

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

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KANSAS *View*

by Robin Jennison



PARK PASSPORT IS WIN/WIN/WIN

Everybody loves a win/win situation, where both sides benefit, right? So a win/win/win situation is even better, and I believe the Parks Passport program is just that.

This year, Kansans are able to purchase their annual state park vehicle permit (Parks Passport) when they renew their vehicle tags. The Parks Passport gets you into all 26 state parks for a full year from date of purchase, and it only costs \$15. The original annual park vehicle permit, which is valid Jan. 1-Dec. 31, is \$25 and available only through KDWP offices. With a savings of \$10, the Parks Passport is a truly a bargain, and it's convenient, so that's a win for anyone who enjoys our state parks.

The Parks Passport is modeled after similar programs established in other states. Twenty-seven percent of Michigan residents bought their park permit when they registered their vehicle after the program was implemented there. If 10 percent of Kansans buy a Parks Passport when they register their vehicle, park revenues will increase. And that's vitally important to sustaining our state park services.

Historically, state parks were funded in part with State General Funds. Over the years, that funding has been inconsistent and recently significantly reduced. To maintain services, parks operate with minimal staffing and equipment, and managers are always looking for ways to increase visitation and revenues.

I've learned that our park managers and staff are creative and innovative in finding ways to attract more park visitors. Examples include disk golf courses, archery ranges, hiking, biking and horse trails, canoe trails, play grounds, and more. Park managers also use special events to attract new visitors and enhance the park experience. Those events can be as big as the Country Stampede or something as low key as a chili cook-off or Christmas In July event.

The Country Stampede, by the way, is an annual concert event at Tuttle Creek State Park, near Manhattan. The event runs through four days and brings top music acts to the Kansas park. This year's stampede occurred on

June 27, 28, 29 and 30 and featured country music acts such as Little Big Town, Jake Owen, Jason Aldean, Scotty McCreary, Trace Adkins, and Miranda Lambert. More than 150,000 people enjoyed country music and Tuttle Creek State Park over those four days.

Other state parks host mountain bike races, triathlons, ironman races, bluegrass music festivals, kids' fishing derbies, car shows, and more. As and aside, Wilson state Park's Switchback Mountain Bike Trail was recently given the "Epic Award" by the International Mountain Bicycling Association. Park managers are continually coming up with new ways to get people to their parks and make their stays more enjoyable.

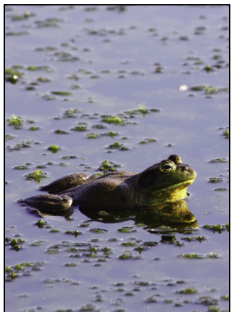
While the more than 100 cabins built in our state parks over the past 10 years are popular, until recently, all the revenue generated by cabin stays was going to pay off the loans used to pay for construction. Those loans were paid off last year, so the Cabin Fee Fund should also help with state park funding.

The one thing that may impact park visitation and revenues more than any other is something the staff can't control – the weather. Last summer was particularly difficult because the exceptionally hot temperatures and blue-green algae blooms that restricted some boating and swimming recreation. So far, the summer of 2013 has been good, although spring took its time in arriving.

Don't forget, if you plan on spending any time at one or more of the 26 state parks across Kansas, ask your county treasurer about the Parks Passport when you renew your tags. If you've already purchased a regular annual vehicle permit, pro-rated refunds may be available. The Parks Passport will be valid until your tags expire next year, and it will save you \$10!

So, purchasing a Parks Passport saves you money and is a win. And it will help fund our state park programs; win. And the third "win?" It's the amount of fun and enjoyment you can have at a state park. There is no better way to enjoy the Kansas outdoors this summer than by spending time at a park. There you have it: a win/win/win situation. ♡

- 1 Kansas View**
State Parks Passport Is Win/Win/Win *by Robin Jennison*
- 16 Silver Linings**
Drought has had devastating effects on some of our reservoirs, but good things are in our angling future when the water returns. *by Jeff Koch*
- 22 The Unlikely Lure Of Lichens**
Easily overlooked, lichens provide color to sometimes stark landscapes and offer a fascinating study of symbiosis. *by Ron Kaufman*
- 28 Dutch Delicious**
Cooking with a Dutch oven is easy and perfect for camping and outdoor events. It also produces good eats. *by Andra Bryan Stefanoni*
- 33 Keeping Lovewell's Fish Home**
The first of its kind in Kansas, a unique mesh barrier is in place at Lovewell Reservoir and should prevent losses of fish when water is released from the lake. *by Scott Waters*
- 38 Reeling Kids In**
A gloomy sky and blustery wind couldn't keep smiles off the faces of 144 kids who participated in the Ninth Annual Glen Elder Fishing Tournament in June. *by Nadia Marji*
- 41 Kansas Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus – Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**
Second in a series on Kansas legislators who are involved in the Kansas Legislative Sportsmens Caucus. *by Mike Miller*
- 43 Sportsmen's Calendar**
- 45 Backlash**
Getting Kids Outside *by Mike Miller*



Front Cover: Summertime means bullfrog season, which opens July 1. A nighttime frog hunt is a great way to beat the heat. Photo by Nadia Marji. **Back Cover:** Stand back. When it's announced that prizes and awards are about to be passed out at the Glen Elder youth fishing tournament, kids listen! Nadia Marji photo.



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Letters . . .

FRUSTRATED WITH BAIT REGS

Editor,

On Page 8 of the *2012 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary* pamphlet, it states "pass it on," which is referring to passing on your fishing heritage to the next generation. Thanks to the new bait laws, Kansas parents and grandparents will not be able to pass on their fishing heritage to our families.

My family has always set lines for catfish in our lakes around home and in the nearby Kaw River. We have had the grandkids help seine or use hook and line to catch live bait in our nearby creek, and local ponds. BUT no more outdoor adventures of this kind for our grandchildren because, you see, I cannot afford to buy certified "clean" bait to meet your new regulations. Besides the cost of bait, there is the 20-plus mile round trip for me to pick it up. But that's not all, if we don't use all of the purchased bait we cannot save it for the next days fishing! According to the regulations it has to be dumped on the ground before leaving your fishing location.

Hoping I had missed something in the fine print, I called a KDWPT biologist and visited with him about the cost of bait and throwing it away every time. The answer I got was "buy less bait so you will have less to dump." Did any biologist or administrator at KDWPT give thought to the availability of purchased bait to our lakes, rivers and streams? Or the high cost of purchasing bait?

Kansas fisherman need to review these new laws, emptying live wells before you leave the ramp so no fish are alive, clean fish where there are no fish stations available and if there are they are not open year-round (might be a health issue with this when the fish may be dead hours before you get home to clean them), cleaning your boat with 140 degree water before you leave the ramp.

I do understand what KDWPT is trying to do with the new rules. It's just too bad it was thought of after the nuisance species have spread as far as they have in Kansas waters. It doesn't do much good to lock the barn door after the cattle have run out!

I would like to suggest that KDWPT

review these regulations and provide some realistic suggestions the general public can afford and live with and not laws that deters the spirit of passing on the great pastime of fishing.

*Richard Wingfield
Lecompton*

Mr. Wingfield,

I understand your frustration, but I know that all of these regulations were put in place only after much debate and consternation. However, the threats invasive species pose to our treasured aquatic resources and fishing heritage were considered to be much greater than the consequences of imposing the regulations.

Water in bait buckets and livewells is considered to be a prime culprit of spreading certain invasive species. The discovery of aquatic nuisance species may have caught us by surprise, but not addressing the situation with regulations designed to prevent their spread would have been disastrous to our fishing resources.

The Commission did amend the bait regulations last year to allow anglers to catch and move bluegill and green sunfish caught from non-ANS designated waters.

- Miller

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

My name is Ernest B. Vinson and I am a senior citizen. I'm writing to you and support your plans to charge seniors for hunting, fishing and camping fees. I do not think it is fair that they are exempt from paying. I'm retired and think it is only fair that we pay something for this privilege.

Thank you for your time.

*Ernest B. Vinson
Salina*

LOVED THE FLIP-FLOPS

Nadia,

I just wanted to drop you a note about how wonderful it was to read your "Goodbye Flip-flops" blog. Your passion for the things you do outdoors and how you feel about Kansas simply oozes out of every chosen word, or so it seems to

me. My grandfather was the exact same for me, though I had the benefit of his tutelage well into my adult years. And as a father to two young daughters, it's always inspiring to read about women who are passionate about the outdoors. I have no doubt you are and will be a tremendous role model to many young girls.

I had strongly considered applying for this position, when it came open, and I was actually back in KS during most of October. My wife and I are originally from Ellsworth and my wife and daughters would like to move back home some day. (I'm still hooked pretty strongly on AK) In the end I didn't apply because it didn't seem to have as many of the public/school interaction opportunities my current position affords. Perhaps I wouldn't have got a look for this position anyhow (I'd like to believe I would have) but after reading your blog, it's clear to me they absolutely got the right person.

Congratulations on your new position and best of wishes on it and all your outdoor pursuits.

*Terry Fuller
Dillingham, Alaska*

PRETTY IN PURPLE



Mikala Larkin, Manhattan, holds a 17-inch Milford crappie she caught May 18. She will receive a Master Angler Award for her catch.

BIRD BRAIN

with Mike Rader

BIRDING MEMORIES

ings. I believe it was the spring of 1985 when Cable told me that the Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS) was sponsoring a field trip to Cherokee County, led by an acquaintance of his, Scott Seltman.

Seltman was a farmer/rancher from Rush County who had a passion about birding and was willing to share it by leading trips to various parts of the state. KOS sponsored these “extra” trips, outside the two scheduled meetings each year, to help interested folks learn more about what each area has to offer and get new people involved in birdwatching. Cable and I made the trek from Manhattan to Galena in early May, met with Seltman and a couple of other folks and started to canvas the area.

We discovered the wonders of Schermerhorn Park, finding northern parulas and yellow-throated warblers in the sycamore trees along shoal creek, listening for other warblers, thrushes, tanagers and flycatchers in the woods east of the park and visiting areas on the Spring River, between Galena and Riverton. It was soggy, wet country, but it held wonderful species of birds that I either hadn’t seen many of or not at all. The most exciting thing I recall from that part of the trip was hearing an odd bird call that Cable and Seltman immediately recognized as a flock of fish crows. They do a high-pitched “uh-uh, uh-uh” that sounds unlike most any call a typical American crow would do. We were really pumped about hearing and finally seeing them, as that species was at that time extremely rare in Kansas.

I have been back to that area several times and have created more great memories. Seltman, Cable and I are life-long friends and we have been to countless birding hotspots around the state, but great memories were still made in Cherokee County, such as finally seeing a black vulture with Seltman. We drove a lot of miles there to finally check that one off the list of new state birds for each of us. I thought of that when I was watching a black vulture soaring out in front of the nature center over Shoal Creek with my oldest daughter Jennifer, the new director of the facility. I thought back to the first discovery of fish crows with Cable and Seltman, when Jennifer and I were watching a half dozen of them on the banks of the creek picking through debris left by park users the night before. I told her what to look for in identification of black vultures and turkey vultures in flight from a distance and also to listen to the crows for the strange calls. It brought back fond memories for me and hopefully created some for her at her new place of work at the nature center. Maybe she can then pass on some of that knowledge and create memories for the next generation of birders to enjoy Schermerhorn Park and Shoal Creek.



I recently traveled to Cherokee County, in the extreme southeast corner of our state, for a visit to Schermerhorn Park on the south side of Galena. The Southeast Kansas Nature Center, which sits on the bluff above the banks of Shoal Creek, was my destination. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has agreed to take over operations of the gem of a facility from the city and local volunteer group. Under the persistence, guidance and hard work of Linda Phipps and her fantastic nature groupies, this facility has been transformed from an old, dilapidated and abandoned boy scout building into a fine example of a small, but mighty place to learn about the native plants and animals of the region. We’ll cover it more in-depth in a future magazine article, but it’s a must-see for folks who appreciate nature and are in that part of Kansas.

The reason I’m discussing Schermerhorn Park and Cherokee County is that when I was in college in the first half of the 1980s, I had an avid interest in birds, had taken ornithology classes from Dr. John Zimmerman and became good friends with another professor and first serious birding mentor, Ted Cable. We would take time over lunch or between classes to go out to the outflow tube at Tuttle Creek Reservoir, the River Pond area of the state park, Rocky Ford, Cedar Creek Cemetery, and other locals near Manhattan to look for birds. I remember getting my first Ross’s goose, first glaucous gull, and many “firsts” when birding with Cable on these abbreviated out-

IT'S THE LAW

with Kevin Jones



DOMICILED

Where we live says a lot about us and affects our lives in several ways. The state in which we live dictates the privileges we have available such as what hunting or fishing licenses and permits we may purchase. Quite often, there may be significant differences between resident and nonresidents in not only the cost of the license or permit, but the availability and method of acquiring them. Typically, residents of a state pay less for licenses and the permit quotas are normally greater in number and easier to acquire. This fact may cause some people to claim residency they are not entitled to in order to hunt or fish in another state without paying higher nonresident fees or to acquire a desirable permit that is more available to residents. While the vast majority of hunters and anglers do the right thing and purchase only the licenses and permits they are entitled to, there are individuals who will try and cheat the system.

Each state has its own definition and requirements for a person to establish and maintain residency. Usually there is a requirement that the person must live within the state for a certain period of time, and typically the person may not claim residency anywhere else during that time. Some states may have a time period as short as 30 days while other states may require as long as one year. The law may also make other requirements of the person in order for them to qualify.

The definitions of residency and domicile are often used interchangeably, which is a mistake. Each has its own unique definition. A residence is the place a person is currently living and in

fact a person may be residing in several locations during any given time. That being said, a person may have only one domicile, which is the singular place they establish for legal purposes. Two examples of a person's domicile include where that person is registered to vote or the address they use in filing their federal income tax. There are other records or declarations that may be used as well.

A Kansas resident, for hunting and fishing licensing and permitting purposes, is defined as a person who has continuously resided in Kansas for at least 60 days, and has not claimed a residency privilege in another state during that period. There is a second part to the residency requirement and that is the person must have domiciliary intent; in other words, the person must be making Kansas their legal domicile and intend to do so for the future. This does not mean that a person cannot move from the state sometime after they legally purchase the license or permit, but it does mean that at the time the purchase is made they must be intending on keeping their domicile in Kansas for the foreseeable future. This second part of the definition is an

important requirement that many who violate the residency requirement often ignore. The most common situation being when a person knows they are moving from the state and makes the purchase of a resident license or permit just before leaving.

There are several provisions in the Kansas laws that do allow a person to hold resident licenses and permits in both Kansas and another state. A person who legally acquires a lifetime license may be able to use that

license even though they may establish a legal domicile in another state at a later time. Kansas law allows resident privileges to be extended to active military personnel or full-time students enrolled in a post-secondary school. As with many exemptions, a person needs to fully understand the requirements and limitations before making the claim for the exemption. As I have advised on many other occasions, it is wise to get any question you may have answered before purchasing a license or permit.



"Wild About Kansas" Junior Photo Contest

If you're an avid *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine reader, then you know our January/February issue is jam-packed each year with amazing images from some of the area's top outdoor photographers. One day we got to thinking, why stop there?

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is proud to announce the 1st annual Wild About Kansas junior photo contest going on now. "Wild About Kansas" is a program designed to showcase Kansas outdoors through the lens of young photographers. Winning entries will be featured in the 2014 January/February issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine.

Participants must be age 18 or younger. Photos must be the participant's original work and be taken within the state of Kansas. There is no fee to participate.

