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On Point

by Mike Hayden



Fish Kansas

Our population is increasingly urban, and that makes us less likely to hunt, fish and use our state parks. Fishing is a wonderful way to spend time outdoors with family and friends, away from the bustle of urban life. A recent survey conducted by Southwick Associates, Inc. for the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation revealed some interesting insights into angler motivations. The results were encouraging because they lead us to believe we're on the right path to keeping our fishing heritage alive and strong.

The survey is titled "A Survey of Lapsed Anglers," and it was designed to learn more about the reasons people fish, factors that motivate them to buy fishing licenses, and issues that might prompt them to fish more often. Lapsed anglers are those who don't buy a fishing license every year. We've learned that more than half of our anglers may buy a fishing license just once out of every three years. We want to know what we can do to get them to buy licenses and fish more often.

According to the survey, 68 percent of the respondents listed "to spend time outdoors" as their main reason they went fishing. That's good to know because we have lots of great places to fish and spend time outdoors.

Other reasons given for fishing included "to get away from stresses of everyday life," "for the excitement of the catch," and "to spend time with family." I couldn't agree more. Fishing is a great way to relieve stress, and there may not be a better way for a family to enjoy the outdoors than to fish together. And the little kid in all of us gets excited when a fish bites.

When asked what might motivate them to buy a fishing license, 45 percent said that if they knew 100 percent of the license fee went to conservation and to ensure fishing opportunities, they would buy a license. That's also good to know because that's exactly where your fishing license fees go. We're a fee-funded agency; the people who enjoy fishing pay for fisheries management, conservation and access when they purchase a fishing license.

When asked what might prompt them to spend more time fishing, the majority said that access to fishing spots close to home would do that. That's exactly why our fisheries staff have worked so hard for the past three years to remove barriers and extra fees at local commu-

nity-owned lakes. Through the Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP), the department pays cities and counties a lease fee if they agree to waive any access fees formerly charged to anglers. More than 200 local lakes are enrolled, and they provide great fishing close to home. They are designated in our fishing guide and fishing regulation pamphlets, and there is a special designation for those lakes that are "family friendly." If you see the FFF (Family Friendly Facility) symbol next to the name of a community lake, you know that it has amenities that will make a trip there convenient for your family. Family friendly lakes are locations where no alcohol is allowed, there are flush toilets, fishing spots are easily accessible, and there are security patrols and security lighting.

In addition to the angling opportunities available through CFAP, the F.I.S.H. program (Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats) leases private ponds and stream access sites from landowners and opens them to public fishing from March-October. A fishing atlas is produced each spring so anglers can find F.I.S.H. sites, as well as all public fishing areas.

Information materials such as atlases, regulation pamphlets, and area maps are designed to help anglers be more successful. In addition, many district fisheries biologists are producing electronic newsletters (click on the "Newsletter Request Form" link from our homepage, www.kdwp.state.ks.us, to have a newsletter emailed to you), as well as updating the Weekly Fishing Reports on the website. There's a link on the Weekly Fishing Reports page that will take you to angler-generated reports for even more information. And don't forget to get a copy of the 2010 Fishing Forecast. This handy pamphlet includes lake-by-lake information about sport fish populations and can help you decide where to go based on the type of fishing you enjoy.

The variety, abundance and quality of fishing opportunities in Kansas have never been better, and the amount of fishing information available is unprecedented. If you enjoy fishing but haven't found the time lately, you might be surprised at the opportunities available. You owe it to yourself and your family to check the KDWP website and learn about the programs and opportunities available close to home. ♡

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Front Cover: Jim Reid, of Wichita, found the crappie mother lode this spring and shows off a monster male white crappie. Marc Murrell snapped the photo. **Back Cover:** Student archers compete in the first Archery In The Schools Kansas State Championship hosted by Fort Hays State University in March. Mike Blair photo.



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, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, and military or veteran status. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612-1327.

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Letters . . .

MY FAVORITE HUNTER

Editor:

I live on 20 acres (partially wooded) in Johnson County. I have had many requests to hunt on my property throughout the years. I finally decided to let a man, Jeff Henning, and his son, Jordan, hunt on my land this year. Why? I thought it was great that he wanted to hunt with his son. Also, I knew (from my next door neighbor) that his best friend hunted on my neighbor's land and had excellent references. Well – I want to nominate my hunter and his son for Guest Hunter of The Year! If I had known he was so kind and considerate, I would have invited him to hunt on my land years earlier. Christmas weekend, he and his 13-year-old son showed up at my house with his bladed 4-wheeler and cleaned out my entire driveway. They also brought a bag full of assorted homemade Christmas candy and venison sausage. This is for allowing them the privilege to hunt on my land. Now that's not all! They showed up again yesterday to clean up the latest snowfall. It has been quite a winter so far, hasn't it. This was especially appreciated. My car broke down in my driveway last Wednesday evening. I had to have it towed to my mechanic's, and I had to borrow my cousin's pickup truck which is not 4-wheel drive. Trucks don't always operate that great in snow, so I was especially appreciative. I am single, and it is rare that we have a winter like this. In the past, I have depended on my snow shovel and my own energy to clear my driveway enough to get in and out. When one is single, you just have to be able to get out and do those things. I would never have asked anyone to do it for me, but it is so nice when someone offers, and Jeff has said he would always do it if I needed it. What a great example he is setting for his own children and they sound super. Jeff coaches his son's ball team in the summer. His daughter, Katie, who is a senior at Olathe South High School just received a scholarship to play softball at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

He and his wife, Michelle, and both of their children are all hunters. Perhaps I should nominate the whole family for



HUNTING *with Wayne Doyle* HERITAGE

Instructor Academy

The last weekend in March saw 184 volunteer Hunter Education Program instructors gather at Rock Springs 4H Camp for a weekend of intense instructor training. Kansas instructors were joined by program administrators and volunteer instructors from Nebraska and North Dakota for discussions and training in the philosophy of hunting, conducted by Dr. Jim Tantillo, Cornell University; the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation and hunter recruitment, conducted by Roger Krueger, North Dakota volunteer hunter education instructor; Conducting Tree Stand Safety Training by L.J. Smith and John Louk representing the Treestand Manufacturers Association; and CPR training and certification by Danny Gillum and Brent Unruh, Dodge City. Additionally, the instructors viewed equipment displays, heard a program update and Instructor Association briefings, had the opportunity to hear about the Nebraska and North Dakota programs from their respective coordinators, and learned about the newly established Hunting Incident Investigation Teams from KDWP NRO Lt. Matt Stucker. A final panel discussion of various topics was conducted by Dr. Tantillo, Capt. Mel Madorin, KDWP Law Enforcement, Tim Boxberger, KHEIA President and the three coordinators.

