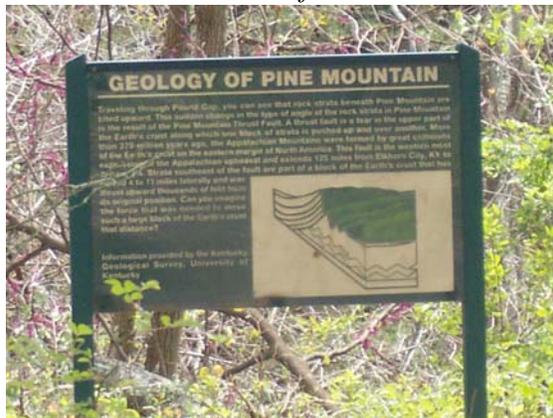
Letcher County has the best interpretation for wildlife viewing around Fish Pond Lake at Little Laurel Park.



Tree Identification



Hydrological Information



Geological Information



Plant Identification



Animal Track Identification



Every county needs to determine where interpretive signs should be located and develop detailed maps to provide visitors as well as the residents with location and information about the wildlife in the area.

Another unique feature at Little Laurel Park is a sundial that has an interpretive sign that explains how it works.

CLAY COUNTY, KENTUCKY
 Elk and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities

The Clay County Fiscal Court declared Clay County the “Gateway to Elk Country” in July 2007. A copy of the proclamation is included at the end of this section. Clay County Judge Executive suggested transforming the existing three-county 1,700 acre industrial park into a wildlife viewing area. (*See photos at the end of this section*). The roads throughout the site are in excellent condition. There is also water, electricity and one abandoned industrial building. The large open fields are primarily fescue and would need to be replaced with plantings that would attract and sustain wildlife. Recent sightings of a couple of elk in this area are encouraging but it may be an area where additional elk may need to be transferred to this site.

The City of Manchester is currently in the process of developing an elk and wildlife viewing loop along highway 66, 150 and 421. Also included along the route is a wayside exhibit at Oneida highlighting some of the unique history of the area. A major portion of the trail goes through the Daniel Boone National Forest. Thousands of redbud and dogwood line the road and are definitely something Clay County should promote each Spring to encourage visitors to travel the route.



Redbuds line and Highways 80, 421 and 66



This restroom and parking area is strategically located approximately half way between the communities of Oneida and Manchester.

The route also offers pay lakes, an RV park, the Red Bird Ranger Station, two bed & breakfasts and a few country stores, some of whom also sell gas and offer a deli and one which sells ginseng, mayroot and other mountain plants. There are a few picnic areas maintained by Redbird Division of Daniel Boone National Park located just off the loop.



One of the DBNF picnic areas in DBNF – Redbird Ramger District

A few of the sites one will see along the route which might be of interest to visitors.



One of two B&B's along the proposed wildlife viewing loop



Cedar Lodge Bed & Breakfast offers lodging along the route



One of four country stores along the loop.



One of two paylakes along the proposed route.



Farms, barns and fields are some of the sights along the route.



There is a craft shop at the Red Bird Missionary plus cabins, a restaurant facility and more.

EXISTING INDUSTRIAL PARK COULD BE CONVERTED TO WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA.



Judge “Crawdad” Sizemore and John Kinney, ranger with DBNF discuss how to convert the site



The proposed site has rolling open fields. In the background, one can see the industrial building.



Possible building on Hwy 80 to serve as a welcome center for the region to assist visitors in finding information on elk and wildlife viewing opportunities as well as other tourist information for the region and to let them know they have come to a unique place that has a lot to offer.



People use the industrial site for riding ATV's



A few suspension bridges still exist along the route.

In August 2007, the KDFWR finalized a Wildlife Management Area agreement with the new landowner of the 18,000 acre SMEPA tract, half of which is in Clay County. This tract already has many elk using it and this will provide elk viewing opportunities. With some habitat improvement work, this place can become a very valuable asset to Clay and Leslie counties. Also of note is the story of the salt works and the aquaculture ponds on reclaimed coal mines. A side trip to both these areas would be very worthwhile.