For more information, including entry rules, submission instructions, and judging criteria, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "Services/Publications/Magazine/Wild About Kansas."



— Nadia Marji

A FISHY REPUTATION



A reputation is tough to live up to if it involves high expectations. I have spent most of my life living up to low expectations and have enjoyed the rewards of a low-performance life. However, there was a time when I was burdened with high expectations.

Unfortunately, I am lucky when it comes to catching fish. Rest assured there is little skill involved when I fish, but I have the ability to think like a fish. I have a two-track mind – eating until stomach distention and sleeping until I can gorge myself again – both fish-like qualities. I have proudly attained lunker status.

Because I could catch fish, I had the reputation of being a good fisherman. That meant that an enjoyable hobby, made more pleasurable by the lack of people bothering me, became a job. It got the point that if people saw my bicycle parked at Nuzman's pond, they would stop to watch.

And while I was lucky, I wasn't always humble. On one occasion, I was showing off my bow and arrow cast for two guys. Timed perfectly, the lure is released moments before releasing the reel's button, resulting in a beautiful low-arc cast. Wanting more distance, I pulled back too far. My fingers slipped off of the hook, and it promptly buried in my index finger. With a howl of pain, I let go of my rod and shook my finger, dislodging the hook. The lure plopped in the water by a submerged log where a 4-pound bass inhaled it and catapulted across the pond. When I grabbed my wildly gyrating rod, the fish was spent and still hooked. I dragged it onto the shore, astonishing my onlookers.

"They were right," one spectator said. "No skill, but a ridiculous amount of luck. What was that cast called – 'The Bow and Scream Like a Baby Cast' or the 'Bloody Finger'?" Jealousy is ugly.

As my reputation grew, so did the strain on my only fishing hole. Catches were getting thin, and living up to my reputation was becoming a lot like work! I had to find another pond.

I made an unholy alliance with Big Harry, who was a year older and 200 pounds heavier than me. Despite his large profile, his face could have been plastered on baby food jars. He perspired heavily, and when he sweated, he smelled like a stale bologna sandwich – his diet staple. But Harry had a car, and he wanted to fish.

When Harry pulled up one Saturday morning in a 1968 Chevelle two-door hardtop, I could not believe it.

"Your dad said we could take this fishing?"

"Oh, he thinks I am taking it to the car wash. I figured if I went there after we went fishin,' it really wouldn't be a lie."

It wasn't a bad lie and was actually pretty-well-thought-out. A bulldozer wouldn't go down a couple of the dirt roads I wanted to negotiate, so the car would definitely need washing when we were done.

"Let's go," I shouted, climbing in.

Twenty minutes later we pulled up to a farm pond that I had always wanted to fish. Rings and splashes on the calm surface were promising. My reputation would live on.

I jumped from the car, slid through the fence and ran for the pond. I could hear shouting and imagined it was my fans cheering me on. Then I realized the shouting was a call for help – Harry was hung in the fence.

I had no idea someone not in a John Wayne WWII movie could get that tangled in barbed wire. After several dozen small, surgical cuts in his shirt and pants, I was able to free him.

These are my good school clothes you just carved up!" snarled Harry. "Who ever gave you a knife should be jailed."

I turned and headed for the pond.

The fishing was fantastic! Every cast produced a strike, and I nearly had my limit when I heard a shrill bird-like shriek emanate from Harry's mouth.

"I'm hooked, I'm hooked," he screamed. "Help me, Todd!"

"Hold on," I sighed. "I need one more fish for a limit."

"I'm bleeding out. I'm getting faint." He was getting faint from dehydration. His face looked like a shower head.

When I made my way to Harry, I could see a lot of blood around his finger, and the hook was buried over the barb. Worried about living up to my high expectations, I pulled out my trusty pocketknife.

"No knife!" he screamed and yanked the treble hook out of his finger. Now he was bleeding.

"What is that?" he yelled, pointing to a tiny white cord loop coming out of the exit wound. I had no idea what it was, but it looked important.

I pulled a band-aid from my tackle box and wrapped his bloody finger. "You'll be fine," I assured. "Let's go to the state lake so I can catch one more fish."

"Are you crazy?" Harry hissed. "I'm bleeding to death and you want to catch one more? I'm heading home. I might have nerve damage." Harry headed for his car. I grabbed my stringer and followed.

When I climbed in, I commented that the bleeding had almost stopped, then added, "The state lake is full of 5-pounders. It would be a shame to come all this way and not cast once or twice."

Harry looked at me, a mixture of sweat, blood, and mistrust on his face. "Five-pounders, huh. Just one or two casts and then we head home," he said as fishing fever overcame his concern about nerve damage.

When we arrived at the lake, I explained that the best spots were on the far side and that I knew a shortcut across the dam. I got out and guided him through the boulder-strewn dam shoulder with hardly any scraping.

"What was that scraping noise? If you scratch this car . . ." I hated to tell Harry, but I didn't scratch the car, he did.

Casually mentioning to Harry that it was illegal to drive across the dam was the wrong thing to say. The combination of his wound, dehydration, and the fact that he had damaged his dad's car caused him to tromp on the accelerator. I discovered that a person with trauma is prone to irrational behavior and a 1968 Chevelle can fly, literally. Harry catapulted the car over the boulder field on the far side of the dam. He cleared all but one big rock.

When the car came to a rest, I found one of my fish on the dash, one in my lap, and two were unaccounted for. As fish scales and dust settled, I got out and surveyed the damage. His face was pressed against the steering wheel – Harry couldn't bear to look.

"Never knew cars had so many different colors of liquid in them. There is red stuff, yellow stuff, brown stuff – you think you were bleeding," I chuckled, shaking my head. "Boy oh boy, you sure screwed up your dad's car!"

He gave me a crazed look and drove away with sparks flying, smoke belching out of the exhaust and the multicolored streams of fluid leaving a pretty rainbow on the pavement. I started the long walk home, my reputation and expectations trending downward.

What do you picture in your mind when you hear the words “boat accident?” Do you picture the Titanic slowly sinking into the ocean, with an orchestra playing in the background passing the time before the boat finally goes under water? Unfortunately, recreational boats don’t sink like the Titanic. It doesn’t take hours or even minutes. It takes seconds. It happens usually without warning and catches most people completely by surprise.

Imagine yourself cruising around the lake in your boat with a couple of friends and family members. The sun is shining and the sky is blue. There’s a slight breeze and lake is relatively calm. A boat powers by and throws a large wake and your boat starts to lean to one side from the force of the waves. Something doesn’t feel quite right and everyone starts to panic. Now count to three.

What did you do during those three seconds? Did you calmly walk to the front of your boat, lift up a seat cushion and start handing out life jackets? Or did you grab onto something in the boat and hold on, reach for your kids to keep them from getting banged around, or are you trying to protect your head from hitting the side of the boat as everything turns upside down? Even if you were prepared enough to have your life jackets readily accessible and within reaching distance of everyone on board, do you think you would have had time to put the jackets on before you hit the water? Be honest.

Now let’s think about what happens if your jackets are strapped to your seat backs and the boat capsizes. You made sure they were secured to the seats extra tight right? That way they didn’t blow off as you were cruising across the lake. Guess where your life jackets are now that your boat is upside down? Yep, still strapped to the seats, but now they’re under the boat where you can’t reach them. Same thing goes if your jackets are stowed under seats or in cabinets – they stay with the boat as it drifts away and you’re trying to keep your head above the water, hoping you have enough strength to tread water until someone notices you.

Convincing people that wearing their life jackets is the smart and safe option is relatively easy. Ask anyone what the most important piece of safety equipment on a boat is and almost everyone will say a life jacket. Convincing them to actually wear them is the difficult part. Accidents are called that for a reason – if we could see them coming, we would avoid them. Just like trying to put on a seat belt in the middle of a car crash, trying to wrestle with a life jacket in the middle of boat accident is almost impossible.

I hear people say all the time that their children complain about having to wear a life jacket, how it’s hot, or uncomfortable, or why should they have to wear one if the adults don’t.

Boat SAFE

with Erika Brooks

BE PREPARED
and
BE SAFE



We have an easy solution for that on our boat. Nobody goes without a life jacket, no excuses. And there are different styles of jackets available today, so take the time to try some on and find one that fits correctly and is comfortable. Persons 16 years of age and older can wear an inflatable life jacket, either belt pack or suspender type, which can be automatically or manually inflatable.

In the past eight years, 43 people have lost their lives in boating accidents on Kansas waters, and of those 43 people 37 of them weren’t wearing a life jacket and drowned. When there is no medical issue or traumatic injury from the accident, there is a fairly good chance that a life jacket would have saved most of those people’s lives. Then there’s the ugly side of the issue that nobody wants to talk about. If you have a friend or family member involved in a boating accident and they are not rescued, it then becomes a recovery. A body recovery drag bar is not a delicate piece of equipment, it’s a piece of metal with large hooks on the end that is pulled along the bottom of the lake meant to snag a person who is under the water. Some people have had to wait days, weeks or even months before their loved one’s body was recovered and they were finally able to have some closure. I see more pets in life jackets than I do human passengers, so if we care so much about our animals, why don’t we care about ourselves and our loved ones just as much?

HUNTING HERITAGE *with Kent Barrett*

ETHICS, RESPONSIBILITY and PRIVILEGE

In life, it is impossible to say how important it is for us to make ethical decisions and then be responsible for these choices. We teach this in our hunter education courses throughout the state each year, but ethics extend to all aspects of our lives. When Robin Hood and his band of merry men were causing such grief for the Sheriff of Nottingham, we sometimes forget that the cause of this friction was not the robbing of the rich in order to give to the poor, but was in fact the ownership of game and the right to hunt. Historically, the rich and entitled owned the game, as well as the land, and controlled who could use it. Peasants were not allowed to hunt even if they were starving. This changed when good men used their swords to defend the rights of all and forced the king to recognize the peoples' rights. This idea of peoples' rights followed the settlers to this new land. When a common man stood up for the privilege of gathering oysters from a mudflat in New Jersey, the courts recognized that the common individual has a right to enjoy nature and the bounties of the natural harvest equally with all other people in this nation. But with this privilege comes responsibility.

A major responsibility that all sportsmen and women share today is to obey the game laws as adopted by the state. To not obey the law is to remove oneself from the ranks of sportsmen and become a criminal. I was reminded of this last Friday. I was visiting the vast wilderness of southcentral Idaho. We had traveled in and were enjoying the south fork of the Boise River way back up in the mountains. While looking over the beautiful surroundings, a couple of float boats came down the river and flashed by us. The occupants were enjoying an afternoon of fishing the river in the most beautiful conditions imaginable. The only problem was that the fishing season did not open until the next day, the Saturday before

Memorial Day. The regulation was printed quite plainly in the published fishing regulations and had not changed for a number of years. However, these people felt entitled to disregard the printed regulation for some self-determined entitlement. We were so far back in the wilderness that we had no cell phone reception. There was little chance of detection by the authorities, so there was almost no risk of a citation. But that should not be the point.

The father of American game management, Aldo Leopold, once wrote, "A peculiar virtue in wildlife ethics is that the hunter ordinarily has no gallery to applaud or disapprove of his conduct. Whatever his acts, they are dictated by his own conscience, rather than a mob of onlookers. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this fact."

Each of us is entitled to make decisions regarding our actions, and each of us accepts the credit or blame for the consequences of those decisions. Even if there is no legal consequence for a bad decision, there is still a consequence. No one can place themselves in with the poachers without there being a consequence. Although this is not evidenced as a visible stain that is noticeable to others, one would carry some burden knowing that one had not followed the written regulations as well as the unwritten code of "fair chase."

As we enjoy nature throughout the seasons, I would hope that each of us would consider the responsibility that we have to others, the land, the wild resources and most importantly, to ourselves. My wife likes to question me as to how I can sleep so soundly, especially when we are camping. I like to remind her, somewhat haughtily, that it is because I have a conscience void of offense towards man. I have to admit that the sleeping is even better if I can include the others as well.

NO POLE, NO BAIT, NO PROBLEM

The increased popularity of television shows like "Hillbilly Handfishin'," "Catfishin' Kings," and "Mudcats," prove that handfishing for large catfish can be an exciting and fast-paced sport. Luckily, Kansas is one of a handful of states that offers this special season. With a special permit, anglers can handfish for flathead catfish in select waters from sunrise to sunset June 15-Aug. 31.

Commonly referred to as "noodling," handfishing consists of finding a suspected catfish hole, barricading any possible exits the fish might escape through, using your hands as bait and sticking your arm inside the hole to catch the catfish bare-handed. Although seemingly easy, this sport can prove to be very

dangerous for inexperienced anglers.

Adding to the challenge of handfishing, no man-made objects that attract fish, such as a barrel, box, or bathtub may be used. Handfishing anglers are also prohibited from using snorkel or scuba gear, as well as any hooks. A stringer may be used, but not until the catfish is caught by hand and is at or above the water's surface.

Handfishing permits can be obtained for \$27.50 at license vendors or online. Anglers



participating in this special season will need to have a handfishing permit in addition to a regular fishing license. New for 2013, handfishing permit-holders are no longer required to complete and submit a questionnaire following the close of the season.

To purchase a handfishing permit online, visit ksoutdoors.com and click "License/Permits."

—KDWP NEWS

KANSAS WATERS OPEN TO HANDFISHING INCLUDE:

- the entire length of the Arkansas River,
- all federal reservoirs from beyond 150 yards of the dam to the upstream end of the federal property, and
- the Kansas River from its origin, downstream to its confluence with the Missouri River.



Going Dutch

Summer is finally in fullswing and cabin fever has been replaced with the camping itch. Grilling and campfire cook-outs have always been a favorite of mine, and I'm always looking for new ways and to cook outdoors. Dutch oven cobbles recently appeared on my radar.

What is a Dutch oven exactly? A Dutch oven is a heavy cast-iron cooking vessel with a lid that can be used to cook or braise food from the top and the bottom. While most Dutch ovens are cast iron, there are aluminum models that provide a lightweight option when hiking or packing. Dutch ovens come in many styles for indoor and outdoor use. My favorites include a cast iron pot with short stubby

legs and a long cast iron handle for suspending over a fire or carrying while hot. The lid will be flat with tall sides to hold hot coals and to keep ash from getting into food while removing the lid. A snugly fitting lid with a short handle is preferred over a notched lid that requires a separate handle. If it's not attached, I'll lose it.

New pots should be seasoned prior to cooking and usually come with instructions on how to do this. Seasoning creates a barrier between your food and the metal and prevents rusting. When cleaning cast iron, NEVER use soap. Most of the time a simple wipe down with a paper towel will clean the pot. If foods are stubbornly stuck, fill the pot with water and place on the fire. The boiling water will loosen the stuck material. Pour out water and gently scrub with a nylon or nonabrasive cleaning pad. Return the clean pot to the coals to dry and sanitize. Next, let the pot cool and

apply a light coat of vegetable oil with a paper towel to prevent rusting.

Coals from bagged charcoal or campfire ambers can be used as a heat source. Use a shovel to create a separate bed of coals at the perimeter of the main fire and place the lidded pot with food on the coals. Next, place a blanket of hot coals on the lid for cooking. Trial and error is the best way to get a feel for what to expect for cook times in relation to the amount of hot coals used.

Everything from cobbler to pizza can be cooked in a Dutch oven, and it often becomes a choice cooking method of avid campers. Try your hand this summer at Dutch oven cooking and don't get discouraged if you fail the first time. Start small with breakfast biscuits and work your way into full meals. For some good tips and recipes, see Andra Stefanoni's article on Page 28 of this issue.