What does this have to do with the Hunting Heritage? Everything! Volunteer Hunter Education Program instructors are often the first exposure to the heritage and traditions of the hunt that new hunters get. While family and friends usually recruit the new hunters and start them indirectly into the tradition, it's the volunteer instructors that introduce the concepts of safety, wildlife management, the role of hunting in conservation, and other topics in a structured, organized way.

Do Hunter Education Program graduates leave the course as fully trained, safe and responsible hunters? Of course not. But they are started on that path by trained instructors, like the ones who gave a weekend of their time to become even better at what they love doing – teaching responsible hunting.

WAY outside BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"WELL, THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD."



Black-crowned Night Heron

BIRD BRAIN

with Mike Rader

Marshland Bird Experience

National Wildlife Refuge. It is rarer still to find neotropical cormorants, common moorhens and eared grebes nesting in Kansas.

Another group of birds that have a limited nesting presence in Kansas are the rails. These secretive relatives of the coot are denizens of the marsh. Four species, the king, Virginia, sora, and black, are known to nest in the state with some regularity, with the Virginia rail being by far the most abundant. Yellow rails migrate through Kansas, utilizing more upland, grassy habitat, but are rarely observed. King rails are about the size of a small chicken, with a long reddish bill and brown plumage. They have a distinctive clacking call and can be encouraged to respond to a recorded call. Virginia rails are about half the size of king rail and have similar plumage characteristics. They do several different calls, including an odd pig-like grunt that makes them easy to identify. Soras are fairly common during migration, and a few hang around to nest in central Kansas. They have very distinctive “whinny” and “squeak” calls often sparked by a clap of the hands or the slam of a car door along a marsh road. They are small, chunky birds, about the size of a bobwhite with grayish-brown plumage and short, yellowish bills. Black rails are smaller yet, only the size of a sparrow, and have blackish plumage, with lighter spots on the body. They do a distinctive “kee kee do” call and a grunting call that can be mimicked to encourage them to respond. They are a highly-sought species by bird watchers, as they are somewhat rare and are very difficult to find and see. Many birders make the trip to Quivira solely to see and photograph this species.

Most rails can be lured out into the open or at least prompted to respond by a recorded call, but this should be done sparingly so as not to disrupt their courtship, breeding, and nesting activities. Often, the best way to see them is to sit quietly in a vehicle in a location where you know they are present and watch the edges of the cattails near the water. They will often run out into the open to catch insects and poke around on the mud flats. The Wildlife Drive Loop at Quivira and the dike roads of Cheyenne Bottoms are both excellent locations to try this technique.

There are dozens of strange and beautiful sounds that come from the marsh, especially at dusk. Listening to calls of frogs, rails, coots, grebes, bitterns and other wetland birds is worth the trip. The months of May and June are prime time to get out to a Kansas marsh and enjoy nature’s symphony.

The months of May and June are favorites with Kansas bird watchers. Spring migration is still going on for the avian species that nest further north, while other species have completed their journey and remain here to nest. If you visit some of the premier marshes in the state, there is great opportunity to see many of the water birds that are Kansas summer residents. It’s possible to witness breeding behavior, nesting activity and fledging of species such as Canada geese, blue-winged teal, mallards, wood ducks and a few others.

Heron rookeries can be fascinating to watch. Look for abundant, flat-topped nests decorating tree tops or nestled in cattails, depending on the species. Great blue herons, little blue herons, black-crowned and yellow-crowned night herons, great egrets, and snowy egrets all tend to prefer tall trees and usually nest in colonies. American and least bitterns are typically solitary nesters, making their nests in cattails. Green herons are typically solitary and usually place their nests in small trees. Cattle egrets seem to be the most opportunistic and will nest in large colonies, utilizing trees associated with other egret species rookeries or even cattail rookeries. Hundreds of birds will often congregate in these rookeries.

Shorebird species that nest in Kansas include the stunning American avocet, black-necked stilt, snowy plover, spotted sandpiper, Wilson’s phalarope and the abundant killdeer. The upland sandpiper is a shorebird that is actually associated with grasslands and pastures, rather than wetlands. It’s “wolf whistle” call and stiff-winged breeding display can be observed over prairies in much of the state.

White-faced ibis, American coots, common moorhens, Western and pied-billed grebes, and double-crested cormorants aren’t common Kansas nesters, but you may find them nesting at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area or Quivira



HABITAT HELP with Jake George

KDWP Behind The Scenes

When you think about the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, what comes to mind? State parks? Public wildlife areas? Walk-in hunting areas? State fishing lakes? For many, these tangible areas comprise the extent of services provided by KDWP because they are the only direct contact people have with the department. Behind the scenes, however, there is a continuing effort to improve and create quality wildlife habitat on private lands throughout the state. Although there have been many programmatic changes throughout the years, KDWP has been assisting private landowners with wildlife habitat in some capacity since 1973. Currently, our wildlife biologists and biological technicians help to deliver several state and federal programs. These programs allow them to provide technical guidance and help landowners find cost-share benefits associated with habitat improvement projects.

The framework of the Kansas Private Lands Habitat Management Program consists of the Upland Game Bird Initiative, Pheasant Initiative, Quail Initiative, Prairie Chicken Initiative and KDWP Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. This program allows for KDWP biologists and private landowners to work together in the development of habitat management plans. Currently, several plans are focusing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enhancements that include cost-sharing on prescribed burning, light disking, food plot establishment, forb and legume interseeding, brush removal,

and providing additional Sign-Up Incentive Payments (SIP) or Practice Incentive Payments (PIP) to help increase the enrollment in several Continuous CRP practices. Other plans have been developed to provide cost share for the conversion of farmland to native grass, converting grazing land and hay land from cool-season grass to warm-season grass, hedgerow renovation, wetland development, and deferred grazing on native rangeland. This program also provides the cooperating landowner the ability to loan or rent native grass drills, tree planting machines, weed barrier fabric machines, root plows, drip torches, and portable tanks and sprayers for controlled burns. Since 2004, conservation partners have contributed over \$80,000, adding to the nearly \$690,000 in contributions from KDWP. In 2009 alone, approximately \$120,000 was spent for direct on-the-ground habitat management projects across the state.