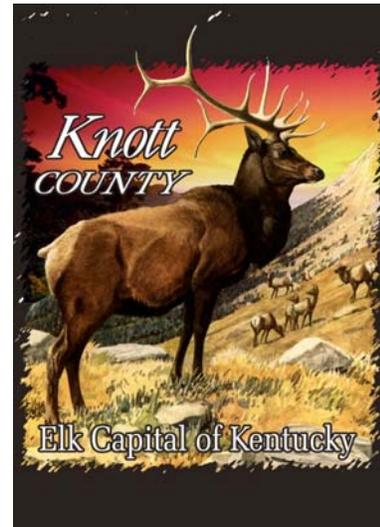
STUDY OF ELK AND WILDLIFE VIEWING POTENTIAL FOR KENTUCKY

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KNOTT COUNTY, KENTUCKY
Elk and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities

Knott County has taken the most proactive efforts in capitalizing on elk and elk viewing opportunities in their county.

The Knott County Fiscal Court passed a proclamation making Knott County the “Elk Capital of Kentucky” and is adding signs declaring this throughout the county. Knott County has developed a map featuring elk viewing locations and other tourism opportunities within the county (*See end of this section for map*). They have created a county logo featuring an elk and including it on all marketing materials and on all trail signs being developed for ATV’s and horseback riding within the county.



New T-shirt and county logo



Sign at City Hall features an elk

The sign for City Hall and Visitor Center features an elk, albeit with caribou antlers. The county symbol for Knott County, once the opossum, was officially changed in 2006 to the elk.

Billboards have been erected that includes a large photo of an elk and promotes elk viewing. A two-mile elk viewing drive has been established and the road renamed “Elk View Drive” and a viewing site is now being established. Signs have been erected and t-shirts made recognizing Knott County as the “Elk Capital of Kentucky”



Billboards recognize elk as one of the primary attractions in Knott County



Discussions are currently underway for establishing an RMEF elk visitor center similar to what is being developed in Benezette Pennsylvania. Two sites in Knott County have been identified.

KDFWR ranger Charles Logsdon pointing out where nearly 300 elk have been seen at the elk viewing site on Elk View Drive in Knott County.

There are numerous locations within Knott County where one is almost sure to see elk including the ATV Training Center/Horseback Riding Trail Head, along Elk View Drive, at Pippa Passes, in Robinson Forest, and at the proposed site for the RMEF Visitor Center just one mile off Hwy 80 on the Knott County/Perry County border. Tour guides from Buckhorn State Resort Park often take their visitors to the Starfire Land Management area within Knott County to find elk which is a limited access site. Each of these sites is easily accessible by automobile.



This herd of elk were on the construction site of the new Sportsplex Recreational Facility being built in Knott County in June of this year.

Saddle Up Elk Tours, an entrepreneurial business offering elk viewing opportunities by horseback opened in Knott County Spring 2007 and has already provided 20 tours to people from Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio and Tennessee. See Chapter 9: *ELK VIEWING TOUR OPPORTUNITIES* for more info on this business.



Judge Executive Randy Thompson takes two tourists to a few sites in the county to see elk.



Two visitors take a ride with Saddle Up Elk Tours

Near Carr Creek Lake, there is an excellent wetlands area for one to see wood ducks and beavers at work that is viewable from the road and offers restroom facilities and both picnic and parking area. There are also nature trails within Carr Fork Lake State Park that also offer easy access, parking and restroom facilities. Taking one of the coal roads up the mountain, one of the most breathtaking views within the county is a few miles off Highway 7 and easily accessible by car.

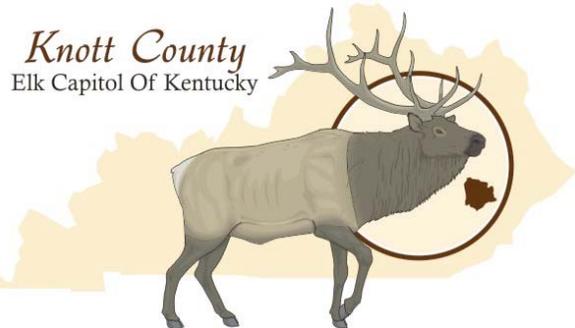


A few of the elk often seen near the elk viewing area on Elk View Drive in Knott County.