FISHIN' with Mike Miller

SWIMMIN' SWIM BAITS

I couldn't possibly name one lure as my favorite. I have many lures I favor, either because they catch fish, they have sentimental value or they just look cool. However, a lure-type that I've only recently been casting is moving up on my list of favorites. The plastic swim bait looks cool and it catches fish, but I also like it because it's versatile.

When I say swim bait, I'm referring to a large, plastic bait with a paddle-type tail. The one's I use are rigged weedless with a large, weighted hook. You can simply cast them out and reel them in, the thumping paddle tail imparting all the action you need. Or you can vary the retrieve, stopping to let the bait sink before resuming. It's easy to make the bait look like a wounded baitfish with rod action and retrieve.

Strikes aren't usually jarring. In fact, a strike often feels like the weight of the lure has been taken off the end of the line.

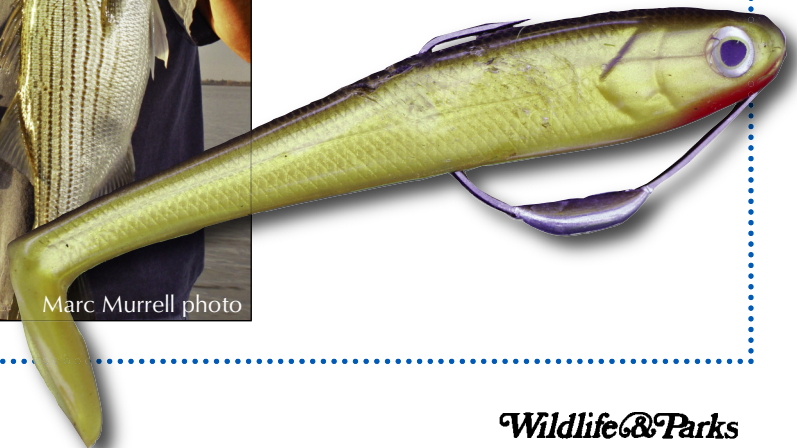
Sometimes, you'll feel a "tap" as the fish inhales the bait. Because of the soft, plastic material, fish hang on, so there's time to reel down

and set the hook. And you need to set the hook. I would recommend using a braid or super line to help with getting a good hook set. Monofilament, especially if it was a long cast, may have too much stretch to get a good hook set.

I started using the large swim baits while fishing for pike in Canada, but I've since cast them for bass and wipers in Kansas. I fished a 5-inch swim bait with a slow retrieve in 15 feet of water for Milford wipers. And I cast the same bait at the local sandpit for bass. It's weedless and runs nicely through submerged brush and heavy weeds. If you haven't already, try a large plastic swim bait. Just be sure to use some heavy line and hang on. Big fish love 'em.



Marc Murrell photo





Most people shutter at the sight of poop. It's not often something that warrants a double-take – unless you're like me and look at it like a mystery, dissecting the clue-filled lumps to find out "who done it?"

Now I'm no professional dung-detective, but through observation, I've learned that one of the most important things you can gather from examining an animal's scat is what their diet consists of. This can help you narrow down the species of animal based on what it eats, and if you can find their food source(s), then you can probably find them.

To lay down some ground work for our scat session, here are a few basics to keep in mind:

CARNIVORES VS. HERBIVORES VS. OMNIVORES

This is important to know ahead of time as it can quickly help narrow down your list of potential animals by process of elimination. For example, deer scat will never contain bones or feathers since deer are herbivores and only eat plants.

YOU GET OUT WHAT YOU PUT IN

Moist foods are going to produce slimmer scats, while more fibrous foods are going to produce larger scats.

LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE

When examining scat, it's best to consider the total quantity of scat in addition to the individual pieces. Although individual pieces of scat may resemble a certain species, the total quantity may serve as the deciding factor in differentiating between species.

IT'S VARIABLE

By this I mean, think of how much your own "number twos" vary – animals are no different. Fortunately, animals are creatures of habit, so a consistent diet tends to produce a consistent scat.

With that in mind, listed below are common examples of scats left by various animals:

Rabbits and relatives: spheres

Rodents/shrews/deer: elongated spheres

Raccoons/coyotes and relatives: long, thick cords

Weasels/mink and relatives: cords (often folded)

Birds, reptiles, and amphibians: long, thin cords (also nitrogenous deposits; shapeless; semiliquid)

Now that we've skated through this fecal-fiesta, it's time to talk about animal tracks.

Just as scat can tell us a lot about a particular animal, tracks can tell us even more – like what the animal's habitat might be, what its daily routines are and what it was doing when the track was made. For example, when an animal leaves tracks that exhibit webbing in their feet, we can probably safely say they inhabit wet areas. Tracks can sometimes even tell us the behavior of an animal when the tracks were made, for instance, tracks that are found in close proximity of one another tell us the animal was walking slowly, possibly even stalking something. Tracks with footprints made farther apart and dig deeply into the ground might indicate the animal was sprinting either to or from something.

With that being said, below are a few questions you might ask yourself when trying to decipher wildlife tracks (other than "what the heck am I doing out here and what was that noise?").

- 1 ARE THERE TWO OR FOUR FEET?**
- 2 HOW LARGE ARE THE TRACKS?**
- 3 HOW FAR APART ARE THE TRACKS?**
- 4 DO THE TRACKS SHOW CLAWS? ARE THEY WEBBED?**
- 5 WHAT TYPE OF HABITAT WAS THE TRACK FOUND IN?**

Just as scat greatly varies within a given species, so can tracks. For instance, males often produce larger tracks than females, the age of the animal can account for a large variance in the size of tracks, and although rare, genetic mutations such as an extra toe can also serve as a cause for misidentification.

There are other factors that a tracker needs to keep in mind, as well, such as the type of surface the track was found on and the slope or angle of the ground. Soft soil, snow, and sand can all exaggerate the size of a track due to the surface's fluidity.

Being new to all of this, I'm sticking to the common-sense, poor man's version of "tracking for dummies," but just like riding a bike – I've come to know that some things are best learned by doing.

The next time you hit the trails, look down – you might just find a clue or number two.

Happy tracking!

Accidental Huntress is now on Twitter! Follow her at [@A_Huntress](https://twitter.com/A_Huntress)

The Kansas spring turkey season has come and gone. Most of the turkeys harvested in Kansas are taken the first few weeks of the season in April. However, for those that don't mind a few more (million) ticks and leafed-out poison ivy, May is a pretty good option, too.

But despite my enjoyment of spring turkey hunting, it's been three years since I've actually killed a gobbler. Prior to that I had taken the last handful of birds with my bow and the rewards of that challenge were fulfilling. However, I lost a couple really fine spring turkey hotspots (deer, too) to leasing and a change of land ownership, and additional access isn't easy anymore.

So the past couple seasons, I've been content trying to get my twin boys a bird or two and haven't worried about hunting on my own. However, the boys are busy enough now as teenagers that spring turkey hunting isn't a big priority for them and Dad was back flying solo.

I had hunted several times with a friend, the first time shortly after a spring ice storm. Birds gobbled like crazy on the roost, and it was a wonderful, albeit chilly morning as we chatted and watched the world wake up.

Our calling later piqued the interest of six jakes, and they eased into shotgun range. They stared at our decoys like middle school boys gazing at the girls standing on the other side of the gym at their first middle school dance. Neither of us took a shot. Having them in shotgun range was reward enough. As it turned out, this wouldn't be the last time I'd see these six, wannabe gobblers.

In mid-May, my buddy and I chatted about another hunt, but he was busy getting ready for a Canada fishing trip. He encouraged me to try the spot for one last hunt.

The morning was slow motion. Fog

rolled in and out, thick enough at times I couldn't see my decoy 15 yards away. I imagined a strutter stepping out of the fog like John Wayne walking into a bar. That didn't happen but a lone, timid jake came to my calls and decoy before vanishing

didn't budge much. Just when I was about to give up, those six jakes came back into the picture. They were at a dead run and chased one gobbler clear out of sight.

"That's not much of a fair fight," I thought to myself.

At that point the first gobbler had begun to move toward me, and it was less than 100 yards away. I thought I was in the chips. Nope. Here comes those six jakes again. This gobbler was more reluctant to give ground and a fracas broke out. Numbers won and the tom eased off.

But the bird heard my hen calls and began heading back my way. Things were promising as the tom worked the edge of the creek bottom and I was sure it would shortly be within range. But those six jakes weren't done pestering him.

The good news is the tom was in range when the jakes reached it. I struggled to keep track of the longbeard as they tussled and fussed. As soon as the tom was clear, I cut loose with a load of 3-inch, No. 6s and the tom went down in a heap 30 yards away.

The gang-o-jakes fluttered into the air, gobbled and looked around. Still well within range I opted not to fill my second permit, thinking about a return trip for the other longbeard. The jakes strolled off to about 75 yards.

The bird I shot hadn't twitched since it went down, but it started to flop. The jakes' heads turned a bright red in the blink of an eye and they made a mad dash to the downed bird for one final butt-whipping.

By now I was tired of their antics. I thought to myself I'd just pick out the biggest jake and turn their half-dozen posse into a quintet. After all it was May and the walleye were biting. And that's exactly what I did, putting my 2013 season in the books better late than never.



Marc Murrell photo

about as quickly as he appeared.

As the morning passed, it got quieter. I took the opportunity to do what comes naturally to me on a nice spring morning; I snoozed. I awoke to see that pack of six jakes entering the opposite end of the field. However, this time they had no interest in my calls or my decoy. Rude, I thought. The woods were surprisingly quiet, and I decided to call it a day.

As I walked back to my vehicle, I saw a big tail fan across the field. Upon closer inspection, I saw two longbeards. I jumped back down in the creek bed and hustled as close as I dare get.

I started calling and could get the toms to gobble but they had hens nearby and

PARK VIEW Adventure ON!

with Kathy Pritchett

Those long, hot days of summer are upon us, and kids are tired of the pool and video games. What to do? Check out the events calendar for Kansas state parks at www.ksoutdoors.com and click "News/State Parks/Event Calendar." From various competitions that make up the Sunflower State Games to the Waconda Festival to fishing tournaments and various reunions, there is always something going on in a Kansas state park.

Speaking of reunions, how about holding yours in a Kansas state park? A few of our parks have enclosed shelters with air conditioning, and all of them have open air shelters. Invite your friends and family for a get-together to camp, fish, boat, swim and gather round a campfire. Those who don't want to rough it can opt for a cabin. Book early, though, as cabins and utility campsites fill quickly for holidays and early summer weekends.

What activities can kids do in the parks? Our parks have playground equipment, beaches and trails. Using these areas, you could create scavenger hunt for your kids or play "I spy." Many of the parks have disc golf courses, horseshoe pits, and volleyball or basketball courts. Inquire at the office to check out the equipment. Parks often host nature programs that can be fun and educational for all ages. Historical re-enactors frequently hold events in state parks and welcome visitors. Obtain a bird, plant or wildlife ID book. Just holding still and observing the plants and wildlife can be exciting, as kids (or adults) try to identify species they see. Some animals are active only during the day, others at dawn or dusk, and some only at night, so the fun never stops. Lean back and look up at night to see stars that city lights often render invisible. Find the constellations and learn



navigation by the stars instead of GPS. Download our smart phone Pocket Ranger™ app at www.pocketrangerexchange.com/apps/ks/apps.php to map trails or participate in our virtual geo-challenge activity.

Please be aware of safety while in the parks. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Don't swim outside the marked swimming areas; areas past the buoys can lead to sudden drop-offs that could be beyond a swimmer's abilities. The lake is generally cooler than the surrounding air temperature, so swimmers can become chilled and slip into hypothermia even when it seems warm outside. The Kansas wind can make water rough and hard to swim in, too, tiring swimmers quickly. Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when on the water, and make sure children are wearing right-sized PFDs.

Also remember that this is unfenced nature, so wild animals may try to forage for YOUR food. As much as possible, keep food secured where animals can't smell it. Bears are not a hazard, but raccoons and skunks certainly could be. Snakes and insects can also be encountered, so just be aware of your surroundings. We are past the normal "stormy" season, but Kansas weather can be unpredictable. Being aware of the conditions around you will let you have such an enjoyable time in the outdoors that you can't wait to return. There is a lot to see and do in the great Kansas outdoors.

FROGGING: THE ULTIMATE FAST FOOD

Kansas bullfrog season runs from July 1-Oct. 31, and for some, this is a special summer treat. Bullfrog hunting, or "frogging," is a great way to spend a summer night, as well as fill up on good eats. Similar in taste and texture to that of shrimp or fish, bullfrog legs are often served fried.

The daily creel limit is eight, with a possession limit of 24. While bullfrogs may be taken by hook and line, dip net, gig, bow and arrow, or crossbow (firearms not allowed), many froggers prefer to take them by hand.

How to Nab a Bullfrog:

1. At night, walk quietly through a small body of water.
2. Shine a bright light along the bank until a pair of glowing eyes appear (usually rainbow in color).
3. While temporarily blinding the frog with your light, walk directly up to the frog.
4. As quickly as possible, grab or net the frog and place in your sack.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 and enjoy!



SUPPLIES YOU'LL NEED:

Flashlight, sack, an old pair of tennis shoes, and a valid fishing license (if required by law).

KANOPOLIS STATE PARK

TRAIL RIDES AT KANOPOLIS OFFER TASTE OF SIMPLER TIMES

If you want a vacation from the fast-paced, go-go-go, deadline-driven times of today, consider exploring the trails of Kanopolis State Park on horseback. Nestled in the scenic Smoky Hills region of Kansas just 33 miles southwest of Salina, Kanopolis State Park offers over 30 miles of some of the best trails in the state.

From canyons and prairie, to deer and prairie dogs, a horseback ride through Kanopolis State Park is a great way to experience the natural wonders of one of Kansas' oldest recreation areas.

Since 1955, visitors have enjoyed the more than 15,000 acres of rolling hills, bluffs, and woods Kanopolis State Park has to offer. Whether you are looking for a weekend getaway with the family, or just a day adventure, consider planning a trip to Kanopolis State Park.

For more information, contact the Kanopolis State Park Office at (785) 546-2565.

— Nadia Marji



NOT YOUR AVERAGE SCHOOL OF FISH

Have you ever wondered how to tell the difference between a white bass and a wiper? Or, how to tie on a hook using an improved clinch knot? Whether you simply want to improve your general fishing knowledge or are looking to sharpen your angling skills, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) has just the program for you.

KDWPT, alongside Fishing's Future, a non-profit organization aimed at getting families outdoors through the sport of fishing, will now be offering an Angler Education Program. The first class will be held August 10, 2013 from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th Street North in Wichita.

"Kansas has had aquatic education for some time, but our new partnership with Fishing's Future will create an even more organized and useful program," said KDWPT district fisheries biologist Jessica Mounts.

Similar to other educational programs currently offered, the new Angler Education Program will enlist qualified



volunteer instructors to teach each class. Subjects covered include current rules and regulations, species identification, fishing ethics, equipment, knot-tying, casting, fish habitat, aquatic nuisance species, conservation, and much more.

Specialized classes will also be given on family fishing, adult beginner fishing, specialized fishing techniques, and fishing for a particular species, schedules and resources permitting.

"This program is a great way for any angler to expand their outdoors skills, become more active, and enjoy Kansas' many parks and waterways," said Fishing's Future local coordinator Kevin Reich.

All classes are open to the public at no cost, however pre-registration is required. To register for the Aug. 10 class, visit fishingsfuture.org, click "upcoming events," and "Kansas Angler Education Training Program"

For more information, including how to become an Angler Education instructor, contact Reich at kevin.reich@fishingsfuture.org, or by phone at (785) 577-6921.