The KDWP Wildlife Section continues to promote wildlife-related federal farm bill programs. Our district wildlife biologists deliver most aspects of the Federal Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). This includes program promotion, landowner contact, conservation planning, and technical assistance with practice implementation. This continues to be a very successful partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Last year alone, 116 WHIP contracts were approved, bringing nearly \$980,000 in federal funding to the state for wildlife habitat improvement projects.

In a state with 97 percent of land area in private ownership, habitat improvement programs for these properties are crucial to wildlife management in Kansas. If you would like some assistance with developing a wildlife management plan for your property, call 620-672-0760 for the name of a KDWP private lands biologist in your area.

HALSTEAD MAN INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

The International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) has announced that Larry McAdow, Halstead, will be inducted into the organization's Hall of Fame. McAdow is just the third Kansan to receive this prestigious honor

McAdow has been involved with hunter education for 36 years. He started as a volunteer instructor in 1974, and from 1980 to the present, he has served several terms on the Hunter Education Advisory Committee. In 1984, he was designated as a master instructor, and in 1988 became an area coordinator for the Kansas Hunter Education Program. In 1991, McAdow was named Outdoor Educator of the Year by the Kansas Wildlife Federation. He has been awarded the Kansas Hunter Education Program's Order of the Buffalo for excellence – a peer-selected award – three times. In 1996, he was named Game Conservation International's Outstanding Hunter Educator, as well as the Kansas Region 4 Instructor of the Year. In 2003, he was named the Winchester Instructor of the Year by IHEA.

"Larry is all about innovation," statewide hunter education coordi-



nator Wayne Doyle said. "In his 36 years as an instructor, he has continually looked for and adopted new and better ways to teach. He has made use of new technology and new ideas in training instructors and students.

"Larry's most valuable contribution to hunter education is his willingness to share knowledge with others," Doyle explained. "He will help solve problems, teach classes, train instructors – anything that's needed on short notice. His willingness to listen, offer advice, counsel, and mentor has been invaluable to me as statewide coordinator. I simply couldn't be as effective without Larry McAdow. The impact he has had on this program is immeasurable."

McAdow's response to news of the award reflects both a dedication to his work and a humble attitude toward the spotlight.

"I have been honored over the years to be associated with and work with the best instructors and state coordinators anywhere in the world," McAdow said. "This is the honor of my life. All others pale in comparison because of the people I have had the honor to be associated with over the years."

McAdow will be inducted into the IHEA Hall of Fame at the organization's annual meeting June 2-5 at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colo. For more information on this event, go to the IHEA website, www.ihea.com. —KDWP News

FISH SQUEEZER

with Tommie Berger

Creel Clerks Provide Valuable Service



PROUD GRANDMOTHER

Editor,

I'm writing you this short note to go along with this application (trophy turkey) to inform you that this bird was shot by our 9-year-old grandson. This was his very first hunt ever and only the tenth time he had shot his 20-gauge shotgun that he had won at the Quail Forever dinner three years ago.

I am not sure if this is necessary, but we've never done this before because this is the first time my husband and myself have also ever hunted turkeys. Matt was very excited and was even responsible for calling his bird in because our calling wasn't going very well.

Matt had done a little target practice, maybe five rounds just to familiarize himself with the kill zone on a turkey, and to see if his arms were long enough to handle the youth shotgun. They were and everything went well, as you see.

We are all very proud of him and anticipating what his second bird could be. Thank you so much for making such an award available to the hunters of Kansas. Sincerely,

Cindy A. Horner
Phillpsburg

Editor's note: Mrs. Horner called to give the magazine permission to print his letter, and she added a short sidebar to the story: "I should have included this detail in my letter. When we hunted in the morning, Matt wore his ear muffs to protect his ears. However, he forgot them when we went out that afternoon. He wore his army hat with ear flaps down, but right before he shot the turkey, he said, 'Grandma, before I shoot, could you put your hands over my ears?' As soon as I covered his ears, he made the shot. I thought that was a neat detail of our hunt."

May

Probably the best fishing month of the year. The water temperature is in the 50s and 60s, and many species still have the spawning urge. The fish are shallow and easier to catch. The white bass spawn in the rivers sometimes extends into early May, but if conditions are not good in the rivers, they will head toward the dam to spawn in May. Crappie are likely still in the spawning mood, as are the black basses.

By this time, the stripers and wipers have figured out that they cannot take care of their spawning urges in Kansas waters, so they decide it is time to eat. May is schooling time for these streamlined fighters, and they love the wind-blown points where shad, crayfish, and other small fish are concentrated. It is generally during May when stripers and wipers will hit topwater lures, and you'd better hold on if they do. White bass and white perch often move up onto the points with the stripers and will take small white jigs and small crankbaits. Matching your lure size to the size of the food the fish are feeding is critical now.

Late in the month after the spawn, the smallmouth and largemouth will go on a feeding spree, and small crawdad crankbaits thrown around any rocky shoreline will provide some fast action. They may also start to hit topwater baits at this time. Catfishing is just now picking up on the reservoirs.

June

This month is another good fishing month. Generally the big June attraction is walleye/saugeye on the flats. This is the time to get out the jig-n-nightcrawler and drift fish for these tasty critters. Most anglers look for flat areas – 2 to 12 feet deep. Mud bottoms seem to be the best although gravelly areas will also produce. Shore-bound anglers can sometimes get in on this fishing by wading the shallow flats and points. Walleye often feed as shallow as 2 or 3 feet, especially on windy days.



The drift fishing technique is simply to hook a nightcrawler, leach, or even a minnow onto a jig and cast it out. Position the boat upwind of the flat and turn it broadside so that it drifts slowly with the wind. Keep your jig bouncing lightly over the bottom. Walleye or saugeye are not always aggressive biters, so you'll need to pay attention to your rod and feel the subtle bite. It can take a little practice to know when you have a bite versus when your jig is just bouncing over the bottom.

Catfishing picks up in June, and this is their spawning time. This is about the only time of year the catfish are on the rocks and will occasionally take a crankbait or other lure fished slowly around those rocks. As the water warms up, you need to switch from stinky shad baits to other baits like worms, crawdads, frogs, shrimp, sponge baits and prepared baits. Now is also a great time to start limb lining or trot lining for catfish.

