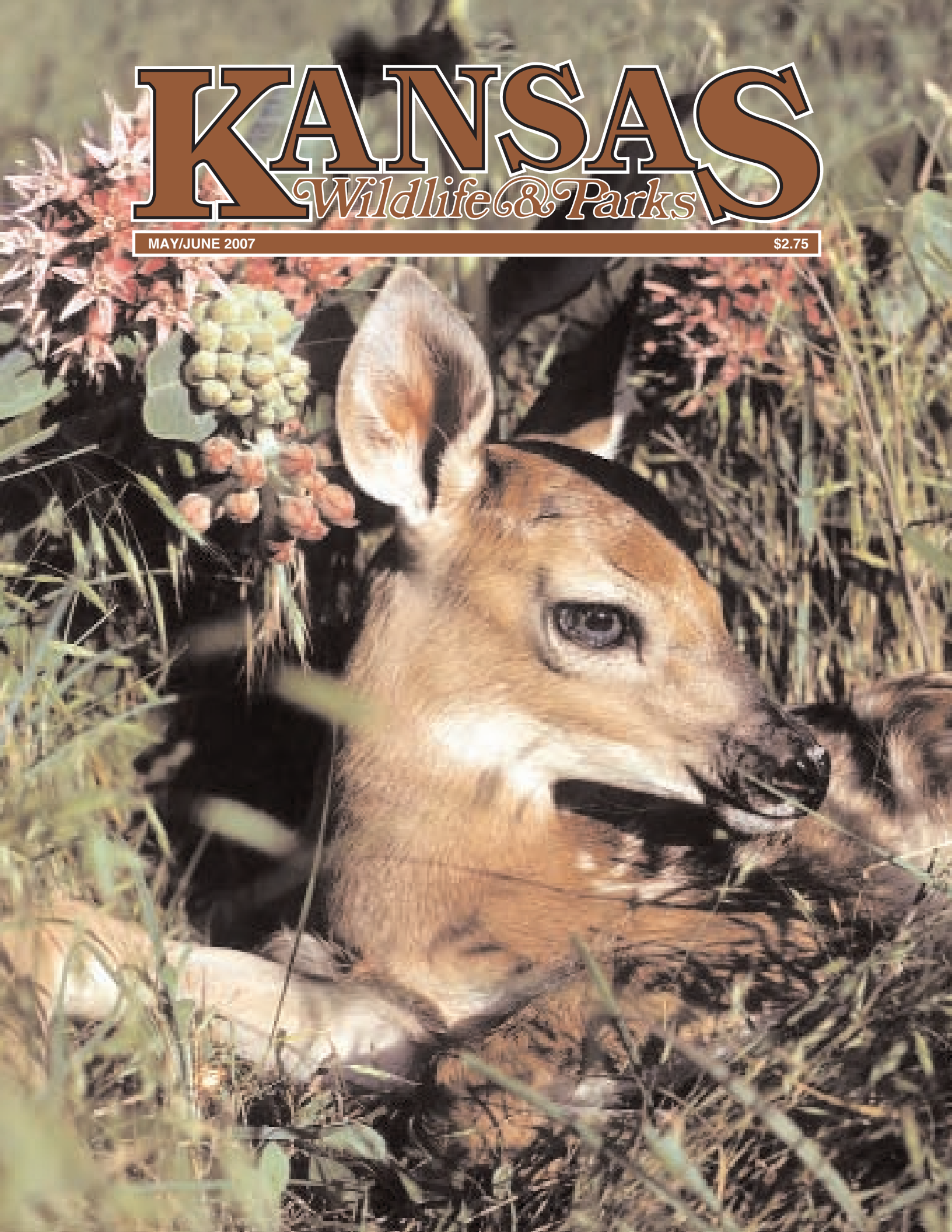


KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

MAY/JUNE 2007

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On Point

by Mike Hayden

Deer Changes Coming



It's been a long road, but we're closer to making some major changes in our deer permitting program. In April, Governor Sebelius signed a bill that put KDWP's Deer Task Force recommendations into state law.

It all started in 2005, when the House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee asked the department for recommendations to condense and simplify deer-related statutes. The department assembled a Deer Task Force of 10 employees from around the state who had a wealth of experience with natural resource management issues.

The group quickly discovered that this would not be a simple process. Kansas deer regulations have been changing and evolving for 40 years. Imagine our deer program as a house. In 1965, the year of our first modern deer season, we started with a simple one-room house. We had a limited resource and limited opportunities. The resource and opportunities grew slowly for the first 20 years. However, in the last 20, both have grown dramatically. In the last 10 years, a growing number of stakeholders have lobbied for changes, both through the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission and through the Legislature. We've added lots of rooms to our little house, and it has become a complicated labyrinth that is difficult to understand.

The Task Force discussed a complete renovation of the program – conserving the resource, looking at the aspects they knew constituents didn't like, incorporating improvements constituents had been asking for, and finding ways to simplify and improve the program.

However, such changes would impact a wide variety of resource stakeholders. So, in January of 2006, the Task Force unveiled draft recommendations, which included some dramatic changes, and asked the Legislature for a year to solicit public input before presenting final recommendations. The Legislature concurred.

To begin gathering public input, the department established a blog site, ran the Task Force recommendations in news stories, and solicited telephone and email comments. The recommendations were discussed at all commission meetings, where additional public comment was received. Last August, the department hosted 14 public meetings throughout the state to talk about changes and hear concerns from hunters and landowners. More than 600 attended those meetings. The recommendations were discussed with various sportsmen's groups including the Kansas Bowhunters Association, Kansas Sport Hunting Association, and the Kansas Outfitters Association.

Agricultural organizations such as the Kansas Farm Bureau and the Kansas Livestock Association were also consulted.

In addition, surveys were conducted. To understand opinions about deer and deer hunting, hunters were mailed surveys in July, and landowners and nonhunting Kansans were surveyed last fall.

Then the Task Force went back to the drawing board and began incorporating changes in the recommendations as a result of the public input and survey results. Members knew they couldn't completely satisfy all constituents, but they tried to provide something for everyone. In January of 2007, the department presented the commission with final recommendations. It then went to the Legislature.

The department proposed repealing many of the existing statutes and establishing the recommendations through the regulatory process. However, as with changing any emotionally, politically and socially charged issue, compromises were necessary. The passage of HB2437 will allow the department to incorporate the Task Force recommendations, but they are written in statute rather than regulation. The commission will now tailor regulations to accommodate the state laws, which will be in place for the 2008 deer seasons.

You can read the full set of final recommendations at the department's website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us — just type "Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Deer Task Force Recommendations" (include quotation marks) in the search box. Highlights of the changes include allowing residents to purchase a whitetail either sex permit that allows them to hunt statewide during any season with legal equipment. Resident bowhunters will be able to purchase a statewide either species, either sex archery permit. The 19 Deer Management Units will still be in place for antlerless harvest and nonresident hunters. A formula will be used to allocate nonresident whitetail permits based on demand, as well as biological factors, and transferable nonresident permits will be eliminated. It will also be easier for a landowner's family to qualify for hunt-own-land permits, regardless of where they live. These changes and more will be implemented as a result of the Task Force's work, the input of the public, and the well-being of the resource. We're confident the new permitting structure will be simpler and more accommodating to resident hunters and will provide a more responsive way to manage the resource and its opportunities.

KANSAS

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Front Cover: This fawn obeys its instinct to remain motionless and hidden. Photograph by Mike Blair, 50mm lens, f/11 @ 1/125th sec. **Back Cover:** There are 48 cabins in state parks, and they are popular with park users. Blair photographed this cabin at Cross Timbers State Park with a 24mm lens, f/5.6 @ 1/125th sec.



Editorial Creed: To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612.

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A Fawn's



Life

text and photos by Mike Blair
photographer/associate editor, Pratt

The sight of deer thrill us, and their natural history fascinates us. Follow a fawn through the year and learn how it survives to continue the cycle of renewal.

Few wild animals are as widely recognized and loved as baby deer. Dressed in Nature's own camouflage and fresh as morning dew, these spotted youngsters appeal to everyone from children to veteran hunters. Rarely seen in infancy, fawns survive at first by hiding in heavy cover. Only as they grow do we normally get to see them.

Gestation is 200-205 days and with an average conception date of November 15 in Kansas, most births occur in early June. However, some does breed in October, yielding May fawns, and others, particularly yearling does, may breed as late as January, having fawns in late summer. In extreme cases, late-born fawns carry their spotted coats into winter, a rare phenomenon that results in shaggy, phantom markings meant for another season.

Pregnant does become restless several weeks before delivery. At this time, they drive away last year's fawns. These progeny, now 11 months old and fully capable of independent living, must leave the doe to allow her time for a new fawn. Often, yearling doe offspring are preparing to have their own fawn. Young bucks are driven from the home range, forced to relocate. These young bucks usually wander miles away to establish new territories. This helps prevent inbreeding in local deer populations.

The doe selects a quiet area in which to give birth although delivery can be random, taking place wherever and whenever the moment arrives. For instance, does may drop their fawns on an open roadway instead of heavy, adjacent cover. But fawns are quickly moved to safety.

Number of young depends on the age of the doe and condition of the range. Usually, first-time mothers have one fawn. Mature does typically have twins, but triplets or quadruplets are possible. Multiple births increase risks of fawn detection and predation and also complicate the doe's feeding schedule.

A fawn can stand within minutes of birth. It nurses for a short time, and then the doe leads it to hiding cover. In the case of several fawns, the doe leads each to hiding places about 100 yards apart. This minimizes the risk of predators finding the young. The doe then moves a short distance away to keep watch.





Adult Kansas does usually have twins, and triplets aren't uncommon. Yearling does will usually have a single fawn. For the first few weeks in the fawns' lives, the doe will hide them separately, staying away except to feed them. Coupled with the fawns' instincts to remain still, spots and coloration provide amazing camouflage. Lack of scent also protects them from predators.

For the first week, the doe visits each fawn about three or four times daily to nurse and groom it. As the fawn nurses, the doe licks it to stimulate bodily functions. The doe then eats the fawn's droppings to eliminate this scent source. After feeding, the fawn walks away about 30 yards and chooses its own hiding place. The doe does not follow, being careful to keep her scent well away from the hidden fawn.

A newborn fawn has two pri-

mary defenses: lack of scent and the instinct and ability to hide. Its reddish coat, dappled with white spots, blends well in a variety of cover. Cryptic coloration sometimes makes little difference, since the newborn fawn often chooses deep grass that hides it completely. When approached, the tiny animal lies still in a near-torpid state. With little scent to tip off nearby predators, the motionless fawn usually escapes detection unless a predator literally

stumbles onto it.

Fawns are thought to be scent-free for only the first few days of life. Last summer, I had an experience that seemed to indicate this might be longer. I lost track of a nursing fawn that appeared to be three weeks old. It was backlit in an open field, and I tried to drive my car through a distant gate to provide a better light angle for photographs. About five minutes elapsed before I got into position, and by then the doe was leaving and the fawn was hidden.

Since I didn't have a good mark on the young deer's whereabouts, I turned out my dog, and we started walking circles. After 15 minutes, I was ready to give up when I saw the young animal lying in a patch of milkweeds. Its head was up, typical of an older fawn that might try to run. The dog passed downwind just 15 feet from the fawn, missing it in spite of a moderate breeze. I cast her back through the area with hand signals, and even commanded her to sit directly in the fawn's scent



While it looks weak and fragile, a fawn can outrun a man when three days old. However, the young fawn's primary defense is still its camouflage and instinct to hide.

stream. Though quite close, the Labrador never detected the young deer. Normally, my dog reacts to the odor of adult deer up to 300 yards away. Finally, the fawn lost its nerve and sprinted 100 yards before hiding again in deep weeds.

Newborn fawns quickly gain strength and speed. Three days after birth, a fawn can outrun a man. When three weeks old, it can outrun a coyote for short distances. During its first few weeks of life, the fawn is inactive for up to 90 percent of each day. As it grows, though, the doe visits more often each day, and the fawn begins to follow its mother on short forays. It also engages in bouts of play after each nursing. Fawns play by bumping their mother, bucking, and then racing in circles. The older the fawn, the larger these circles, finally widening to a radius of 100 yards or more. Sometimes, the doe will join this play, racing about as the fawn runs and kicks up its heels. Play is important in helping a fawn learn to flee and evade predators.



Sibling fawns may not meet until they are several weeks old but after that, they will seldom be apart for their first six months. While still nursing, these fawns are learning which plants are good to eat as they travel and forage with the doe.

Sibling fawns are usually several weeks old before meeting for the first time. This probably happens when one fawn simply follows its mother to the other. Siblings quickly bond and become inseparable. They play, travel, and eat together through most of the first year, even when the doe is not present. The young fawns are seldom more than a few feet apart.

Though reliant on doe's milk

for several months, fawns begin nibbling succulent plant tips when only two weeks old. They learn from the doe which foods are best. The four-chambered ruminant stomach is fully developed by eight weeks of age, and at that time the fawn takes much of its nourishment through browsing. Nursing continues sporadically for up to six months, though the doe seldom allows it past three.

A fawn is most vulnerable when several weeks old. With growing strength and coordination, it may become impatient and try to seek its mother. This is especially true for a young buck. It wanders about, calling loudly with a whine or nasal bleat. These sounds, easily recognized by predators, jeopardize the naive fawn. If caught by a coyote or bobcat, the distressed fawn bawls loudly for help. Any grown deer, including bucks, may race to intervene. Even so, fawn predation is a major factor in fawn mortality.

In certain habitats, ticks can



Like most youngsters, fawns are playful and rowdy at times. This fawn decided that if a cool drink was good, a cool dip would be better.

pose a serious problem. Baby deer lie quietly for long periods, allowing ticks to swarm their eyes and ears. So heavy are tick attacks in some cases that fawns are blinded and eventually die. This is particularly troublesome in southeastern Kansas where heavy woods are interspersed with brushy prairie, and tick densities can be high.

By six to eight weeks of age, fawns follow their mothers to social feeding sites such as alfalfa fields. Here, they may mingle with other young deer. Pecking order is determined by the doe's rank in the herd. The dominant doe and her young move freely and occupy the choice habitat. Fawns are now active through 30 percent of the day, but they still spend much time apart from the doe.

At three months, the fawns finally stay full-time with the doe. At this age, they have the size and endurance to keep up in all



While most fawns are born in early June and will lose their spotted coats by September, fawns of yearling does are born later and may retain spots into winter.

situations. Natural curiosity begins to give way to caution, and even youngsters can spot potential danger. Play is less evident now and involves more contact with other young deer, such as mock fighting.

Young bucks develop "buttons" where their future antlers will be. These small velvet knobs

are not conspicuous. However, button bucks show intense curiosity about older male deer and their behavior. As late summer arrives, buck fawns make short sorties to investigate older bucks. In rare cases, a button buck may break fully with its family group to join an older male.

I saw this last fall while bowhunting a mature buck I saw frequently. On several occasions in October, I watched the buck crossing a long expanse of prairie between feeding and bedding grounds. A buck fawn was always with it, 50 yards behind. The old buck seemed to pay little attention, but the young deer always followed. Other groups of mature bucks came and went, but this pair kept to themselves. The big buck traveled only in faint twilight, and I figured the youngster's education with the old deer would make him wise and hard to hunt throughout life.

By September, most fawns are approaching four months old. Spots now fade and disappear. At this time, the young deer resemble adults in every way but



This doe's fawns have matured nicely by early fall. Weaning usually takes place in September although the fawns will stay with the doe for nearly a year.

size. They gain weight rapidly so that by December, they weigh 50-75 pounds, depending on gender. Early-born buck fawns may be nearly as large as their mothers by winter.

For this reason, first-year bucks may be mistaken for does during late archery and firearms deer seasons. They may be legally tagged with "antlerless only" deer permits if no polished antler is visible.

Normal, healthy fawns can easily survive their first Kansas winter, even in the absence of their mothers. Older, orphaned fawns remain in loose association with the general herd, simply becoming independent a few months earlier than normal. They may form bonds with other

young deer in similar condition.

When five months old, fawns begin to establish their own rank with other fawns in the social order. They begin grooming other fawns and adults, an important mechanism in establishing social position. They may fight with other fawns at feeding areas, and rarely, they may even challenge their own mothers for food. This fighting takes the form of standing upright on hind legs and flailing with front hooves. The sharp hooves can deliver painful, cutting blows.

The fawns generally continue to stay with the does throughout the first year of life though it's not uncommon for brief separations to occur. As the new fawning season approaches, they

disperse to begin their own adult lives. However, does and young often regroup by fall, forming matriarchal societies.

In the meantime, fawns are born, a welcome renewal of one of Kansas' most loved wild creatures. Dressed in camouflage, they bring new wonder to the ever-changing outdoors. A glimpse of these tiny animals is always a special gift. But remember that it's normal for a doe to leave its fawn hidden and alone. In fact, it's necessary for the fawn's survival. If you come across a hiding fawn, enjoy a distant view and back quietly away. The fawn does not need to be "saved," because the doe is nearby, waiting for you to leave. 🦌





by Jason Goeckler
aquatic nuisance specialist, Emporia

photos by Mike Blair

Biologists are keeping a close eye on invasive species such as zebra mussels – non-native species that have a harmful effect on our native resources. Aquatic nuisance species are of particular concern because they can be spread so easily.

Kansas waters are being invaded by aliens. No UFOs have landed, but we are seeing an infiltration of plants, animals, and fish from other parts of the world. The invasion of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) is causing serious consequences to our environment and our wallets.

An aquatic nuisance species is

a fish, animal, or plant that has been introduced into a new ecosystem and that has a harmful impact to natural resources, as well as the human uses of these resources. Examples in Kansas include zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil and white perch. These introduced species can disrupt the natural ecosystem of Kansas by altering food webs,

nutrient dynamics, and biodiversity. They can also change the ecology of lakes and rivers, degrade habitat value in infested waters, and stunt fish populations. Aquatic nuisance species not only represent a threat to the environment, they threaten industry and the economy.

ANS can decrease property values, reduce recreational



Zebra mussels are native to the Black and Caspian seas of Europe and probably ended up here on the hulls or in ballasts of cargo ships travelling through the Great Lakes. The tiny mussels attach to hard objects, such as this rock, in great numbers.

opportunities, and threaten water quality. Other impacts include fouled water intakes, increased cost for power generation, impeded water flow, and decreased efficiency of water delivery systems. Flooding risks are higher due to increased biomass in water or clogged lake outlets. Damage costs for nuisance species are estimated at nearly \$120 billion dollars a year in the United States alone.

One of the most notorious aquatic nuisance species is the zebra mussel. Since introduction to North America in 1988, zebra mussels have infested waters in 22 states and two provinces. In Kansas, zebra mussels have been found in El Dorado Reservoir, the Walnut River, and Winfield City Lake. Several other lakes across the Midwestern U.S. are also infested with zebra

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF NUISANCE SPECIES

- Learn to identify aquatic nuisance species.
- Do not release aquarium pets, plants or water into or near a body of water or storm drain. You could be hurting all of the streams and lakes around the country and killing other fish and animals that already live in the water. If you cannot find a home for the critters in your aquarium, bury them. Dump the water into the toilet or yard far away from storm drains.
- Never move fish caught from one body of water to another.
- Never empty bait buckets in the lake. Empty them on dry land or in the trash.
- Inspect aquatic recreational equipment (boats, trailers, skis, anchors, etc.) and remove any visible organisms and vegetation.
- Wash equipment with 140-degree water, a 10-percent chlorine and water solution, or dry for at least five days to remove or kill species that are not visible.

**Contact the
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
at (620) 342-0658 if you find
any nuisance species.**

mussels – Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri; Skiatook, Oologah, Kaw, and Keystone lakes in Oklahoma; and Base Lake on Offutt AFB in Nebraska. In February 2007, a closely-related species, the quagga mussel, invaded the Colorado River system in Lake Meade, Nev. Until this new discovery, the quagga mussel had been confined to the Great Lakes region. Visitors to these lakes need to be vigilant to prevent the further spread of zebra and quagga mussels.

What are zebra mussels, and why are they a problem? *Dreissena polymorpha* is a finger-nail-sized, D-shaped mollusk native to the Caspian and Black seas of Europe. Zebra mussels are thought to have been brought to the Great Lakes on ship hulls or in ship ballasts. A highly opportunistic mollusk, the zebra mussel reproduces rapidly and can reach extreme densities – 700,000 individuals per square meter. Once intro-



Many potential problems come with zebra mussels, including damage to watercraft, clogged water intake or transfer equipment, decreased water quality and, as the photo above indicates, sharp shells that are dangerous to swimmers and barefoot waders.

duced, new populations can expand quickly since one female can produce up to a million eggs in a season. Zebra mussels cause a host of problems for surface water users, including boat hull fouling, fish habitat degradation, zooplankton removal, bad odor, plugged intake pipes, and dan-

gerously sharp shells that can cut the unprotected skin of humans and pets. Zebra mussels make it difficult to fish because the sharp shells can cut an angler's line while fishing. Clusters of zebra mussels are also aesthetically unpleasing.

Zebra mussels attach to any hard surface such as rocks, piers, docks, and flooded timber. The invasive mussel eats by filtering microscopic food from the water. Each adult mussel can filter up to a liter of water every day, taking in zooplankton and other edible particles. This attribute for filtering water sounds positive, but it's not. Particulates strained by zebra mussels would normally feed an array of native aquatic invertebrates, young fish, and mussels. Because zebra mussels are so efficient at feeding, they can disrupt food webs and therefore, entire ecosystems.

Filter-feeding by zebra mussels may eventually provide clear water, and some people



Zebra mussel populations increase at alarming rates, and this buoy chain at El Dorado Reservoir shows just how densely the adults can congregate on objects.

mistakenly think this is a benefit. It is a drawback. The clear water allows harmful ultraviolet rays to reach optimum spawning areas and damage fish eggs laid during the spawn. It may also lead to algal blooms, which can be harmful to people.

Since its introduction to the U.S. in 1988, the zebra mussel has spread rapidly from the Great Lakes region, through Midwestern streams, into two Kansas reservoirs and their drainages. Zebra mussels were first detected in El Dorado Reservoir in 2003. At that time, the population was at very low densities and many lake visitors may not have noticed the nuisance lurking under the water. Since that time, zebra mussels have proliferated, reaching densities greater than 65,000 individuals per square meter and becoming impossible to miss. In the fall of 2006, El Dorado Reservoir experienced low water levels, exposing billions of zebra mussels and the extent of the infestation. Unfortunately, once zebra mussels become established, they are nearly impossible to eradicate.

Each month, KDWP biologists visit El Dorado Reservoir to monitor the zebra mussel population. Reproduction is monitored by counting veligers, which are the free-floating, microscopic juvenile zebra mussels. Since 2004, zebra mussel reproduction in El Dorado has increased from an in-lake peak of 16 veligers per liter to 236 veligers per liter in 2006. Although the increase is stag-

gering, the peak has not yet been realized. Current estimates predict that reproduction may reach 500 veligers per liter in 2007 and will increase exponentially until the peak is reached.


Although zebra mussels have numerous negative effects, it is still safe to visit lakes where they are present. Users simply need

tion. Because the zebra mussel larvae are tiny and free-floating, they can be unknowingly transported in any recreational equipment that touches the water, including boat bilges and livewells, personal watercraft, sailboats, duck decoys, bait buckets, and water toys. Adult zebra mussels may also attach to boat hulls.

Lake users must drain all water from their equipment to ensure zebra mussel veligers are not transported. Adult zebra mussels, plants, and mud should be removed from boats and all other equipment before leaving any lake. More detailed protocols to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other ANS are listed below.

To date, zebra mussels have been found only in El Dorado Reservoir, the Walnut River, and Winfield City Lake, but users to all lakes should practice these proto-

cols to ensure that they are not contributing to the ANS spread. By following these procedures, you can prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other potentially undetected ANS. If we work together, we can protect Kansas waters.

For more information call the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks at (620) 342-0658 or check the website at www.kdwp.state.ks.us. 



to be aware of the zebra mussel's presence, take precautions to protect themselves from the sharp shells, and ensure zebra mussels are not being spread to new waters.

It is illegal to import, possess, and transport live zebra mussels. Lakes in Kansas where zebra mussels have been discovered are posted with signs indicating their presence. Take special notice of these signs as they provide very important informa-



HOME TOWN FISHING

by Jessica Mounts

Community Fisheries Assistance Program coordinator, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

***How do you spell removing local angling fees
and improving close-to-home fishing opportunities?
C-F-A-P – Community Fisheries Assistance Program.***

“Mom,” my ten-year-old began, “can we go fishing today?”
“Hmmm,” I thought out loud, “let me check the weather. It’s only March; the water is still cold and it’s supposed to be windy.”

“Please, Mom?” his younger brother broke in, “I won’t get wet, I promise!”

Knowing better but giving in, I

told them both to go find their poles. “Bring them here so I can check your line and reels,” I called after them as they raced toward the garage.

We’ve only recently become a fishing family, and our set-up is pretty understated. No boat, no expensive lures, and one basic rod and reel each. When the boys were younger, I taught them how

to fish on a bare-bones cane pole that they couldn’t tangle or hang up – outfitted with a small hook, a bit of worm and a bright bobber. Although they’ve both graduated to their own rod/reel combos, they still look at fishing as just one more chance to get outside – unfortunately an increasingly rare concept to many children their age.

One reason for this may be the shifting population in our state. People are migrating from rural areas to urban areas, and large cities are quickly growing outward. More than half of Kansans now reside in the five most urban counties of our previously-rural state. Although our hatcheries are producing millions of sport fish each year, and fisheries biologists set creel and length limits to optimize the fishing opportunities, changes in population and land use pose daunting challenges for fisheries management. In recent years, several new programs have been introduced to better serve Kansas anglers, especially urban anglers.