Fish Squeezer

with Tommie Berger

Spreading the Word

We are moving into the dog days of summer, and many are wondering what summer will bring. So far this year, we certainly have not had normal weather, whatever that is. After a mild winter, it didn't seem like the cool/cold weather would ever end. Spring was cooler than normal and in some of the areas of the state wetter than normal. Some are even talking in central and eastern Kansas that the drought might be broken.

With the unusual weather we've had, the fishing has been hard to figure out, too. Some of the farm ponds, state fishing lakes, and a few reservoirs have caught some water, which will bode well for fishing in the future. In other areas, water levels are still low, and fisheries are still in danger. Cool water temperatures delayed spawning by many species and made planning fishing trips more difficult.

By the time this article is printed, fishing is usually tough anyway. A lot of you will go to the lakes to camp, swim, and boat and fishing will take second fiddle to staying cool. When it's hot, fishing is better in early mornings and late evenings, and night fishing under lights can be an effective and cool alternative. Those who fish out of float tubes, U-boats, or wade will be more comfortable, and I suppose those brave souls who like to stick their hands into holes to handfish for flatheads can stay cool in the water – the question is can they stay cool under the pressure? I'm not sure I could!

As we get into late summer, there are a few who have satisfied their fishing fever and switch to whitetail fever. Trail cameras go up, and visions of monster velvet bucks pass through their minds. I know a few whitetail deer hunters who are absolutely obsessed with early season scouting to find out if the big buck they didn't get last year made it through the winter. It is good to plan ahead right now for those early fall hunts.

Hopefully, most of you who might hunt out of state or even



in Kansas where we still have a few draw hunts have put in for those drawings. Unfortunately, as we start to get busy in the spring and summer, we forget to get those early applications in and miss out on some of the hunting opportunities that are available to us. Sometimes we need to remind our nonresident friends of the opportunities that they might even have right here in Kansas. As many know, we have one of the best trophy white-tail deer herds in the country and often there are even some non-resident permits left over after the first draws. It is a good idea to visit the KDWP website (www.ksoutdoors.com) to keep up on all the opportunities out there.

I hope you all have a successful summer fishing and are ready to hunt come late summer and fall. Kansas has some of the very best hunting and fishing in the country; a secret that perhaps some Kansans might prefer to keep to themselves!

Legislation Passed To Reduce Boat Taxes

In last November's election, a majority of Kansas voters supported amending the state constitution to allow legislators to change the way watercraft are taxed. Legislators acted on the issue this spring, and the result was the passage of SB83, which Governor Brownback signed on April 16. The new law will tax boats at 11.5 percent of assessed value in 2014 and 5 percent in 2015 and thereafter.

Currently, watercraft in Kansas are taxed at 30 percent of the assessed value, which often results in a property tax many times greater than that paid by boat owners in neighboring states. Because of that disparity, thousands of Kansas boaters have opted to register their boats in other states. As a result, Kansas counties lose out on the property taxes and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

receives less funding from boat registrations. The fee for registering a boat in Kansas is \$30 for three years, and that money goes to boater education programs, boat access facilities and other recreational boating programs. Kansas also receives U.S. Coast Guard funding based on the number of registered boats.

This change is good news for boaters, as well as marine dealers since it may prompt Kansans to upgrade their boat or buy a new boat. And it should convince Kansans to register their boats here.

For more information on registering your boat, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "Boating/Registering Your Boat."

"Youth in the Outdoors" Day

The Fourth Annual "Youth in the Outdoors Day" was conducted on June 8 at Ravenwood Lodge near Topeka. The event is a product of the Justin Corbet Memorial Shooting Sports Foundation. Justin loved the outdoors but was killed in a motorcycle accident at the age of 23. His namesake, non-profit foundation was formed to provide leadership, support and financial assistance to qualified programs and individuals in various shooting sports. The principal goal is to raise funding for shooting, hunting and educational opportunities aimed at women, youth and families.

The "Youth in the Outdoors Day" has grown in popularity since the first event four years ago.

"We wanted to give something back to the community for supporting us so much," said Verne Dow, a board member of the foundation. "Our first one was terribly rainy but we still had 80-90 kids, and the next year we doubled that and the next year we doubled that. My wife served over 400 hot dogs last year so it's

really growing and it's getting bigger."

The event has more than a dozen local, regional and national sponsors including retail stores, restaurants, media, local law enforcement, state natural resource and conservation organizations. Individuals from many of these organizations will be on hand to provide instruction in a variety of activities.

"We had people here from T.H.E. Archery Club with nearly a dozen places for the kids to shoot," Dow said. "And the First Santa Fe Trail Plainsmen were on hand with an 1800s era camp site and blackpowder demonstration and the kids threw tomahawks and knives."

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism operated the Laser Shot simulated hunting game and the Kansas Hunter Education Instructors provided a BB and pellet gun range set up. Kids had the chance to shoot shotguns and learn about trapping and furharvesting from the Kansas Furharvesters Association. The Free State Fly Fishers conducted fly tying and fly fishing demonstrations. A



host of other stations took kids through many more aspects of the great outdoors including turkey calling, waterfowl calling and wildlife habitat management.

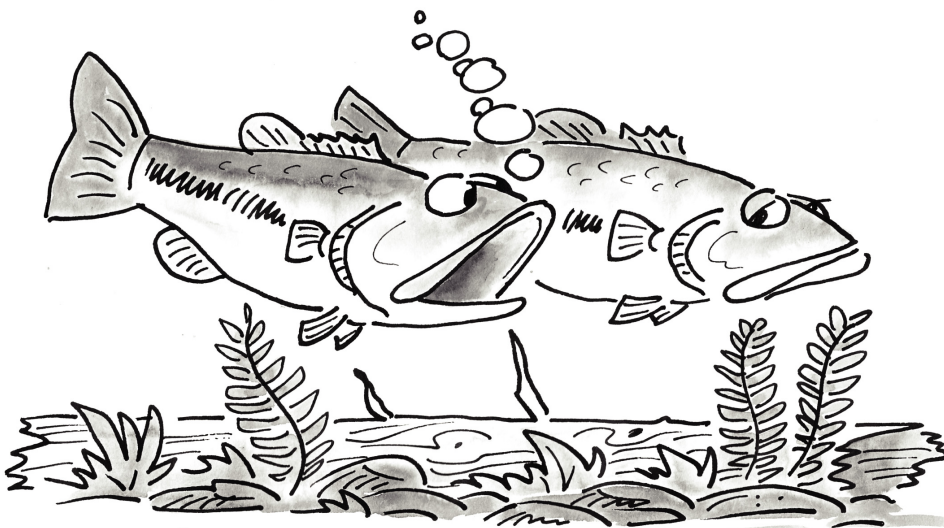
"The kids just love to be able to go through all those activities and there's probably 25 or 30 different things they can try," Dow said. "They get a chance to do some things they normally wouldn't get to do with some of the hands-on activities."

The Justin Corbet Shooting Sports Foundation has awarded \$112,000 in grants, impacting over 14,000 youth and ladies educational programs since its inception. More than half of the money has been awarded to Kansas 4-H programs.

— Marc Murrell

WAY outside

BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"I'M STARVING, BUT ACCORDING TO THE SOLUNAR TABLES WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO EAT FOR ANOTHER HOUR."

Survey Spotlights Dove Hunters

One of North America's most highly sought after migratory birds, the dove, will be the focus of a national survey conducted June 20 through the end of the year. A cooperative effort of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Flyway Councils, and state fish and wildlife agencies, the National Dove Hunter Survey will examine the experiences and opinions of dove hunters from across the nation.

Surveys will be mailed to randomly selected hunters who purchased a HIP stamp required to hunt doves.

For more information, contact Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism migratory bird specialist Richard Schultheis at (620) 342-0658 or by email at richard.schultheis@ksoutdoors.com.

Go With The Flow

with Mark VanScoyoc

Spotlight on Kansas Waterways Plains Minnow

DESCRIPTION: Slender body, flattened ventrally. Mouth thin-lipped, ventral (located on bottom), Dorsal fin high and pointed, located directly over pelvic fins. Anal fin with eight rays. Straw colored with sides yellowish-white or dull silvery, not transparent.

SIZE: Maximum length for adults is 13 cm (5 inches)

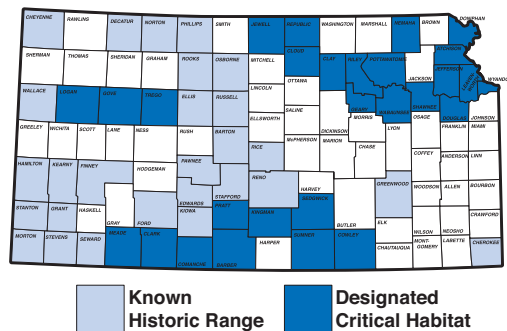
Plains minnows were formerly abundant in all large Kansas streams containing broad beds of sand and shallow, braided flow. Within these streams, the plains minnow is most numerous where the sediments accumulate in shallow backwaters, gentle eddies, and along the deeper edges of sand "waves" formed on the shifting substrate by the current. Once a common bait fish due to its size and abundance, it has become scarce in former areas of abundance. It is a species that is heavily dependant upon variable rates in water flow to complete its reproductive cycle. The fish spawns between April and August, but its reproductive habits are not fully understood. It's thought that abrupt rises (flood flows) may stimulate spawning behavior.



Joshua S. Perkin photo

Conserving this and other species is the best way for us to gage how well we manage the resource that they rely on to survive. What's good for the fish is good for us as well. If that fish, or any species of concern for that matter, is gone, it becomes that much more difficult for us to effectively determine if our streams and rivers are safe for all of us to use, whether for recreation, irrigation, or drinking water.

In order to recover this species and remove it from the state threatened list, we'll need to learn more about its habitat requirements. Conserving that habitat and establishing partnerships with conservation organizations, industry, landowners and other interested parties is the only way to ensure its future.



BIRDING BIG YEAR COMPETITION SIGN-UP STILL OPEN

Birders can still sign up for the 2013 Kansas Birding Big Year, a competition where participants attempt to observe as many species of birds as they can within the borders of Kansas. Unlike other "big year" competitions that span the U.S. in a calendar year, participants in the Kansas Birding Big Year can compete any time now through Dec. 31, 2013.

"The real driving force behind this competition is getting folks into the Kansas outdoors to enjoy nature and the fun wildlife watching opportunities available," said KDWP wildlife education coordinator Mike Rader. "We also hope this competition will help show folks just how many different kinds of birds either migrate through or call Kansas home."

Participants can compete in one of three categories: youth (16 and under), adult (17-64), and senior (65 and up) by logging their data into the online service, eBird, available on the Cornell University

web site, www.ebird.org. Winners from each category will receive prizes to be awarded next January. Event sponsors include Acorn Naturalists, Cabela's, Bass Pro Shops, Bushnell, and Walmart.

Participants must register for the competition, at <http://ksoutdoors.com/birding-big-year> or by emailing Rader at mike.rader@ksoutdoors.com. To compete, birders will submit their list totals online. Birds must be observed within Kansas boundaries, and must be species accepted by the Kansas Bird Records Committee of the Kansas Ornithological Society. Qualified birds must be alive, wild and unrestrained, and diagnostic field marks must be seen, and/or heard and documented by the recorder.



SILVER



Much of Kansas has experienced severe drought conditions for the past three years, and some lakes and reservoirs were at historic-low levels. And while boat access has been difficult at a few lakes, there is a silver lining for future fishing prospects.

LININGS

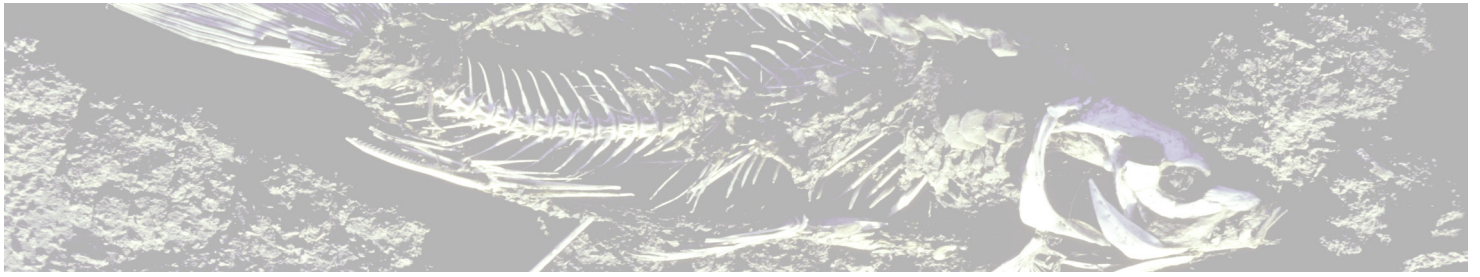


by Jeff Koch

district fisheries biologist, Pretty Prairie

photos by Marc Murrell

manager, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita



There is probably wisdom in the old saying that “In Kansas, you may be in a drought, but you are only a week away from a flood.” While much of Kansas has been mired in a historic warm and dry weather pattern, outdoor enthusiasts are waiting for rains to bring back life to the parched landscape and beloved fishing holes. Very few water bodies in Kansas have been immune

to the drought. While small streams and farm ponds have been completely dry, some federal reservoirs have experienced all-time low water levels. Although periods of drought have many negative impacts on fisheries in the short term, there is a silver lining when the rains do return.

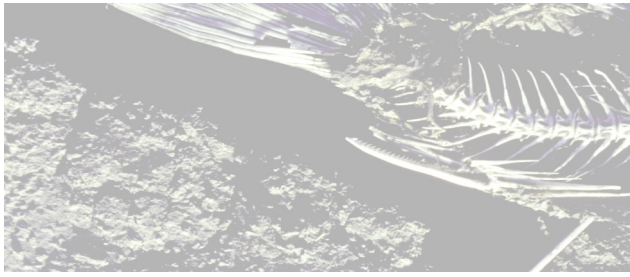
Some of the most impacted reservoirs include those in southcentral

Kansas, such as Cheney and Kanopolis. Cheney’s water level bottomed out at approximately 8 feet low in February, while Kanopolis reached levels 6 feet below conservation pool, which equates to about ten feet below normal summer operating pool. At the lowest levels, all boat ramps were rendered useless at Kanopolis, while only one at Cheney remained marginally useful for



Marc Murrell photo

Kanopolis is kept 4 feet above conservation pool during the summer to make boating access easier. When level dropped to 6 feet below conservation pool last year, it was 10 feet below the level boaters are accustomed to and ramps were unusable.



launching small vessels. Spring rains have raised reservoir levels slightly (nearly a foot and a half to two feet at each reservoir); however, launching boats at Kanopolis remains difficult. Conditions are improving though, as KDWP staff is dredging the area around the Langley Point boat ramp on the south side. At Cheney, still only one ramp is useable. Other infrastructure at both reservoirs such as marina slips and fishing jetties are dry, while boat docks are still resting on dry lake bed.

Biologically, low water in reservoirs can have both negative and positive effects on fish. Of course, decreased water volumes can support less aquatic life, prolonged periods of stagnation can lead to harmful algae blooms, and decreased deep-water habitat can stress cool water fish like walleye and striped bass. Looking on the bright side; however, when a reservoir's volume decreases dramatically like Cheney did last summer, the existing fish community crowds and can result in some pretty spectacular fishing. Many anglers commented that catches of walleyes, wipers, and white bass at Cheney in the summer and fall of 2012 were far above average compared to "normal" water years. Additionally, crappie fishing at Cheney was as good as it has been in years this spring, as much of the traditional spawning substrate is dry. Remaining spawning substrate around the marina concentrated spawning fish into small areas, allowing easy access for anglers.