June stripers, wipers, white bass, and white perch are often still on the points and chasing bait fish. Small white twister tail jigs are a good bet, but action will slow as the water heats up later in the month. Smallmouth and largemouth bass will still be active on crankbaits and topwater, but later in June will be time to switch to plastic worms and crawdads and fish deeper. Crappie will have disappeared, retreating to the deeper water never to be found again till fall!

Outdoor Adventure Camp

The Kansas Wildlife Federation (KWF) and the K-State Cooperative Extension Service are sponsoring the 22nd Annual Outdoor Adventure Camp (OAC) June 6-11 at the Camp WaShunGa area of Rock Springs 4-H Center, near Junction City. Youngsters ages 10 through 12 who enjoy the outdoors are encouraged to attend.

Session subjects include insects, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, fish management, wildlife management, wetlands, birds, and stream ecology. Afternoons will be spent learning about birds of prey, skins and skulls, bats, streams, and more general topics, including ecology, wetlands, riparian areas, and watersheds. Instructors from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Kansas State University, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, county conservation districts, the Riley County Fish and Game Association, 4-H clubs, and other organizations will be on hand.

After dark, participants may prowl for owls, star-gaze, or watch bats hunt bugs. Evening swims will be followed by campfire stories and snacks. One evening will feature a friendly fishing competition.

Other activities include scavenger hunts; swimming and canoeing; fishing; rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader, archery, and pellet gun shooting; arts and crafts; horse-back riding; and a trip to the Milford Nature Center and Fish Hatchery.

For information, call Theresa Berger at 785-526-7466 or email bergkwf@wtciweb.com.

On The Web with Mark Shoup

Considering a new outdoor activity this summer? If you like to be on the water, you might want to consider canoeing, kayaking, or rafting. If so, a good place to begin your exploration would be on the web, specifically, the Kansas Canoe and Kayaking Association's website, www.kansascanoe.org. This outfit organizes river trips throughout Kansas and elsewhere, and you can explore these plans on their Events Calendar. There's also a Sale Page where you can find deals on equipment, from boats to wetsuits, as well as trips.

If you're interested in joining the group, here's what they say about themselves: "The Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association (KCKA) is an organization of canoeist, kayakers, and rafters working together to promote river running, education, conservation, access, and paddling-related activities. Various chapters of KCKA help support the specific interests of KCKA members."

The latest on river conditions in Kansas and elsewhere is available in a one-click left-hand menu on the KCKA website, but this is actually a link to the Kansas Whitewater Association website, www.kansaswhitewater.org. For the more adventurous river rat, this site is intriguing. While they boast that Kansas is close to much of the best whitewater in the country, they also guide you to fine whitewater experiences right here

Canoe Kansas Day Trippin'

in Kansas. Like the KCKA website, the KWA website lists events and membership info, as well as links to like-minded clubs in the state.

Hit the web and then the water this summer, and you'll find there's more to Kansas than most folks guessed.

Money is tight these days, and many Kansans are looking for ways to squeeze a summer vacation out of the family budget. This year, think "There's no place like home." At www.trails.com/toptrails.aspx?area=13139, you'll find a list of what Trails.com thinks are the top 10 or 15 Kansas day trips, such as the National Geographic Scenic Byway, the Konza Prairie, and the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.

Most of the trips on this site are in eastern Kansas, but if you go to the Kansas State Historical Society website, www.kshs.org/tourists/index.htm, you'll find more. Trips are listed by region, historic theme, off-highway experiences, and official Historical Society sites.

If you don't find what you want here, go to the KDWP website, where you'll find trips aplenty. And if you're still stumped, simply google "Kansas day trips." You may have a hard time making up your mind where to go, but you'll have plenty of fun trips to choose from.

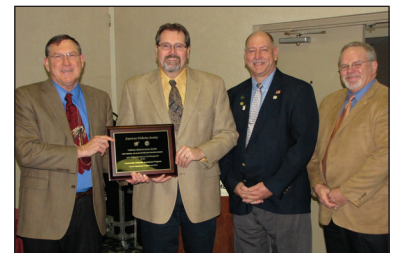
CFAP HONORED NATIONALLY

Last spring, the American Fisheries Society (AFS) presented KDWP with the AFS 2009 Outstanding Sport Fish Restoration Program Projects of the Year award for its Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP), which works with communities to improve fishing access and opportunities at community-owned lakes.

Using matching funds from federal excise taxes on fishing equipment and motor boat fuel, KDWP leases fishing rights to those 238 community lakes, removing local fishing and boating fees for anglers on approximately 13,000 acres of water. The program is 100-percent reimbursable from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Although the agency is responsible for 25 percent of the project, local expenses for maintaining these lakes provide the required match. Community lakes enrolled in the program benefit from enhanced fisheries management and stocking. KDWP targeted community lakes because of their popularity and convenience to anglers.

For more information on KDWP's Community Fisheries Assistance Program, go to the KDWP website, kdwp.state.ks.us.

—KDWP News



Secretary Mike Hayden, Fisheries Section chief, Doug Nygren, President of Fisheries Administration Section for the American Fisheries Society, Bob Curry, and Wildlife and Parks Commission chairman Kelly Johnston.



CATTAIL TREAT

Spring has sprung, and the grass needs mowing again. Everything is literally growing like weeds. After chores are done, the kids, my wife and I head to the crappie hole. Along the bank of the creek, newly sprouted cattails about 3 feet high make it hard to fish. Since fishing is nearly impossible, I decide to switch gears and make use of the obstacle.

I search my truck for a plastic sack I tuck away for such occasions. I return to the water's edge with sack and pocketknife. Reaching down and firmly grabbing the green shoot of a cattail, I apply pressure until the cattail pops away from its root system. I peel the outer layers of the shoot off, exposing a bright white core. Then I cut the cattail off where the white begins to turn green and trim a quarter-

inch off the base. What is left is a 2- or 3-inch long white shoot that tastes like cucumber. Later in the year, cattail shoots become woody in texture and lose their appeal.