One is the Urban Fishing Program, which simply stocks catchable-sized fish in lakes easily accessible to urban anglers. This has been a popular program with anglers, but biologists were also interested in increasing angling opportunities by opening new waters. One of the barriers that kept some anglers away were special fees charged by local communities that own some of these urban lakes. Department biologists manage or assist with managing fisheries on hundreds of lakes across the state. On those owned by KDWP (state fishing lakes), anglers only need a fishing license, unless they are exempt. However, some communities that own lakes routinely charged additional access fees to anglers.

In 2004, the idea of the Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) began, with a goal of removing permit fees from local community lakes. With more than 250 community

lakes around the state, this was a daunting task. KDWP staff began meeting with community leaders around the state, proposing lease agreements. KDWP negotiated lease payments considering the revenue communities had received through angler fees, as well as the quality of angling opportunities provided. The communities eliminated angler fees and received assistance from the department enhancing their fisheries.

The department uses Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration funds derived from excise taxes on fishing equipment to pay yearly lease payments to cooperating communities. In addition to the fisheries management provided by KDWP, there is a competitive yearly grant program to help the communities with facility development costs.

There are currently more than 200 community lakes enrolled in the program. Now in its third year, the program has helped form strong partnerships with communities across the state and has removed local access fees on more than 14,000 acres of water. Fisheries biologists work closely with the cities and counties that operate and maintain the lakes to make the most of their smaller fisheries. These lakes are stocked with several species of fish every year and provide

the opportunity to catch channel catfish, largemouth bass, crappie, wipers, several species of sunfish, walleye and more.

These small, close-to-home lakes provide the anglers of Kansas with a variety of fishing opportunities — attracting beginners hooking their first bluegill, as well as accomplished bass anglers looking for the big one. Most importantly CFAP lakes provide family-friendly facilities, including bathrooms, picnicking and play areas, as well as easy shoreline access.



CFAP is important because it removed fees to lakes close to anglers' homes and improved fishing opportunities for large numbers of anglers.

Over the last few years, I have been lucky enough to fish at many of the lakes in the CFAP program. So far, I have yet to be disappointed, but I'd like to share a few of my favorites.

•
Sterling City Lake is a 10-acre lake located at the south edge of Sterling in Rice County. Sterling provides a decent bass and channel catfish fishery; the entire shoreline is accessible; and plenty of parking is available. RV camping is offered with electrical hook-ups as well as a few tent camping spots. Grassy areas, shade trees, and recently-remodeled bathrooms make it an excellent pick for families.

•
Alma City Lake is a bit off the beaten path, but this scenic 80-acre lake is worth the extra few minutes of driving. Nestled in the Flint Hills of northeastern Kansas, Alma is southeast of Manhattan, on Highway 99. The lake is a few minutes drive southeast of Alma and provides



great opportunities to catch large bluegill, channel catfish, and smallmouth bass. One of the prettiest sights I've ever seen was the sun setting behind the hills as I sat fishing on the dock at this lake one August evening.

•
Bone Creek Reservoir is one of the largest community lakes in the state at 540 acres. Located in the Cherokee Lowlands

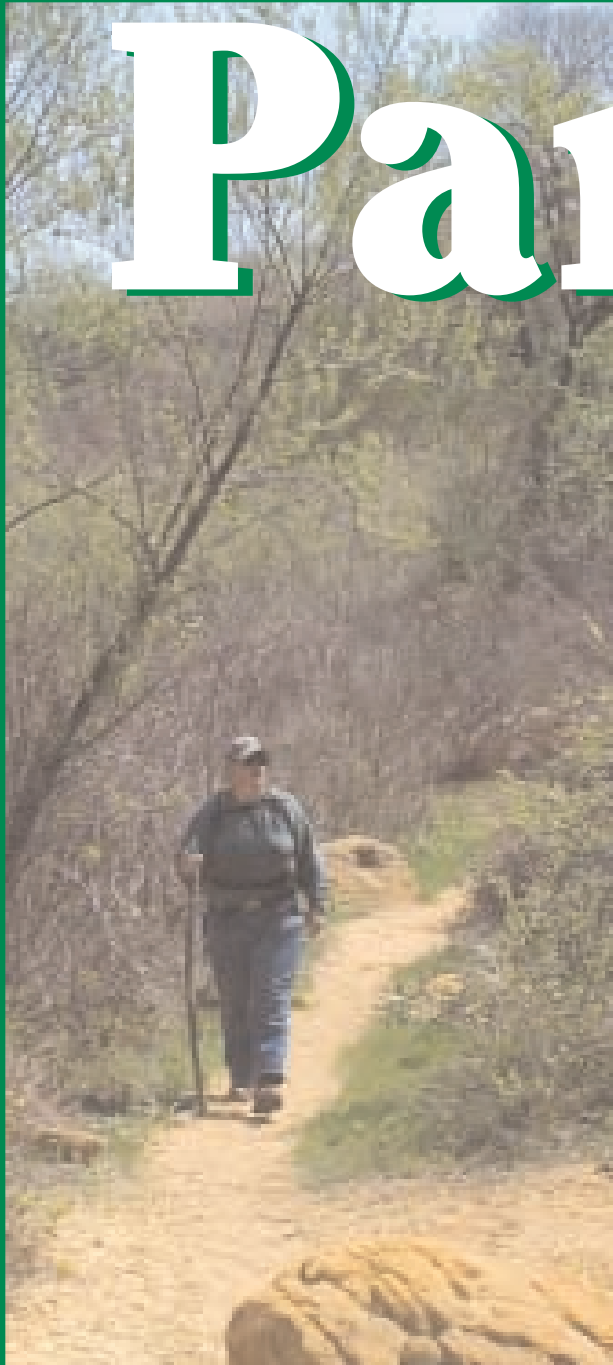
north of Girard on Highway 7, this lake offers plenty of shoreline access and fine crappie opportunities in flooded timber. Channel catfish is another favorite at this lake, and plenty of grassy areas provide room for picnics and for children to play. Bathrooms are open year-round, and the main boat ramp was renovated this year with a grant from the CFAP program.

I often consider what led me to take up fishing with my boys. I remember fishing a time or two each year with my dad, but I don't recall it being a big part of my childhood. I know that one reason my family can make time in our busy lives for a few hours of fishing now is due to the convenience of having a local lake to fish — a fun outdoor experience with no extra fees or long drive. I guess that's exactly what we had in mind when we started CFAP. ♡



You can find out which community lakes are enrolled in CFAP by going online at www.kdwp.state.ks.us or by looking at the 2007 Kansas Fishing Atlas, pictured above. The atlas includes maps with all public waters, and CFAP lakes are color coded.

Kansas State Parks



Cross Timbers State Park



Kansas State Parks: More Than Meets The Eye

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks manages 24 state parks across the state. Most provide utility and primitive camping, and access to reservoirs, trails, and wildlife areas. A few are preserved natural areas, allowing visitors to enjoy unspoiled wild Kansas. Many parks host annual events such as concerts, festivals, and competitions. Whatever your outdoor interest — hiking, camping, wildlife observation, fishing, bike riding, horseback riding, hunting, or just plain relaxing, a Kansas state park has what you're looking for. If you've never been to a Kansas state park, use this guide to find the nearest one. Visit our website for current park fees at www.kdwp.state.ks.us or call one of the offices listed in the back of this publication. If you haven't visited a state park recently, look again — *there's more than meets the eye.*

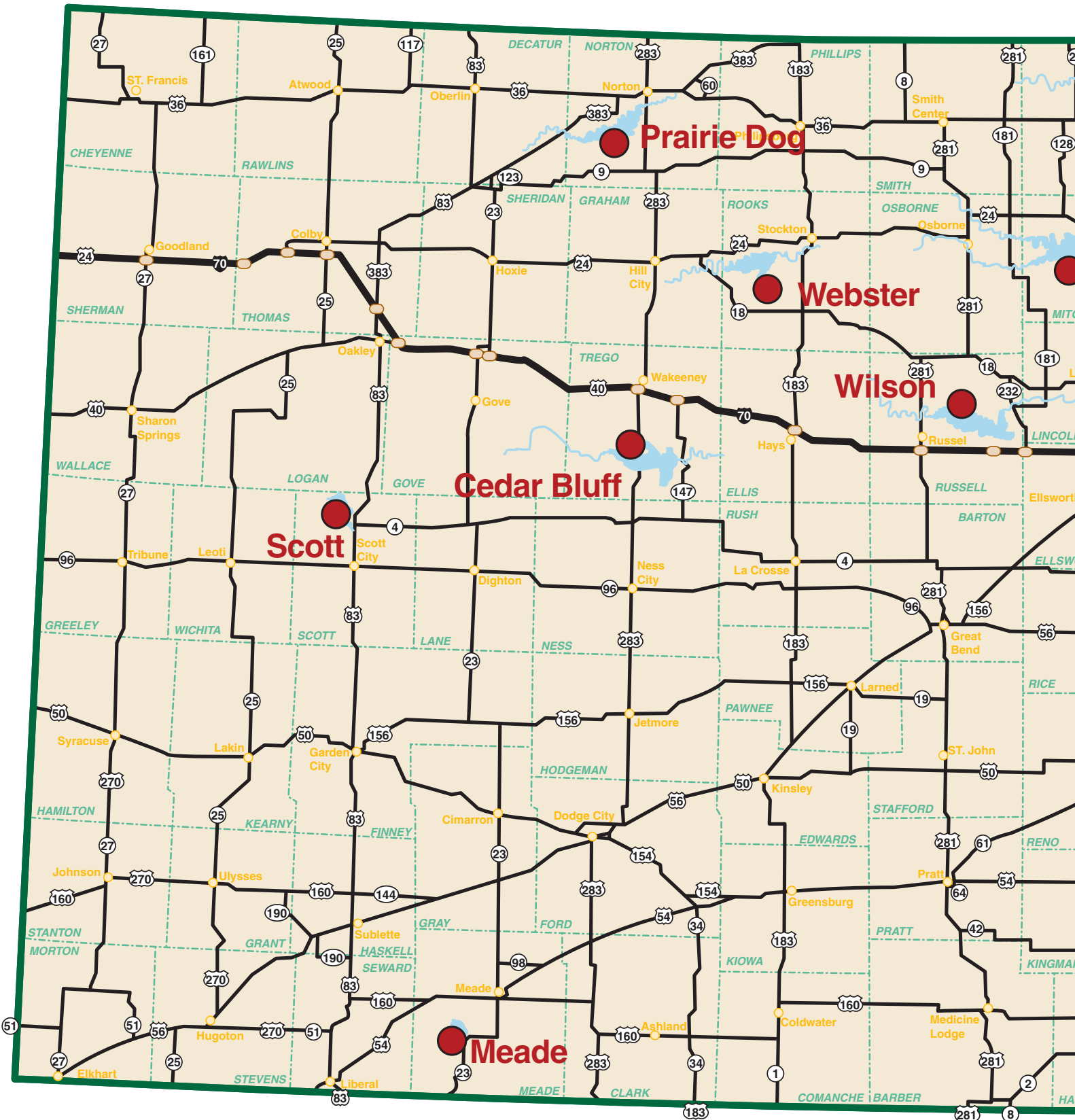
Cross Timbers State Park

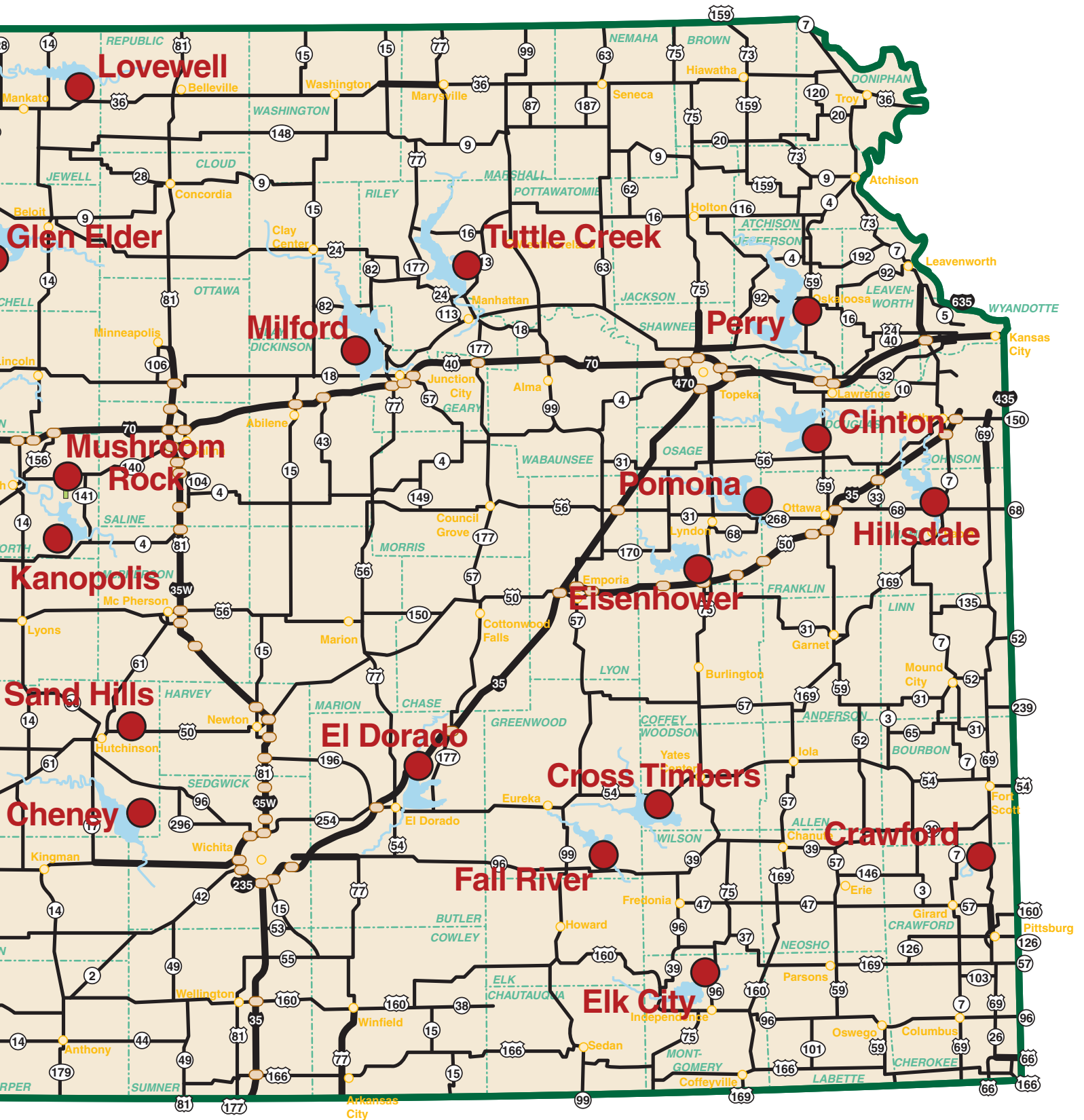


El Dorado State Park

PARK	SERVICES																																
	LAND ACRES	NUMBER OF AREAS	WATER	WATER, SEWER, & ELEC. HOOKUPS (B)	ELECTRIC & ELECTRIC HOOKUPS (B)	NON-UTILITY ONLY (B)	RESERVABLE SITES	RENT-A-CAMP (B)	SHOWERHOUSE	BOAT RAMP	COURTESY LANES	BOATING	BOAT RENTAL DOCKS	MARINA	DUMP STATION	TRAILS	HISTORICAL LANDMARK	SHELTERHOUSES	FISH CLEANING STATIONS	RENTAL CABINS (B)		50 AMP ELECTRICAL (B)	SWIMMING BEACH										
Cedar Bluff	900	2	10	91	20	300	A		5	11	5	A		A	3		A	4	2	5	A	1	3 Modern, 2 Primitive Cabins										
Cheney	1913	2		223		274	A		9	22	3	A		A	4	A		4	2	7	A	4											
Clinton	1425	1		240		220	A		4	16	8	A	A	A	2	A	A	6	1		70	1	Archery Range, Trout Pond, Childrens Fishing Pond										
Crawford	589	1		48	27	43			2	2	2	C		A	1	A	A	7		1		1											
Cross Timbers	1075	5	15	37	10	180	A		5	6	2	A			1	A			2	3	A	1											
Eisenhower	1785	1	25	84	78		A	A	5	18	2	A		E	4	A		1	2	3	A	1	Diverse Trails, Kayak Rental, Kids Fishing Pond, Yurts										
El Dorado	4000	4	128	352		566	A		13	17	5	A	A	A	4	A		10	1	10	A	2	Laundry Facility										
Elk City	857	1	11	86		53	30		2	3	2	A			2	A	E	3	1		A	1	Diverse Trails, Frisbee Golf										
Fall River	981	3		45		93	A		3	4	4	A			1	A		14	1		A	1											
Glen Elder	1391	1		112	8	240	A		3	6	2	A	A	A	2	A	A	1	1		A	1	Trails Under Development										
Hillsdale	2830	5		175		40			3	10	5	A	A	A	1	A		9			A	1	Equestrian Campground, Windsurfer Beach										
Kanopolis	1585	2	16	44	223		A	A	3	6	2	A		A	3	A	A	5	2	2	A	1	Equestrian Campground, Horse Rentals										
Lovewell	1126	1	23	13	82	306	11		4	6	4	A	A	A	2	A	A	3	2	6	A	1	Archery Range										
Meade	443	1		42	0	150	24		2	1	1	D			1	A		4			A	1	8 Reservable Sites										
Milford	1084	1	51	90		120	A		3	10	3	A	E	A	2	A	A	33	1	3	A	1	Equestrian Campground, Viewing Tower, Horse & Hiking Trails										
Mushroom Rock	5	1	DAY USE AREA ONLY													A										Historic Site Unusual Geologic Formations							
Perry	1597	2		102		200			5	10	2	A		E	2	A		10	1	4	A	1	Horse, Biking and Hiking Trails										
Pomona	490	1	45	97		200	A		3	5	2	A		A	2	A		1			A	1											
Prairie Dog	1150	2		40	18	130	A		2	3	1	A			2	A	A	8	1	2	A	1	Adobe House Museum										
Prairie Spirit Trail	33 mi.	DAY USE AREA ONLY- per person permit required																													Biking & Walking Trail		
Sand Hills	1123	1	DAY USE AREA ONLY- per person permit required																														Horse & Walking Trails
Scott	1120	1		40	15	100			3	2	2	D		A	1	A	A	3			A	1	Historical Site										
Tuttle Creek	1196	5	8	159	44	500	A	A	5	11	3	A	A	A	5	A		39	3	7	A	1	Equestrian Campground, Disc Golf Course, Canoe Rentals										
Webster	880	2	1	66	7	100	A		3	5	3	A			1	A		18	1	1	A	1	2 Walk-out Fishing Docks										
Wilson	927	2	4	99	36	100	A	A	5	5	2	A	A	A	3	A		4	1	4	A	2	Biking & Walking Trail										

KANSAS STATE PARK LEGEND					
Park Area		Information Center		Dumpster	
Camping Area		Pay Stations		Concessions	
Other Public Lands		Potable Water		Playground	
Water		Shower/Toilet		Shelter	
Dam or levee		Modern Toilet		Shelter Group	
Private Lands		Vault Toilet		Cabin Modern	
Paved Roads		Trailer Dump Station		Cabin Primitive	
Gravel Roads		Boat Ramps		Camping Improved	
Unimproved Roads		Dock/Pier		Camping Primitive	
Park Entrance		Fish Cleaning Station		Trail/Trailhead Hike	
Park Office		Swimming Area		Trail/Trailhead Bike	
Parking Area		Marina		Trail/Trailhead Equestrian	





Cedar Bluff State Park

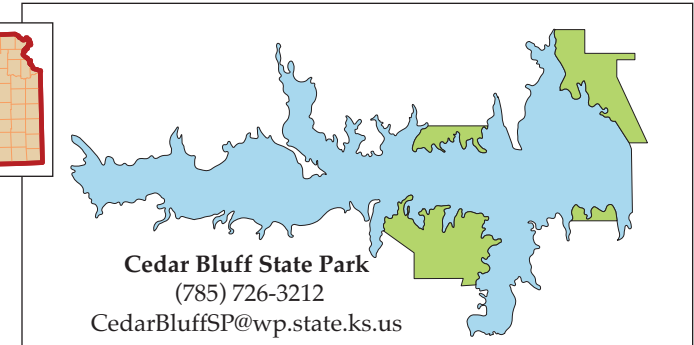
Located south of I-70 in Trego County, this western Kansas park consists of two areas comprising 1,100 acres on the 6,000-acre Cedar Bluff Reservoir. The Bluffton Area, located on the lake's north shore, is the most developed and receives extensive use. The Page Creek Area, on the south shore, offers beautiful primitive camping as well as a generous helping of utility sites.

Park campgrounds offer 121 utility sites, and a group campground contains 12 utility sites. Expansive areas are set aside for primitive camping; the park is equipped to suit nearly anyone's preference.

Two primitive cabins are available equipped with beds, tables and chairs, solar light, charcoal grills, and wood burning stove. Three modern cabins are also available equipped with beds, picnic tables, kitchens with electric stove tops, small refrigerators, bathrooms, showers, and heat and air.

Other facilities include five shower houses, two reservable shelters, three vault toilets, numerous picnic shelters, two fishing docks, two fish cleaning stations, BMX track, basketball court, and horseshoe pit.

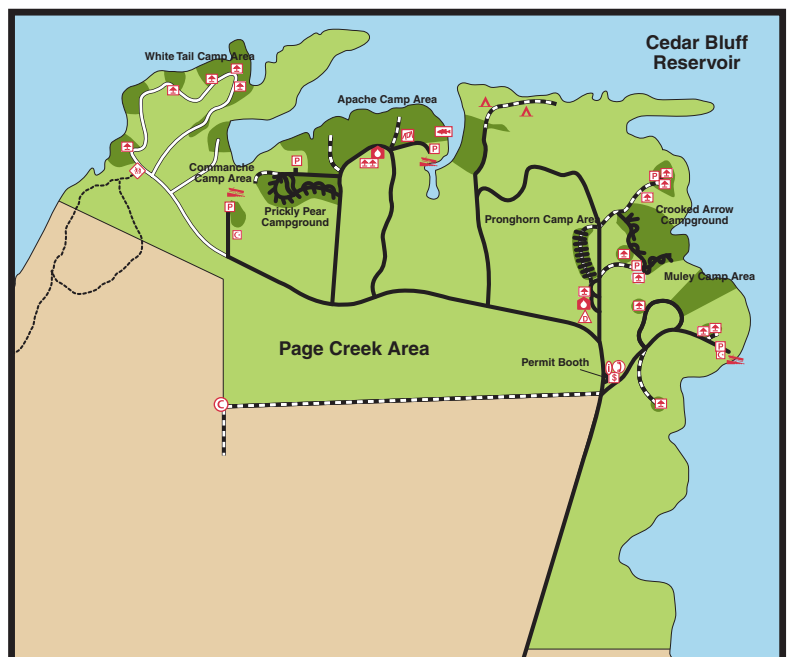
On the lake, fishing, boating, windsurfing, and



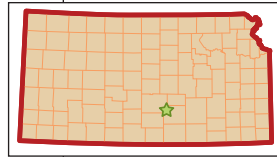
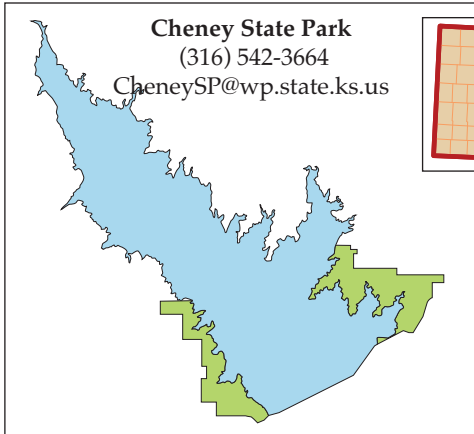
skiing are popular. In the stilling basin just below the Cedar Bluff Dam, anglers may fish for the rainbow trout stocked in the spring and fall. Five boat ramps allow access to the water, two in the Bluffton Area and three in the Page Creek Area.

The area around the park offers excellent wildlife watching opportunities, enhanced by food plots and a waterfowl refuge. Deer, turkey, pheasant, Canada geese, pelicans, eagles in the winter, and more can be seen in and near the park. A portion of the Page Creek Area is designated as a handicapped hunting access area.

Threshing Machine Canyon, the site of an 1850s Indian attack on a wagon train bearing a threshing machine, is accessed by a road west of the park. In the historic canyon, you will find carvings dating back to the mid-1800s. For a stunning view of the area, take a drive to the top of the 150-foot tall, cedar-covered limestone bluffs.