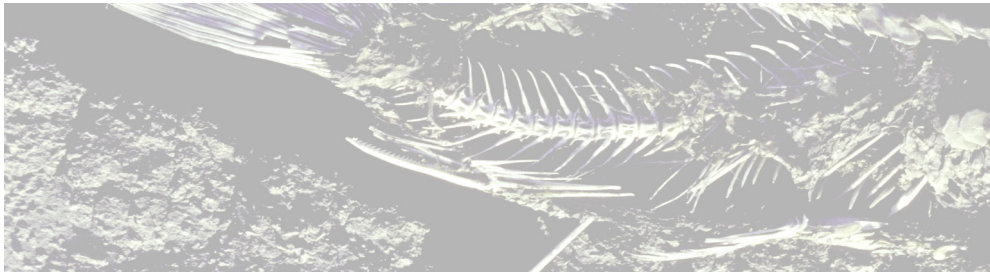
Not only does concentrating game fish make things easier on anglers, forage fish populations that were spawned in a full lake are also concentrated, enabling predators to more efficiently feed. In light of high water temperatures and shrinking reservoirs in southcentral Kansas, most predators (especially walleye and saugeye) were in exceptional body condition going into last winter. In theory, this excellent condition should have increased their likelihood of over-winter survival and enhanced reproductive fitness this spring. Ideally, nuisance white perch at Cheney were also concentrated, allowing healthy predator populations to decrease their numbers.



Low water levels at Kanopolis Reservoir made boat ramps unusable, but park staff took advantage of the low water to remove sand and silt off the end of the jetty. After dredging and a little rain, the ramp was useable by Memorial Day weekend.



Cheney Reservoir, west of Wichita, dropped to 8 feet below conservation pool last year. At that level, all but one boat ramp were far away from the water.



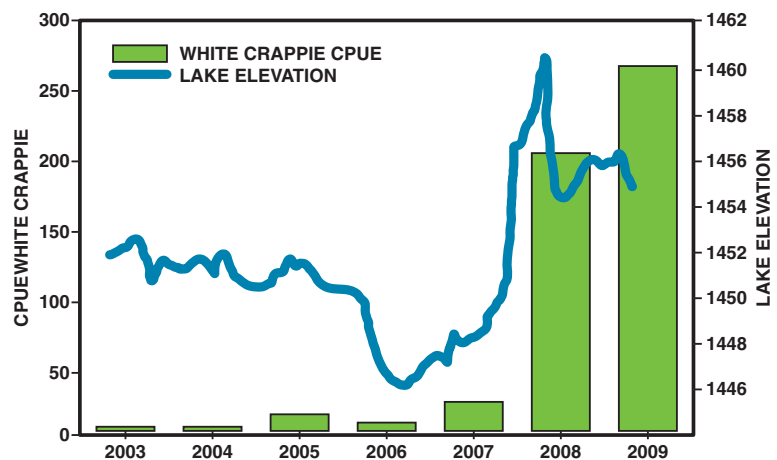
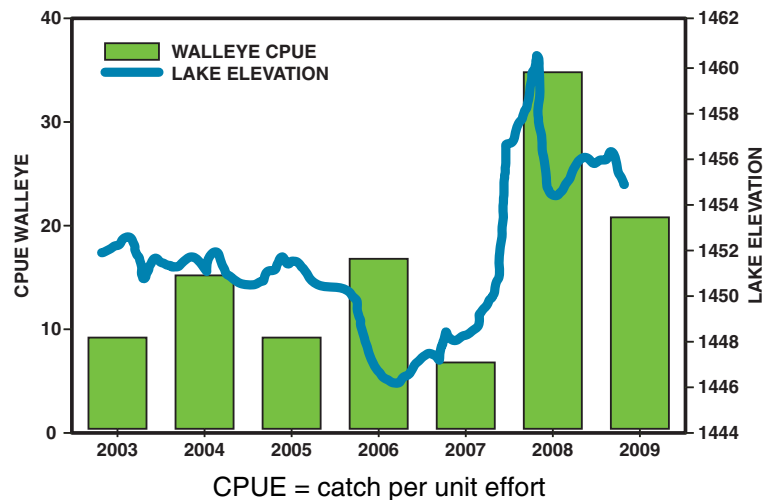
Zebra mussel populations were also negatively affected by the drought in 2011 and 2012. Decreasing water levels left large amounts of preferred zebra mussel habitat, such as rock jetties, high and dry. As indicated by KDWPT's monthly veliger samples, zebra mussel densities at Cheney are at an all time low since their discovery in 2003. Undoubtedly though, the zebra mussels will make a comeback after refilling as their preferred hard substrates will be free of algae and in excellent condition for colonization.

Many fisheries and wildlife biologists draft water management plans for reservoirs that attempt to finely manipulate water levels to benefit fish and wildlife. In a generalized plan, water level is held slightly below conservation pool throughout mid-winter into early spring. This drawdown decreases algal coverage on important spawning substrates utilized by popular sportfish such as walleye and crappie. In spring, water levels are ideally increased to inundate clean spawning substrate and nursery habitat including terrestrial vegetation.

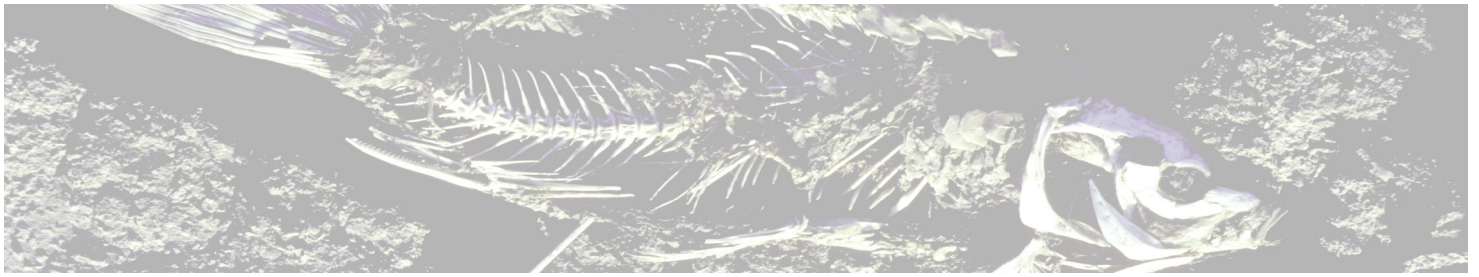
Although water level management plans work well in theory, Mother Nature very rarely cooperates in Kansas. However, this idea of controlled environmental instability gives us the potential for positive outcomes after periods of drought. For instance, Glen Elder Reservoir has been one of the most productive crappie lakes in the country in the past couple years. Glen Elder was several feet low in the early to mid-2000s; however, when water returned and inundated terrestrial vegetation on the exposed lakebed, this provided habitat for production of juvenile fish

and abundant forage. The resulting boom in sportfish production was unprecedented. Excellent year classes of crappie, walleye, and white bass were produced and are still contributing to an excellent fishery at Glen Elder.

Similar sportfish "booms" have been experienced in wet years at reservoirs that traditionally experience low water levels. For instance,



Crappie populations usually boom when reservoirs refill after being low for a period. Spawning success and young-of-the-year survival is high when terrestrial vegetation is flooded. Glen Elder's fantastic crappie fishing is the result of low water levels experienced in the early 2000s, then subsequent refilling.




the water levels at Cedar Bluff Reservoir increased approximately 5 feet in late winter and early spring, 2010. Newly inundated vegetation and clean substrates contributed to excellent year classes of largemouth bass and crappie. Similar increases in black bass and walleye production have occurred at Wilson Reservoir following refilling in the late 2000s. With any luck, the reservoirs of southcentral Kansas will experience similar fates when rains return.

Although small impoundments in Kansas have completely dried up or decreased in water volume substantially, dewatering can provide several unique opportunities to manage fisheries. A dry pond can offer an opportunity to “start over” a fishery with a clean slate, especially if the impoundment is located in an area of the watershed where it will not be recolonized by natural water flow from upstream. Eliminating rough fish or unbalanced sportfish populations can revitalize aquatic systems. Additionally, many pond owners took advantage of dry conditions to deepen existing ponds by removing years of accumulated sediment.

Along similar lines, fisheries biologists took advantage of dry conditions and renovated Kingman State Fishing Lake in the fall of 2012. The fish community at Kingman State Fishing Lake had deteriorated due to expanding populations of white perch, gizzard shad, and common carp. The drought provided ideal conditions for renovation as many sloughs, wetlands, and streams that could harbor undesirable fish were dry. These circumstances greatly increased the chance of completely

eliminating any nuisance species. Additionally, as the lake was already more than 2 feet low at the time, draining time was minimal, allowing staff to quickly execute the renovation.

Lower water levels also give KDWPT staff excellent opportunities to more easily add fish habitat around popular fishing locations. Dry lake bed surrounding jetties allow biologists easy access for placement of cedar trees and other habitat structures. When the water returns, these inundated structures will provide excellent habitat for sportfish, areas for macroinvertebrate colonization, and will also provide excellent areas for anglers to target fish.

Until substantial rains return to Kansas, keep in mind that the drought might not be all bad in regard to the aquatic systems in Kansas. Take a look around while fishing and take note of certain habitat characteristics that you might not have noticed while the water is at normal levels. Old road beds, islands, house foundations, and tree rows are excellent habitat for fish and are now easy to spot. Mark a point on your GPS and hit them up once water levels increase. You might just have found a new favorite fishing spot. Enjoy your time on the lakes and reservoirs that are now a bit smaller; hopefully, it's only for the time being. 



Low water levels also allow biologists to repair dikes and jetties and build and place fish-attracting brushpiles exactly where they want.



Tiny and often unnoticed lichens aren't hard to find once you start looking. And the story behind the organisms is fascinating.

"Fungi that have discovered agriculture." Trevor Goward, lichenologist, referring to lichens

THE UNLIKELY LURE OF LICHENS

text and photos by Ron Kaufman
Information Services Division director, Topeka

Each to his own, I guess. When I'm exploring outdoors, I find myself drawn to little things that many folks might overlook. When conversations with my friends turn to sharing outdoor adventures, my interest in seldom noticed and unappreciated worlds often bring discussions to a "You could hear the crickets chirping" halt. Such is the case with my interest in lichens. Nature abounds with all manner of things unnoticed, but among the most elegant and noteworthy are lichens – one of the most humble, intriguing and colorful life forms on the planet.

Lichens are all around us, whether we live in the country or the city. Look closely at rocks, old wooden fence posts, trees, soil, logs and even old grave markers. If you see scaly, leafy or sometimes shrubby patches of color – green, gray, yellow, orange, brown or even black – you're probably gazing at lichens. Lichens aren't

plants, algae, mosses or molds, even though they may resemble them all.

Lichens can be difficult to identify because many species look alike and can be distinguished only through microscopic or chemical studies. Some estimates put the number of lichen species at about 28,000 worldwide, but that number is likely to change as more studies are done. Kansas can boast more than 560 species known so far.

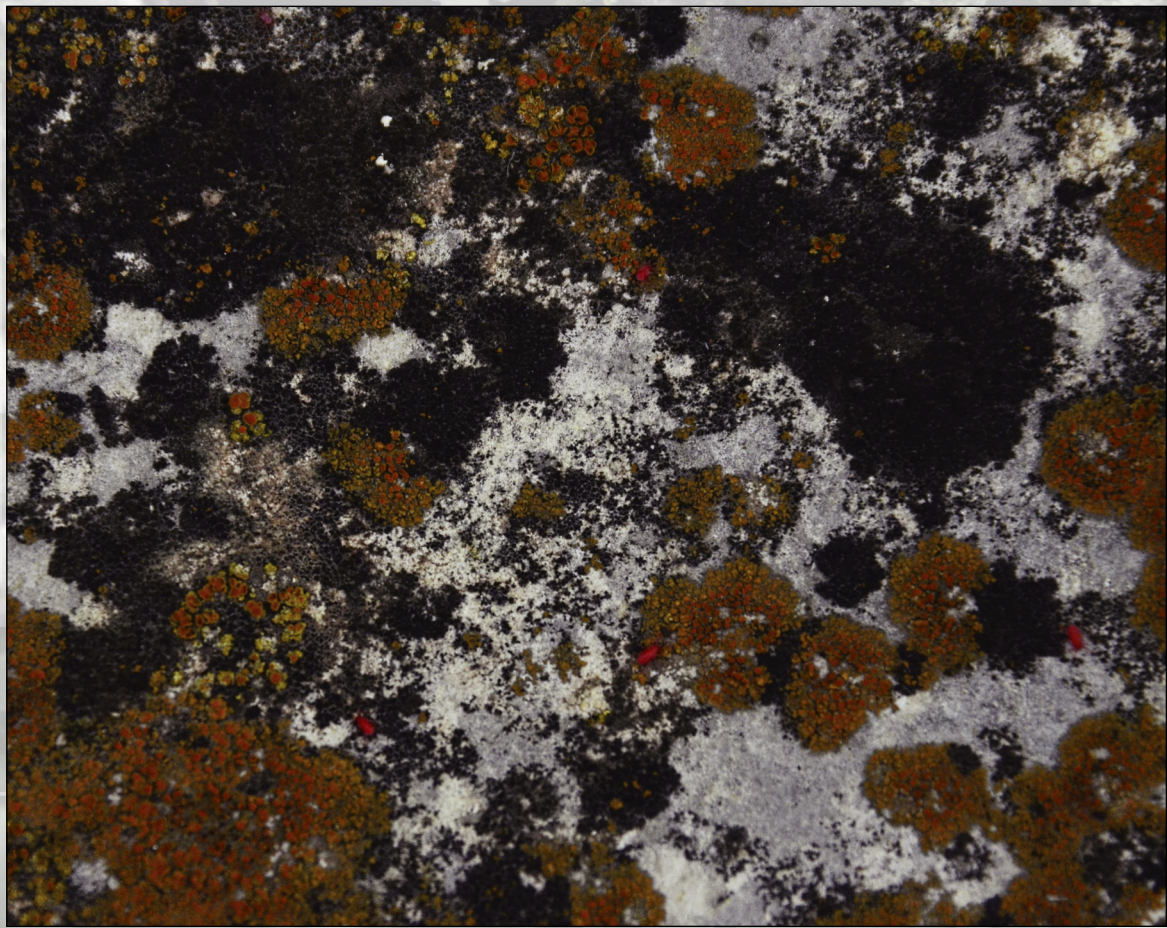
An Unlikely Liaison

These unpretentious life forms look like one single organism, but they're actually two or more species living together in a tight bond that benefits each. It's an unlikely liaison, as the partners hail from different kingdoms on the tree of life – a species of fungus paired with a species of alga (or sometimes algae-like bacteria called cyanobacteria). This type of relationship is called "sym-

biosis," a broad term describing a close partnership between two or more individuals of different species. Scientists call each symbiotic partner a "symbiont."

The fungus is called a "mycobiont." It is the dominant partner, which is why lichens are sometimes called "lichenized fungi" and are grouped with the fungi. The fungus helps control humidity within the lichen and provides shade and protection for the benefit of the algae or cyanobacteria cells embedded in its tightly interwoven filaments. Fungi are familiar to many people as mushrooms (also called "toadstools"), yeasts and molds. They aren't plants and can't produce their own energy. The "toadstool" mushrooms commonly seen in our lawns and on the woodland floor are the visible, cap-like fruiting bodies of certain fungi, the main filaments of which (called "hyphae") are usually out of sight, entangled in soil, wood or tree

These unpretentious life forms look like one single organism, but they're actually two or more species living together in a tight bond that benefits each. Lichens are self-contained wonders needing little more than sunlight, air and minerals to survive, and can flourish in extreme conditions. The lichen, pictured at right, were found on rocks in Clark County's Big Basin, picture below.



bark. The vast majority of lichens, however, consist of a different type of fungi that produces cup-shaped fruiting bodies – called “cup fungi.” When you look closely at lichen, you’ll sometimes see these tiny cup-like structures growing from the fungal partner. The most well-known cup fungus in Kansas is the prized and edible morel mushroom.