One of the many breathtaking view on top of a reclaimed coal mine area a few miles off Hwy 7. One takes an old coal road to the top.

On the following page is a map of locations of some of the sites in Knott County and the areas one will most likely see elk and other wildlife that was developed as a marketing tool for the county to entice people to visit. A similar map should be developed for each of the counties within the 16-county elk restoration area.



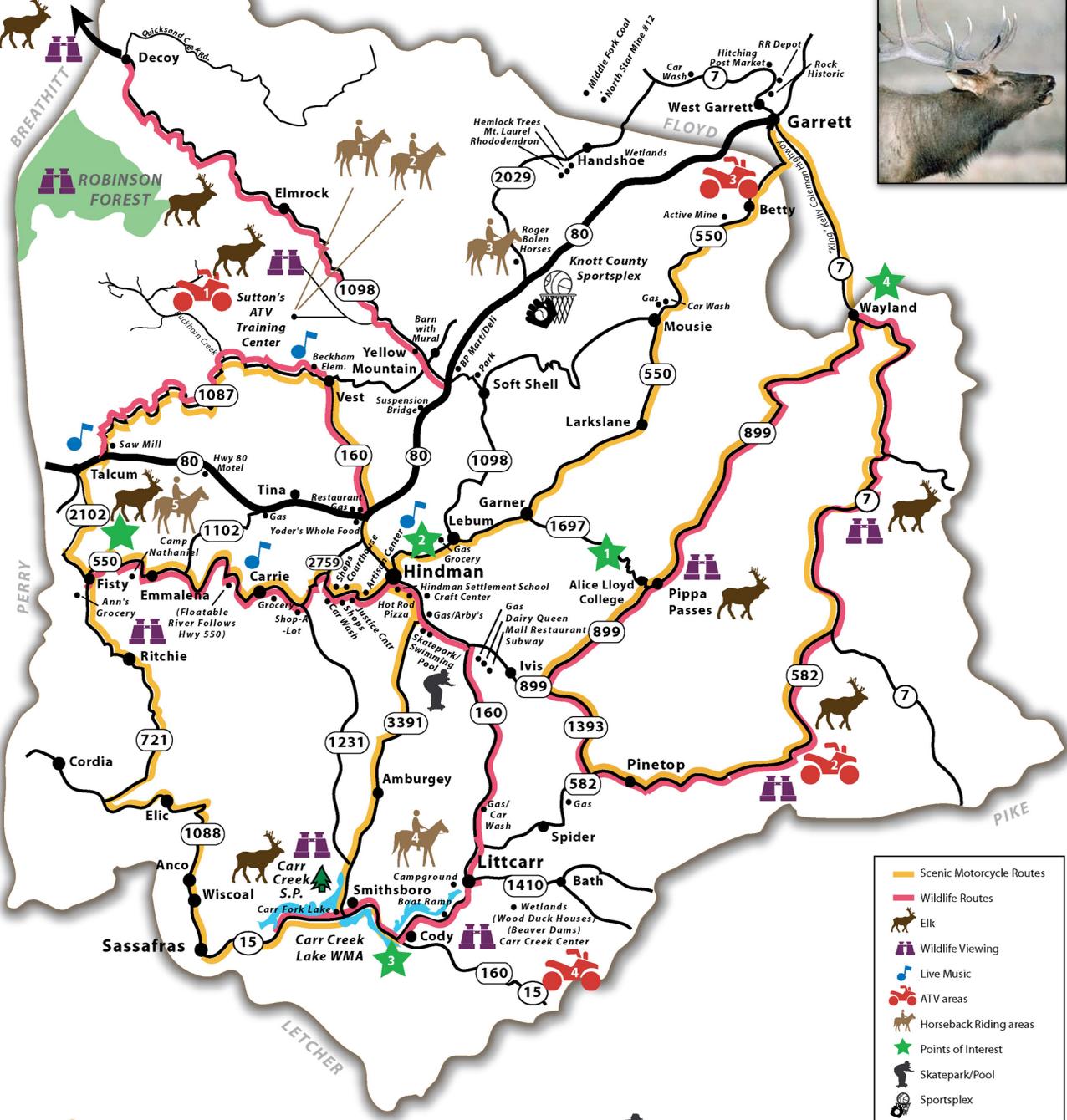


Knott County Adventure Tourism Park System

"Elk Capital of Kentucky"



Continue on Hwy 1098 into Breathitt County an Elk Viewing Site



MOTORCYCLISTS LOVE KNOTT COUNTY ROADS!