Cheney State Park



This 1,900-acre park comprises two areas at the south end of Cheney Reservoir, 20 miles west of Wichita. Since its completion in 1964, the park has grown to include more than 200 utility camping sites. In addition to the variety of camping amenities

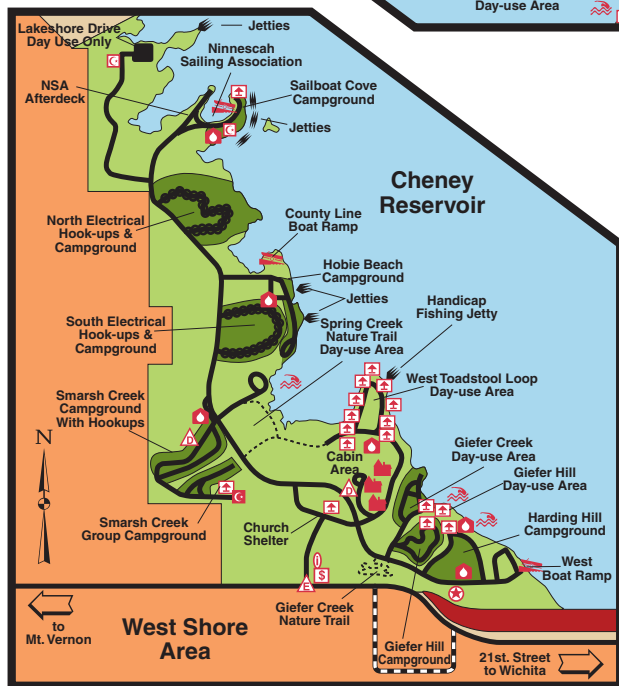
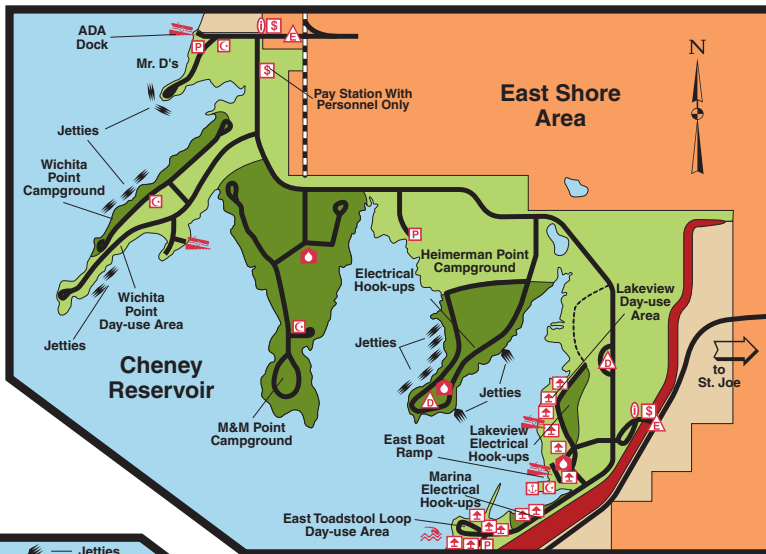
available here, the West Shore Area offers seven reservable modern cabins.

Cheney State Park occupies the shores of one of the top sailing lakes in the U. S. The Ninnescah Sailing Center on the West Shore Area is the “headquarters” for sailing at Cheney. A marina in the East Shore Area offers supplies and services for boaters and anglers.

The park is equipped with modern pit toilets, nine restrooms with showers, a shelter house, four trailer dump stations, and four designated swimming areas, as well as several picnic/day use areas. The Giefer Creek and Spring Creek nature trails offer hikers aesthetic samplings of the area’s lush natural beauty.

Fishing is productive for channel catfish, white bass, crappie, striped bass, wiper, and walleye. The park’s 22-boat launching lanes provide convenient access to the 9,500-acre lake. A handicapped-accessible fishing complex is available at the Toadstool Loop Jetty.

The 5,200-acre Cheney Wildlife Area adjacent to the park provides a rich variety of wildlife watching, nature photography, and public hunting. A refuge has been set aside on the wildlife area for migratory waterfowl. The area is closed to all activities from Sept. 15 through March 15, when it is reopened for fishing and non-hunting day-use activities.



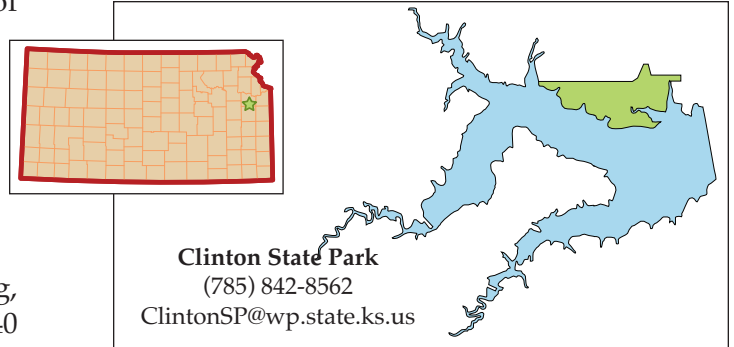
Clinton State Park

Clinton State Park is located 4 miles west of Lawrence in the scenic Osage Questas region. The 1,500-acre park lies on the north shore of Clinton Reservoir, known for its clear water and good fishing. Modern facilities and an extensive hiking/biking trail system make this park and adjacent 9,200-acre wildlife area an attractive destination for all outdoors enthusiasts.

Popular activities include picnicking, swimming, and camping on one of the nearly 500 campsites. 240 campsites are water/electric utility sites, of which 70 provide 50-amp service, and 220 are primitive sites. Nearby restrooms and showers add a touch of comfort and convenience for park visitors.

Visitors to the park can view white-tailed deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, bald eagles in spring and fall, and numerous species of songbirds in the carefully-managed habitats that make Clinton a distinctive outdoor destination.

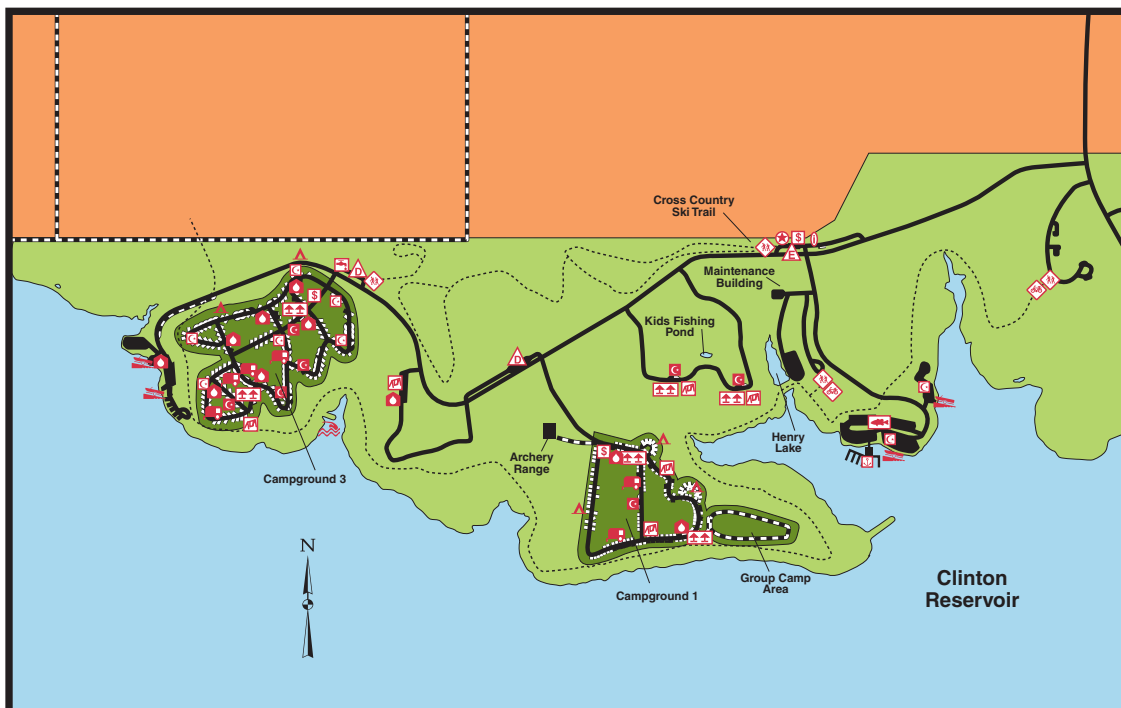
Winter camping with a heated restroom is now available, and a new area for mountain biking features a skills course. The course is designed with obstacle course features that offer a real challenge for cyclists of various skill levels. The course is approximately 1/8-mile long. Much of the course is of a raised wooden track design with narrow, low-speed balance crossings, a half pipe, multi-level



stream crossings, and other aspects that fully test a rider's balance and abilities at low speed control. There is a sign-in and liability waiver that must be completed prior to using the course.

The Clinton Lake Marina offers boat slips, fishing and boating supplies, equipment rental, and a floating restaurant. Anglers are attracted to Clinton Reservoir for its good channel catfish, walleye, and crappie fishing.

Well-known for its extensive trails system, Clinton State Park is an outdoor mecca for hikers, nature photographers, mountain bicyclists, wildflower enthusiasts, wildlife observers, and cross-country snow skiers. Park staff work closely with Lawrence and University of Kansas individuals and organizations to present several concerts and other special events each year.



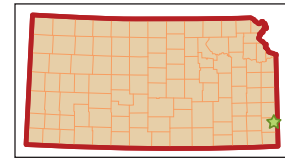
Crawford State Park

Rich in history and spectacular scenery, Crawford State Park has a flavor all its own. This southeast Kansas treasure, located 9 miles north of Girard in Crawford County, resides on a 150-acre lake built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. There are two recorded archaeological sites within the park's boundaries, including remnants of a 19th-century U. S. military outpost. An interpretive trail connects the park with the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks' Farlington Fish Hatchery, which was built shortly after the CCC completed construction of the lake.

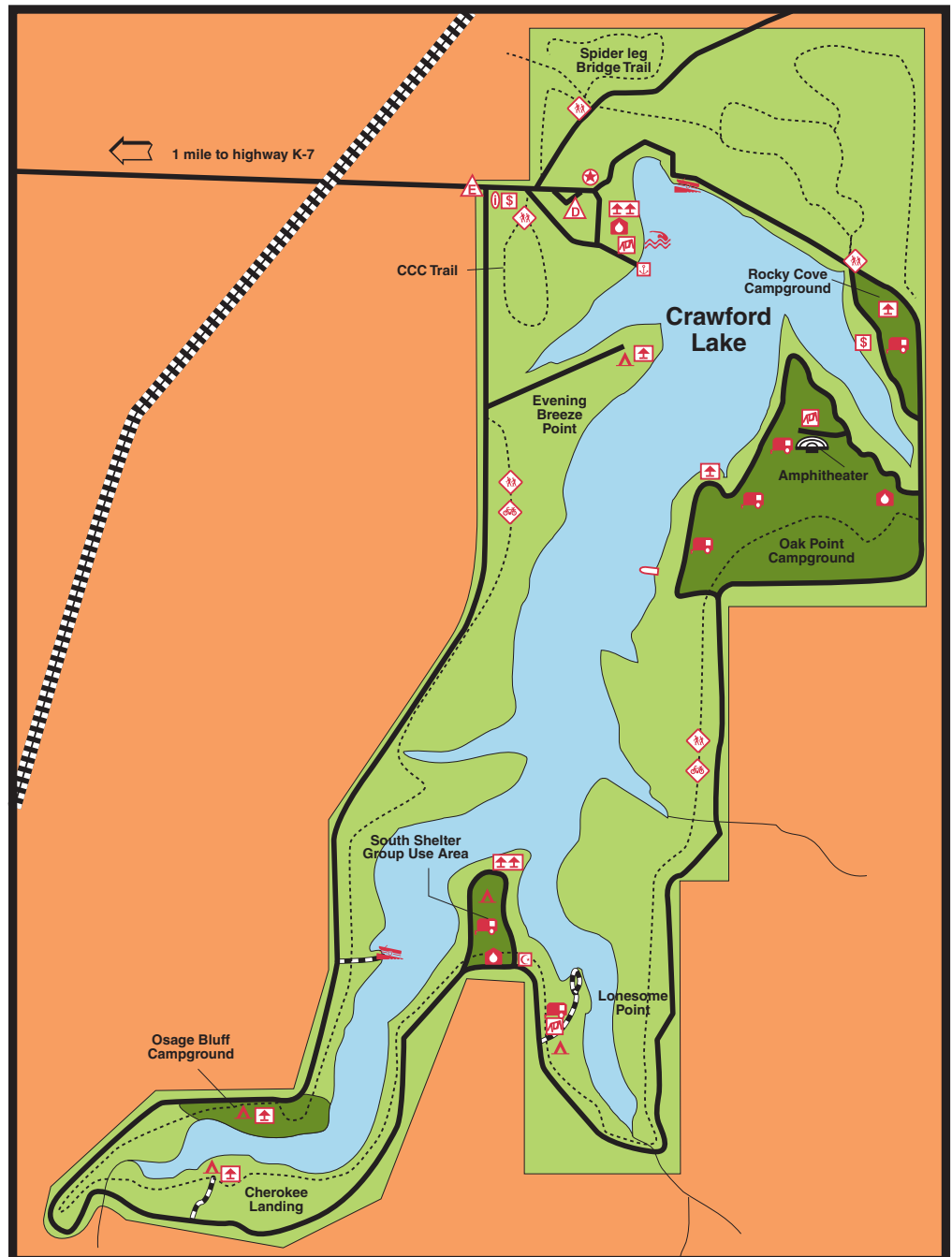
The 500-acre park features seven campgrounds with 74 water/electric utility campsites and 425 primitive campsites, two boat ramps, three bathhouses, and a swimming beach. Hiking and mountain bike trails, horse shoe pits, and three playgrounds offer more recreational opportunities. Food, fuel and convenience items are available at the full-service marina and restaurant located within the park.

Anglers enjoy excellent fishing for channel catfish, crappie, and striped bass. Pleasure boating and scuba diving are favorite recreational pursuits.

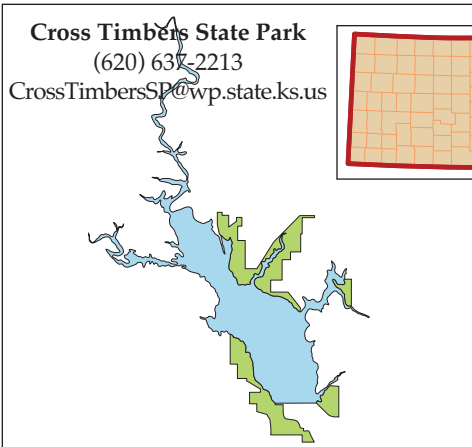
Located on the edge of the Ozarks, Crawford State Park displays the variety of landscapes available in Kansas state parks. Redbud trees offer spectacular beauty in spring, and the lush foliage of the surrounding forest is a naturalist's delight.



Crawford State Park
(620) 362-3671
CrawfordSP@wp.state.ks.us



Cross Timbers State Park

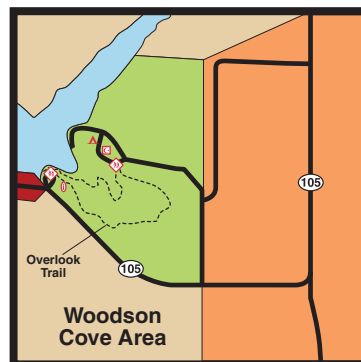
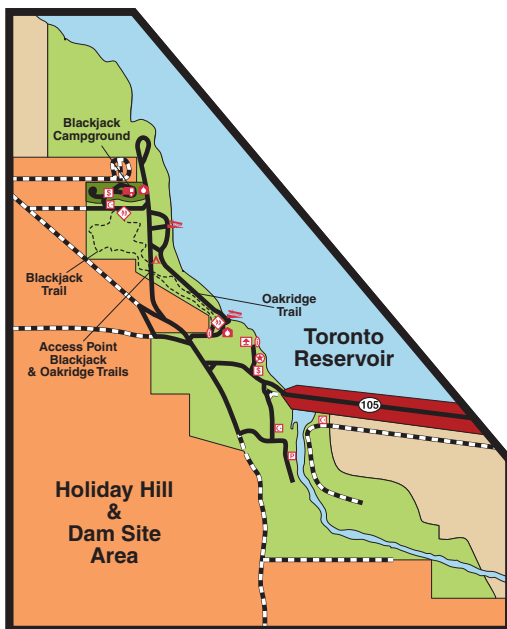
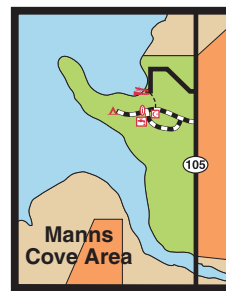
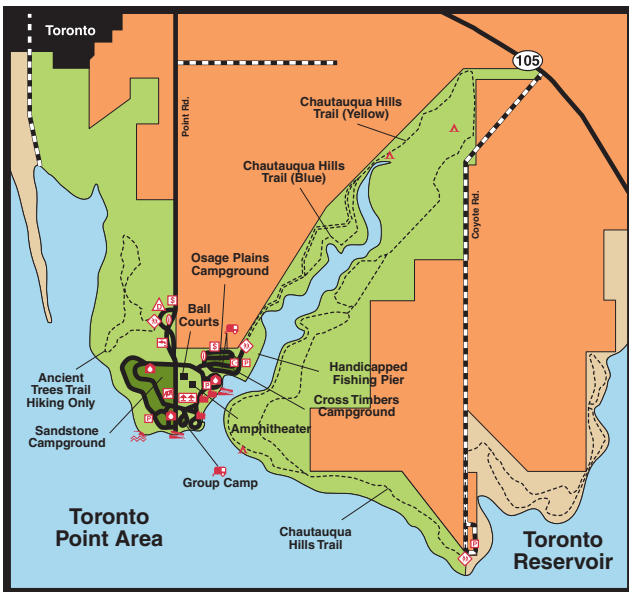


Cross Timbers State Park is located in the gently rolling hills of the Verdigris River Valley in southeast Kansas. Comprising 1,075 acres in the northern reaches of the physiographic region known to early pioneers as the Cross Timbers, this park provides numerous access points to the

2,800-acre Toronto Reservoir. The park is located 12 miles west of Yates Center in Woodson County. This region was a favored hunting and camping ground of Native Americans of the Osage Nation. The forested flood plains, surrounded by terraces of prairie and hills of oak savannah, provide visitors an opportunity to immerse themselves in some of the most diverse flora and fauna in Kansas.

Shaded campsites within easy access of the lake are available for both full RV hookups and primitive camping. All park campgrounds are served by modern bathroom and shower facilities. All park trails are open to hiking and backpacking. All but the Ancient Trees Trail are open to other non-motorized uses such as jogging and mountain biking. Backcountry camping is allowed by special permit on segments of the Chautauqua Hills Trail.

Fishing in the river and on the reservoir can be excellent. Both are noted for excellent white crappie, white bass, channel catfish, and flathead catfish angling. Black bass, bluegill, and sunfish round out the diverse fishing opportunities available here. The adjacent 4,600-acre Toronto Wildlife Area is a diverse collection of habitats, including forests, grasslands, farmlands, and marshes. Species common to the area include white-tailed deer, wild turkey, quail, squirrel, rabbit, dove, and raccoon. A rich variety of songbirds appeal to wildlife observers and photographers.

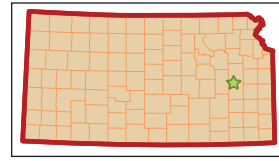


Eisenhower State Park

Named after native son President Dwight Eisenhower, this 1,785-acre park features 1,000 acres of tallgrass prairie, 440 acres of woodland, and a complete range of recreational facilities. The park lies on the north shore of the 6,900-acre Melvern Reservoir, in southern Osage County.

The park provides 187 utility sites: 84 with water, 25 with sewer hookups, and five shower houses. Non-utility sites are available in five camping areas throughout the park. Contact the park office for information on reservable campsites that are available. Laundry facilities are also available at the Doud shower building.

The park offers Mamie's (primitive) Cabin near the east boat ramp and two temporary struc-



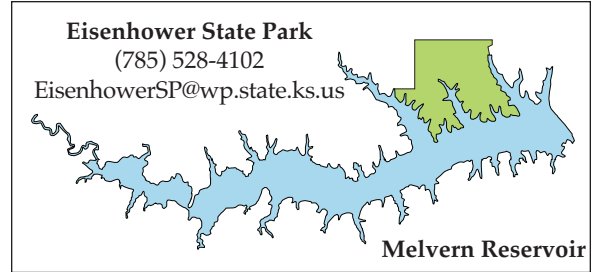
tures called yurts in West Point campground. Ike's Shelter house is an excellent area for family reunions within the Jones Family Activity Area. Other recreation facilities include a swimming beach, horseshoe pits, playground, volleyball court, and picnic shelters.

Eisenhower is also home to a burgeoning trails system for horseback riding, biking, and hiking. Crooked Knee Horse Trail offers equestrians a 20-mile excursion through the undeveloped west side of the park. Biking and hiking is available on the horse

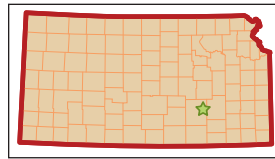
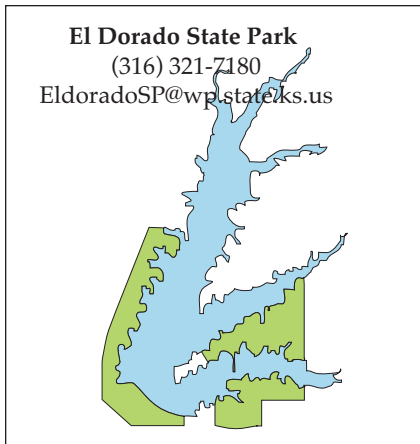
trails, but remember trail rules.

The park offers a variety of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, Eastern wild turkey, bobwhite quail, squirrels, furbearers, and waterfowl. Hunting within the state park is by special permit only.

Melvorn Reservoir's excellent fishing potential attracts anglers looking for walleye, crappie, sauger, white bass, and channel catfish. Two nine-lane boat ramps with ample parking offer excellent access to the expansive lake.



El Dorado State Park



miles of shoreline. About 6,000 acres of land are available for public hunting, including 2,000 acres within the state park. All hunting within the park requires a state park vehicle permit for entry.

A large amphitheater with

dual stages accommodates a variety of concerts and festivals conducted at the park each year. Trail users will find a variety of attractions, including a designated horse campground. Seven trails offer outdoor adventure for hikers, bikers, and horse riders.

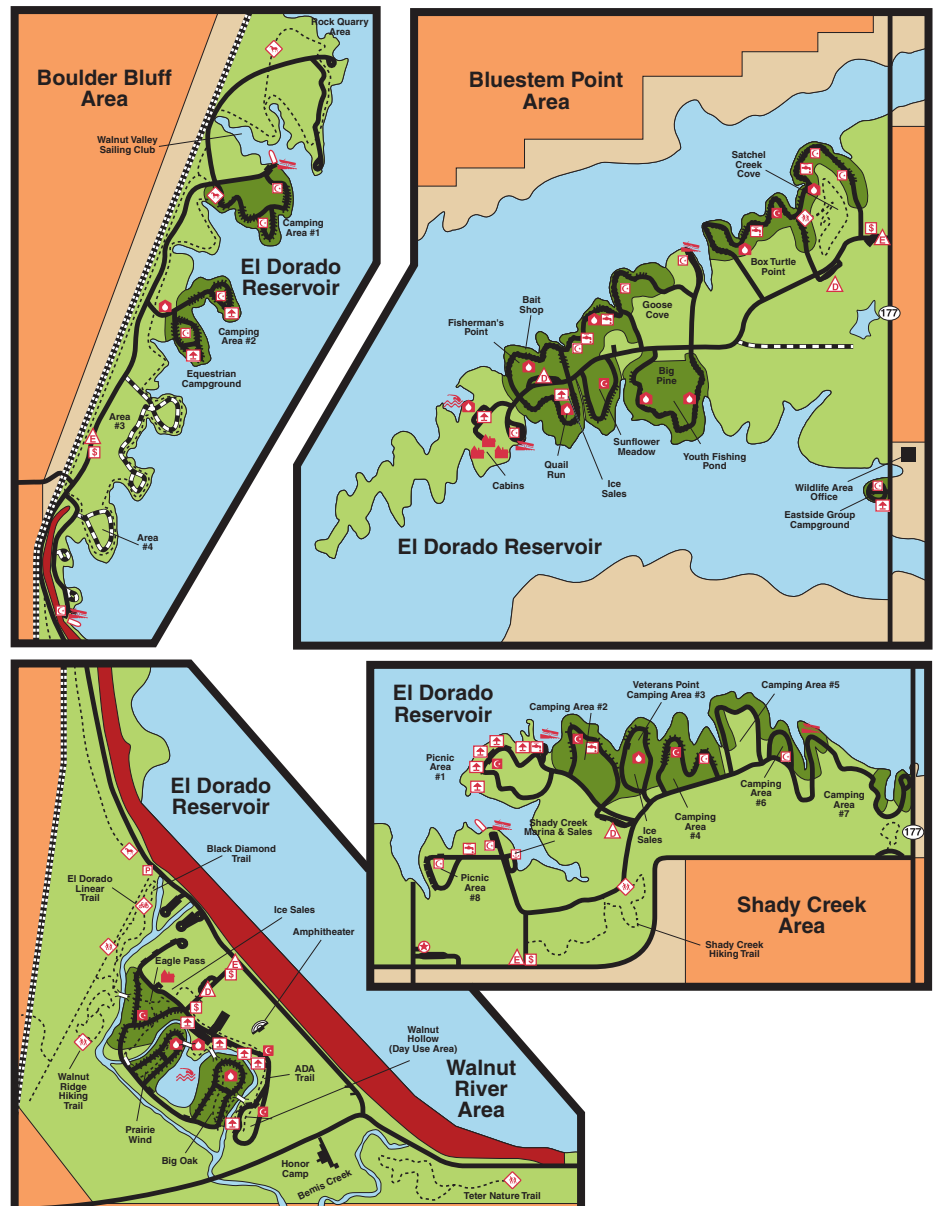
Ten cabins are available for reservation year-round, offering a variety of comfortable accommodations to suit any preference.

El Dorado State Park is located north and east of the city of El Dorado on the edge of the scenic Flint Hills. Kansas' largest state park, El Dorado's four units sprawl across 4,000 acres along the eastern and western shores of El Dorado Reservoir.

Regarded as one of the state's most handicapped accessible parks, El Dorado contains 1,100 campsites that offer visitors a range of choices. Other facilities include two swimming beaches, 10 group shelters, and a 24-site group campground.

The Shady Creek Marina, Walnut Valley Sailing Club, and six boat ramps offer amenities and facilities for boaters of every stripe. Crappie and largemouth bass fishing are good in standing timber and around fish attractors. Walleye fishing is good along the face of the dam and on the old railroad bed. Channel cat fishing is good lakewide, as well as in the river below the outlet. Flathead fishing is good in a variety of areas, especially Old Bluestem Lake.