The algae and cyanobacteria partners are called “photobionts” and they contain a greenish pigment called chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is the key ingredient in photosynthesis, a process which enables them to convert sunlight, carbon dioxide and water into simple sugars that the fungi also use. Algae are usually associated with moist environments. Most people have seen algae in aquariums, backyard pools, and standing or gently flowing water. Although cyanobacteria are not algae, they’re often called “blue-green algae,” and certain species (but not those found in lichens) are the rapidly-reproducing organisms that sometimes cause harmful algae blooms in Kansas lakes.

Farmer Fungi

Lichens embody a cozy arrangement, but the partners don’t necessarily have a friendly rapport. In fact, the mycobiont appears to entrap and use the photobiont. Lichenologist Trevor Goward even described lichens as “fungi that have discovered agriculture.”

As Caleb Morse, Collection Manager for the R.L. McGregor Herbarium at the University of Kansas and an avid lichenologist notes, “Despite the description of lichens being in a symbiotic relationship, it’s not all wine and roses for the photobionts. The fungal partners extract carbohydrates from the photobionts with tiny attachments that tap into their cells. Further, the algae are limited to producing offspring by parts of the algae splitting from a single parent – whereas many algae can reproduce in a more complex manner.” On the other hand, the mycobionts and photobionts are usually loyal partners. Typically, a given species of lichenized fungus harbors a single species of photobiont and neither one can survive without the other.

Lichens take one of several forms, which are largely determined by the



The range of colors displayed by lichens is quite striking. When dry, many lichens appear to be gray or grayish-green, although if they're heavily pigmented, yellow or orange. When damp, the brighter green or blue-green colors tend to "pop out." Other pigments can impart a myriad of colors to some lichens including yellow, orange, red, brown and black.

mycobiont. The forms most easily seen in Kansas are crustose and foliose. Crustose lichens look like colorful crusts that tightly hug – and sometimes grow into – the surface beneath them. You won't be able to easily see or lift an edge to look underneath. Foliose lichens look like small gray or green lettuce leaves lying on the substrate. The edges can be slightly raised and wavy, and sometimes these lichens use root-like structures called "rhizines" on their lower surface to anchor them to (but not extract nutrients from) the substrate. An intermediate form between the two is called squamulose, or scale-like. Shrub-like or "fruticose" lichens are less common in Kansas and resemble tiny trees or shrubs growing outward from the substrate. Model railroaders wanting trees for their layouts can buy dried fruticose lichens that resemble tiny trees and shrubs.

Lichen Locations

Lichens are self-contained wonders which need little more than sunlight, air and minerals to survive. The minerals largely come from rainwater, although in some cases a mycobiont may draw minerals from the substrate to which it is attached. Lichens can withstand very extreme conditions, and



they're able to live in locations and on substrates shunned by other organisms. Home is where they can get a secure footing and fulfill their simple needs. They are particularly good at attaching themselves to a variety of rough or porous surfaces. In Kansas, they are found in diverse habitats

ranging from the sheltered woodlands of eastern Kansas to the windswept landscape of the arid western counties. They're adept at setting up shop on rocks, bare ground, tree bark, fence posts, logs, stone markers, and even other lichen. They are so successful that they cover about 8



Lichens are used by many animals for food, shelter and nesting materials. They may be eaten by deer, turkeys and small mammals. And ruby-throated hummingbirds, some hawks, mergansers, peewees, vireos, and warblers use lichens when building nests.

percent of the earth's land surface between (and including) the polar regions. About the only place they're not found is in the ocean, although some species can live just below the tide line where they are regularly subjected to salt water and wave action.

A Likeable Lot

Lichens are ecologically beneficial in many ways. They contribute to soil formation because wind-blown debris can collect around them, and they can slowly degrade rocks by physical or chemical actions. The small amounts of soil they create can help seedlings gain a foothold. Conversely, many people don't like lichens on buildings, walls and markers, because some can

slowly deteriorate the surfaces. A stroll through an older cemetery will usually reveal an abundance of lichens on some of the markers. Other people appreciate the weathered patina that lichens impart to such old structures. As an example, my wife doesn't like lichens living on our redwood deck, whereas I'm happy with the arrangement. (I'm also lazy.)

Lichens also are used by many animals for food, shelter and nesting materials. They may be eaten by deer, turkeys and small mammals. Reindeer moss – a fruticose-form lichen that looks like short, shrubby ground cover – is an important food source for caribou on the northern tundra. Lichens are a common nesting

material for ruby-throated hummingbirds, and other birds use lichens as well, such as some hawks, mergansers, peewees, vireos, and warblers. Some amphibians and insects perch on lichens, which serve as background for their camouflage, making the critters hard to spot.

Lichen Color Palette

The range of colors displayed by lichens is quite striking. When dry, many lichens appear to be gray or grayish-green, although if they're heavily pigmented, yellow or orange. When damp, the brighter green or blue-green colors tend to "pop out." Other pigments can impart a myriad of

Lichen Resources Online

<http://www.lichen.com/>

U.S. Forest Service, Celebrating Wildflowers: Lichens
<http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/interesting/lichens/index.shtml>

Loveable Lichens:
<http://www.earthlife.net/lichens/intro.html>

The British Lichen Society
<http://www.thebls.org.uk/>

A stroll through an older cemetery will usually reveal an abundance of lichens on some of the older markers. However, lichens can slowly deteriorate the surfaces of buildings, walls and marks.

colors to some lichens including yellow, orange, red, brown and black.

Lichen pigments have been used by creative people for thousands of years. Lichens can be used to make a colorful variety of dyes for wool and fibers (including a range of purples), and instructions can be found online for making lichen dyes. Some are still harvested for commercial dyeing purposes. Litmus paper is made using dyes extracted from certain species of lichen, and it is used by chemists (even students in science classes) to determine whether a solution is acidic or basic.

So there you have it. Lichens are all around us, they're complicated, colorful, resourceful, hardy, and important. I'll leave it to you to judge whether they will enliven your next friendly chit-chat or bring stimulating conversation to a quick standstill. And, let me know if you need help establishing a lichen colony on your deck. It's really easy. ♡



The author is indebted to Caleb Morse, Collection Manager, R.L. McGregor Herbarium, University of Kansas, for his assistance with this article.



Dutch Delicious

text and photos by Andra Stafanoni
Pittsburg

A little black pot is easily the little black dress of cooking. With a little instruction and practice, you can produce mouth-watering meals with this little black pot and some charcoal.



The Dutch oven is durable enough to serve hundreds at scouting functions, living history encampments and mountain men rendezvous, dependable enough for a campground cookout, and versatile enough for elegant fare at a backyard gathering with friends. And one can be used in any season, in any kind of weather.

"You can cook in one anywhere, in any condition. That's the beauty of the Dutch oven," said Luann Waters, a longtime outdoor educator from the Midwest.

When Waters learned to use a Dutch oven, she became so enamored with it that she integrated the vessel into her career and now crisscrosses the nation teaching the art to countless others at outdoor events and workshops.

"My hottest workshop was about 99 degrees in August in Oklahoma, and the coldest was about 20 degrees in March in Wisconsin," she said. "It doesn't matter — the food still turns out great every time."

Waters maintains that anything you can cook in your kitchen, you can cook in a Dutch oven. And doing so can often help a non-outdoor enthusiast turn the corner.

"Use the Dutch oven as a tool to ease people into the outdoors if they're not already outdoors people. If they find out it's fun and they can be successful at it, maybe they'll be inspired to go to a campground and try it on their own," Waters said.

She recommends assigning guests or fellow campers various tasks, like chopping, measuring or lighting the coals.

"You can get your guests involved and make it something to experience together," she said.

Linda VonWedell of Columbus, learned to cook with a Dutch oven years ago at a Women in the Outdoors workshop at Rock Springs. Now she, her husband Jim, and daughter, Tracy, use Dutch ovens at home and when camping.

Creamy Chicken Enchiladas



Directions:

Mix cooked chicken with spinach and green onion; set aside. In a separate bowl, make sauce by combining sour cream, yogurt, flour, cumin and salt. Stir in milk and green chilies. Divide sauce in half; pour half into chicken mix as a filling. Divide filling among tortillas and roll them up. Place in foil-lined Dutch oven in layers. Spoon remaining sauce over enchiladas. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and let stand for five minutes. Garnish and serve. (Makes 6 or more servings)

2 pounds of boneless chicken breasts,
pre-cooked and diced
(or substitute canned chicken)

1 package (10 ounce) frozen chopped spinach

½ cup green onions, thinly sliced

2 cups sour cream

1 cup plain yogurt

2 T. flour

½ tsp. cumin

salt, to taste

½ cup milk
(can substitute dry milk when camping)

2 cans (4 oz. each) diced green chilies, drained

12 to 24 flour tortillas (7-inch size)

8 oz. cheddar cheese, shredded

diced fresh tomatoes and sliced black olives
for garnish, if desired

“We use them when we’re grilling because they’re great for making side dishes like baked beans or a dessert like peach cobbler,” said VonWedell, who often puts brisket in a Dutch oven and cooks it on her rock driveway to avoid heating up the kitchen.

When it’s chore time at their rural Kansas home, the family puts ham and beans or chili in a Dutch oven and lets the food cook all morning. Then they enjoy a hearty lunch outdoors.

Ellen Benitz, now a retired Midwest regional event coordinator for Women in the Outdoors, longtime Dutch oven instructor and author of two Dutch oven cookbooks, said she appreciates the adaptability the Dutch oven to just about any recipe.

“I have ladies at our workshops make everything from pizza to a rich crab bisque to decadent brownies,” she said. “Once they see that a Dutch oven doesn’t always just mean a

batch of chili, they’re hooked.”

How a Dutch oven works:

Dutch ovens are made of cast iron and have a flat bottom and three short legs. They come in various sizes, indicated by inches in diameter, ranging from 8 inches to 24 inches. The most versatile is the 12-inch oven, perfect for stews and desserts. It offers plenty of space between the food and lid. A 12-inch oven is the same volume as a 9-inch by 13-inch cake pan, so cake mixes or desserts will come out the same thickness.

A Dutch oven can be heated to fairly precise temperatures of 350 degrees, 375 degrees, 425 degrees, etc., just like a kitchen stove, based on the number of charcoal briquettes used underneath it and on the lid. For example, five to eight briquettes underneath and 12 to 14 on top is the equivalent of about 350 degrees.



Old Settler's Beans

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. bacon, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 (15-oz.) cans kidney beans
- 2 (15-oz.) cans pork and beans
- 2 (15-oz.) cans butter beans
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup barbecue sauce
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 2 T. mustard
- 4 T. molasses

Directions:

Preheat Dutch oven to 350 degrees. Brown ground beef, bacon, and onion together; drain grease. Add beans and mix well. In small bowl, mix sugars, barbecue sauce, molasses, and spices together. Add to Dutch oven and mix well. Cook for one hour. (Makes 6 or more servings)

Tips:

- If you plan to use your Dutch oven at a campground away from home, do as much food prep in advance before leaving home as you can. Chop an onion and place it in a zippered plastic bag. Pre-cook chicken breasts for use in "Creamy Chicken Enchiladas." Measure out spices. Label the bags and simply pull them from your ice chest when ready for use.

- Line the bottom and sides with parchment paper before pouring in cobblers, cakes or other messy foods to make cleanup easy.

- When cooking in the backyard or at a campsite, use a fire pan for safety to avoid singeing grass or leaving marks on concrete, and for ease in disposing of ash. Shallow galvanized metal pans are available from feed stores for about \$5 and hold coals nicely. In a pinch, a double-layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil will do.

- A lid lifter is well worth the investment. It is the most efficient and easiest way to avoid burning yourself or spilling coals or ash in the food.

Because Dutch ovens are stackable, you don't have to spread additional charcoal briquettes on the ground.

Like any cookware made of cast iron, a Dutch oven works best when "seasoned" after several uses. In fact, Dutch ovens should never be cleaned with detergents, or they will need to be "re-seasoned." To season, rub with melted shortening or vegetable or canola oil, place the Dutch oven upside down in a kitchen oven heated to 450 degrees for about an hour, then turn off the oven. When the Dutch oven is cool, clean it with paper towels.

To clean after use, scrape out any leftover food, fill the oven with hot water and let it sit for a few minutes to loosen remaining food particles. Scrub with a natural fiber brush or plastic scrub brush, rinse with hot water, dry thoroughly, and store with the lid off in a dry, cool place.

Apply a light coat of oil with a paper towel before each use. ♡



Directions:

Line the oven with foil*. Pour the fruit pie filling into the oven. "Dump" the cake mix over the fruit and spread evenly. Gently pour can of soda over the mix. Stir (You do not have to totally mix). Bake 45 minutes or until lightly brown and firm.

*Keep foil below the top edge of the oven, otherwise, the lid won't fit tightly, causing it to lose heat.



Dutch Oven Cobbler (also called Dump Cake)

2 cans fruit pie filling

1 box yellow cake mix

1 can of soda (Slice, 7-up, etc.)

Andra Bryan Stefanoni is an award-winning journalist and avid outdoor enthusiast who lives in southeast Kansas with her husband and two sons. Their favorite summertime activities involve tents, hammocks and charcoal. Andra can be reached at andra.stefanoni@gmail.com



KEEPING LOVEWELL'S FISH HOME

text and photos by Scott Waters
district fisheries biologist, Beloit

Built for agricultural irrigation, Lovewell Reservoir in Jewell County experiences large releases during the growing season, and along with the water, large numbers of fish left the lake. This year, a unique fish barrier has been installed and biologists are confident it will keep Lovewell's sport fish home where they belong.

Each year, thousands of anglers and campers travel to Lovewell Reservoir in northcentral Kansas to enjoy Lovewell State Park and wet a line. Anglers' primary targets include walleye, white bass, wipers, channel catfish, and crappie. While most returning anglers know what to expect each year, many have wondered just how good the fishing could be if a new, unique fisheries management technique was introduced.

Lovewell is a 3,000-acre reservoir constructed in 1957 following completion of the dam impounding White Rock Creek. The primary purpose of the reservoir is to provide an annual water supply for irrigators in the Republican River Valley. As a means of providing this water supply, a diversion canal was constructed from the Republican River, approximately 9 miles east of the reservoir. Inflows from the Republican annually maintain water levels near or above conservation pool prior to the irrigation season and are able to recharge the reservoir following irrigation releases. Thus, even in years of drought, visitors are guaranteed an overflowing reservoir between April and June, the peak camping

and fishing seasons. However, throughout the summer, the water level will decline as water is released for irrigation and will be between 6 and 10 feet below conservation by September.

These irrigation releases occur via the Courtland Canal, which flows out of Lovewell Reservoir on the south end of the dam. The canal provides a water source for 28,000 acres of irrigated land and empties into the Republican River after approximately 13 miles. The irrigation season lasts from late May to late August, with the peak occurring between July 15 and August 15. Depending on weather patterns and demand, total releases range from 25,000-65,000 acre-feet, and the 10-year average is 45,600 acre-feet. In addition to large amounts of water released during the summer, high numbers of fish are known to exit the reservoir as well.