Roads throughout Knott County are wonderful for motorcycle rides offering great scenery with lots of twists and turns. A few favorites are marked in yellow. One of the routes takes one through Pippa Passes, home of Alice Lloyd College, where one often sees elk. You can continue to the town of Wayland, an old coal camp which is the hometown of Kentucky's most famous basketball player, Kelly Coleman. Travel the King Kelly Coleman Highway past a large coal operation to Garrett which has an old railroad depot and historic rock buildings. And if you would like a little music, take Hwy 160 on a Friday or Saturday night to Beckham Combs school near Vest or travel through Talcum and Fisty to Carrie for some live local entertainment.



Knott County also offers a public swimming pool, skate park, and the **KNOTT COUNTY SPORTSPLEX** that includes five full sized multi-use courts for basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and cheerleading, 8 lane bowling alley, arcade, baseball batting cages, fitness center, indoor walking track, three baseball fields and two soccer fields.



HORSEBACK RIDING

A large portion of 43,000 acres of reclaimed coal property is being developed in hundreds of miles of horseback riding trails through a partnership of Western Pocahontas Land Company, the Knott County Fiscal Court and the Knott County Saddle Club.



Horseback Riding Trail #1

Trailhead near the ATV Training Center on Elk View Road off Hwy 1098
4-Hour Ride (12 to 14 miles)

Trail well marked. Great trail for both wagons and horse riders. Creek crossings, partially wooded, partially open fields and beautiful streams. Open to the public. \$5 fee for non-club members.



Horseback Riding Trail #2

Trailhead near the ATV Training Center on Elk View Road off Hwy 1098
6-Hour Ride (18 to 20 miles)

Trail well marked. Beautiful ponds, creek crossings, breathtaking scenery, shaded timber. A pleasant ride through the mountains. Open to the public. \$5 fee for non-club members.



Horseback Riding Trail #3

Starting point is just off Hwy 80 on west side of Hwy 2209

Short trail takes riders past a cave entrance. Need permission to ride in this area. Call Roger Bolen at (606) 438-3117 or (606) 785-3229.



Horseback Riding Trail #4

Trailhead near Littcar on Hwy 3391

Newest trail to be developed. Call (606) 642-3656 for information. Open to the public. \$5 fee for non-club members.



Saddle Up Elk Tours #5

Guided Tours Available

See elk while horseback riding. Saddle Up Elk Tours provides all the horses and equipment you will need for your elk viewing adventure. You don't need riding experience - all horses are gentle and experienced. Rides last approximately 2-1/2 hours with morning and evening rides available. Seasons range from August to December and March - May or by special request, rain or shine. Advance notice required. Contact Bernice Amburgey at (606) 642-3656.



Carr Creek State Park & Lake

Carr Creek State Park is a 29 acre park featuring a full range of recreational opportunities on Carr Fork Lake including a beach, bathhouse, fishing, picnic area, restrooms and 39 camping sites. Carr Creek Lake is a 710 acre U.S. Corps of Engineers lake offering fishing, boating, camping, picnicking, playgrounds, and a marina.



ATV TRAILS

The Knott County ATV Safety Training Center for ATV's and dirtbikes is one of only five training centers in the U.S. and the only one that includes both a training area, a skills test course as well as beginner, intermediate and challenge trails accessible right from the training center. Call (606) 233-0800 today to enroll in a class.

Directions: Take Hwy 80 to Hwy 1098 north 2 miles turning left into Elk View Road then right on Sutton Memorial Drive.