The kids are intrigued with what I am doing. I convince them to try some after eating one myself; the spitting and sputtering begins. Although my wife and I are enjoying the tasty treat, the kids are fearful they may have to endure another. I ensure them they would not be forced to eat it. But picking it looked like fun, so they begin handing me shoots of cattail to trim and bag. They actually have fun, and after 30 minutes or so, I have plenty of cosak asparagus to enjoy.

At home, I search for a recipe the kids might enjoy, and find one for creamy cucumber and onions that looks tasty. I collect a bunch of green onions to give the recipe more of a twist, then mix a batch and set it in the fridge overnight. The next

evening, we eat it with supper. The kids, while a little skeptical at first, enjoy the tasty treat.

While the fishing trip was a bust, all was not lost. We did bring home some tasty treats from the field.



CREAMY CATTAIL AND SCALLIONS

- 4 cups cleaned Cattail root cut to 1-2 inch pieces
- 8 to 10 Green Onions cut to 1-2 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup Mayonnaise (not Miracle Whip)
- 1/2 cup Sour Cream
- 5 Tbsp Sugar
- 2 Tbsp Cider Vinegar
- 1/2 tsp Salt (more to taste)
- 1/4 tsp Pepper
- 1/4 tsp Poppy Seed



FISHIN' with Mike Miller

Location, Location, Location

Fishing and selling a house have one thing in common — it's all about location. And any angler worth his salt knows that you have to fish where there are fish, and finding fish on a lake or reservoir is the first step to catching fish. Fish relate to some kind of underwater structure — rocks, brush, a change in depth, weeds, a point — something different from the surrounding lake bottom.

But finding structure that's holding fish is only half of the location battle. Boat positioning is a skill that takes years to learn. But I guarantee that if you pay attention to the details of positioning your boat properly as it relates to the structure and fish below, you will catch more fish.

Boat positioning could be setting the anchor so that the prevailing wind sets your boat right on the ledge or creek channel break. It's much easier said than done, and even if you have years of experience, it usually takes two or three tries.

Boat positioning is anchoring over a brushpile with two anchors so that anglers can reach the fish and the boat doesn't drift. That way you can fish vertically in the brush and not lose half your jigs. Another type of boat positioning that is critical involves working along and casting a shoreline. You may need



to keep the boat very close to the shore so that you can cast parallel, keeping your lure in the right zone. Shoreline boat position can include using the trolling motor and depth finder to keep the boat just the right distance from the shore so that casts reach the fish-holding zone.

Boat position is also critical when drifting for walleye. A skilled boat operator will learn to motor around the areas holding fish so they don't spook, then position the boat so that the wind pushes it across the flat where fish are holding. The right drift might require using the trolling motor to make adjustments, and maybe even a drift sock if the drift speed is too fast.

Unless the wind is dead calm, boat positioning is a challenge, and unfortunately, the fish usually don't bite as well on calm days. Wind can be necessary to good fishing, so make it work for you by learning how to position your boat. Remember, it's all about location.

PROFILE:

with Mark Shoup

BENNY YOUNG



Forever Young

Benny Young retired from KDWP's Law Enforcement Division in early March, but that doesn't mean he's ready to be put out to pasture. As a natural resource officer from Colby, Young wanted to see more kids involved in outdoor activities, so in 1998, he started an Outdoor Skills Day. With the help of local wildlife biologist Leonard Hopper and a local landowner who offered his property for the event, Young developed the day into an annual event that draws 40 to 60 kids to learn how to shoot shotguns, bows, and muzzleloaders; put up tree stands; trap; and fish. It was an infectious success that inspired five or six other such events by KDWP staff in northwest Kansas. At one time or another, Young helped with all of them. Now that he's retired, he doesn't want it to end.

"The kids really enjoyed this, and I had as much fun as they did," Young says. "We had great support with local donors. Mike Miller and the Pass It On program and hunter education coordinator Wayne Doyle played big roles. The response was great. A couple from Kansas City even planned their family vacations around the event so their kids could attend. I want to keep doing this even though I'm retired, so I'm working with our local trap shooting club to keep it going. I really want to continue my Outdoor Day. Kids are our future."

Young came by his love of the outdoors naturally. Although he moved around a lot growing up (his father was in the oil business), he lived in the country for three years, where he learned to hunt and fish with his older brother. He spent his high school years in Hays and made a number of friends who loved to hunt. After high school, Young studied at Fort Hays State University for two years and later got a job as a general repair and maintenance technician (GMRT) for the school. In 1984, Cedar Bluff State Park came calling. A park ranger job had opened up, and Young took a chance, applied, and got the job.

Young would spend 4 ½ years at Cedar Bluff before landing a job as a "game warden" in charge of 4,000 square miles – Gove, Logan, Sheridan, and Thomas counties. That was 1988, and it was a bit overwhelming at first, considering you could drive 1 ½ hours on I-70 and still be in Young's district. In the first few years, he also patrolled lakes in the summer. Everyone needs a mentor in a new job, and Young had a lot of help and inspiration from neighboring NRO Larry Dawson, who worked out of Goodland at that time. (Dawson moved to Parsons in the mid-1990s and passed away in 2004.)

"Larry taught me almost everything I know," Young explains. "He was a great guy, just fantastic. I can't say enough good things about him. If I had any questions, he'd help. Everything I hadn't done, he helped me learn. And I didn't have

to ask; sometimes he'd just call me up and ask if I'd ever checked a fur buyer before, or something like that, and if I hadn't, he'd take me with him to show me how it's done. I burned up his phone lines for awhile, but he had a lot of patience and kept me from getting lost."

With a mentor like Dawson, Young was soon prepared for the challenges of being an NRO in a large district. And he had some big ones.

"I worked one of the largest wildlife cases in Kansas history," he recalls. "It was the only aircraft case in Kansas, too. Some local hunters told me about a guy who was shooting deer out of an aircraft, so I called [Fish and Wildlife Service special agent] Kenny Kessler. Kessler had to go up his chain of command all the way to D.C. to get permission to do an undercover sting. We knew we had a good case. Finally, a federal agent from Nebraska and one of our officers went under cover and flew with this guy, who was charging clients to shoot deer from his airplane on his land. The agents did an excellent job. After charges were filed and the case settled, the guy lost his airplane, and the final settlement was \$105,000. I worked a couple of \$30,000 cases, as well."

But Young's career has been about much more than catching bad guys; it's been about forging relationships.