For years, anglers and KDWPT employees noticed considerable numbers of gizzard shad, walleye, crappie, drum, and catfish in the small pools left in the Courtland Canal after releases ceased. This was likely just a small percentage of the fish that were lost because many more probably migrated down-

stream into the Republican River. After much planning, KDWPT personnel decided it was necessary to determine exactly how many fish were leaving the reservoir and what species were most affected.

In 2005, nets were installed in the Courtland Canal immediately below the reservoir. These nets collected all fish leaving the reservoir via irrigation releases and allowed us to estimate the numbers, sizes, and species of fish becoming entrained (flushed). Nets were run during approximately one-third of the season, and catch data was extrapolated to determine the total number of fish lost. Sample periods bracketed peak fish movement times of sunrise and sunset, thus nets were run from either 3 a.m.-3 p.m. or 3 p.m.-3 a.m. Nets were checked every one to three hours, depending on catch rates and fish were removed. All fish were identified by species, counted, and measured unless very large numbers were collected and a subsample was taken. This collection process was repeated in 2006 and 2007, providing three years of data to determine the extent of fish entrainment from Lovewell. Numbers varied greatly between years, but species composition and size were amazingly consistent.

In 2005, 22 samples were taken during the irrigation season, and 665,000 fish representing 16 different species were collected. Approximately 99 percent of these fish were age-0 (that year's spawn) with approximately 100 adults also collected. We estimated that 5.5 million fish were entrained during the irrigation season with gizzard shad the dominant species by number at 4.1 million. In addition, 840,000 small drum, 500,000 crappie, 22,000 white bass, 5,600 walleye, and 3,200 channel catfish were

flushed through the canal gates. The timing of fish loss became predictable with the low light periods (sunrise and sunset) showing somewhat consistent peaks of fish loss. Also, periods of rapidly increasing release rates would nearly always trigger high fish entrainment. Declining and low release rates yielded fewer fish.

In 2006, catch rates were down significantly. That year, 33 sampling efforts collected 643,000 fish, representing 21 species. Young fish again dominated the catch

with gizzard shad accounting for 93.1 percent followed by drum (4.9 percent), crappie (1.1 percent), and channel catfish (0.2 percent). Greater numbers of adult fish were collected in 2006 with crappie (58.3 percent) accounting for over half of the adult catch. An estimated 2.9 million fish were entrained in 2006.

The 2007 season resulted in the highest amount of water released with approximately 35,000 acre-feet flushed through the gate, compared with only 25,000 acre-feet in 2005 and 27,000 acre-feet in



Lovewell Reservoir is popular with walleye anglers as shown in this photo of Kendall Strutt with a nice fish. Anglers and biologists hope the barrier will let Lovewell live up to its potential for producing outstanding fishing opportunities.

2006. This higher release rate combined with higher numbers of young fish in the reservoir led to the highest catch rates during the three-year sample. Thirty-five total samples taken in 2007 collected an estimated 2.8 million fish, representing 22 species. Perhaps the most interesting catch in 2007 were three rainbow trout collected in July that must have entered Lovewell via the inlet from a trout stocking location in Nebraska.

An estimated 6.1 million fish were entrained in 2007 with gizzard shad again accounting for the majority of the catch at 98 percent. In addition, an estimated 7,400 walleye, 37,000 crappie, and 1,100 channel catfish were entrained. Surprisingly, only 118 white bass were lost in 2007.

While these losses appeared to be significant, we needed to determine what impact these entrainment rates were having on the Lovewell Reservoir fish populations. To do that, it was necessary to determine the percentage of age-0 fish lost to irrigation releases. Cove rotenone data from Lovewell Reservoir during 1978-1981 provided the best available information for estimating the number of age-0 fish in the reservoir. Cove rotenone is an old sampling technique for fisheries managers that involves blocking off a cove with a large net and applying poison to the water in the cove while protecting the rest of the reservoir. These fish in the cove were then collected and counted so a total estimate of fish numbers was made for the reservoir. To estimate the percentage of age-0 fish entrained during 2005, 2006, and 2007 the following method was employed: 1) multiply calculated density by surface acreage during the cove rotenone sample to obtain the total number of each species present in the reservoir, 2) multiply this number



Lovewell Reservoir's water level typical drops 6-10 feet each summer as water is released for irrigation. Water from the Republican River keeps the lake full the rest of the year.

by the proportion that were age-0 (this year's hatch), and 3) divide the number entrained during 2006 by the sum of the estimated total and the number entrained.

Using this method, we determined that approximately 45 percent to 55 percent of the age-0 gizzard shad, 0 percent to 1 percent of the white bass, and 50 percent to 60 percent of the crappie were entrained during the 2007 irrigation season. In 2006, approximately 1 percent to 5 percent of the age-0 gizzard shad, 1 percent to 5 percent of the white bass, and 50 percent to 60 percent of the crappie were entrained. In 2005, gizzard shad ranged from 1 percent to 67 percent of the year class that would have been entrained; white bass varied 6 percent to 90 percent, and white crappie were between 44 percent and 95 percent. This high percentage of year classes lost to irrigation releases was significant and needed to be addressed.

We researched a wide variety of solutions to address the fish loss

from Lovewell Reservoir each summer. One option was to restock all of the fish lost each year based on what was collected in the canal. Using standard fish replacement costs, these mitigated fish stockings would have cost between \$370,000 and \$910,000 annually. Besides the extreme cost of purchasing these fish, the feasibility of obtaining these numbers of young walleye, crappie, channel catfish, and gizzard shad would be very difficult. Thus, this option was eliminated.

During the study, we observed predictable patterns of fish loss with the highest fish entrainment rates occurring during rapid increases of water release and during the low light periods of sunrise and sunset. We discussed with the irrigation district the possibility of altering how the water was released, recommending gradual releases to occur during midday or at night. Due to water delivery schedules, this wasn't a feasible option because water must be delivered as needed.

We then decided that some sort of barrier was needed to keep the fish in the reservoir during irrigation releases. The first option we looked at was a rotating screen which would be mounted directly in front of the outlet gates and protect all fish from leaving. This rotating screen would be in constant motion and allow for the debris to be continuously cleaned off the system. Due to the high cost of the screen and the associated costs of constructing two large concrete wing walls this wasn't an option either.

Behavioral fish barriers have been used for several decades with mixed results depending on the system they are installed in, the fish species present, water flow and release rates, and the type of barrier. Behavioral barriers create some sort of annoyance or irritation as the fish enter the system that forces them to leave the affected area, in this case the outlet area near the gates. These barriers include electrical fields that the fish detect and turn away from, acoustic sounds that annoy the fish, strobe lights, and air bubbles that rise from the bottom of the reservoir. Each of these has the ability to prevent or reduce fish entrainment in the right system for the right species, but without extensive testing at Lovewell Reservoir and with each species of concern, we could not be certain that any of them would be effective at greatly reducing entrainment.

The final option was to find a barrier that consisted of a large mesh net that could be stretched across the outlet area and physically keep fish away from the outlet gates. We researched different options and decided to work with a Maine-based company called Mackworth Aquatic Environmental Systems. We first visited several of their projects in the Boston, Mass. area to verify



The middle section of the barrier consists of a coated nylon mesh with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch holes. This mesh size was determined to be optimal for keeping the majority of the small fish in the reservoir while not allowing for fish to become impinged in the mesh.

that this system would solve our needs of reducing fish entrainment at Lovewell. Their engineering and development team proved they were more than capable of addressing the specific concerns we had at Lovewell with regards to release rates and timing, bottom topography, substrate type, and fish species assemblage. Following approval from the Bureau of Reclamation, we purchased a Fish Exclusion Barrier in 2012.

The mesh barrier extends from the shoreline north of the jetty, westward past the tip of the jetty and across to the south shoreline. Originally, we had planned on simply placing the barrier across the narrow portion of the outlet channel, thus reducing the length and cutting costs. This final placement was necessary due to its additional depth outside of the channel area where routine dredging projects occur while the added length and depth yields

reduced through-barrier velocities, thus providing for better fish escapement conditions.

The middle section of the barrier consists of a coated nylon mesh with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch holes. This mesh size was determined to be optimal for keeping the majority of the small fish in the reservoir while not allowing for fish to become impinged in the mesh. The waxy coating on the mesh will also reduce the amount of periphyton and algal growth that could potentially clog the system. A quick release mechanism was added between the center sections and can open the net if clogging and water restriction do occur. The barrier was designed to operate at a wide variety of water levels—a must in this greatly fluctuating system. It will be effective between water levels of 12 feet below conservation to 7 feet above pool. Should the water level continue to rise above this level during high water periods,

the top of the barrier will allow for overtopping or the bottom may lift slightly to adjust for the higher water levels. At any level, water releases should not be reduced, and we expect normal irrigation releases throughout the summer.

The barrier is held above the surface of the water by polystyrene flotation enclosed in an impervious hood. It extends to the reservoir bottom where the foot is held in place by chain ballast in a ballast pocket and by the forces acting on the barrier from water flow toward the dam. In addition, the barrier is held in position by large anchors sitting at each end on the shoreline with additional concrete anchors on the bottom of the reservoir to hold it in place. Three of these anchors weigh 14,000 pounds while the other four anchors weigh 4,800 pounds. The anchors were poured on land and moved into position with a large section of a floating breakwater structure.

Each April, the barrier will be assembled on shore and floated into position with the use of two boats. The bottom ballast pocket will then be lowered to the reservoir bottom and attached to the anchors using the mooring lines which have been tied to buoy markers. The ends will be attached to shore and all of the lines will be adjusted for proper depth control. The barrier will remain in the water during the irrigation season and pulled out each September after water releases have ceased.

Annually removing the barrier is necessary as ice could damage and move the barrier if it was left through the winter. Also, the barrier may need to be cleaned each year and holes can be mended, if necessary.

We felt it was necessary to protect the barrier as much as possible from boats, floating logs, trash, and other debris so we purchased a large protective log boom which is placed just upstream of the barrier and floats on the surface. It will also be removed each fall and redeployed each spring.

We believe the barrier should work very well and reduce or eliminate fish entrainment from Lovewell Reservoir each year as long as it is left alone and not tampered with. We are asking anglers (boat and shoreline) to leave the barrier alone and not try to fish next to it. There will be a reduction in the fishing suc-

cess at the outlet area with the barrier in place, but anglers are still allowed to fish just upstream of it as long as they do not walk on it, snag lures in it or interfere with it in any way.

This is a project that has been discussed for several decades and focused on for nearly 10 years. This is the first barrier of its kind to be used in Kansas, and we hope it will serve as a model for other reservoirs to follow if everything works as planned. The irrigation district will realize great benefits from it because of fewer fish clogging their irrigation pumps and canals. Anglers, of course, will realize the most benefit with an improved fishery consisting of more forage fish and sportfish. This is just another unique example of sportsmen's dollars at work. ♡



The barrier is held above the surface of the water by polystyrene flotation enclosed in an impervious hood. It extends to the reservoir bottom where the foot is held in place by chain ballast in a ballast pocket and by the forces acting on the barrier from water flow toward the dam.

REELING KIDS IN

text and photos by Nadia Marji
associate editor, Pratt

Glen Elder recently hosted 144 kids during its ninth annual youth fishing tournament, most of whom had never fished before. More than 200 fish were landed, including some Master Angler Award sized.

On the morning of Saturday, June 1, district fisheries biologist Scott Waters received a phone call confirming his worst fear yet again – another boater was cancelling for the day’s event. Waters’ volunteer boat count was now down to 33 and with nearly 150 kids, a handful of park staff, and numerous volunteers eager to hit the water, Waters wondered if he could get everyone on the water. The last thing in the world he wanted to do was to tell a kid that he didn’t have enough room for them on a boat.

As if a boat shortage wasn’t enough of a challenge for event staff, the weather didn’t appear any less forgiving. Twenty to 30 mph winds and unseasonably-cold temperatures weren’t what Waters had in mind for the 9th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament. However, the weather as irrelevant to the 144 kids who were ready and optimistic as ever that they would



A happy young angler proudly holds up a crappie, her fourth fish of the day. The largest crappie caught that day measured 15 inches.

catch fish.

After a few deep breaths and several more phone calls, Waters pulled it off – Waconda Lake was spotted with boats from shore to shore and kids clad in bright orange life jackets were riding in them.

At 8:30 a.m. the last boat launched. In that boat, Public Lands Division regional supervisor Mike Nyhoff greeted each child by name as he took their equipment in one hand and helped them onto the vessel with the other. Two sisters, a father and daughter pair, and a

young boy were among Nyhoff’s passengers. Once on board, each youngster handed Nyhoff their pole and waited patiently as he placed a worm on their hook.

“Alright kids, drop your lines and lets catch some fish!” Nyhoff exclaimed. “Now remember, if the fish don’t bite, just pert your lips like this and sing ‘here fishy, fishy, fishy.’” The girls aboard chuckled, unsure if Nyhoff’s statement was a joke or trade secret.

Complete silence fell aboard the boat as each youth gazed intently on the tip of their fishing rod. Five

minutes went by and nothing.

"Just keep those lines in the water," Nyhoff said. "You can't catch a fish out of water."

Suddenly one of the girls aboard let out a gasp. "You get one?" Nyhoff asked.

"I don't know, but something moved my..." and just as quickly as she had gasped, the tip of her pole had began the dipping dance that every angler lives for. "Reel, reel, reel" Nyhoff exclaimed.

The first fish of the day had caused so much excitement that the other youngsters pulled their lines from the water. "What did you get?" they all said.

"Looks like you've got yourself a drum," Nyhoff explained to the girl. As he freed the fish from the lure, he asked the girl "Toss or keep?" Grinning widely, she quickly replied, "Keep."

In the eyes of the other participants, the race was on and they immediately dropped their lines back in the water. A few more casts and drops of the anchor later, and the bites seemed to flow in like clockwork. It didn't matter whether it was a walleye, smallmouth bass, or large tree limb on the end of the line (which did happen), the youngsters grew more and more excited with each cast. But even though the fish were biting, it was time to hit the shore.

Chattering her teeth under the hood of a sweatshirt, one girl asked, "Can we cast just one more time?" Clearly worn out, but smiling, Nyhoff replied "sure thing." Nobody caught a fish that last cast, but with the smell of grilled burgers drifting across the water, none really seemed to mind. It was time for hot food, greetings from mom and dad, and the best part of it all — prizes.

Following the morning fishing tournament, participants and family members gathered for a special lunch of elk and bison burgers and hotdogs. Kids were scarfing down

their food in hopes that the sooner they finished their meal, the sooner they could get to the prize table.

After huddling together just long enough for a group photo, the kids raced back to the lunch tables to wait for further instructions.

"You guys ready to find out the results of the 9th annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament?" Waters asked excitedly. The reply came roaring back as the kids went crazy with excitement. "Alright, let's get this thing started then!" Waters replied.

Waters shared that out of the 144 youth participants, more than half of the kids found a fish at the end of their line – 215 fish to be precise. When the day's count was over, participants had caught a total of 107 drum, 33 white bass, 26

walleye, 21 crappie, 11 bluegill, six channel catfish, five smallmouth bass, four flathead catfish, one wiper, one carp and seven turtles (a new tournament record).

Waters then went on to announce the winner of each category. Categories included the most fish caught, the biggest fish caught in each species, the smallest fish caught, and a spur-of-the-moment addition of most turtles caught. In fact, a few lucky anglers were even able to apply for a Master Angler Award due to the size of their catch that day.