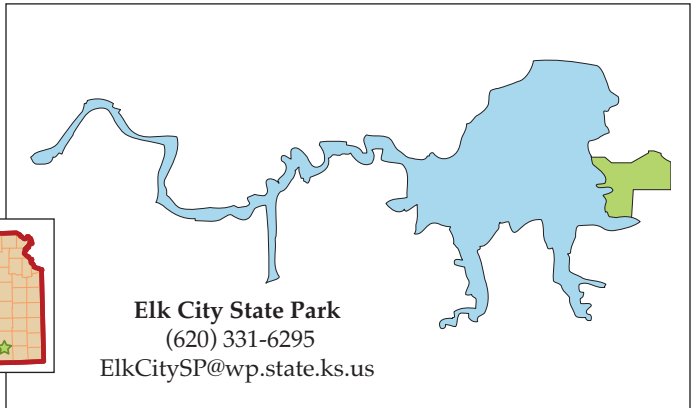
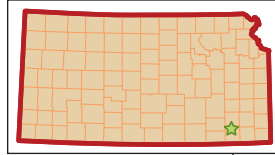
The 8,000-acre El Dorado Reservoir has approximately 98



Elk City State Park

Dense oak-hickory woodlands meet rolling meadows of big bluestem and Indiangrass at this striking 857-acre park located west of Independence in Montgomery County. The 4,500-acre Elk City Reservoir and 12,000-acre Elk City Wildlife Area adjacent to the park offer outdoors lovers ample room to pursue their pastimes.

A nationally-recognized trails system invites visitors to take a closer look at the rich variety of flora and fauna in and around Elk City State Park. The Green Thumb Nature Trail is a one-mile loop that begins in the state park campground and rewards hikers with a panoramic vista of the lake, framed by ash and oak trees. Table Mound Hiking Trail and Post Oak Nature Trail are also park attractions. Park users can also enjoy the 4-mile Eagle Rock Mountain Bike Trail, 6-miles of hiking/nature trails, and a one-mile exercise trail. A



frisbee golf course is also available. Parking is available near the trailheads.

Campgrounds at Elk City offer an array of well-shaded sites appealing to recreational vehicle or primitive campers. Conveniently located restrooms and showers, swimming beach, group shelter, fishing piers, and three-lane boat ramps offer popular amenities for park visitors.

ties for park visitors.

The expansive Elk City Wildlife Area adjacent to the park offers a rich array of wild inhabitants. White-tailed deer, wild turkey, bobwhite quail, cottontail, fox and gray squirrels, and prairie chickens can be found here. Common furbearers include beaver, raccoon, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, opossum, minks, and muskrat.

Elk City Reservoir offers good to excellent fishing opportunities for channel catfish, white bass, crappie, flathead catfish, largemouth bass, and saugeye. A handicapped access fishing dock is located in the state park.



Fall River State Park

Positioned between the Cross Timbers region and the grasslands of the Flint Hills, Fall River State Park is home to a remarkable diversity of plant and animal life. The 980-acre park is a unique blend of forested flood plains, blackjack savannahs, and tallgrass prairie.

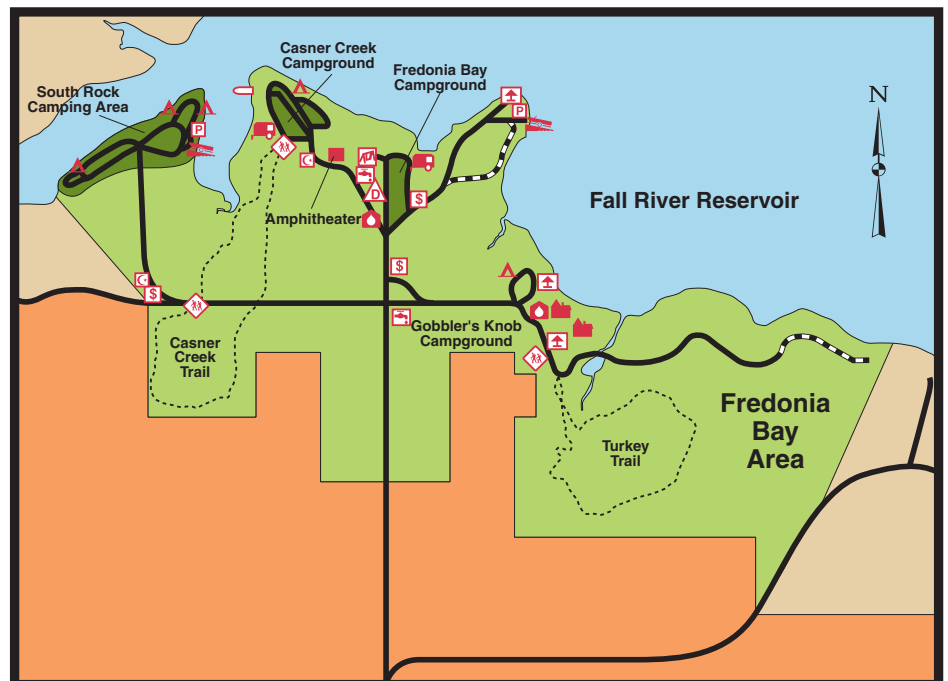
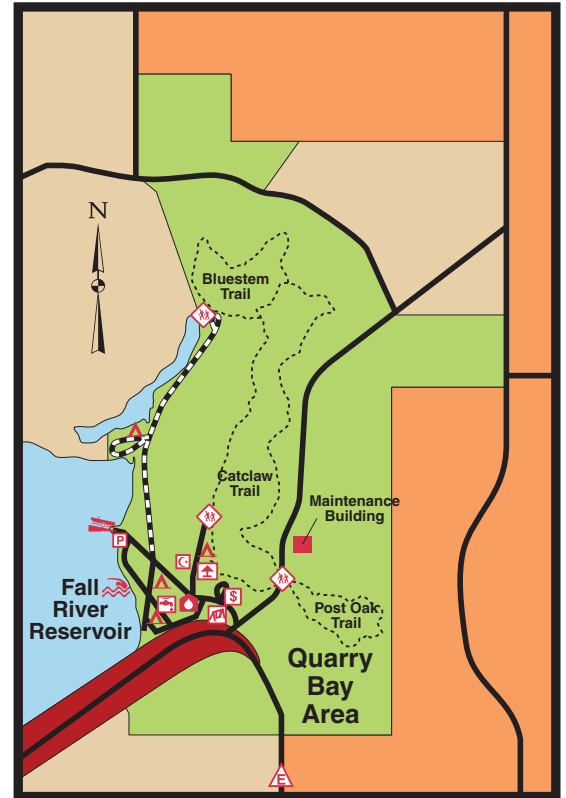
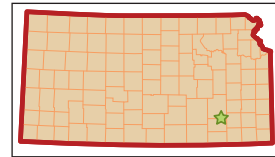
Outdoor enthusiasts looking to get off the beaten track will find much to their liking at this park, located in southeastern Greenwood County.

Camping, swimming, boating, water skiing, hiking, and picnicking are popular pursuits at Fall River. Developed campsites include modern restroom and shower facilities. Forty-five electric/water hookups are available, plus more than 100 primitive campsites. Six hiking trails and an orienteering course offer visitors an up-close and personal perspective on this unique area.

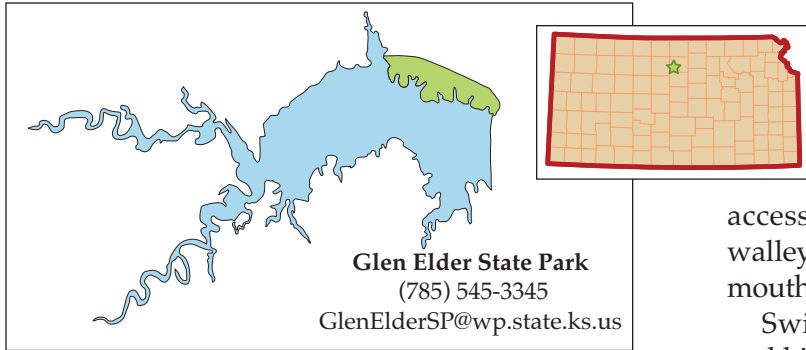
A favorite pastime here is canoeing Fall River, which feeds into the 2,450-acre reservoir of the same name. Bird watchers, photographers, and naturalists enjoy a variety of native plants and animals here. More than 8,000 acres of public wildlife area next to the park are managed for a variety of game and nongame species. Dove, quail, deer, turkey, rabbit, squirrel, waterfowl, and prairie chicken are common.

Fall River offers good fishing opportunities for channel cat-

fish, white bass, crappie, flathead catfish, largemouth bass, and walleye. White bass fishing can be excellent in early spring, particularly in Otter Creek and Fall River above the reservoir.



Glen Elder State Park



Situated on the shores of one of Kansas' largest lakes, Glen Elder State Park offers abundant recreational opportunities. Located 12 miles west of Beloit in Mitchell County, Glen Elder was honored as one of America's top five best state parks by *Field & Stream* magazine, August 2004.

Modern restroom/shower buildings are open in the Sioux, Kanza, and Cheyenne areas from mid-April to October. The Kanza shower may be open during the winter and early spring, as well, depending on the weather. A full-service marina provides fuel, slip rental, and supplies from April through October.

With three campgrounds offering 121 electrical

hookups (most with water), as well as more than 300 primitive sites, there's plenty of room for campers of any preference. Boat ramps in Kanza and Osage offer excellent lake access and ADA courtesy docks.

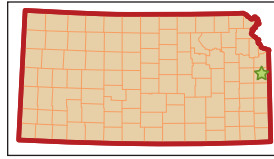
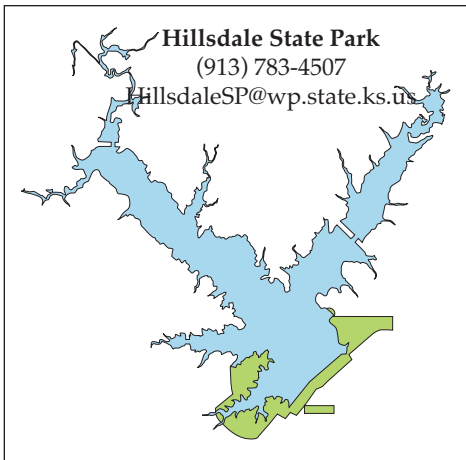
Glen Elder State Park offers convenient access to the 12,500-acre reservoir where crappie, walleye, white bass, saugeye, channel catfish, largemouth bass, and flathead catfish attract anglers.

Swimming, boating, hiking, volleyball, softball, and bicycling accommodations are all available at the park. The Osage Area has sand volleyball courts, a reservable group shelter, and a swimming beach. The Pawnee Overlook provides shoreline fishing, primitive camping, picnicking — and an excellent view. The Chautauqua Fishing Pond offers easy access for individuals with disabilities and children. The pond is stocked with trout in the winter.

Waconda Heritage Village, featuring the historic Hopewell Church, offers visitors a glimpse into the area's past. The facility provides historical displays and a room reservable for group events. Current development includes a Waconda Springs replica and possibly a restored limestone schoolhouse.



Hillsdale State Park



Located in the rolling hills of Miami County, Hillsdale State Park offers a broad array of outdoor recreation opportunities. Campers, anglers, boaters, hunters, swimmers, horseback riders, model airplane flyers, hikers, naturalists, pic-

nickers, photographers, and sight-seers all enjoy special opportunities at Hillsdale.

Located in the fastest-growing area of the state, the park is heavily used by residents of nearby Kansas City.

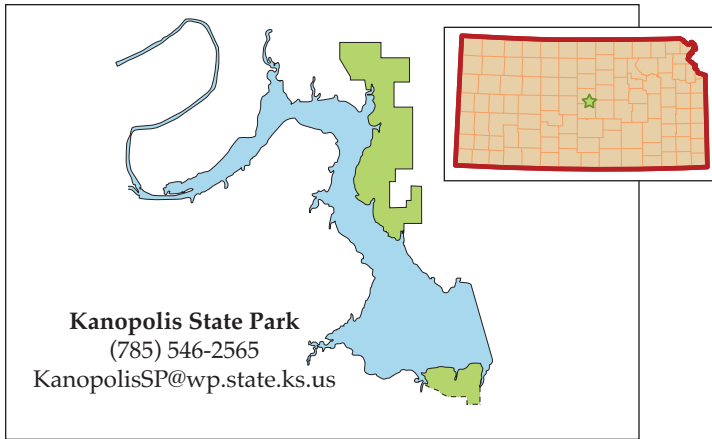
Camping is allowed in the 200 designated camp sites in the Russell Crites Area. About half of those sites have electric/water hookups available. Two restroom/shower houses are conveniently located for campground users. The park features a beach area that is open from sunrise to sunset.

The Saddle Ridge Equestrian Area on the east side of the reservoir has 32 miles of marked trails. Model airplane flying is a popular activity in a specially designated area just south of the dam.

Anglers find ample sport in the 4,500-acre Hillsdale Reservoir. Fishing is allowed on all 51 miles of shoreline, and seven boat ramps in the state park and adjacent wildlife area provide convenient access to the water. When the lake was filled in the early 1980s, more than 70 percent of the standing timber in the lake basin was left to provide fish habitat. As a result, walleye, catfish, largemouth bass, crappie, and bluegill are abundant. The adjacent 7,700-acre public wildlife area offers hunters and wildlife observers a variety of enjoyable outdoor opportunities.



Kanopolis State Park

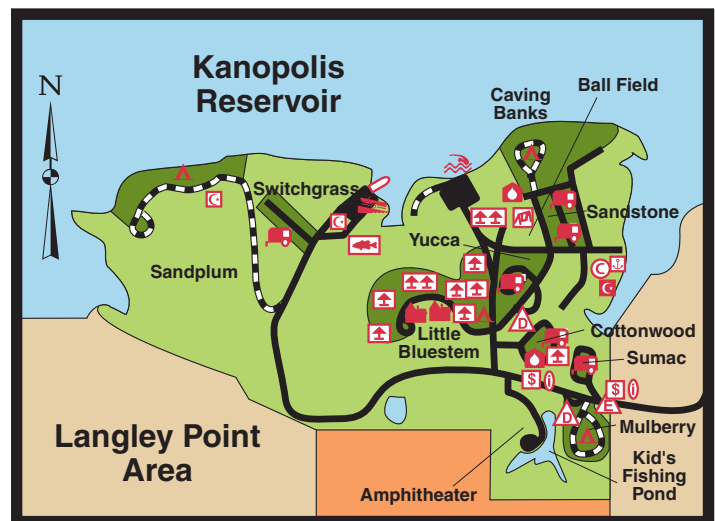
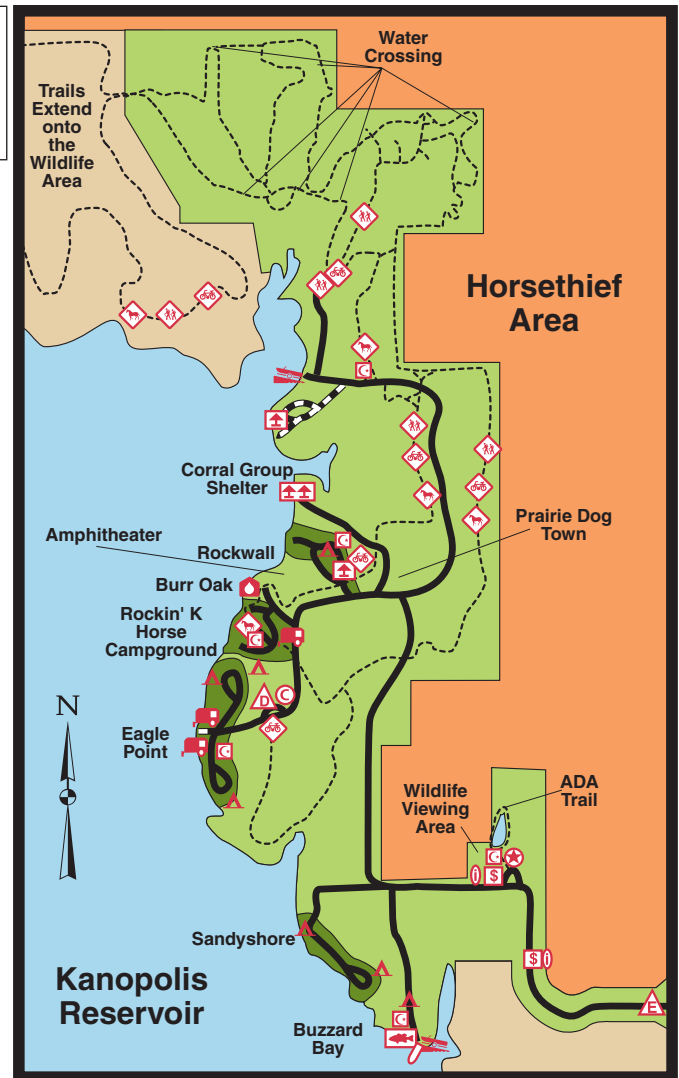


Kanopolis State Park started it all. The first Kansas state park has drawn visitors to eastern Ellsworth County since 1959. Situated in the rolling hills, bluffs, and woods of the scenic Smoky Hills region of Kansas, Kanopolis is 33 miles southwest of Salina.

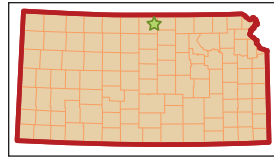
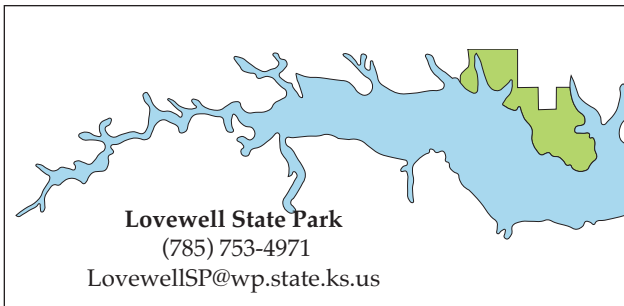
The park features a full-service marina; beaches; picnic areas; two cabins; and trails for horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking. More than 200 primitive campsites and 119 utility sites are located in the 14 campgrounds in the Langley Point and Horsethief areas. Buffalo Track Nature Trail is an enthralling 1.8-mile route rich in native plants and wildlife, as well as Native American history.

Kanopolis offers 27.4 miles of multi-use trails, all of which start in the state park. The Rockin' K Trail take visitors to and from the Rockin' K Campground. The Horsethief Trail loops through canyons and trees. Farther north and west, the Prairie Trail traverses high prairie and Red Rock Canyon. The Alum Creek Trail takes visitors across vast prairie and through many water crossings. Be aware that it can take more than a day to complete some trails on foot.

The 3,500-acre Kanopolis Reservoir offers excellent fishing opportunities. White bass fishing can be good soon after ice-out and in April during the spawning run. The best crappie fishing occurs from March through May. In addition, anglers will find walleye, saugeye, wiper, largemouth bass, and channel catfish. More than 12,500 acres of public wildlife area add to Kanopolis' appeal.



Lovewell State Park



offers an enticing blend of camping, fishing, wildlife watching, and special events.

Lovewell State Park is a haven for outdoor lovers who are looking for variety. Located off the beaten track in northern Jewell County, Lovewell

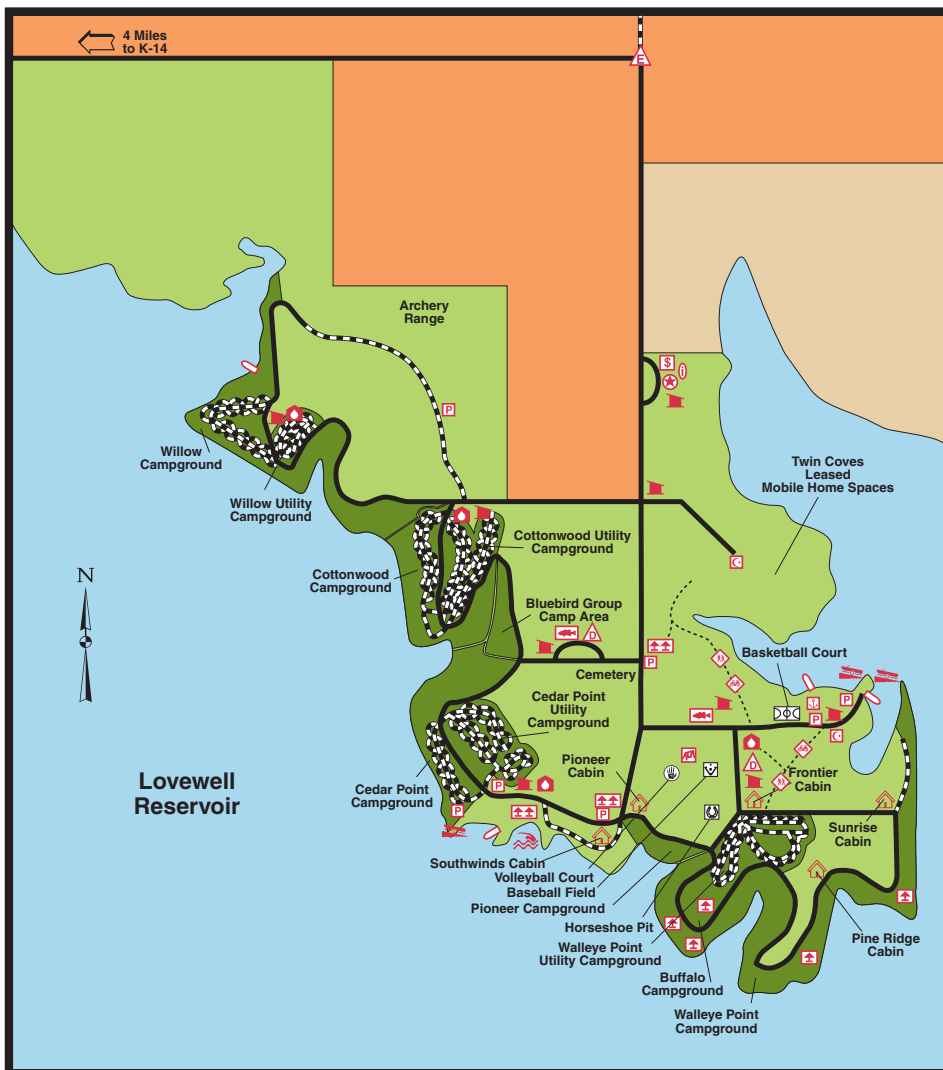
The park features excellent shade and 23 full utility, 13 water/electric, 82 electric only, and 306 primitive campsites, as

well as six semi-modern cabins. Designated electrical sites may be reserved. Bluebird and Buffalo Primitive Campgrounds are reservable for groups. Four shower/toilet buildings, two vault toilets, year-round freeze-proof water hydrants, two trailer dump stations, and fish cleaning stations are centrally located in the park.

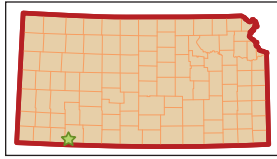
A historic limestone school hosts summer church services, and an archery range is located north of the Cottonwood shower building. The Pioneer Day-use Area features a playground, sand volleyball court, softball diamond, and horseshoe pits. Two basketball goals are located west of the marina. The Southwinds Swimming Beach offers plenty of sun and shade. Picnic facilities are available throughout the day-use areas, as well as a large log group shelter and a beach. The shelter can be reserved.

Lovewell hosts several annual special events, including a Kids Fishing Derby in early June, fireworks and sand castle contest in July, Lovewell Fun Day in August, archery safety course in September, and various other special events and fishing tournaments throughout the year.

The 2,900-acre Lovewell Reservoir is popular with anglers. The south shore features high bluffs that block summer winds. The 2,200-acre Lovewell Wildlife Area invites hunters, wildlife watchers, and other wildlife enthusiasts to experience a variety of well-managed habitats.



Meade State Park



The only state park in southwest Kansas, Meade State Park is an oasis in the shortgrass prairie region of the state.

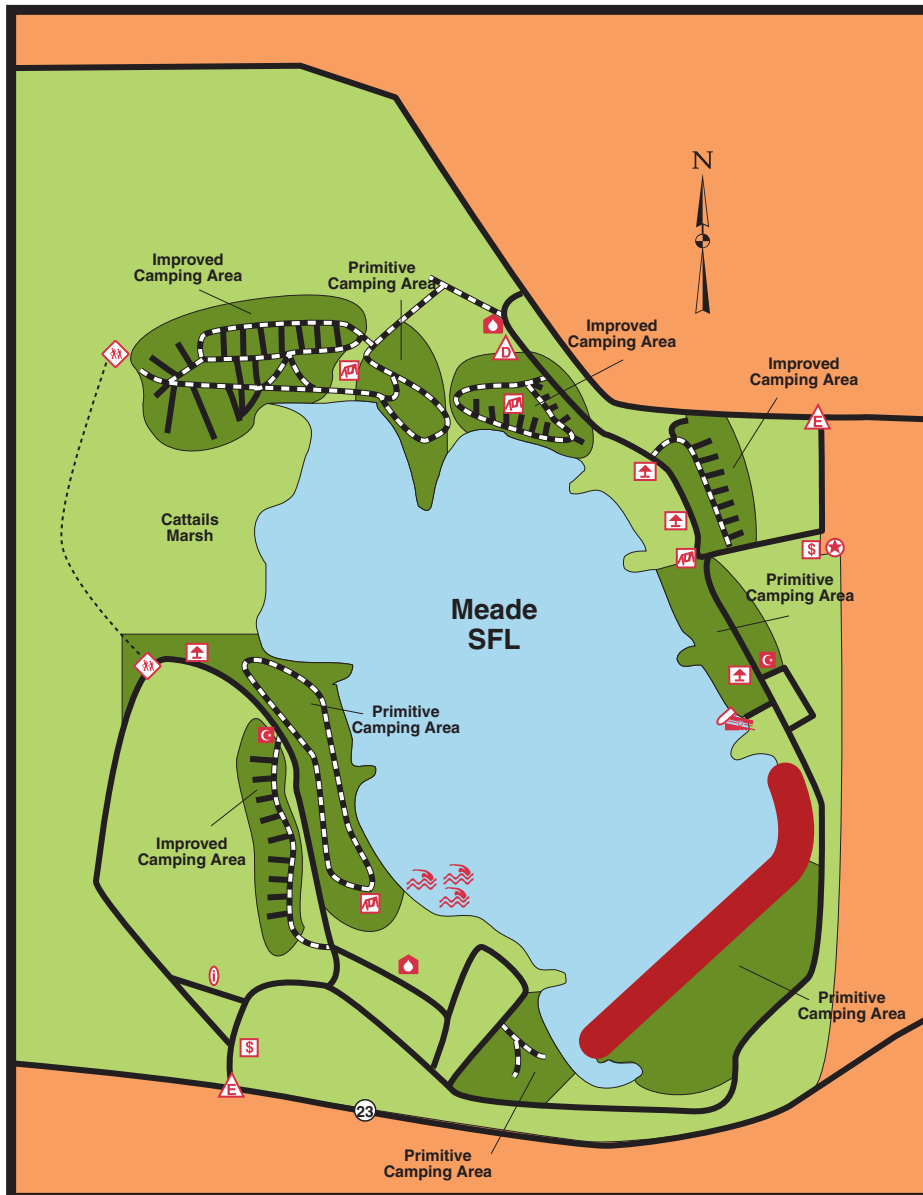
The park comprises 440 acres of land and recreational facilities situated around the 80-acre Meade State Fishing Lake.