"I've had a great career," he says. "It's been a lot of fun. I wouldn't have done anything different. The people have been great – fellow officers, sheriffs, judges, troopers, and almost all outdoorsmen. Only a very small percentage cause problems. Most have helped me when I needed it or given me tips when someone was breaking the law."

When asked what his hopes for the agency are, his answer is simple and direct: "I hope the agency survives the challenges the future brings, that people have a place to hunt. I'd like to see an officer in every county. And I hope my position is filled soon."

Whatever the future brings, however, Young has advice for young natural resource officers.

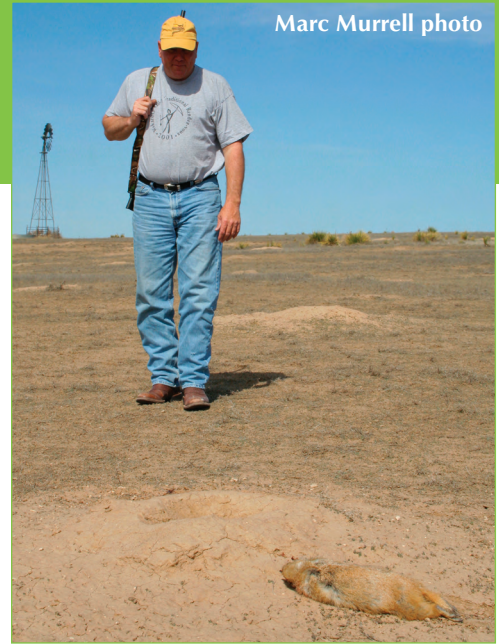
"You've got to get out and get to know the local authorities and landowners. I've tried to talk to everyone in my region I could. People will report poachers if they know you'll come, but you've got to prove yourself, earn their trust. When I got a call – day or night – I'd go out. And don't forget youth –they're our future."

Leaving KDWP was not easy for Young. "We've got some fantastic people, and that was hard to leave," he laments. But Young deserves some time to relax and enjoy working with young people from time to time. He's proved himself.

HUNTING SPOTS

with Marc Murrell

Prairie Dogs



Imagine what early settlers witnessed when they first arrived in the Great Plains. Vast herds of bison, deer, elk and miles and miles of prairie dog towns covered millions of acres. Even as late as 1901, scientists surveyed a single prairie dog town in Texas that covered 25,000 square miles with an estimated 4 million inhabitants.

But with settlement came the loss of habitat and competition between wildlife and humans. Bison are gone and prairie dog towns are a fraction of their former size. The black-tailed prairie dog is considered a pest by ranchers as they compete with cattle for grass and tear up pastures with their burrows. Some landowners spend several thousand dollars each year poisoning them, trying to keep their numbers in check.

As a result, many landowners don't mind if individuals want to help control their numbers by shooting them. Honing long-rang rifle skills on large dog towns is a tradition on the wide-open prairie, and

some western states even promote it as a tourist attraction. And although Kansas dog towns have been reduced dramatically over the years, there are still plenty of opportunities right here in the Sunflower State.

"We have people come from all over the country to shoot them," said B.J. Thurman, Kansas Wildlife and Parks natural resource officer in Elkhart. "They'll come out and spend several days doing it."

In addition to public portions of the Cimarron National Grasslands, many western Kansas counties provide prairie dog shooting opportunities. Shooters need to plan some time for locating private landowners, and a local cafe or COOP are good starting points to get permission.

Prairie dog shooting takes place year-round, but veteran dog shooters look at May and June as the best months. September is popular, too. These rodents are relatively tiny targets ranging from 14-17 inches tall. They weigh from 1 to 3 pounds.

Shooting equipment can be elaborate to the point of using range finders, spotting scopes, shooting benches and sand bags. Typically, these enthusiasts try their hand at

shots as far away as 500-600 yards. Common calibers for prairie dog shooting include .22-250 and .223. Some hardcore shooters may shoot hundreds of rounds a day. Many reload their own ammunition and have a favorite load. At distances less than 250 yards, a .17 HMR works well, and some prairie dog shooters even use a .22 long rifle as those shells are much cheaper than other calibers.

Prairie dog towns range in size from just a few acres to some that stretch for a mile or more. The average number of prairie dogs per acre in a dog town is 10.

Prairie dog populations are somewhat cyclic. If towns get too large the plague can come through and kill many of the inhabitants. However, it only takes a year or two for those numbers to rebound.



HUNT RIGHTS LOST IN 34 STATES

Last January, a West Liberty, Iowa, man was ordered to pay \$1,400 in fines and civil penalties after pleading guilty to three turkey poaching charges in Kansas. Lane C. Roszell, 19, pleaded guilty to charges in Smith County District Court in Smith Center after an investigation by KDWP and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Roszell was charged after officials from the Iowa DNR received information from the Turn in Poachers (TIP) hotline in November 2009. Investigation by the Iowa DNR revealed Roszell had traveled to Smith Center in November 2008 on a fall turkey hunting trip. KDWP determined that Roszell had purchased one wild turkey hunting permit for the 2008 fall turkey hunting season in Kansas but later had four wild turkeys in his possession.

On Jan. 30 of this year, Roszell was charged with nine hunting violations in Kansas, but in a plea bargain agreement reached Feb. 11, Roszell pleaded guilty to three counts of hunting or taking a wild turkey without a valid Kansas turkey hunting permit. The remaining six charges were dismissed.

Roszell paid a \$600 fine and \$800 restitution to KDWP. His hunting privileges were suspended for three years and a Remington shotgun was forfeited to the Iowa DNR. His hunting privileges will be suspended in 33 other states that are members of the Wildlife Violator Compact.

—Quad-City Times, Iowa

after the first 100 will receive two nights free camping and utilities during 2011. The contest begins May 1 and ends on November 1, 2010. Entry forms will be available online at the Department website, or at participating geocache locations.

The state's budget woes are no news to anyone. The Parks Division has taken a number of sizeable budget cuts already, and next fiscal year, which begins July 1, promises to be no better. However, park visitors may wonder how those cuts will affect their outings this summer.