As the names of the winners were read off, one by one, lucky youngsters jogged up to the prize table, grinning from ear to ear as they picked out a prize of their choice. With 80 sponsors and over



After several lost fish, this young angler set his hook just quick enough to land this smallmouth bass. The largest smallmouth caught was 14 inches.



A youth angler holds her second catch of the day, a drum. The largest drum caught at the tournament measured in at 19 inches

\$2,500 in prizes, the prize table was filled with gifts that even a seasoned angler would have been proud to take home. In fact, because of the generosity of multiple sponsors, every participant was able to go home with a new fishing pole, t-shirt, and goodie bag filled with tackle equipment, gift certificates, as well as a few other gifts, regardless of their success on the water.

For some young anglers, the Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament may be remembered as just a “cool” event where they went home with a lot of “stuff,” but for others, their day out on the water and new fishing pole will be the beginning of a life-long hobby that perhaps, one day, they will share with someone else.

The event wouldn’t have happened without the 33 boat drivers who donated their time and equipment. Others critical to the event included the Waconda Lake Association, volunteers, KDWPT staff, and especially Wayne Miner who donated 140 dozen night crawlers.

The next tournament will be held June 7, 2014. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, contact Waters at (785) 545-3345.



A father and son share a moment following lunch and prizes. Thanks to many generous donors, each youth angler went home with a new pole.

GLEN ELDER STATE PARK

Glen Elder State Park graces the shore of arguably one of the best fishing lakes in Kansas. From swimming, boating, hiking, volleyball, softball, and bike riding, and of course fishing there’s sure to be an activity at Glen Elder that the whole family will enjoy.


Camping facilities include the Kanza Campground, Cheyenne Campground, and the Kaw Campground, in addition to multiple primitive campsites. With 120 electrical hook-up campground sites, 300 primitive campground sites, and three rental cabins, there’s plenty of room for everyone.

Don’t feel like staying on land? Waconda Lake is one of Kansas’ largest lakes, filled with historical heritage as vast as the lake itself.

The lake covers what once was an active mineral spring called Waconda Springs. The spring’s pool was said to be 50 feet in diameter, 15 feet deep and rich in a variety of minerals.

Waconda Springs was a sacred, ceremonial gathering place for many of the Native American tribes that lived in the central plains. Kanza tribe members reportedly called the springs, “Wakonda,” meaning “Great Spirit.”

Today, families can enjoy both the rich history and flourishing aquatic wildlife that inhabit the lake. The Glen Elder full service marina also provides visitors with convenient one-stop shopping just feet from shore.

To plan your trip or to learn more about the youth fishing tournament, contact the Glen Elder State Park office at (785) 545-3345. 

KANSAS LEGISLATIVE SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS

SEN. RALPH OSTMEYER

by Mike Miller
editor, Pratt

In the May-June issue of Kansas Wildlife & Parks magazine, we featured the Kansas Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and one of its founders, Speaker of the House, Rep. Ray Merrick, Stillwell. This article is the second in a series about legislators who participate in the caucus and understand Kansas' outdoor heritage. Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, Grinnell, is one of the leaders of the Kansas Sportsmen's Caucus. A farmer/rancher from Grinnell, Ostmeyer spoke with us from his home in June.

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer's involvement with the Kansas Sportsmen's Caucus (KSC) began as a result of his friendship with then Rep. Gary Hayzlett and Rep. Ray Merrick.

"You know, Gary and Ray got this thing started, and Larry Powell was also involved. My interest in it stems from my family, I have seven children, and my boys grew up hunting. I always felt that if my boys wanted to go hunting, they

should have a place to go, and for that reason, I've never posted my land. I have kids here in town who hunt on my land." Ostmeyer said when asked about the importance of our hunting heritage. "All I've asked is that they ask permission first. I've always wanted to get young kids involved."

Ostmeyer was talking about the importance of hunters, especially youngsters, having a place to hunt.

"When my kids were in high

school, if they asked me to use the pickup to go hunting, I always knew who they were going with and where they were. I knew they enjoyed hunting and couldn't get in a lot of trouble," Ostmeyer said. "However, I also told them that if I found out they had shot a hole in a stop sign or shot an insulator off, they would lose their privileges."

Ostmeyer spoke of the value of hunter education courses teaching hunter responsibility and ethics. He attended the course when his oldest son took it in the 1970s.

"I've always felt that hunting has kept a lot of kids out of trouble.



Now my boys are teaching their children to hunt. It's just something we do in the family," he added.

Ostmeyer talked about how important the hunting traditions are to his family. Each year relatives from around Kansas travel to the family farm for opening day of pheasant season, and now they also hunt turkeys and deer.

Born in the tiny town of Angelus, just north of Grinnell, Ostmeyer went to Grinnell High School and talks fondly of hunting with buddies before and after school.

"Back in those days, we always kept our shotgun in our car," he chuckled. "Of course you don't see that today."

Ostmeyer emphasized his desire to get people involved in the outdoors, and he wants to see more

women in the Senate get involved with the caucus. He said that Sen. McGinn, Sedgwick, Sen. Schmidt, Topkea and Sen. Fransisco, Lawrence, have shown interest in the clay target shooting event, and he would love to get them to the fishing event in the spring.

To epitomize his feelings about the outdoors, Ostmeyer described a goose hunt with his son and grandson several years ago.

"My son said 'Dad, the weather is going to be perfect; no wind and a little skiff of snow.' He had been out there the day before and set up his decoys. I took my oldest son's boy along," Ostmeyer remembered fondly. "I got so darn cold laying on the ground in the snow waiting for those geese, but I had so much fun. We must have got 10 or 11 geese – there were five of use-hunting. There wasn't a breath of

wind, but it was only 10 degrees.

"They were calling these birds in to the decoys and it was the dangedest thing I'd ever seen," he chuckled. "I'd never done this before. After one last group came in, they asked me how long I wanted to hunt. I told them it was up to them, but at about 3 in the afternoon when they said they'd had it, I told them I had been ready to quit at 11. I was cold! I had the heater wide open the whole way home.

"They laughed at me, but I said 'I bet this doesn't happen again.' I figured my insulated clothes and boots would keep me warm, but they didn't, laying on that cold ground. We had a great time, though. It was such a bonding experience."

Ostmeyer relishes time spent outdoors, and it's always focused on family. And as far as passing on the outdoor heritage, he has his hands full. He has 18 grandchildren.

"My boys are more avid than I – they really hunt and fish, and they get their kids involved. In fact, when one of my granddaughters was born, her first outfit was from Cabelas," he chuckled.

When asked about issues facing today's sportsmen, Ostmeyer expressed concern about protecting our Second Amendment rights.

"I think the Kansas legislature had a good year doing that this year. I thought last year was good, but I think this year was even better," He added.

The hunting heritage is important to many Kansans, and hunters are important to the economies of many western Kansas communities. It's comforting to know that we have legislators who were cut from that cloth and understand the issues we face. ♡



Sen. Ostmeyer's connection to hunting and the outdoors is firmly attached to his family. This picture shows his grandson Chandler with his first deer. Chandler is one of 18!

2013 Sportsmen's Calendar

TURKEY

2013 SPRING TURKEY:

- Youth/ Archery/ Persons with disabilities:
April 1-9, 2013
- Firearm: April 10-May 31, 2013

2013 FALL TURKEY:

- Oct. 1-Dec. 3 AND Dec. 16-Jan. 31, 2014

BIG GAME

DEER:

- Youth/ Persons with Disabilities: Sept. 7-15, 2013
- Archery: Sept. 16 - Dec. 31, 2013
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 16-Sept. 29, 2013
- Pre-Rut Whitetail Antlerless Oct. 12-13, 2013
- Regular Firearm: Dec. 4 Dec. 15, 2013
- Firearm Extended Whitetail Antlerless
Season: Jan.1-Jan. 12, 2014
- Archery Extended Whitetail Antlerless
Season (DMU 19 only): Jan. 13-Jan. 31, 2013
- Special Extended Firearms Whitetail
Antlerless Season: Jan. 13-Jan. 19, 2014
(Open for unit 7, 8 and 15 only.)

ELK (residents only)

Outside Fort Riley: (proposed)

- Muzzleloader: Sept. 1-30, 2013
- Archery: Sept. 16-Dec. 31, 2013
- Firearm: Dec. 4-15, 2013 and
Jan.1-March 15, 2014

On Fort Riley: (proposed)

- Muzzleloader and archery: Sept. 1-30, 2013
- Firearm Season for Holders of Any-Elk
Permits: Oct. 1 Dec. 31, 2013
Antlerless Only
- Firearm First Segment: Oct. 1-31, 2013
- Firearm Second Segment: Nov. 1-30, 2013
- Firearm Third Segment: Dec. 1-31, 2013

ANTELOPE

- Firearm: Oct. 4-7, 2013
- Archery: Sept. 21-29 & Oct. 12-31, 2013
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 30-Oct. 7, 2013

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS (to be set)

DUCK

CANADA GEESE (including brant)

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

LIGHT GEESE

YOUTH WATERFOWL

EARLY TEAL

DOVE (Mourning, white-winged, Eurasian collared, and ringed turtle doves)

- Season: Sept.1-Oct. 31 and Nov. 2-10, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 15
- Possession limit: 30

EXOTIC DOVE

(Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves only)

- Season: Nov. 20, 2013-Feb. 28, 2014
- Daily bag limit: No Limit
- Possession limit: No Limit

RAIL (Sora and Virginia)

- Season: Sept. 1-Nov. 9, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 25
- Possession limit: 25

SNIPE

- Season: Sept. 1-Dec. 16, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 8
- Possession limit: 16

WOODCOCK

- Season: Oct. 12-Nov. 25, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

SANDHILL CRANE

- Season: Nov. 6, 2013-Jan. 2, 2014
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

2013 Sportsmen's Calendar

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

PRAIRIE CHICKEN

- Early Season (East and Northwest units):
Sept. 15-Oct. 15
- Regular Season (East and Northwest units):
Nov. 16, 2013-Jan. 31, 2014
- Regular Season (Southwest Unit):
Nov. 16-Dec. 31, 2013
- Daily Bag Limit: 2 (East and Northwest Units) single species or in combination
1 (Southwest Unit)
- Possession Limit: Twice daily bag

PHEASANTS

- Season: Nov. 9, 2013-Jan. 31, 2014
- Youth Season: Nov. 2-3, 2013
- Daily Bag Limit: 4 cocks in regular season,
2 cocks in youth season

QUAIL

- Season: Nov. 9, 2013-Jan. 31, 2014
- Youth Season: Nov. 2-3, 2013
- Daily Bag Limit: 8 in regular season,
4 in youth season

SMALL GAME ANIMALS

SQUIRREL

- Season: June 1, 2012-Feb. 28, 2013
- Daily Bag Limit: 5
- Possession Limit: 20

RABBITS (cottontail & jackrabbit)

- Season: All year
- Daily Bag Limit: 10
- Possession Limit: 30

CROW

- Season: Nov. 10, 2013-March 10, 2014
- Daily Bag Limit: No Limit
- Possession Limit: No Limit

FURBEARERS

TRAPPING

- Season: Nov. 13, 2013-Feb. 15, 2014
Badger, bobcat, mink, muskrat, opossum,
raccoon, swift fox, red fox, gray fox,
striped skunk, weasel.

RUNNING

- Season: March 1-Nov. 1, 2013

BEAVER TRAPPING

- Season (statewide):
Nov. 13, 2013-March 31, 2014

OTTER TRAPPING

- Season: Nov. 13-March 31, 2014
- Season Bag Limit: 2

FISHING SEASONS

BULLFROG

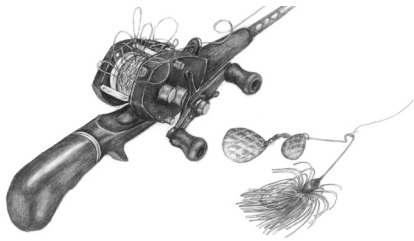
- Season: July 1-Oct. 31, 2013
- Daily creel limit: 8
- Possession limit: 24

FLOATLINE FISHING

- Season: July 15-Sept. 15, 2013
- Area open: Hillsdale, Council Grove, Tuttle Creek, Kanopolis, John Redmond, Toronto, Wilson and Pomona reservoirs.

HANDFISHING (flathead catfish only)

- Season: June 15-August 31, 2013
- Area open: Arkansas River, Kansas River and federal reservoirs 150 yards from beyond the dam upstream to the end of the federal property.
- Daily creel limit: 5
- Special permit required



Backlash

by Mike Miller

Getting Kids Outside

As I've worked with our Pass It On program over the past 12 years, I've developed a theory about how our efforts impact young people. Of course our ultimate goal with these programs is to recruit hunters and anglers. We have always stated that success of these programs would be a reverse in the decline of hunters and anglers in Kansas. Reaching that goal would mean that our wildlife and fisheries programs would continue to be funded through license sales and that our outdoor heritage would be passed down to future generations.

In its early stages, that was basically what the Pass It On program was – a youth recruitment tool. Naturally, there were nay-sayers who didn't believe a one-day event could effectively recruit hunters. There were also those who believed that events involving just 10 or 20 participants were "drops in the bucket" and not worth our time. And there were those who said we were preaching to the choir because many of the youth who come to these events already hunt and fish.

Well first of all, I've decided that the program and the ideals it promotes are much more valuable than just a recruiting tool or license marketing campaign. I believe we can have a lasting impact on youngsters with a one-day event. It's vital to provide subsequent events such as special hunts, mentored hunts and advanced hunter education, but I believe providing a youngster with an outdoor experience, be it shooting, hunting, or fishing, can start that youngster on a road to a lifetime in the outdoors. I know that some youngsters will leave that event and never hunt or fish again. It may be that they don't have the opportunity or it may be that they just didn't feel the same spark as others.

But those youth who feel the spark will be motivated to get more experience. Their parents will see how much it means to them, and they will go out of their way to find other opportunities for them to learn about the outdoors. I've seen a mother drive 60 miles one way so her son could participate in four evening wingshooting clinics. She knew how much he enjoyed it and was willing to do whatever it took. I visited with a father from Colorado about a youth spring hunt conducted in Kansas who signed his son up and made the 7-hour drive so his son could hunt turkeys for one day. Both had a great experience and vowed to return next year.

Critics have also said that it takes a hunter to make a hunter. They'll say it doesn't matter how many events we



conduct, if a youngster doesn't have a mentor to teach them about the outdoors, it's unlikely they'll follow that path. This point I'll agree with. All hunters and anglers can look back to having a mentor – probably several mentors – who taught them about various outdoor skills. However, I don't think we should underestimate a child's ability to seek out and find a mentor when they discover how much they enjoy hunting and fishing.

I know many avid hunters who grew up in a family without hunters. Somewhere along the way, they had an outdoor experience that lit a spark. Driven by the desire to learn more, they sought a family friend, relative or childhood friend to help them. The drive to hunt and fish can be a powerful force in a youngster, and just a little fanning can turn that spark into a burning flame.

We can't expect any of our events to recruit a large percentage of the participating youth into hunting. The experience affects each youngster in a unique way. Some will be bound and determined to hunt as often as possible. Others may not hunt or shoot again until later in life, but they will rely on that first experience. I know fathers who were dedicated to getting all of their children as many outdoor experiences as possible. Inevitably, one child will be an avid hunter or angler and another, with the same opportunities, will choose something else. Hunting and fishing isn't for everyone. But every event, no matter how large or small, is valid. The impact is cumulative.

The Pass It On program is about starting a spark in as many youngsters as we can. That spark can be fanned in many ways. But we have to get them outside for that first experience. Never underestimate the impact you can have teaching a youngster about the outdoors. 