The nature trails offer visitors an up-close look at the shortgrass prairie. Utility and primitive camping, day use areas, swimming beach, and boating and fishing access make this a popular destination. Campgrounds provide 42 water/electric utility sites

and 150 primitive campsites.

The lake invites anglers to sample excellent fishing for bluegill, crappie, channel cat, and largemouth bass. No skiing or pleasure boating is allowed; boats with motors must be used for fishing only.

The adjacent 360-acre wildlife area, although modestly-sized, offers good opportunities for dove and quail hunters. Deer, turkey, rabbit, and squirrel also inhabit the area and offer hunters an occasional mixed bag. Deer may be hunted only with bow or muzzleloader firearms. Naturalists will enjoy a nature trail at the northwest corner of the lake.



Meade State Park
(620) 873-2572
MeadeSP@wp.state.ks.us

Milford State Park

Located near Junction City on the shores of the state's largest lake – 16,000-acre Milford Reservoir – Milford State Park is a favorite getaway. Park facilities include modern campgrounds, shower buildings, toilets, swimming beaches, boat ramps, picnic shelters, a full-service marina, and a multi-purpose trails system. The park also houses a large yacht club.

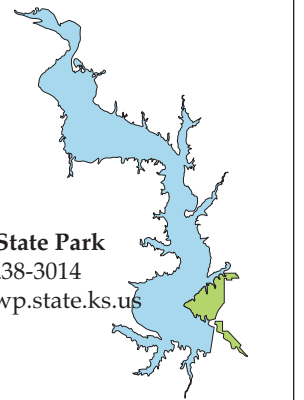
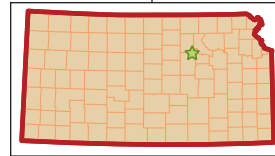
The park comprises five campgrounds with 141 electric/water utility sites. Fifty-one of these sites also include sewer hookups. More than 100 improved primitive campsites are also available throughout the park. Three modern cabins are available for rent. Contact the park for a reservation application.

The state park is a popular destination for anglers eager to experience the excellent fishing available in Milford Reservoir. Walleye concentrate along the face of the dam in early April to spawn, then move to the flats at Farnum Creek and mud points near School Creek. Nearly all of the brushy and rocky coves contain crappie and largemouth bass, but coves in the Rolling Hills and Curtis Creek areas are traditional hot spots for crappie. White bass and catfish are plentiful in a variety of locations, and smallmouth bass frequent the face of the dam, as well as rocky points in the lower half of the lake.

Many game species are present on the 18,800-acre

Milford Wildlife Area, and a permanent 1,100-acre wildlife refuge has been established on the northern end of the reservoir for waterfowl management.

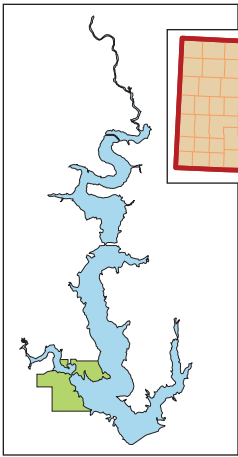
Nearby Milford Nature Center and Milford Fish Hatchery offer a variety of interpretive exhibits and displays.



Milford State Park
(785) 238-3014
MilfordSP@wp.state.ks.us



Perry State Park



Perry State Park comprises two areas totaling 1,250 acres on the shores of Perry Reservoir in Jefferson County. With the 12,500-acre reservoir and an 11,000-acre wildlife area nearby, this state park is well-situated to accommodate any outdoor preference.

The park's four campgrounds provide 102 electric/water campsites and 200 primitive campsites. Showers and toilets are conveniently located for all campers. A swimming

beach and beach house serve summertime fun-seekers. Day-use areas of the park offer seven picnic shelters, three of which are available by reservation.

The marshes at Perry Wildlife Area provide early migrant bird hunting, and deep water areas supply late-season mallard and diving duck hunting. In dry years, water is pumped to some of the area's 10 marshes to ensure adequate water levels. White-tailed deer, cottontails, wild turkeys, coyotes, raccoons, and doves are common on the area.

Perry Reservoir is best known for its crappie and channel cat fishing. Best angling opportunities for crappie are in the Slough Creek, Rock Creek, and Old Town areas. The best areas for channel catfish are on mud flats in the upper end of the reservoir and in the Delaware River.

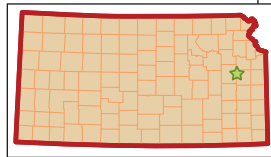


Pomona State Park

Well-known by northeast Kansas residents for shady campsites and a great family atmosphere, the 490-acre Pomona State Park is located in Osage County, 30 miles south of Topeka. Recreation opportunities at the park include camping, picnicking, fishing, boating, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

The park has 142 water/electric campsites and more than 200 primitive campsites. Lighthouse Bay Marina provides full services to boaters, anglers, skiers, and campers. Four boat ramps are available in the park, and the lake's generally calm waters are popular with skiers.

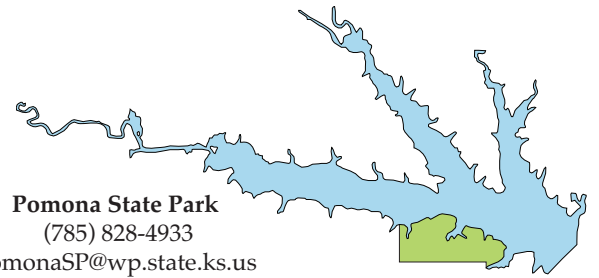
Southwind Shelter House is a group facility equipped with



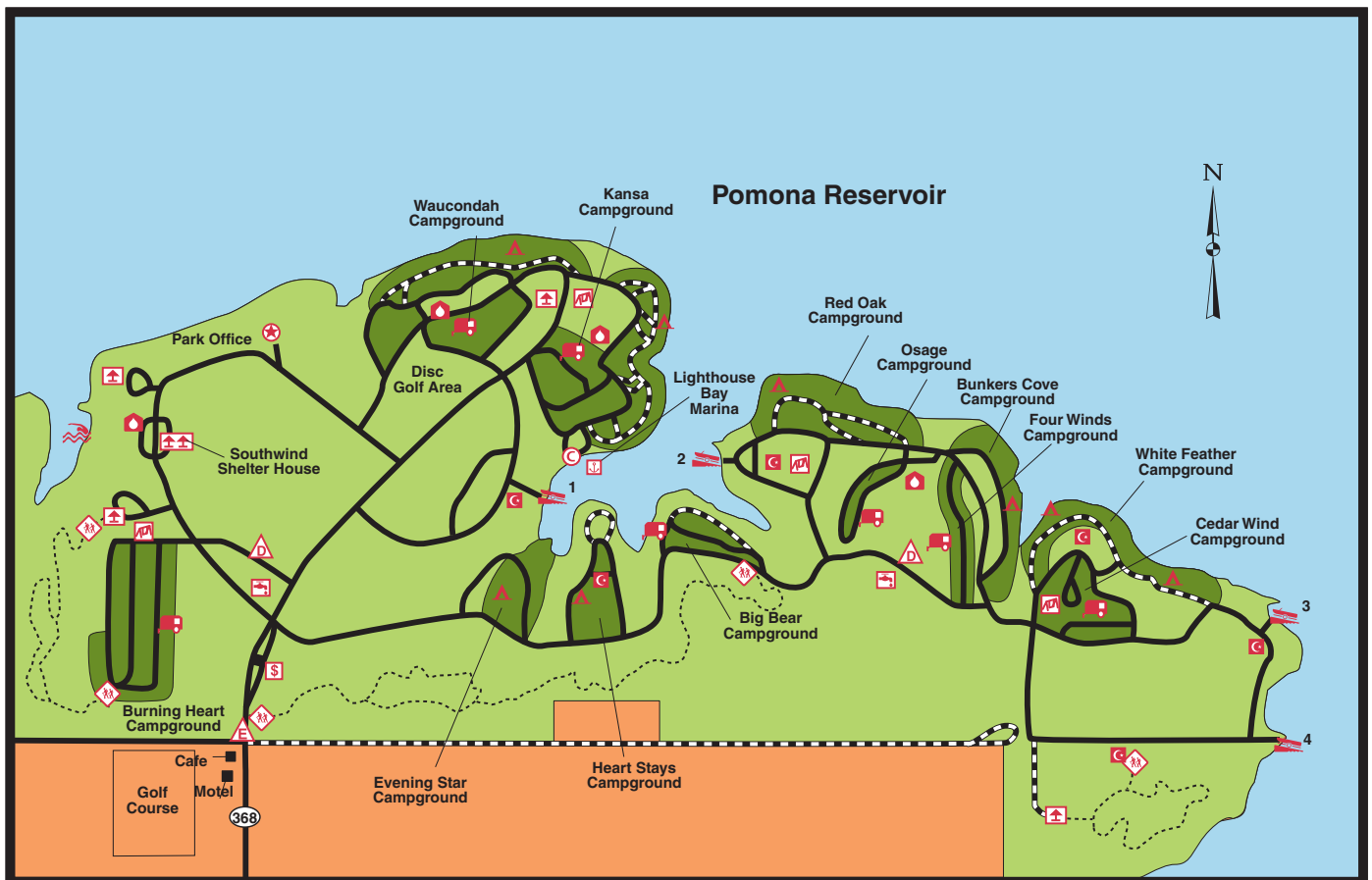
restrooms, a kitchenette, a large multi-purpose room, and restful

porch areas. Call the park office for availability and reservations. A swim beach and bath house are located in the park, as well as picnic shelters, playgrounds, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, a nine-hole disc golf course, and 2.5 miles of trails.

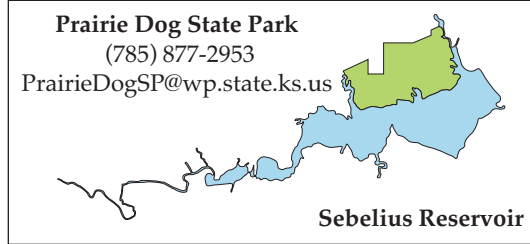
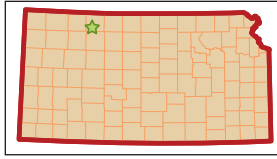
Nearby wildlife areas offer upland bird and waterfowl hunting. Bald eagles visit the lake



in the winter and are often seen perching in shoreline trees or soaring above the lake. A popular destination for fishermen, the 4,000-acre Pomona Reservoir offers some of the best crappie and catfish angling in Kansas, as well as good populations of walleye, white bass, and large-mouth bass.



Prairie Dog State Park



A prime place to experience the shortgrass prairies of western Kansas, Prairie Dog State Park occupies 1,150 acres on the shores of Keith Sebelius Reservoir in Norton County. The park is home to a thriving prairie dog colony and is the site of one of the last remaining adobe houses in Kansas.

Campsites at Prairie Dog include 40 electric/water sites, 18

electric-only sites, and more than 130 primitive sites. Reservable campsites are available, and two cabins are available for rent. A group campground in the Branded Cedar Area offers shower and restroom facilities and two RV dump stations. A 1.4-mile nature trail complete with interpretive signs is a great place to explore the

park and observe wildlife.

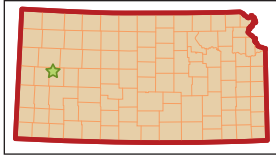
Historical interpretation is a hallmark of this park. Two vintage 19th century buildings are preserved here, including a one-room school and renovated adobe house.

Sebelius Reservoir is well known for its excellent fishing opportunities. In recent years, anglers have found productive fishing for black bass, walleye, wiper, crappie, catfish, and saugeye.

The 6,400-acre Norton Wildlife Area offers good prospects for pheasant, waterfowl, turkey, and rabbits. Both white-tailed and mule deer can be found here, as well as a variety of furbearers.



Scott State Park



Nature trails accommodate hikers, horseback riders, and naturalists and provide excellent opportunities to observe wildlife in natural habitats. Wild turkey,

deer, bobcat, and beaver are common in the area. A horse camp area provides amenities for equestrian visitors.

Hidden in the western Kansas prairie, Scott State Park is a startling oasis of natural springs, deep wooded canyons, and craggy bluffs. The 1,020-acre park surrounds the 100-acre, spring-fed Scott State Fishing Lake.

Rich in history, this park provides an ideal setting for camping, boating, swimming, hiking, hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. The Steele home, the dwelling of the original settlers on the area, has been preserved much as it was more than 100 years ago. The park also boasts the northernmost pueblo in the U. S. - El Cuartelejo.

The park has 55 utility campsites, including some with 50-amp service and water hookups. Three modern shower buildings, 100 primitive campsites and several vault toilets are also available. Visitors enjoy a swimming beach and playground, and a concessions building stocks camping and fishing supplies. Canoe and paddleboat rentals are available seasonally.



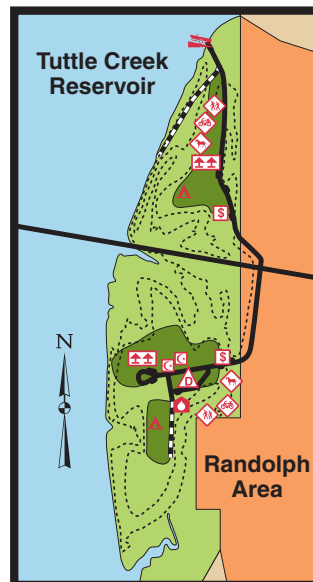
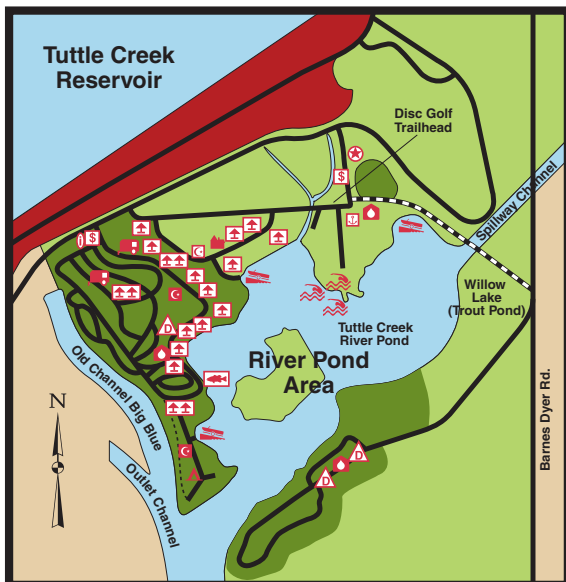
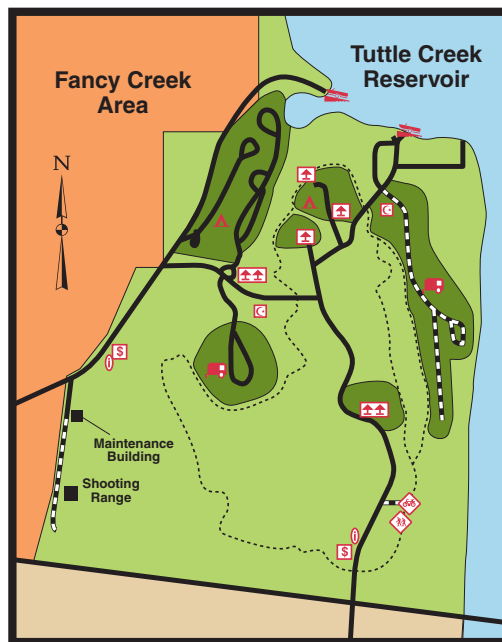
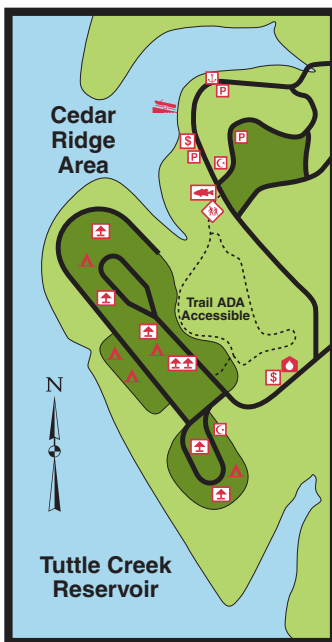
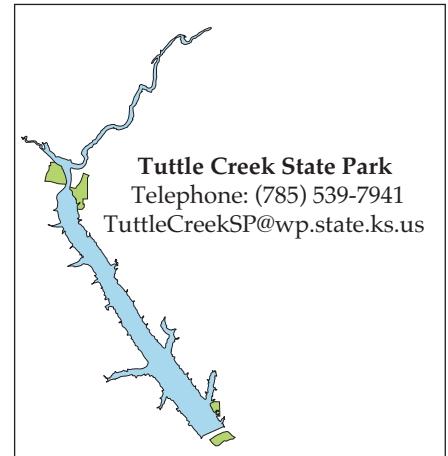
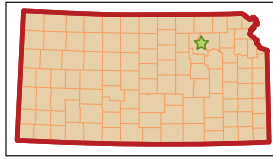
Tuttle Creek State Park

Located near Manhattan in northeast Kansas, Tuttle Creek State Park offers visitors a broad variety of outdoor recreation possibilities and plenty of room to roam.

Tuttle Creek Reservoir, the state's second largest impoundment, offers 12,500 acres of water and about 100 miles of rugged, wooded shoreline to explore.

Four units – River Pond, Cedar

Ridge, Fancy Creek and Randolph – make up the 1,250-acre park. Electric and water hookups, a swimming beach, boat ramps, courtesy docks, and dump stations are available.

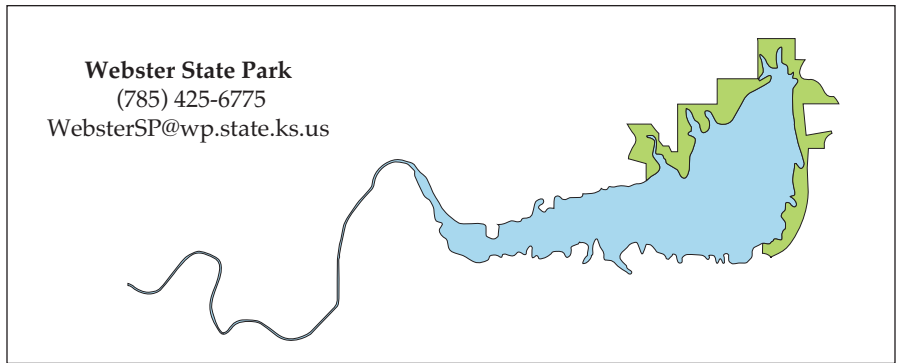
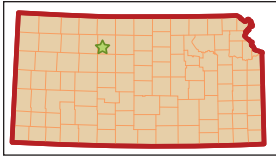


Campgrounds contain 154 water/electric campsites, 44 electric-only campsites, and 500 primitive campsites.

Numerous nature trails, a mountain biking trail, and a scenic equestrian trail offer explorers a variety of routes to experience the aesthetic Flint Hills. Scenic picnic areas, an 18-hole disc golf course, volleyball courts, horse shoe pits, and conveniently-placed restroom and shower facilities accommodate park visitors. The state-of-the-art Fancy Creek Shooting Range is open the first and third weekends of each month and the fourth Thursday.

Excellent channel cat and flathead fishing is available in the lake and in the river above and below the lake. Fair numbers of bass and crappie are caught near standing timber and brush piles, and saugeye can be taken off the face of the dam, as well as in the river below. The 12,000-acre wildlife area adjacent to the park offers excellent hunting and wildlife watching.

Webster State Park

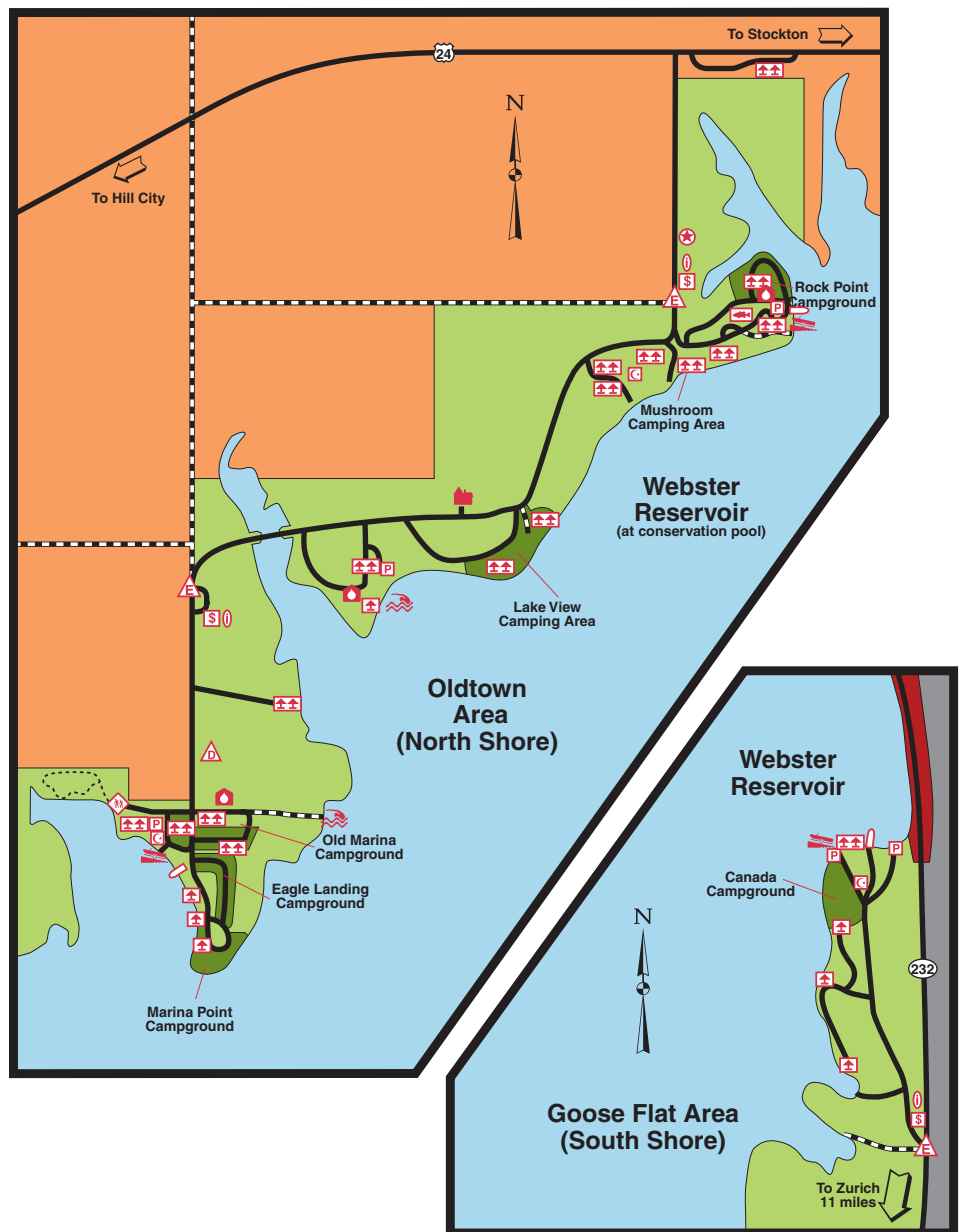


Webster State Park offers a prairie setting of rolling hills and spacious skies. The park occupies 880 acres contained in two tracts on the shores of Webster Reservoir.

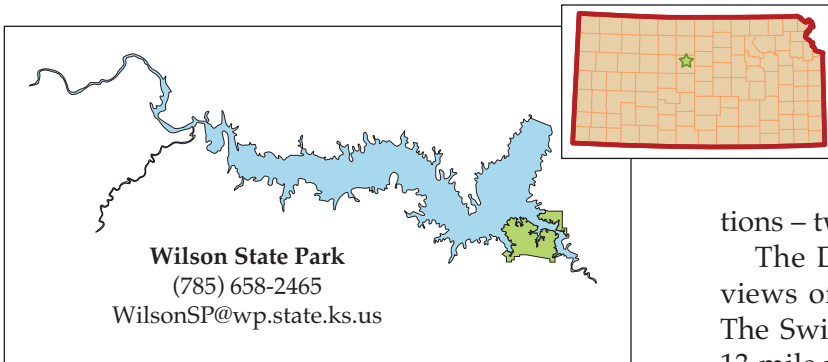
Campers can choose from 74 utility campsites and more than 100 primitive campsites. In addition to boating and fishing, campers at Webster choose from recreational opportunities provided by swimming beaches, a sand volleyball court, horse shoe pits, playgrounds, and a hiking trail. The newest addition to Webster's attractions is a two-bedroom cabin that accommodates six people.