The answer is that the department has tried to make the cuts with the smallest impacts on customers. However, with fixed costs, such as utilities to cabins and campsites, making up such a large portion of our budget, there was not much room to cut. Seasonal employees – who clean the restrooms, collect fees, and do much of the mowing and trimming – started later this year and will be let go earlier. Visitors may see smaller mowed margins around some campsites, and staff will mow less frequently. There may be fewer camp hosts. Some campgrounds may be closed entirely for parts of the year, though generally not until mid-September. Offices may be open shorter hours and fewer days per week. When storms or other disasters strike, repairs may take longer, may even be deferred for several months, or facilities may simply be closed until funding for repairs is secured. Visitor safety will not be compromised, though, with a full complement of enforcement officers providing security.

Visitors may also ask, "How can the state be in a budget crunch and still install new restrooms and cabins?" The answer is that construction monies are allocated years in advance, and many of the projects are completed using funds that were set aside two or three years ago, and must by law be used for that purpose. Other projects utilize grant funds, where the state pays only a portion of the cost. Kansas Wildscape foundation has secured funding to build and install most of the cabins. The department recently completed an energy audit and will be implementing steps to incorporate renewable energy sources for savings into the future.

The next few years may be lean, but prudent management and innovative staff will ensure that Kansas state parks will present safe and healthy recreation.

The Department of Wildlife and Parks will offer a geocache contest again this year, with caches located on 31 department properties. The GPS coordinates of the first caches will be posted on the KDWP website (www.kdwp.state.ks.us) on May 1. Coordinates of the second cache are located in the first cache. Each second cache found is worth a point. Cachers who turn in their forms for validation at the location of the cache will receive a pen that affirms, "I found the geocache at" that location, though forms can be validated at any department office. The first 50 cachers to get 31 points will be eligible to win their choice of a 2011 annual camping permit or a two-night stay in a department cabin. Cachers after the first 50 or cachers who earn 18-30 points are eligible for a 2011 14-day camping permit or a one-night stay in a department cabin. Cachers who earn 5-17 points or who earn more but turn the completed forms in

We are always happy to answer questions, though sometimes it takes some digging to find out what you really want to know. This is nowhere more evident than on questions that come through the "Contact Us" link on the website. When webservers click on this link, the email goes to our main office, where a human must read the email and forward it to the appropriate division for response. Many times, the questions are so brief or lacking in detail that we must ask for clarification. Some examples:

"I want to rent a cabin in May. How much will it cost and do you have one?" We have cabins at over 20 locations, with more added all the time. If this person had specified a location, we could have forwarded the question directly to that area for a specific response. Instead, we had to ask "Where?" The cost and availability answer to the question depended on where and when.

Another person emailed, "I'm coming to Kansas to ride horses in April. How much will it cost?" Again, the question is not as simple as it sounds. Does the person intend to bring her own horse or rent one? Only Kanopolis State Park has a concessionaire that rents horses, and the cost there depends on the length of the ride, time of day, and other factors. Does the person intend to trailer in the horse and just ride for the day? In this case, that person would have to obtain a motor vehicle permit to drive into the park. Does the person intend to trailer in and camp with the horse? If so vehicle permit and camping fees would apply. Does the person intend just to ride the horse into the state park and on the trails for the day? If so, there would be no cost.

Many answers can be found by utilizing the "Search" box on the home page. However, don't hesitate to call or email. Just remember that the more specific information you give us, the faster we can find the answer.

Parks Division assistant director Linda Lanterman presented awards at this year's law enforcement training for all field divisions at Salina. Rick Martin, manager of Kanopolis and Wilson state parks, was named the division's Outstanding Employee for 2009. Chris Hammerschmidt (Elk City State Park) and Dale Schwieger (Eisenhower State Park) received the Director's Award. Toby Kuhn (Prairie Dog State Park) took home the Merit Award and Mark Goldsberry (Meade State Park) received an Award for Valor, while Dustin Ward (El Dorado State Park) received the Public Service Award. NASPD State Park Leadership School graduates Kuhn, Greg Mills (Scott State Park), Casey Smithson (Pomona State Park), and Ward shared the Team Award. Director Jerry Hover and Lanterman presented Nathan Hemphill (Pratt's Green Nature Trail) and AmeriCorps member Shannon Jarmer (Pratt Office) with Director's Awards at a parks staff meeting in the Pratt Headquarters office.

"NATURAL TENDENCIES"

THAT'S WILD
with Ken Brunson

A colleague and I recently pondered the question: "Why isn't everyone as fascinated by the natural world as we are?" I do not remember a time when I wasn't fascinated by the wonders of plant and animal life, even rocks and the weather. I cannot imagine any kid not being mesmerized while holding a horny toad. As a teen, I would be too anxious to sleep waiting for opening day of pheasant season. And I could stay wide awake all night waiting for the tug of a flathead on my line. This obsession with nature has never left. Well, as scientific inquiry leads us, there happens to be somewhat of a scientific explanation for this affliction.

Howard Gardner published on this many years ago in "Frames of Mind: The theory of multiple intelligences." Of eight identifiable intelligences exhibited in humans, one is characterized as a "Naturalistic Intelligence." While the other seven deal with rather non-surprising aptitudes such as reading, writing, musical, spiritual, physical and communication skills, this eighth naturalistic intelligence zapped me like a bolt of lightning. I reject the idea that only those with this eighth intelligence gravitate toward outdoor and nature interests. I doubt that the several hundred thousand anglers, hunters and birdwatchers in Kansas fall only into the eighth intelligence category. Logically, there is a combination of factors which lead to nature.

To me, the variety found in nature is astounding and stimulating. Each new plant learned is like a new day; each new geographic discovery, a new adventure. The spring migration of shorebirds, the next unique hoary frost, the synchronized swimming of sand shiners in a clear stream, the darkest night with a zillion sparkling stars are all wonders that every child should experience.

There are a million natural experiences in natural Kansas. I cannot understand anyone not being as fascinated as I by them. But, I've found one certain explanation – opportunity. Fewer young people are given or are taking advantage of opportunities I was fortunate to have had.

I've given programs to numerous biology classes, 4-H clubs, and civic organizations in our town through the years. I'm always amazed at how few people actually get out to see some of the cool nature in our own area. In a half-hour drive, Prattans can be at the south end of Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, a Wetland of International Importance and a spectacular wildlife display, especially during migrations. Yet, consistently and quite disappointingly, few Prattans have been there. And this is one of the most spectacular places in the nation for seeing wildlife and enjoying nature!



