

# Paddling Through

Making the open water a little more open



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## Jacobson Park

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Jacobson Park is a 216-acre park located in east Lexington. Local Parks officials teamed up with the Adaptive Recreation team at Easterseals Bluegrass to make paddling sports at the reservoir more accessible. Easterseals was already offering adaptive kayaking at the park but there was limited equipment available and the boat launch facility was not useable by paddlers with disability.



### Equipment purchases

LFUCG purchased four outfitted kayaks, a transfer bench, a kayak chariot, three cushions for positioning, six hand paddle and wrist adaptations, and two paddle pivots to be made available at the public boat rental.



### Dock upgrades

While there were some docks and fishing piers available at the lake, they all needed some accessibility upgrades to make them usable for people of all abilities. It was also important to make sure that the LFUCG was committed to maintaining the docks.

## Therapeutic Recreation

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The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) Parks and Recreation provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enjoy recreation, leisure and play and to showcase their talents and abilities. Programs are designed to enhance the overall health, wellness and social needs of individuals with disabilities.

## Contact LFUCG Recreation

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Parks & Recreation  
Dunbar Office  
545 N. Upper St.  
Lexington, KY 40508

(859) 288-2928

[lexingtonky.gov/about-tr](http://lexingtonky.gov/about-tr)

# Assistive technology for the kayak launch

**Challenge: The kayak launch.** Transferring from a wheelchair in to a kayak can be a dangerous thing, especially when it happens on the muddy, unstable shore. It is also hard for someone with a mobility device or who is unstable on the lumpy ground to move their kayak and equipment to the water.

Several companies have developed solutions to help kayakers with special needs use their boats safely. At Jacobson Park Reservoir, the team purchased a Kayak Chariot and a transfer bench. These are low-tech and portable and something the kayaker can afford on their own. The Chariot is a two-wheeled floating dolly that lifts the kayak to wheelchair height for easier transfer. The paddler or a helper can then roll the Chariot in to the water much more easily than trying to push or slide. The kayak transfer bench sits over the kayak and allows the user to slide in to position before lowering themselves in. It's particularly useful for someone who needs a helper to get them positioned. The photo shows the transfer bench in use along with the Chariot.



For a more permanent solution, BoardSafe has developed a floating dock system that can enable those with or without a disability to safely board a variety of boats. Their dock was designed with input from Paralympic athletes and members of the public with disabilities and includes thoughtful design features. The dock features a roller system that allows a canoe or kayak user to put their boat in while firmly on shore and let it roll to the dock for easy loading. At the dock, the boat is supported by a submerged roller system. A frame over the boat has plenty of bars and straps to help the paddler transfer safely. They also have a

patented system of steps that start at seated height. A wheelchair user or someone unsteady on their feet can sit down on the top step and then slide down to the water level at their own pace. The steps are wide and open on all sides to allow a caregiver to provide assistance when needed. The dock floats but has been designed for maximum stability and to make sure that the gangway ramp is never steeper than the ADA standard.

[Learn more about kayak launch equipment](#)

[boardsafedocks.com](http://boardsafedocks.com)  
[creatingability.com](http://creatingability.com)



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