Five boat ramp lanes and three courtesy docks offer boaters ample launching facilities. Pleasure boating, fishing, water skiing, and windsurfing are popular activities at Webster. Primary sportfish include walleye, wipers, largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, and flathead catfish. The park offers floating fishing docks, and there is an easily-accessible fishing pier at the nearby stilling basin.

The 5,750-acre Webster Wildlife Area is home to white-tailed and mule deer, pheasants, quail, waterfowl, wild turkey, squirrels, and numerous songbirds.



Wilson State Park



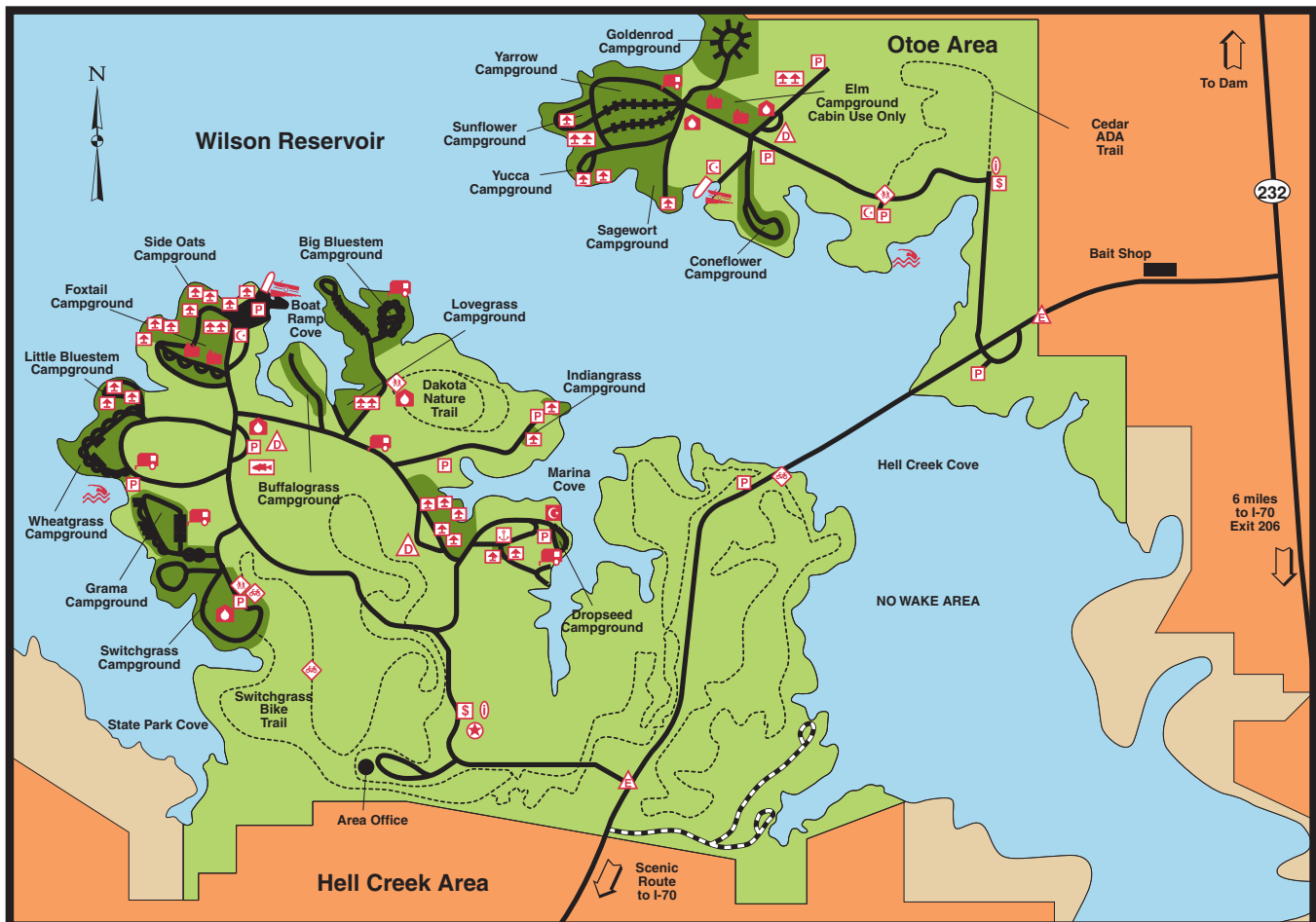
Set in the scenic Smoky Hills region of Kansas, Wilson State Park provides convenient access to one of the state's prime water recreation areas.

The park's 945 acres consist of two areas – Hell Creek and Otoe – both situated on the south side of the 9,000-acre Wilson Reservoir. Utility and primitive campsites, day-use areas, a swimming beach, boating access, a marina, and trails provide enjoy-

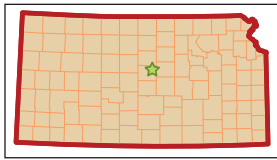
able alternatives for visitors. Water hookups and shower buildings are available April through September. Frost-free water hydrants and several vault toilets are open through the winter. For RV campers, the park has three dump stations – two in Hell Creek and one in Otoe.

The Dakota Trail gives visitors one of the best views of the Kansas prairie and Wilson Reservoir. The Switchgrass Bike Trail offers bicyclists a scenic 13-mile route. Cedar Trail in the Otoe area is a handicapped-accessible, one-mile loop with an asphalt surface.

Wilson State Park offers excellent opportunities to view and photograph wildlife, including deer, bobwhite quail, waterfowl, numerous songbirds, and migratory birds. The adjacent 8,000-acre Wilson Wildlife Area offers an array of hunting opportunities. Famous for its striped bass and walleye fishing, Wilson attracts thousands of anglers each year.



Mushroom Rock State Park

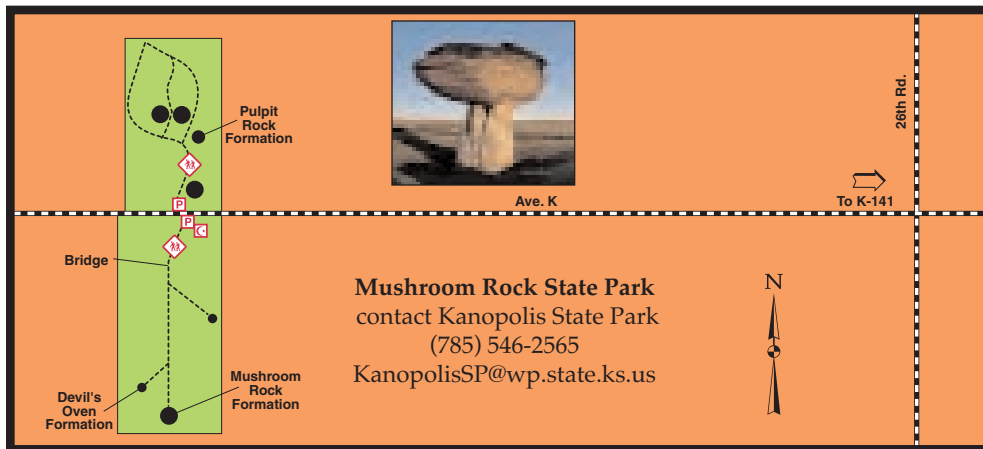


Mushroom Rock State Park is a geological phenomenon of sandstone spheres balanced on softer pedestals of sandstone. The power of erosion weathered away

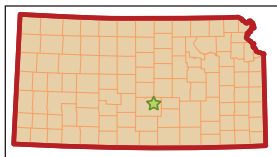
the softer portions of sandy rock. The spheres of the naturally-cemented portions of the sandstone are what we see today.

The Smoky Hill Wagon Trail crossed in this vicinity. These unusual formations, which resemble giant mushrooms reaching for the sky, served as landmarks and meeting places for Native Americans and pioneers.

Managed by staff from nearby Kanopolis State Park, Mushroom Rock is a unique site in a history-rich region.



Sand Hills State Park

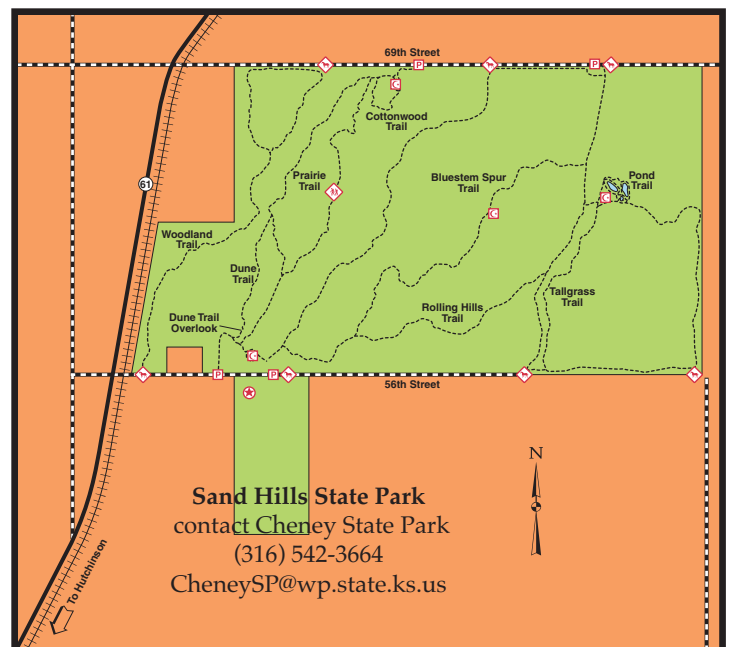


A unique natural area, Sand Hills State Park is a wildlife watcher's delight. Located northeast of

Hutchinson in Reno County, the park features an excellent system of trails that winds through 1,123 acres of sand dunes, native prairie, wetlands, and woodlands. Visitors are limited to walk-in access to help protect the area's natural features. A trail access permit is required for persons 16 years of age or older.

Two wildlife observation blinds allow visitors a close-up view of ducks, geese, songbirds, deer, muskrats, and more. The most popular activities at Sand Hills are hiking and horseback riding. Eight different trails provide hikers and horseback riders a variety of natural environments. The trails range from one mile to almost four miles and are open throughout the year. Most trails start from four parking lots located on 56th Street or 69th Street.

Archery deer and turkey and upland game hunting are available only by special permit. Contact the Cheney State Park office for information.



State Park Regulations

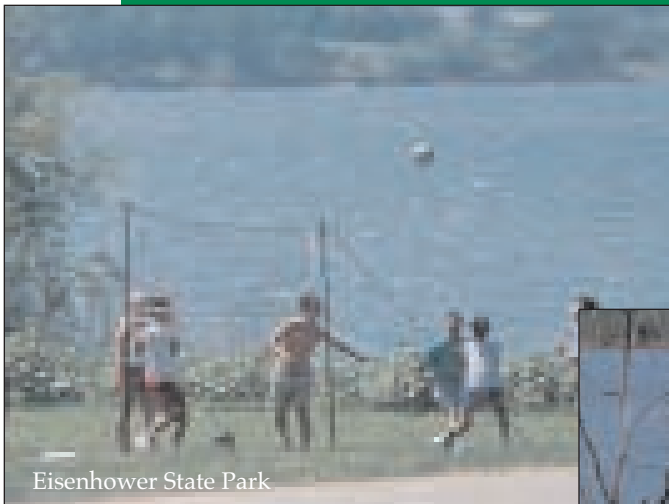
1. A current motor vehicle permit is required for every motorized vehicle entering the park.
2. Vehicles are permitted on improved roads and parking areas only.
3. A camper may stay at one campground up to 14 consecutive days and may extend an additional 14 days only with written permission from the manager.
4. Fires are allowed in fireplaces, fire rings, and cooking grills only.
5. Swimming is at your own risk and recommended only at swimming beach areas.
6. Beverages containing more than 3.2 percent alcohol are not permitted. Kegs are prohibited in some state parks.
7. Pets must be restrained on a leash not longer than 10 feet or otherwise confined.
8. A special event permit is required for any

event involving entrance fees, sales, organized competition, amplified sound, use of temporary structures (does not include common camping gear or blinds), or reservation of a specific site or facility.

9. Quiet hours are 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Actions that alarm, anger, or disturb others are prohibited. Failure to comply may result in expulsion from the park and a notice to appear in court.

This summary highlights only a portion of the current regulations. For a complete listing of the state park rules and regulations, contact a state park office or KDWP, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124-8174; (620) 672-5911.

Complete regulations are also available at the KDWP website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us.



Cabins Offer Lake House Experience

Looking for a special year-round Kansas state park experience? Rental cabins are available throughout the year at 14 Kansas state parks, and KDWP continues to add new cabins to your state park system. As of March 2007, Kansas state parks offered 51 completed cabins, with another 18 in various stages of planning and construction. As funds become available, even more are expected in the future. These cabins feature all the comforts of home while providing access to the pleasure of parks and lakes across the state.

Hunters, anglers, hikers, bird-watchers, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts can choose from a variety of cabins, ranging from primitive to modern. Scenic surroundings and economical rental

fees provide an enticing reprieve from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

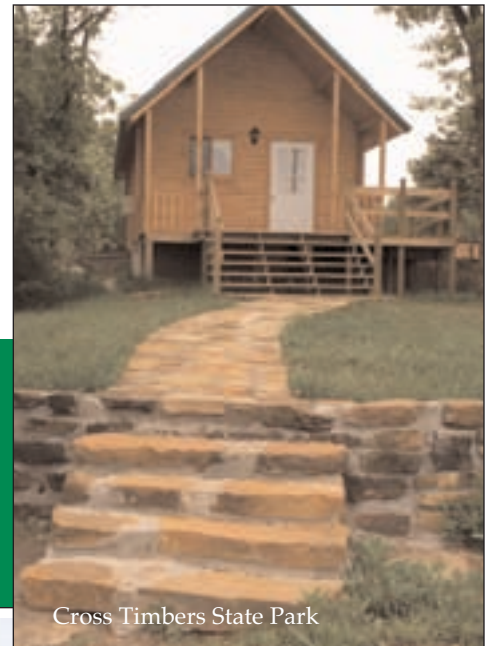
Some state park cabins feature amenities such as full bathroom with shower; kitchen with microwave, refrigerator, and cook-top stove; beds for as many as nine people; screened-in porch; fire ring; and barbecue grill. Heating and air conditioning, table and chairs, basic pots and pans, and table service for four are also offered at many cabins, making them all-season getaways. Cabins without water or full bathrooms are located near park shower houses.

Reservations are required, and cabins are in high demand, so renters are encouraged to call well in advance of a planned trip to make sure a cabin is available.

Some are handicapped accessible. For a list of all state park cabins, go to the KDWP website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us. Click "State Parks," then "Parks With Cabins." Prices vary depending on location, timing, and amenities. Weekly and monthly rates are available.

Phone the state park of your choice and plan a home-state vacation or weekend getaway with all the comforts of home and the outdoor recreational opportunities of one of many fine Kansas state parks. Parks with cabins are listed on Page 3 of this booklet.

LOCATION	SERVICES			SCHEDULED FOR CONSTRUCTION
	PRIMITIVE YURT	PRIMITIVE CABIN	MODERN CABIN	
Cedar Bluff		2	3	
Cheney			7	
Crawford			1	1 modern
Cross Timbers			3	
Eisenhower	2	1		2 modern
El Dorado		5	5	
Fall River				2 modern
Glen Elder				2 modern
Hillsdale				2 modern
Kanopolis				2 modern
Lovewell		6		
Milford			3	
Perry			4	
Pomona				2 modern
Prairie Dog		2		
Tuttle Creek			4	3 modern
Webster			1	
Wilson			2	2 modern



Cross Timbers State Park



Cheney State Park

Park Visitors Hit The Trail!

At one time, Kansas trails were an essential part of the state's pioneering economy. The Santa Fe, the Oregon, the Chisholm — these are just a few trails Kansas helped make famous. Although modern highway systems have made these trails obsolete, demand has increased for recreational trails: places to hike, bicycle, ride horses, and just plain enjoy nature.

This shifting demand for access to the land has created a new interest in public trails. In response, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has put new emphasis on developing and maintaining trails at state parks and wildlife areas across the state. Currently, the department maintains 480 miles of recreational trails, enhancing the economic and environmental value of the Sunflower State's park system.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also maintains trails at many of the state's major reservoirs. Some of these trails dovetail with state park trails, creating expansive hiking experiences.

Kansas trails provide a wide range of benefits. Many trails have historic value, tracing the footsteps of pioneers such as Lewis and Clark, Zebulon Pike, and John C. Fremont. Trails provide an economic boost to local communities because trail users spend money when they travel. Trails also provide people with a better appreciation for wildlife and natural resources. Trails get people close to flora, fauna, and natural geological formations that roads and highways just can't access.

Not the least of trail benefits is personal health. Studies show that walking and bicycling can condition the heart and lungs, reduce weight, and lower blood pressure and cholesterol. And the natural settings of Kansas state park trails provide a renewing of the spirit and peace of mind seldom found in the urban landscape.

So get in step with the future. Discover Kansas trails, truly a moving experience.

LOCATION	SERVICES			NUMBER OF TRAILS/ TOTAL MILES
	HIKING TRAILS	BIKING TRAILS	EQUESTRIAN TRAILS (* camping)	
Cedar Bluff	1	1	1	1 trail, 5 miles
Cheney	2			2 trails, .8 miles
Clinton	3	1		3 trails, 29.75 miles
Crawford	4	4		4 trails, 8.25 miles
Cross Timbers	5	4		5 trails, 15.75 miles
Eisenhower	3	1	3*	3 trails, 20.75 miles
El Dorado	6	5	1*	6 trails, 19.2 miles
Elk City	4	2		5 trails, 10.75 miles
Fall River	5	5		5 trails, 6.5 miles
Glen Elder	3			3 trails, 7.5 miles
Hillsdale	2	2	1*	2 trails, 39 miles
Kanopolis	5	2	1*	5 trails, 31.52 miles
Meade	1	1		1 trail, .8 miles
Milford	4	4	1	4 trails, 13.6 miles
Mushroom Rock	1			1 trail, .5 miles
Perry	2	1	1*	2 trails, 40 miles
Pomona	3	2		3 trails, 3 miles
Prairie Dog	1	1		1 trail, 1.4 miles
Prairie Spirit RT	1	1		1 trail, 33 miles
Sand Hills	8		5	8 trails, 12.6 miles
Scott	2	1	1*	2 trails, 7.3 miles
Tuttle Creek	4	2	1*	4 trails, 19.5 miles
Webster	1			1 trail, 3 miles
Wilson	3	1		3 trails, 22.75 miles



Wilson State Park

State Park Contacts

Cedar Bluff PO Box 76A Ellis, KS 67637 E-mail: CedarBluffSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 726-3212	Fall River 144 Highway 105 Toronto, KS 66777 E-mail: CrossTimbersSP@wp.state.ks.us	(620) 637-2213	Perry 5441 W Lake Rd. Ozawkie, KS 66070-9802 E-mail: PerrySP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 246-3449
Cheney/ Sand Hills 16000 NE 50th St. Cheney, KS 67025-8487 E-mail: CheneySP@wp.state.ks.us	(316) 542-3664	Glen Elder RR 1, PO Box 162A Glen Elder, KS 67446 E-mail: GlenElderSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 545-3345	Pomona 22900 S Hwy 368 Vassar, KS 66543-9162 E-mail: PomonaSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 828-4933
Clinton 798 N 1415th Rd. Lawrence, KS 66049 E-mail: ClintonSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 842-8562	Hillsdale 26001 W 255th St. Paola, KS 66071 E-mail: HillsdaleSP@wp.state.ks.us	(913) 783-4507	Prairie Dog PO Box 431 Norton, KS 67654 E-mail: PrairiedogSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 877-2953
Crawford 1 Lake Rd. Farlington, KS 66734-4045 E-mail: CrawfordSP@wp.state.ks.us	(620) 362-3671	Kanopolis/Mushroom Rock 200 Horsethief Rd. Marquette, KS 67464 E-mail: KanopolisSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 546-2565	Scott 520 W Scott Lake Dr. Scott City, KS 67871-1075 E-mail: ScottSP@wp.state.ks.us	(620) 872-2061
Cross Timbers 144 Highway 105 Toronto, KS 66777 E-mail: CrossTimbersSP@wp.state.ks.us	(620) 637-2213	Lovewell RR 1, PO Box 66A Webber, KS 66970 E-mail: LovewellSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 753-4971	Tuttle Creek 5800-A River Pond Rd. Manhattan, KS 66502 E-mail: TuttleCreekSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 539-7941
Eisenhower 29810 S Fairlawn Rd. Osage City, KS 66523-9046 E-mail: EisenhowerSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 528-4102	Meade 13051 V Rd. Meade, KS 67864 E-mail: MeadeSP@wp.state.ks.us	(620) 873-2572	Webster 1210 Nine Rd. Stockton, KS 67669-8834 E-mail: WebsterSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 425-6775
El Dorado 618 NE Bluestem Rd. El Dorado, KS 67042-8643 E-mail: EldoradoSP@wp.state.ks.us	(316) 321-7180	Milford 8811 State Park Rd. Milford, KS 66514 E-mail: MilfordSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 238-3014	Wilson RR1, PO Box 181 Sylvan Grove, KS 67481 E-mail: WilsonSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 658-2465
Elk City 4825 Squaw Creek Rd. Independence, KS 67301 E-mail: ElkCitySP@wp.state.ks.us	(620) 331-6295	Kanopolis 200 Horsethief Rd. Marquette, KS 67464 E-mail: KanopolisSP@wp.state.ks.us	(785) 546-2565		

Other KDWP Offices

Office of the Secretary
1020 S Kansas, Rm. 200
Topeka, KS 66612-1327
(785) 296-2281

Pratt Operations Office
512 SE 25th Ave.
Pratt, KS 67124-8174
(620) 672-5911

Region 1 Office
1426 Hwy 183 Alt., PO Box 338
Hays, KS 67601-0338
(785) 628-8614

Region 2 Office
300 SW Wanamaker
Topeka, KS 66608
(785) 273-6740

Region 3 Office
1001 W McArtor Rd.
Dodge City, KS 67801-6024
(620) 227-8609

Region 4 Office
6232 E 29th St. North
Wichita, KS 67220
(316) 683-8069

Region 5 Office
1500 W 7th St., PO Box 777
Chanute, KS 66720-0777
(620) 431-0380

Emporia Research & Survey Office
1830 Merchant, PO Box 1525
Emporia, KS 66801-1525
(620) 342-0658

Kansas City District Office
14639 W 95th St.
Lenexa, KS 66215
(913) 894-9113

Staying Out of the State Park Dog House

by Wendy Bowles

conservation worker, Kanopolis State Park

photos by Mike Blair

It's fun to include the family dogs on state park trips. Follow the regulations and some simple rules, and you, your dog, and your fellow campers will enjoy your stay.



For many of us, dogs are part of our families. They are givers of unconditional love and devotion, and they go with us everywhere, even to the lake. Enjoying the companionship of your dog at a state park is acceptable and perfectly legal if you do it right.

We've all seen the "poor dog" that was left in a car, the dog on a chain tangled under the picnic table for hours, or the dog that tried to bite a child. And whatever the setting, we wondered, "why didn't they leave that dog at home?"

When these things happen at state parks, they lead to conflict among campers. A dog is a problem if it isn't quiet, controlled, and properly cared for.

Written and unwritten rules help guide dog owners on state land. State regulations regarding dogs are designed for public safety. The unwritten rules of dog etiquette are mat-

ters of courtesy in shared spaces. Both are important. However, not following state regulations may result in a ticket and fines.



Dogs must be kept on a leash or tether for their own safety, as well as the safety of other park users.

Following is a summary of state regulations. Dogs are not allowed in marked swimming areas, public buildings or structures. And dogs must be kept on a leash or tether not more than 10 feet long, unless they are being used during a hunting season, field trial, noncommercial hunting dog training, or department authorized event. Dogs used to assist the visually or hearing impaired are not restricted by this regulation.

Dog owners must be considerate of others. If a dog doesn't behave at home, it will be trouble in a state park where it will encounter other people and pets. In some cases, it's better to board the dog and enjoy your outing without possible problems.

What follows could be considered "Dog Etiquette 101" for bringing pets to a state park. Ideas are a compilation from park employees and Kat Farres of the Salina Kennel club. These sugges-

tions can ensure a great park experience for your dog, your fellow campers, and you.

First, always make sure your dog's collar has a current rabies tag, as well as a tag with your name, address, and phone number. A third temporary tag with your cell phone and campsite information will help if your dog becomes lost. It's also a good idea to bring a copy of the dog's rabies vaccination certificate, in the unlikely case of a biting incident.

The dog should be kept under control at all times, and barking should be kept to a minimum. Barking is the most common complaint of campers. Since barking usually occurs when a dog is left alone, don't leave your pet for extended periods. Don't leave your dog alone in a tent or leave it tied in the open at your. Also, since it's natural for dogs to be protective, don't tie your pet near the entrance door of your camper, in case emergency personnel need access.

Always clean up after your dog. The park isn't a giant backyard. Carry a plastic sack and pick up all droppings so others don't have to deal with it.

It's illegal to let your dog run loose on hiking trails. Dogs might love it, but it is against regulation, and it could be dangerous for the dog and unnerving for other trail users. Also, don't allow your dog to harass wildlife near the trails. Follow the regulations and keep your dog on a leash. Some state parks allow horses on trails. Keep dogs away from horses at all times to prevent kicking or possible runaways.