ATV Sutton Trail #1

Moderate Skill Level

The trailhead for this 4-6 hour ride (50+ miles) starts at the ATV Training Center and is for the experienced rider. Less experienced riders can access the trail from Elk View Drive. Trail meanders through reclaimed coal mining areas, logging roads, forest areas, along creek beds and past beaver dams. Almost guaranteed to see elk along the route. Contact the ATV Safety Training Center at (606) 233-0080 for maps and information. Open to the public. \$5 parking fee for non-club members. Primitive camping available. Campground with full hookups a restroom/shower house coming soon!



ATV Fire Trail #2

Moderate Skill Level

Very scenic. Featuring the famous Playground, deep mine still in operation. Camp Rock on cliff top, many scenic views and fantastic overlooks, definitely bring binoculars and cameras. Short walk to top of Snake Den featuring a high cliff overlooking a woodland valley with side trip to Sexton Valley and Holly Bush for possible elk viewing. This trail is NOT for the beginner rider! Expect to get muddy. Trail is not marked. For guided tours or permission to park and ride in this area, contact Fairley Mullins (606) 438-4914 (cell) or (606) 785-4371. Coming Soon - restrooms & electrical hookups.



ATV Brushee Fork Trail #3

Moderate Skill Level

A bit more challenging than trail #2. Very scenic ride along wooded trails and creek riding. Definitely will be muddy. See the natural rock cave and other scenic views. Almost always see elk along this trail.

Trail is not marked. For guided tours or permission to park and ride in this area, contact Richie Maggard (606) 434-1281.



ATV Red Fox Trail #4

Easy Trail Ride

Very scenic. Come see the Split Rocks, the Bat Cave, historic Orphans Home, beautiful scenery and winding trails through woodlands and open fields. Very scenic views and great places to stop and explore. Fun easy ride for everyone.

Trail is not marked. For guided tours or information about this trail contact Roger Breeding (606) 633-2386.



POINTS OF INTEREST



Point of Interest #1 Alice Lloyd College

Is a four-year liberal arts work college in Pippa Passes, Kentucky. It was founded by the Cambridge, Massachusetts-born journalist Alice Spencer Geddes Loyd in 1923, initially under the name Janice Junior College, as an institution which would educate leaders for Appalachia locally. Rich in history, the college is actually built around a creek and nestled between the mountains of East Kentucky. A college campus like none you have seen before and a very worthwhile stop. (888) 280-4ALC or www.alc.edu.



Point of Interest #2 Appalachian Artisan Center

The Appalachian Artisan Center opened its doors in December 2001. The building was originally built in 1913 and was remodeled for its current use as a gallery. The original sandstone taken from the mountain adjacent to Main Street is still in place on the exterior of the building. Located downtown, the Center is full of artwork such as jewelry, pottery, woven rugs, books, paintings, photographs, furniture, walking sticks, toys, quilts, baskets and much more. Also located within the Center is the Five and Dine Café where one can enjoy coffee, desserts, soups, sandwiches and much more. Open Mon-Fri 10-6 and Sat 10-4. (606) 785-9855 or www.artisancenter.net



Point of Interest #3 Kentucky School of Craft*

The Kentucky School of Craft* is a new professional craft school housed in a 25,000 historic rock building in Hindman, KY a small town in the beautiful Appalachian Mountains of eastern Kentucky. The Kentucky School of Craft produces skilled artisans, knowledgeable in the region's rich traditions and heritage. The building was once the Hindman School, home of the 1946 State Basketball Champions.



*The Kentucky School of Craft is part of Hazard Community & Technical College and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.



Point of Interest #4 Hindman Settlement School

The Hindman Settlement School was founded in 1902 and offers tours, workshops on Appalachian life and culture, along with the Marie Stewart Museum & Craft Shop. Open Mon-Fri 10-4 and Sat 10-2. (606) 368-6055 or www.hindmansettlement.org



Point of Interest #5 Carr Creek School

Carr Creek School is a legend in Kentucky basketball sports lore as home of the infamous 1928 and 1956 high school basketball teams.



Point of Interest #6 Wayland

Hometown of Kentucky's most famous basketball player, Kelly Coleman.



Other Points of Interest Coal Company, in full operation, near Betty Camp Nathaniel near Fry.