This short article is a guide to



Your dog should have access to shade, shelter in case of a storm, and water should always be in easy reach. A happy dog is less likely to bark or cause other problems.

make camping with your dog more enjoyable for everyone. Your pet depends on you for care at home, where things are familiar and it knows the routine. But special attention is necessary to keep your dog safe and happy while camping. Animals react to being away from home in their own way. For the most part, dogs just want to be with their family, so bring them along and enjoy your stay. However, use your best judgment and realize that sometimes the best thing to do is leave them at home. 🐾



Take your dog on the hiking trails, but keep it on the leash. Be considerate of other hikers, bikers and especially horse riders. Always pick up your dog's droppings.

Following are a few suggestions to keep everyone happy when the dog comes camping.

- Bring your dog's toys and dishes and bed, or use a familiar pet carrier to board the animal overnight. Dogs like familiar things.
- Bring your dog's favorite food from home in a water and mouse-proof container. Wildlife in state parks can be bold about stealing food. Any unprotected dog food can attract unwanted company – and barking at the wild intruder.
- Make sure your dog has a spot that provides shelter, shade and access to water.
- Sweep the campsite for possible danger before tying your dog outside. Glass, gasoline, oil, antifreeze, fish-hooks, fish bait, or discarded food could pose a danger to your pet.
- Remember that new smells, surroundings, and routines can make dogs nervous and stressed. Be patient with your dog in a state park setting, and it should quickly adjust.

Edited by Mark Shoup

ANY PHEASANTS?

Editor:

I have been receiving your magazine for a while now, and I must say that I am more impressed every time I read it. As a hunter, I have seen a lot of the landscape that Kansas has to offer. My father and I live in Illinois, so we only go out to hunt in the fall. I was just writing to see if you knew what the pheasant population was going to be next season.

*Patrick Touchette
Millstadt, Illinois*

Dear Mr. Touchette:

Thanks for the kind words on the magazine. Our small, dedicated staff appreciate those comments. I wish I could give you some insight on next year's pheasant season, but there are a lot of factors that could have an impact between now and then. In some far western counties, the severe winter weather and heavy snows may reduce the population of nesting birds this spring.

However, we do have much more soil moisture than we had last year. That could translate to better nesting and brood-rearing cover this spring. Then we have to see what early summer brings. If we have 100-degree days in June, or if the wheat harvest is early, nesting success can be reduced.

KDWP staff will produce an excellent upland bird forecast that will provide just the information you're looking for. We'll mail it, or you can find it on our website. It should be ready by Sept. 15.

-Miller

BALD EAGLE

Editor:

I am sending a picture of a bald eagle found a few miles south of Delphos on the Solomon River. The picture was taken by our 10-year-old son, Hunter Helget. He and his dad enjoy the outdoors and on one of our wintry January days came across the bald eagle.

I am sending a few of the shots he took. Thought it would be neat to put in your magazine. If you are not able to we understand.

*Rebekah Helget
Delphos*

CHICKADEE CHECKOFF CENTS

Editor:

I am supportive of Kansas wildlife programs and want to continue to be so, but I have a small complaint. In the past, I have marked the so-called "Chickadee Checkoff" on my Kansas income tax form, which contributes, I believe, \$1 to your efforts. This year, your department sent me a mailing costing 24 cents postage (just shy of 25 percent of my contribution) to thank me for contributing to the program and asking for continued support. (Not coincidentally, I'm sure, this came near the beginning of tax preparation season.)

This does not strike me as wise or efficient use of voluntary funding. I didn't need this thanks/reminder; I know it's appreciated.

*Bill Gaeddert
Lawrence*

Dear Mr. Gaeddert:

I appreciate your feelings. However, the \$1 "box" you reference is only on the federal form and is for support of presidential elections, as I recall. Our Chickadee

Checkoff box is only on the state form and allows any donation amount.

Using the postcard is the cheapest way to remind our gracious contributors to donate again. I hope you can appreciate that any volunteer donation program is only as successful as it is advertised. We hold our advertising only to radio commercials, promotions through tax preparers, and contact with former contributors only by this postcard.

The single contact with the postcard reminder is very important in maintaining the relatively meager amount of donations we gain each year. Less than 2 percent of eligible taxpayers contribute, so it is critical that we maintain their commitment.

Thanks for understanding, and we appreciate your contributions to the Chickadee Checkoff.

*-Ken Brunson, wildlife
diversity coordinator, Pratt*

TWO LOVE THE PICS

Editor:

Congratulations to Mike Blair on a wonderful Jan./Feb. 2007 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine. The collection of photos taken in Kansas are amazing. As someone who watches the sky and photographs wildlife, I really enjoyed this issue.

*Verlyn Regehr
Denver*

Editor:

After absorbing, for the first time, all the photos of our state's natural treasures provided in the Jan./Feb. 2007 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine's photo issue, I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated it. I believe it is worthy to be an expensive "coffee table" book. What a gift to receive it as a regular issue.

We grew up in Barber and Sherman counties, respectively. Our son grew up in Derby; he now lives on the coast of California. He will be receiving this in the mail from us.

*Sharon Thom
Derby*



WAY outside

BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"IF HE SAYS, 'USE A PURPLE CRANK BAIT', I'M USING A PURPLE CRANK BAIT"

YOUNG READER

Editor:

I love your pictures and stories. I hunt with my dad and dog a lot, so I read the hunting stories. I shot my first turkey in the spring of 2006.

My dad owns a lake house, and I caught a 35-pound catfish. I think your articles are very cool.

*Ryan Schulteis
Lawrence*

CAT ON A HUNT

Editor:

I had a fabulous trip to Kansas last fall. We have hunted in Nebraska for many years, and this year I thought we'd give Kansas a try. Nice job. The Walk-In Hunting is just terrific. We were able to hunt so much acreage and see so many birds, it was a great trip, and we applaud your office for putting together such a great program.

On a side note, when we were in Rawlins County, we flushed out a mountain lion. It was about 100 pounds, 30 inches at the shoulder, and had a long tail. I'd be hard pressed to believe it was something else.

*Johnny Fisher
Clark, Colorado*

TURKEY RECORDS

Editor:

I would like to see the state turkey records sub-divided into species. To me, the size of an eastern wild turkey can often downplay the size of a Rio Grande turkey.

For example, I took a young man out one weekend on a youth turkey hunt. He shot the biggest Rio Grande turkey I have ever seen. It had a typical score of 70 $\frac{4}{8}$ points, but if you look in the Kansas state record book, it looks like a chicken in comparison to some of the turkeys killed that are obviously easterns.

It's like catching a 16-pound largemouth bass and not acknowledging it because we catch 90-pound flatheads. They're both fish. The same can be said for deer. We have two different species of deer. We sub-divide all other like species into their own category, so we should do that for turkeys too.

*Garrett Roe
Hays*

Dear Mr. Roe:

There are a couple of reasons that we don't have separate records for easterns and Rio Grandes. The main reason is that we have large areas within the state that are occupied by hybrids – either eastern/Rio Grande or eastern/Merriam. We know approximately where these areas are located but not exactly. You can see

the approximate distribution of the subspecies on our website at www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/hunting/turkey.

If we simply allowed hunters to list the subspecies on the application without any agency authorization, we would end up with numerous hybrids being submitted as Rio Grande birds. This, of course, would still result in inflated scores for the Rio Grande category. Even if the birds had to be inspected by the agency, our staff wouldn't be able to positively identify the bird to subspecies. Like I stated earlier, we don't know the exact distributions of the two pure subspecies, and some of the hybrids can look very similar or identical to the pure Rio Grande birds.

To know for sure would require submitting a blood sample to a genetics lab for comparison with pure populations of each subspecies. This is very costly (more than \$100 per bird) and doesn't make sense for the agency when we have so many other pressing needs, such as land acquisition, habitat improvement, equipment purchases, and more.

Your question did make me wonder how the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) classifies birds into subspecies because they don't require any type of certification by wildlife professionals. I looked at their records for Rio Grandes, and many of the listings from Kansas fall within our hybrid zones. In fact, there are a couple of birds listed as Rio Grandes in the NWTf record book that were shot in Stafford County. We have a small, isolated pocket of pure easterns that were stocked in Stafford County, and those birds in the record book were probably hybrids and even "pure" easterns.

You can check out the NWTf records yourself at www.nwtf.org/all_about_turkeys/turkey_records.php. As you can see, it is quite difficult and costly to definitively differentiate between the subspecies. Thus, as far as our agency is concerned, a turkey is a turkey. I'm sure the young man you took hunting was proud of his bird regardless of its score. A score of 70 $\frac{4}{8}$ is certainly a big bird in my book. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me.

*-Jim Pitman, small game
coordinator, Emporia*

\$6,200 FINE

On Dec. 4, 2005, an anonymous call was made to the KDWP office in Pratt. The caller reported that a man had killed a deer that he didn't have a permit for. The caller also reported where the poacher lived, so I made a visit to the suspect at his home in Climax.

When I met him at his front door, I told him about the information I'd received and explained I was there to investigate. He told me he had killed a buck on the opening day of firearms season, and that he did have a permit. I asked if he would show me the deer and his permit. He then showed me a large-racked deer head in a freezer in his carport and some packages in the freezer that he said were deer meat. He also handed me a Unit 12 deer permit and said it was for the buck in the freezer. I asked him where the tag portion of his permit was, and he said that it was with the deer carcass where he had dumped it. Because a hunter is required to keep his tag with the meat, I asked if he would take me to the carcass to retrieve the tag.

While driving, I asked where he'd killed the deer. He gave me the location, but it was clear he didn't realize that it was in Unit 14, not in Unit 12, where his permit was valid.

At a bridge where he said he had dumped the carcass, we found a deer hide he said was not from his deer, so I asked him to show me where he'd killed the deer.

As we arrived at the property, he suddenly said, "We're

about a mile too far."

"A mile too far from what?" I asked.

"A mile too far from Unit 12," he said. I was sure he had just realized he was claiming he'd killed the deer in the wrong unit. I asked him where he was standing when he fired the shot that killed the deer, and he told me he was standing behind a row of trees on the property. I asked him if the spent bullet casing would still be where he was when he'd shot, but he told me he'd picked up the empty case.

I then told him that his story wasn't making sense and that he needed to just be truthful about what happened. He asked what kind of trouble he was in, and I told him it looked like it might be deer-poaching trouble.

He then told me that he had killed the deer the Saturday prior to the season opening in northern Elk County and that he'd fired from the window of his truck. He also told me he'd purchased the permit after killing the deer so that he could tag the deer and claim he'd shot it during season. He took me to where he'd actually dumped the carcass and to the real location where he'd killed the deer.

When we arrived, I had Chase, my department K-9, conduct an area search for the spent casing. In short order, Chase found a .270-caliber casing in the ditch, and the man said it was from the round used to make the kill. He put all this in writing.

I issued the man five tickets for the deer he poached: taking a deer in closed season, hunting deer with the aid of a vehicle, possession of an

untagged deer, unlawful discharge of a firearm from a roadway, and illegally killing a trophy-class buck without a valid permit. The man pleaded guilty in Elk County District Court to all five charges, and Magistrate Judge Martina Hubbell ordered him to pay \$6,200 in fines.

— Dan Melson, natural resource officer, Eureka

KBA REWARD

As the poacher was washing the hair, blood, and other evidence out of the bed of his truck at the Sedan car wash, he made the comment to a young man in the next stall that he had just killed two deer. Unfortunately for the poacher, the young guy took issue with the poaching and wrote down his tag number. He then called the Sedan police.

As the poacher left the car wash, a Sedan police officer stopped him for having an obstructed license tag. While talking to the officer, the poacher made the statement that he had just killed two deer.

The officer said, "You will wait here; the natural resource officer is on his way, and he wants to talk to you."

When NRO Chris Hammerschmidt arrived, the poacher told Hammerschmidt he had shot two deer, and they were at his mother-in-law's farm. He took Hammerschmidt to the farm and showed him the deer — two does that were still warm.

Hammerschmidt seized the deer and the poacher's rifle and charged him with two counts of taking deer during closed season, two counts of taking deer without a valid

permit, and two counts of possessing an untagged deer.

The poacher pled guilty to all six charges and was sentenced to 30 days in jail on each count to run concurrently. The jail sentences were suspended, but he was ordered to surrender his gun, a brand new 7mm, and pay \$1,610 in fines and costs.

Hammerschmidt said he likes cases like this. "Sometimes you need an easy one to help balance things out," he said. Feeling like credit should be given where credit is due, Hammerschmidt submitted the young man who called the police for a Kansas Bowhunters Association (KBA) reward. The KBA paid a \$250 reward to the young man, who was surprised; he was not expecting a reward.

KBA has joined with several other organizations including, the Kansas Wildlife Officers Association, the Kansas Muzzleloaders Association, the Kansas Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation, and Shikar Safari International in offering rewards up to \$1,500 for persons providing information on big game poaching and violations. Persons who report poachers remain unanimous.

To receive such a reward, provide as much information as you can and contact a local natural resource officer. All officers are listed in the Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary. Those with information about a violation of wildlife law may also phone Operation Game Thief toll-free at 1-877-426-3843. —Bob Funke, district law enforcement supervisor, Fredonia

NEW CRP

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency has implemented a new Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) called Conservation Practice 38 (CP-38). A state-specific wildlife conservation practice, CP-38 will give states the flexibility to design conservation programs to fit their own specific wildlife needs.

Initially, CP-38 will affect up to 500,000 acres, with those acres allocated to states based upon cropland acreage in each state. Individual states are expected to receive as many as 30,000 acres. States in turn will design conservation practices and policies specific to their habitat and wildlife. USDA officials expect the practice to be available for landowner enrollment by December 2007.

The USDA has also decided to reallocate Conservation Practice 33 (CP-33). Commonly referred to as Bobwhite Buffers, CP-33 is a conservation practice targeted at improving bobwhite quail habitat through the creation of habitat buffers along row crops. These transitional, or edge, areas provide important habitat for quail, grassland birds, and other wildlife. States that have used up existing allocations will be allowed to continue to enroll acres in CP-33.

—Pheasants Forever

RECORD LOW ACCIDENTS

A new report from the National Safety Council shows that accidental firearm-related fatalities remain at record lows, and accidents involving youths continue to decline significantly. The downward trends are occurring even as firearm ownership rises in the U.S.

Statistics in the council's 2007 "Injury Facts" report show a 40-percent decrease in accidental firearm-related fatalities over a 10-year period ending in 2005. The report also shows firearm-related accidents involving children ages 14 and under declined 69 percent

Give Wildlife LIP

KDWP will accept applications for participation in the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) through Sept. 1. This year, the agency has received \$500,000 in funding for LIP from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to aid in the protection and management of high-priority wildlife habitats, including streams and associated riparian areas, playa lakes, and grasslands.

This voluntary program will enable private landowners to receive technical guidance and financial incentives to benefit at-risk species identified in the Kansas Wildlife Action Plan. High-priority species include lesser prairie chicken, black-tailed prairie dog, ferruginous hawk, northern pintail, American avocet, black tern, Cassin's sparrow, whooping crane, green toad, flathead chub, Arkansas darter, and Topeka shiner. Some examples of potential projects to enhance habitat include restoring native vegetation, brush and invasive weed management, and restoring playa hydrology.

To effectively allocate funding, KDWP will limit participation to privately-owned land within the mixed-grass and shortgrass prairie regions west of the Flint Hills. Within this area, special consideration will be given to projects in the Red Hills, Cimarron River Sand Sage, Arkansas River Sand Sage, Smoky Hills, and Playa Lakes areas.

Proposed projects must contribute to the enhancement of at least one high-priority species or its habitat. Landowners also must agree to allow KDWP biologists access to project lands, and the FWS requires that landowners contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost. This match can either be a cash contribution from a non-federal source or in-kind contributions of labor, materials, and equipment use. A committee of specialists will review completed applications based on established rating criteria to ensure that all applicants are considered fairly and that the best projects are chosen.

Landowners interested in participating should contact LIP project coordinator Chris Berens at 785-462-3367, LIP program coordinator Murray Laubhan at 620-672-5911, or the nearest KDWP district biologist. For more information about the grant program, go online to federalaid.fws.gov/lip/lip.html. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance reference number is 15.633.

—Shoup



between 1995 and 2003. Downward trends also are being reported by other sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

—Bullet Points

POWER FOR PRAIRIE

In an example of how corporate expansion can enhance the needs of native wildlife habitat, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, in cooperation with Sunflower Electric Power Corporation,

has purchased 34,000 acres of irrigated cropland and plan to restore it to native grass, imitating the original sand sage prairie. The effort is part of a Sunflower Electric Plant expansion project in Finney County, in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Pheasants Forever, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other conservation groups.

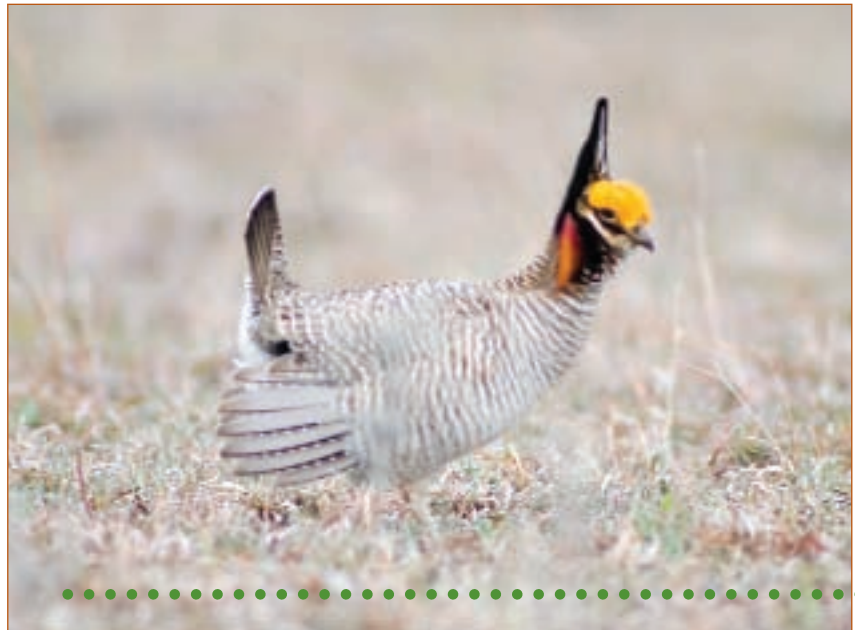
The 34,000-acre site will contribute a sizeable area of permanent grass cover to the Sand Sage Prairie Region of Kansas, which already provides native habitat for

lesser prairie chicken, northern bobwhite quail, and numerous other native species.

Although the primary purpose of the purchase is to obtain the water rights, the deal promises to be good for wildlife, too. The area being purchased is adjacent to 20,000 acres of native sand sage prairie that already provides habitat for lesser prairie chickens, northern bobwhites, loggerhead shrikes, and Cassin's sparrows, among other prairie birds. Together with the 34,000-acre site, the total area will greatly improve native wildlife habitat in Finney and Kearney counties.

"Most of the credit lies with the power companies," according to Randy Rodgers, upland game bird biologist for KDWP. "When KDWP got involved, they were well down the road and headed in the right direction, and I think they have every intention of managing the property well. This has the potential to be one of the best prairie chicken areas anywhere."

—Shoup



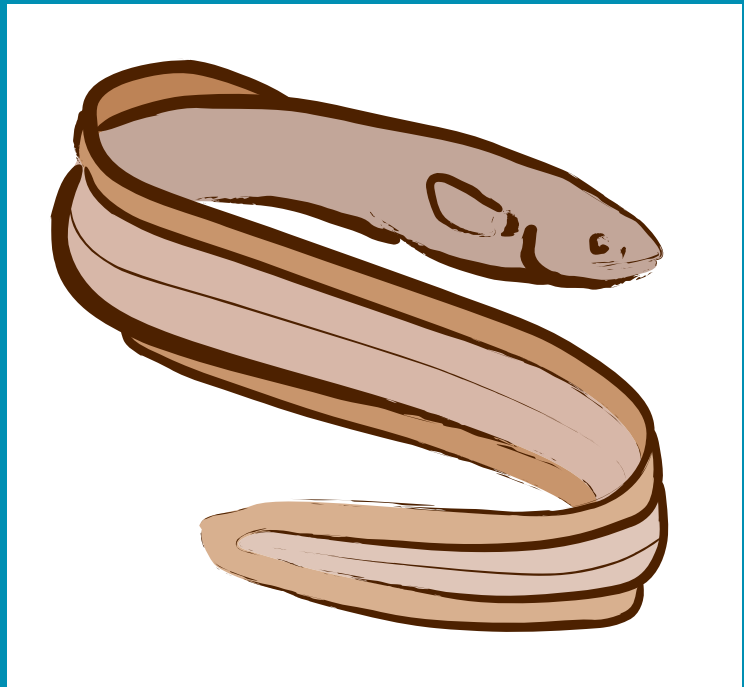
EEL NOT ENDANGERED

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concluded that the American eel is not endangered. In completing a recent review of the eel's status, the agency examined all available information about the American eel population from Greenland south along the North American coast to Brazil in South America and as far inland as the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River drainage. While the eel population has declined in some areas, the species' overall population is not in danger of extinction or likely to become so in the foreseeable future, the agency decided.

Several actions have been taken in an effort to conserve eel populations, including installation of eel ladders for upstream passage at hydropower projects, implementation of state harvest restrictions, and dam removals that open historic eel habitat. In addition, Canadian resource agencies have closed the harvest of eels in the Canadian portion of Lake Ontario, but the Fish & Wildlife Service is exploring options to allow eel fishery sustainability while ensuring adequate conservation measures for the species.

American eels begin life in the Atlantic Ocean's Sargasso Sea near Bermuda. The larvae ride the Gulf Stream for several months until they make their way to Continental Shelf waters. Some eels grow to adulthood in the marine environment; some go into mixed freshwater/saltwater estuaries; some migrate up rivers and streams into Kansas; and some eels move from one habitat to another as they develop. Biologists believe this adaptability among various environments enhances the species' ability to survive despite threats in one or more environments.

—U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service





Promatic Joins QU

A phenomenal clay target game for all ages, sporting clays not only hones shooting skills and firearm responsibility, it also develops long-lasting friendships simply from the camaraderie on the courses and in the field. Sporting clays ranges are set up to simulate shooting challenges encountered while hunting, and the sport is growing in popularity. Sporting clays ranges allow shooters to enjoy the shooting sports year-round while sharpening skills necessary when hunting season opens.

One maker of sporting clay target machines has joined with Quail Unlimited to promote conservation efforts. Promatic is providing grant money through QU for habitat restoration projects in cooperation with private landowners as well as state and federal agencies across the country. By putting on local events and fundraisers, QU chapters raise conservation dollars that are then used for on-the-ground projects locally.

In 2005, Quail Unlimited chapters and partners invested more than \$2.2 million dollars in quail habitat improvements.

—Shoup

Nonresident Antelope

In 2006, Kansas offered the first nonresident antelope permits. Unlimited archery only permits were offered over the counter for \$200 each, and some resident hunters feared competition from nonresident hunters.

It didn't happen. Apparently, hunters would much rather hunt antelope in states such as Wyoming - which boasts a population of more than 400,000 antelope compared to Kansas' estimated 2,000. Only five nonresident archery antelope permits were sold. Of those, no permits were filled. In a follow-up survey, only four of the permit holders indicated that they hunted.

Plans are to continue to offer nonresidents this opportunity, but there are no plans to offer nonresident firearms antelope permits.

—Shoup

Hunting Accidents Down

The number of reported hunting accidents in Kansas dropped to 17 in 2006, down from 20 reported in 2005, according to a KDWP Hunter Education Program report. None of the accidents were fatal.

Swinging on game and its subset, victim moving into line of fire, accounted for 11 incidents. Upland bird hunting was involved in 12 of the incidents; doves, one; waterfowl, one; and turkey, two. The other accident involved poor gun handling before the party went afield.

There were two incidents of failure to properly identify a target (mistaken for game), and four cases of careless gun handling. Sixteen shotguns and one rifle were involved in the incidents, and no bow incidents were reported.

—Shoup



Instructors of the Year

The Advisory Committee to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) Hunter Education Program has named Neil Smith, Winfield, the 2006 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year. An instructor since 2001, Smith has taught and organized classes in Cowley and Sumner counties.

"In nearly six years, Neil has consistently spread the gospel for conservation and hunter education in his workplace, among friends, and among various community organizations," said Alyce Harris, Region 4 area coordinator, in nominating Smith. "He has opened the world of hunting to literally hundreds of certified students, conducted Women On Target events, and assisted with classes wherever he has been needed. Neil is truly a good and dedicated instructor and a friend to instructors and students alike."

Smith spent more than 23 years as a tank commander and military explosive ordinance disposal expert in the Army before retiring to work as a computer classroom manager. During his tenure as a volunteer hunter education instructor, he has conducted Young Hunter Education Challenges, safety fairs, and range officer training classes, and worked closely with Big Brothers/Big Sisters. He also conducts shotgun and home firearm safety classes.

A National Rifle Association certified shotgun instructor, Smith is also a recipient of the KDWP Hunter Education Program's Order of the Buffalo, a peer-recognition honor awarded annually by fellow instructors.

Smith received a Beretta A391 12-gauge shotgun with his award, and the regional honorees each received Henry Golden Boy .22 caliber rifles.

—Shoup

In addition to Smith's award, exceptional instructors in four of KDWP's five regions were named Regional Instructors of the Year. These include the following:

Region 1

Aaron Feist, Sharon Springs

Region 2

Jerry Trudell, Lenexa

Region 3

Jeff Sharp, Holcomb

Region 5

Jerry Howarter, Garnett

BACK TO THE FUTURE

by Mark Shoup



Long-time readers of this column may recall that many have described adventures and misadventures my two sons and I have enjoyed through the years. Seventeen years ago, my oldest son, Logan, then barely old enough to speak, suddenly began uttering full sentences, convincing me that he wanted to go fishing. Unfortunately, I could not get him to repeat the request to my wife, Rose, but we made it out the back door anyway.

A couple of years later, he helped me break writer's block with the brilliant insight that Ninja turtles are suitable subjects for nature writing, that Olympic salamanders might have skis, that box turtles eat spiders and swim, and that, yes, loggerhead turtles swim in the ocean.

In February of 1993, Logan helped retrieve a tree stand that I had left in a shelterbelt that deer season. A honey bee landed on his boot, and he thought it was a flower. As he pondered why deer would poop in their own tracks, he asked timidly, "Daddy, are there dangers out here?" We flushed a great-horned owl, and he asked why it was out in the day and why it didn't have horns. We studied owl pellets, bobcat tracks, and various wildlife sign, and as we pulled away in my pickup, he fell asleep against my arm.

Just a few months later, we were fishing again. It was one of those days when I fumbled almost every pass. I managed to throw Logan's little Snoopy fishing pole in the lake, and as I was wading in after it, he asked calmly, "Are you going to drown?"

There was the great crow hunt of 1994. Just once, I told him, we were going to hunt crow and eat our quarry. In a shelterbelt, a huge, growling raccoon charged inches from Logan, hell-

bent on whatever was eating by my electronic distress call. Realizing its mistake, the coon turned on me, then beat a hasty retreat. We shot a handful of crows that day, and after deep marinating and bacon wrapping, I grilled them. Logan, however, was the only one to ask for seconds.

The first time I took both Logan and his younger brother, Will, fishing, I discovered that fishing and fathering are impossible simultaneous activities, like playing a piano concerto while changing a diaper. As I was fixing Will's tangled rod and reel, Logan started tossing chunks of concrete in the water. I scolded him, so he tied on a brand new Rattletrap I had bought for his birthday. Before I could throw a line into the water, Will had hooked me in the back with a wild cast, and Logan had lost his new Rattletrap. Both boys were in tears, and I was in pain. After bit of minor surgery, however, Will was happily washing rocks, and I quickly cured Logan's emotional trauma with another Rattletrap from my tackle box.

Logan's first shotgun was another milestone, a 10th-birthday present. That evening, I threw a few clay targets for him, and he broke four out of seven. I was sure I had an Olympic champion on my hands. He killed his first duck that fall with an extraordinary crossing shot.

Over the years, we followed the Arkansas River from its headwaters in the Rockies to Larned. Logan fished in the cold and rain when his brother and I took shelter in the pickup.

One column strayed off course a bit, following the adventures of Logan, Will, and friends – inspired by autographed copies of Homer Hickman's Rocket Boys – as they built and fired their rockets at our farm north of town, scattering a flight of Canada geese.

Much of my boys' development has been informed by our family's move to the country in 1997. We affectionately named the place Mole's Elbow, after the abundance of creatures for which I have no affection. One of the most eventful days at Mole's Elbow occurred when the boys had friends over to swim in our newly-built pond. Storms boiled in and out that day, and while I was at work, Rose spent half her time racing the crew back and forth between our place and our neighbors', who had a basement. I returned from work in time to find the boys sliding in mud and washing off in the pond under clear skies.

In 2000, a day at the lake with Hays Daily News outdoor writer Steve Hausler yielded a mess of crappie and an epiphany on Logan's part that a good fishing lake is an essential part of choosing a college. It was a serene day that ended with a double rainbow. Perhaps there was something to Logan's insight.

One of the proudest times I had was when Logan and I were hauling our cow, calf, and pigeons to the county fair. One-half mile from the house, we discovered the trailer gate had flown open, and our livestock were ambling back home. After a high-speed chase worthy of any action movie, Logan leaped from the vehicle and managed to run those cattle down, grab their halters, and save the day. He was no longer a boy.

As middle and high school years flew by, other activities occupied much of Logan's time, but a few last hunts with my aging father remain cherished memories for Logan, Will, and me.

I deign to call this the end of the story. For Logan, it's just the beginning; he graduates from high school this May and is headed to Hillsdale College, in southern Michigan. It's a long way off. I'm considering a frequent-flyer credit card. But he's the one I pray will fly. I also pray that these memories have provided a foundation of love, adventure, and family that will give him pause to set aside a chemistry assignment – just for awhile – to find a lake and fish.

HATCHERY SHUTDOWN

This hatchery has special maintenance needs because 7,200 gallons per minute (gpm)

of water are pumped 1/2 mile to the facility from Milford Supply Lake, and an additional 4,000 gpm of groundwater is pumped 100 yards, all to fill the hatchery's 24 raceways. Waste must be pumped 3/8 of a mile to sewage lagoons. To complete these tasks, 25 motors and pumps with backup systems are employed. Additional systems are also required to maintain water quality.

The shutdown is part of a five-year plan begun in 2002 to repair much of the hatchery's infrastructure. Already completed work includes repair and rehabilitation of the liquid oxygen system, water aeration towers, and wells; obtaining an additional water supply for the area; and installation of an alarm system, sewage lift station monitors/protectors, and numerous pumps and motors that keep the operation moving.

The work beginning in July will include replacement of raceway water and drain valves, replacing low-pressure air lines, modifying the waste drain system to handle peak use and conform to Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) regulations, meeting demands of the domestic water supply system (which has increased 10-fold since 1985), replacing electrical wiring, and creating underground access to raceway valves so they do not freeze in winter but can be easily worked on.

The obvious question most anglers have regarding this shutdown is what affect it will have on the state's fish supply. The answer is "minimal." The timing of the work comes when the bulk of Milford's fish production for the year is complete. What production will be lost will be taken up by KDWP's hatcheries at Farlington, Meade, and Pratt, as well as contracts with private fish growers.

As time and funding allow, future plans for Milford Hatchery include a new siphon line from Milford Reservoir, which would provide an efficient and reliable supply of high-quality water.

The Milford Fish Hatchery uses an intensive system in which eggs are hatched in small containers, and fish are grown in concrete raceways. More fish can be produced in less water, and the health of the fish can be monitored daily.

The 24 concrete raceways hold approximately 18,000 gallons of water. Each raceway has its own recirculation system in which about two-thirds of the water is completely exchanged every hour.

Fish species raised at Milford include walleye, sauger, saugeye, wiper (striped bass/white bass hybrid), hybrid sunfish, channel catfish, blue catfish, largemouth bass, striped bass, and paddlefish.

—Shoup

The Milford Fish Hatchery will shut down for eight months beginning July 1 for much-needed repair. Milford is one of the few warm-water, intensive-culture fish hatcheries in the country. However, like most working facilities, time and wear take their toll. Such wear and tear is to be expected from a high-tech facility like this one, which is more than 20 years old.

FISHING REPORTS ONLINE

Updated weekly by KDWP fisheries biologists, these reports provide the latest ratings on fishing conditions at many department-managed lakes in the state. Information includes a general rating of what the fishing is like – from poor to excellent – as well as the size range of fish being caught. Information about best baits, methods, and locations is also included. This detailed information is included for most species of sportfish in the lake. Water temperatures and lake elevations may also be included, along with other useful information and tips biologists think may help.

In 2006, KDWP added a new feature to the online fishing reports to further enhance their usefulness to the angler. A blog entitled "KDWP Public Fishing Reports" was added, enabling anglers to provide timely reports and tips the local biologist may not have heard about.

Combined with the fishing forecast and the weekly fishing reports, the public fishing reports provide the most complete picture of angling conditions short of being on the lake.

—Shoup

This spring and summer, use a computer to catch more fish. One of the most popular and useful tools provided by KDWP is the weekly lake-by-lake fishing reports posted on the agency's website. While these reports complement the fishing forecast, posted on the agency website each February, they provide more timely information for the angler wanting to know where the fish are biting.

FIRST "BASS PASS" TOURNAMENT

The regulation also allows an angler in a registered tournament to cull his or her catch after reaching the daily creel limit by releasing a small fish and replacing it with a larger one.

The first such event was held March 10 at La Cygne Reservoir, in eastern Kansas, and was "a total success," according to event organizers.

Individuals or organizations planning to conduct registered and permitted bass fishing tournaments that allow participants to use a Bass Pass must apply on a KDWP form, available at most department offices. Forms are also online at www.kdwp.state.ks.us. Click Fishing/Tournaments/Bass Pass/Tournament Registration.

—Shoup

This year, KDWP implemented a new method for conducting bass fishing tournaments. A new "Bass Pass" (\$12.15) allows participants in registered bass tournaments held between Sept. 1 and June 15 to keep two fish – to be released after tournament weigh-in – that meet the statewide minimum length limit but are under a special length limit for that fishing location.

Kissing Plant

When most folks think of mistletoe (*Phoradendron serotinum*), they think of having (or getting) to kiss someone under the plant's waxy leaves at Christmas. Few Kansans likely wonder or know where the plant comes from. Actually, mistletoe is the state flower of Oklahoma, but it also grows in the southeastern corner of Kansas, about the northern range of the species. Mistletoe species are found from the United States to central Argentina.

Mistletoes live as semi-parasites on other trees. Mistletoe flowers come as

solitary blooms or in clusters. Mistletoe's preferred habitat is in temperate zones and tropical regions. Mistletoe flowers have two to three petals that may be separate or united.

Mistletoe stays green year-round, so in the small portion of Kansas where it grows, it is a welcome contrast to winter's gray landscape. In trees that have shed their leaves, mistletoe, with its green leaves and white berries, stand out brightly.

Lacking roots, mistletoe attaches to trees or shrubs with specialized limbs called "haustoria." Some attach only to specific trees while others may attach to a variety of hardwood trees. Unlike most other parasites, such as mushrooms and

fungi, mistletoe have chlorophyll, produce their own food through photosynthesis, and require only water and mineral elements from the host plant.

Like many trees and other plants, mistletoe are "dioecious": male and female plants produce separate flowers. Fruit are found only on the female.

Mistletoe is an important food source for many animals, especially birds, which eat the berries. Mistletoe does not spread rapidly, but once a plant is established, the root system gradually extends up and down the branch. Not until the tree dies, or the infected portion dies or is removed, is the mistletoe killed, and this can take years.

—Shoup

American Avocet

With its elegant profile and striking colors, the American avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) is unique among North American birds. In summer, it can be found wading in temporary and permanent wetlands across Kansas, swinging its long upturned bill through the shallow water and catching small invertebrates.

The avocet is 17 to 19 inches tall with a wingspan of about 28 inches. It has black and white upper body parts and during the breeding season a rusty, pinkish neck and head. The legs are grayish blue and the bill is black.

It breeds in the western Great Plains from Saskatchewan and Alberta south through eastern New Mexico and the Texas panhandle. A few breed in isolated wetland areas in the arid western states, along the coast of California and Texas, and even on the Atlantic coast. It winters in California and Mexico and along the coast from Texas to North Carolina.

The avocet prefers shallow fresh and saltwater wetlands where it feeds on aquatic invertebrates. While wading or swimming, it locates food by sight and snaps it up or sweeps its long bill through the water, capturing prey by touch.

In territory establishment and self-defense, it performs elaborate, ritualized displays. Nesting avocets aggressively attack predators, sometimes physically striking northern har-

riers and ravens. In response to predators, the avocet sometimes issues a series of call notes that gradually change pitch, simulating the Doppler effect and thus making its approach seem faster than it actually is.

The nest is a scrape in the ground lined with grass or other vegetation, feathers, pebbles, or other small objects. Clutch size is usually four eggs. A female may lay one to four eggs in the nest of another female, who then incubates the eggs. Avocets may parasitize other species' nests, too, and common terns and black-necked stilts may parasitize avocet nests.

Avocet chicks leave the nest within 24 hours after hatching. Day-old chicks can walk, swim, and even dive to escape predators.

Avocet populations declined in the 1960s and 1970s, largely due to the loss of wetlands from water diversion for human use. Contamination of wetland habitat with selenium caused increased developmental abnormalities and mortality.

Today, avocets are common at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area beginning with the spring migration through the summer and into early fall.

Their arrival in spring is approximately from March 8 to April 16, with a median date of April 1. This spring, they were first observed on 27 March.

On your next visit to the Bottoms, keep an eye out for these graceful birds. They are very tolerant of visitors and a joy to observe.

—from the Cheyenne Bottoms Newsletter



Bass Pro, Wildscape Honors

Last February, the Kansas Wildscape Foundation recognized Bass Pro Shops commitment to the Outdoor Kansas for Kids (O.K. Kids) program, as well as their role in helping Kansas Wildscape being named the 2006 National Foundation of the Year by the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD).

Through the years, the support of Bass Pro Shops and many other sponsors has enabled Kansas Wildscape to help restore 2,800 acres of wetland near Milford Reservoir, establish O.K. Kids, and build modern cabins in Kansas state parks. These projects are why Kansas Wildscape was selected from foundations across the country and chosen by the NASPD to be honored as the 2006 Foundation of the Year.

"One of the programs Wildscape is most proud of is Outdoor Kansas for Kids (O.K. Kids)," said Mike Vineyard, a member of the Wildscape board of directors. "Bass Pro Shops became the founding sponsor of Kansas Wildscape's O.K. Kids program eight years ago. Since then, the program has reached more than 65,000 Kansas kids and their families."

O.K. Kids day is an event in which outdoor activities such as fishing derbies, zoo presentations, mini-triathlons, and birding festivals are available to the kids free of charge. These events are hosted across the state by state parks and city park and recreation departments.

—Shoup



Bass Pro general manager Scott Ollendick accepts award from Wildscape board member Mike Vineyard

KWF AWARDS

Last February, the Kansas Wildlife Federation (KWF) announced the winners of the 2006 Conservation Awards Program (CAP) honors. Eleven Kansans and one organization were honored for their work on conservation of the state's natural resources.

T. J. Hittle, a leader in the Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association (KCKA), received the Conservationist of the Year honor. Hittle is an outspoken advocate for the rivers of Kansas and is an avid canoer and kayaker. He teaches classes about canoeing and kayaking, spreading his enthusiasm and appreciation for the sport and water resources through education. He has organized floats for many years, promoting KCKA and stream resources.

Other award winners include the following:

Conservation Organization,
Ducks Unlimited

Conservation Educator,
Linda Stewart, Junction City

Wildlife Conservationist,
Charlie Cope, Wichita

Land and Soil Conservationist,
Max Good, Parsons

Conservation Communicator,
Joyce Lent, Wichita

Forest Conservationist,
Jim Grinter, Lawrence

Water Conservationist,
Francis Bennett, Williamsburg

Stream Monitor,
Philip G. Balch, Topeka

Outdoor Skills Instructor,
Melinda Harder, Andover

Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist,
Marvin & Jack Dohrman, Bushton

—Shoup

TUTTLE TRIATHLON

On June 3, Tuttle Creek State Park will host the 4th Annual Flint Hills Triathlon race, and park staff are expecting it to grow substantially. The reason? USA Triathlon has chosen the Flint Hills Triathlon to be part of the National Grand Prix Series.

As such, this event will be just one of 10 Grand Prix Intermediate-distance races across the country. It is estimated that approximately 800 racers will enter the event. KDWP now hopes to host the National Decathlon.

—Jerry Hover, Parks
Division director, Pratt

PUBLISHER DIES

Robert "Pete" Petersen, who built a publishing empire with two trailblazing automobile publications, *Hot Rod* and *Motor Trend*, died last spring of complications from neuroendocrine cancer at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, Ca. He was 80 years old.

Petersen was a familiar face in the hunting and firearms industry because of the well-known hunting and shooting sports magazines his company published, among them *Petersen's Hunting* and *Guns and Ammo*, and because of his personal enthusiasm for hunting.

Petersen may have loved

hunting even more than fine cars. He took safaris to Africa and India and was known at annual SHOT Shows for his generous bidding on firearms that were auctioned to benefit the National Shooting Sports Foundation's (NSSF) many programs. NSSF's *SHOT Business* magazine, a special-interest magazine that was sold to private investors in 1996, was at one time produced by the Petersen Publishing Company. The Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles was a favorite project later in life — one that Petersen and his wife, Margie, supported with a \$30 million endowment.

—Bullet Points

GUESS WHO?

When most people think of mimicry, they think of a term for animals lacking a natural defense but having colors or markings that make them look like a similar animal that is dangerous. There are other types of mimicry, but we'll keep things simple here and just talk about this classic form, called Batesian mimicry.

But let's look at camouflage first. Many of you have seen the insect called a walking stick. At rest, this insect is almost impos-

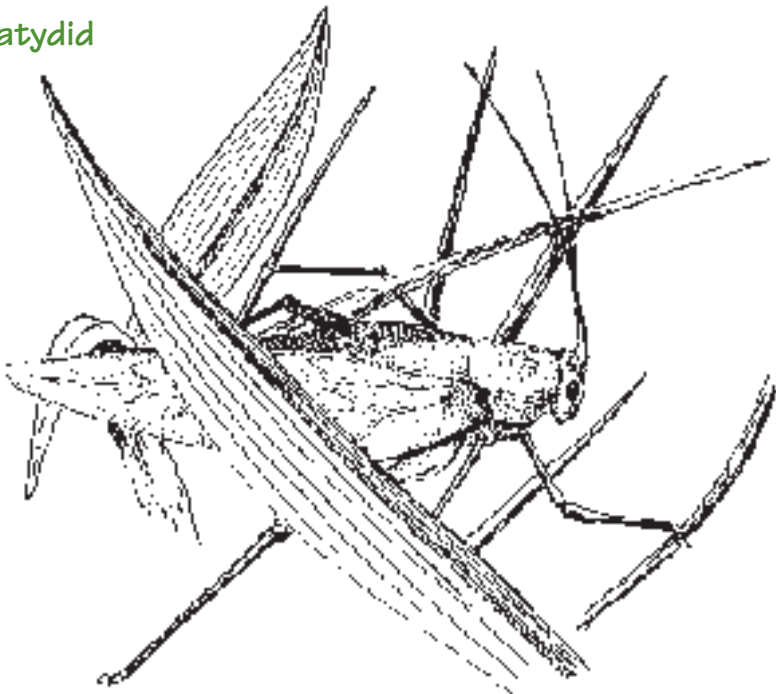
sible to detect. Because of its ability to hide so well, the scientific name for this order of insects — Phasmatodea — comes from the Greek word "phasma," or phantom. The katydid is another insect designed to look like plant life — in this case, a leaf. This is a grasshopper-like insect that many people have accidentally encountered in trees and brush. But finding one on purpose would be harder than finding Waldo on the pages of a "Where's Waldo" book.

Insects aren't the only ani-

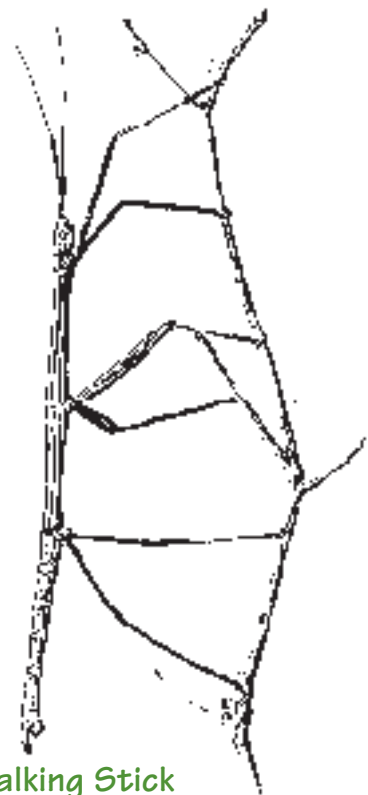
Camouflage and mimicry are defenses that, in many cases, protect some animals from predators. Each of these defenses is different. An animal that is camouflaged may look like things in the environment, such as a twig or leaf. This is especially common among insects.

mals blessed with camouflage. The mottled brown colors of a female pheasant help it blend perfectly with the grasses it inhabits. The snowy owl and the polar bear are pure white, blending in with the snow-covered habitat where they live most of

Katydid



Walking Stick



Coral Snake



Milk Snake



There are thousands of animal mimics worldwide, and at least six different types of mimicry. These range from species that look alike and are both dangerous, to mimicry designed to look harmless or attractive but actually lures prey to a mimicking predator. All are designed to fool an enemy, and they can fool you, too.

is highly-venomous. Both snakes are red with alternating bands of yellow (or white) and black.

The difference lies in the order of the bands around the body. The milk snake color band order is yellow, black, red, black. The coral snake color band order is yellow, red, yellow, black. To remember the difference, memorize these sayings: "Red on black, venom lack," and "Red on yellow, kill a fellow."

the time. Frogs and toads are other examples. Even large animals get in on this act. The African lion's sandy color blends into the dry plains, hiding it from its prey. The tiger's stripes help it blend into the patches of light and shade in the jungle.

As mentioned above, classic mimicry is different from camouflage. Mimicry uses an animal's color patterns to fool other animals, but its purpose is more specific — to look like another animal, a dangerous one. A good example of this is the milk snake. The milk snake is not poisonous, but it looks very much like the coral snake, which

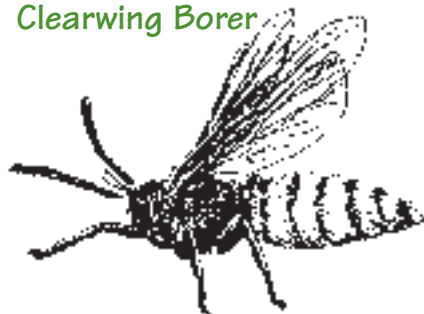
There are many other examples. The ash clearwing borer is a harmless moth that looks like a common wasp. The defenseless drone fly looks almost identical to a honey bee, which has a nasty stinger. Predators learn to avoid wasps and honeybees and,

in turn, similar-looking species.

Some butterflies and moths have large eyespots. These eyespots trick birds into thinking the butterfly or moth is much larger than it really is. In this case, the animal is not mimicking a specific dangerous species but a trait that might indicate danger. And sometimes mimicry involves behavior. The eastern hognose snake mimics the threat display of poisonous snakes.

Perhaps the most commonly-known example of mimicry has recently been discovered to be a myth. The monarch butterfly feeds on milkweed, which gives it a very bitter taste and thus protects it from being eaten by birds and other animals that have experienced the unpleasant sensation of eating one. For decades, it was thought that the viceroy butterfly, which looks very much like the monarch, had a pleasant taste to predators, and its color pattern was thought to be a mimicry of the monarch and protect the viceroy. Recent discoveries have revealed that the viceroy is just as nasty-tasting because it feeds to willow trees, which contain salicylic acid, a very bitter chemical. Therefore, the viceroy is no longer considered a mimic of the monarch.

Clearwing Borer



Common Wasp





Backlash

by Mike Miller

Lennie's Secret Life

It's time people knew the truth about Lennie. Although we've always followed an unwritten don't ask, don't tell policy, I think it's time to get this out in the open: Lennie is a dedicated birdwatcher. I know, it's hard to imagine that a pickup drivin', snuff dippin', bowhuntin' redneck like him secretly sneaks through the woods hoping to glimpse tiny warblers and other little birds you can't eat. But I've seen it with my own eyes.

Of course, most of us who spend any time in the woods eventually become fascinated with the antics of birds. Shoot, during the first few seasons I bowhunted deer, I had to find something to keep my mind occupied because I certainly didn't see many deer. I would watch birds and make mental notes of their markings. Later, when Lennie and I compared deer hunting stories, I'd ask him what kind of bird I had been watching.

"It was a small hawk, and it flew through the tree branches like it had radar," I'd say in amazement.

Lennie would start his quiz. "How big was it? Were the wings and back a bluish-gray? Were its breast feather light brown and streaked?"

"I think so," I'd stammer. "I'm not sure. It flew by pretty fast. I know its tail was banded," I'd announce, proud that I'd actually remembered a detail.

"Were the tail feather tips rounded or square?" Lennie fired back.

"I don't know. Just tell me what kind of bird I saw," I'd say in frustration.

"Well it was probably a sharp-shinned hawk or a Cooper's hawk," Lennie would guess. "I can't tell you for sure without more details. They are both common around our deer woods this time of year. Look for detail, and carry a bird I.D. book."

"Hah," I'd say. "I'm not a birdwatcher."

Then Lennie would tell me about some rare bird he'd seen.

"I'm pretty sure I saw a goshawk," Lennie told me once, with awe in his voice. "Man, what a bird."

"Are they common? Maybe I saw one of those, too," I asked ignorantly.

Lennie wrinkled his face at me and wouldn't even

dignify my question with a response.

Even though Lennie has always been my bird information source, I wasn't aware how serious his birdwatching habit had become until we elk hunted in Colorado. We had been following Rocky around the mountains for several days and were taking a break one morning. Sitting on the side of a mountain on a beautifully calm morning, I was enjoying the fact that my lungs weren't screaming for oxygen when we heard the footfalls of running animals. As the sound grew louder, it was evident that they were large animals – elk! And it sounded like they running right to us. Lennie and I strung arrows and positioned for a shot, should an extremely unfortunate elk stumble into bow range. We watched several elk run by well out of range, but stayed ready. The woods went silent.

My ready bow shook, and adrenaline surged through my body as I focused on the aspen stand below us. In my mind, I could almost see a bull sneaking through.

"There he is!" Lennie hissed in a very excited whisper.

I panicked. My head was on a swivel as I frantically searched for the bull. How could I have missed it? I looked at Lennie, then to Rocky, who was also looking frantically for an elk.

"Where?" I finally whispered.

Lennie pointed just yards in front of us. "Right there on that tree," he said in an irritated tone. "How could you miss it? I've been hearing the brown creeper for quite a while, but I couldn't find it. Watch how it always goes up the trunk. They're cool birds."

Rocky and I considered ganging up on Lennie to teach him a lesson for his false alarm, but we knew how many of us it took to take Lennie down, and we were short a couple. Instead, we made fun of him for being an eggheaded birdwatcher.

"I don't care what you think," he responded. "Birds are cool."

Secretly, I've always agreed with him, and I thoroughly enjoy watching birds whenever I'm out. I'm just not ready to come out of my camouflage yet. ♡