Richard Louv characterizes a lack of outdoor experiences (Last Child in the Woods) as "nature deficit disorder." I call it tragic. KDWP offers literally an armada of trailers and people willing to help youngsters develop shooting skills. We offer numerous fishing clinics. Our "Pass It On" program is a model for the nation. We offer opportunities for archery in the schools. There's our Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites program, special youth hunts, and the OK Kids Day programs. The Kansas Wildlife Federation has sponsored the Outdoor Adventure Camp and the fall Hunting, Fishing, and Furharvesting School for many years. We've been trying to change the cultural shift for three decades to fight against fewer outdoor users—frankly, without significant impact. But these programs are getting a groundswell of additional support from many sources.

Largely through the influence of Louv's focus on nature deficit disorder, community programs are sprouting up to try to get kids into the outdoors and exposed to more nature. Many organizations are jumping on this bandwagon, as well. Concerns about child obesity rates, poor health, poor understanding of science and the outdoors have all stimulated a tidal wave of interest. Lawrence has a program called Outside for a Better Inside program. Hutchinson has initiated an effort called Get Everyone Outdoors. The "No Child Left Inside" program is gaining traction in Wichita and nationally. A budding Kansas Master Naturalist program is in the works to train more people for nature interpretation. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever have a nifty new program called "No Child Left Indoors." The Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education sponsors a Kansas Green Schools program that has over 300 schools signed up. We have Envirothons, Eco-meets and many special field days and events by civic groups, charitable foundations, schools and cities.

The key to persistence of wildlife conservation programs will come from this broad-based and diverse arena of outdoor adventure activities. We will need a larger public engaged in outdoor activities. People won't conserve something of which they have no understanding or appreciation.

Who of us from my generation could have predicted that today there would be a major issue trying to get kids outside for nature experiences? It's unimaginable how any kid would not be enthusiastic about exploring a little stream or even a ditch with crawdads. I'm confident most would if given opportunity. Thanks to this new influx of interest and programs, they will be getting more chances. Stay tuned for more exciting programs designed to get kids into nature. Check the Naturalkansas.org website for exciting natural areas to visit in Kansas. Google the Children & Nature Network website as well as our own KDWP site for more information on related programs.

Council Grove Youth Hunt

The Council Grove 10th Annual Spring Turkey Hunt was conducted on Saturday, April 3. Twelve youth ages 11-16 enjoyed cool but calm weather the morning of the hunt. The boys and their guides departed enthusiastically from the warm café where they shared breakfast and discussed strategy before hunting near Council Grove. By day's end, all participants had seen and heard wild turkeys. Two of the participants harvested a turkey.

This event paired young hunters with knowledgeable and experienced adult volunteers in the hunt. All participants appreciated the opportunity to receive hands-on hunting instruction, turkey hunting gear, and meals.

KDWP staff thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance with another successful event: Council Grove, Emporia, and state of Kansas chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation; Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation; KDWP's "Pass It On" Program; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Volunteers included Randy Benteman, Marvin Peterson, Brandon Houck, Trent Siegle, Tyson Powell, Spencer Tomb, Lance McNew, Dean McDaniel, Allan Cashman, Brad Richardson, Mike Wells, Jason Harris, and Virgil Swisher.

Special thanks to numerous landowners for allowing youth to hunt turkeys on their property. Volunteers interested in helping with next year's hunt should phone 620-767-5900.

—Brent Konen, Council Grove Wildlife Area manager



Here a Fish, There a Fish, Everywhere a Fishing Opportunity

Annually, more than 400,000 anglers devote a portion of their lives to fishing in Kansas. They clock out at work, let the grass grow at home, and head for the water. Many head to the popular reservoirs and many state lakes scattered across our state. Others take advantage of the fishing opportunities provided by the Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) and Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (F.I.S.H.) program.

CFAP and F.I.S.H. are special programs aimed at increasing public fishing opportunities and removing barriers to fishing participation throughout Kansas. Annually, these programs are responsible for providing more than 420 public fishing opportunities.

CFAP partners with cities, counties and public entities to enhance recreational fishing opportunities and remove additional fees to fish. Prior to CFAP, opportunity to fish on many publicly-owned lakes was greatly reduced. These opportunities were reduced because the local communities owning the lakes had decided to charge additional fees to fish (fees were in addition to the required state fishing license). In addition to the financial barrier, these lakes tended to lack fisheries management and angler facilities as most were originally constructed for purposes other than fishing.

CFAP removes the additional fees to go fishing by leasing the fishing rights. At the nearly 13,000 acres of CFAP lakes, anglers are free to fish from shore or a boat with only a Kansas fishing license.

CFAP communities are given priority for KDWP fish stocking, fisheries sampling, and management. This priority and focus have

made some of these waters the best fishing around.

Development grants have increased amenities at CFAP lakes including the addition of docks and piers, restrooms, boat launches, fish cleaning stations, and security lighting. Some CFAP waters even meet "Family Friendly Facility" distinction by providing lots of shoreline access, flush toilets, security lighting, and by prohibiting alcohol.

Don't overlook CFAP lakes the next time you feel like wetting a line; the additional fees are gone and fishing is better than ever.

The F.I.S.H. program increases public fishing opportunities by working with private landowners to allow public access to their pond or portion of a stream. Some F.I.S.H. properties are open year-round but most are only open during prime fishing time, March 1 to October 31.

Every year, the F.I.S.H. program leases the fishing to nearly 180 locations in 39 counties. These sites include more than 1,200 acres of ponds and 90 miles of streams. Ponds range in size from five acres to more than 100 acres.

F.I.S.H. waters typically provide a solitude that is less frequently found on other public waters. In fact, it is not uncommon for an angler to have one of these great little fishing holes all to themselves. While other anglers fail to venture out of their comfort zone and try a new lake, take some time this summer and give one of these little honey holes a try.

Locations of all public fishing opportunities in Kansas are mapped in the 2010 Fishing Atlas. This free publication is available everywhere you can purchase a fishing license and online at fishks.org. Be sure to look at the index in the back of the atlas for F.I.S.H. site specific information including water type (pond or stream), fish species present, and boating allowances.

State Record Fish, Twice

A new state record brown trout was caught on Jan. 15 by Arlyn Lindquist, Windom. Lindquist landed the 2.32-pound, 17.5-inch beauty about 1 p.m. from the Kanopolis Seep Stream. But the record wouldn't stand long.

Two months later at almost the same time of day —March 18 at 1:32 p.m. — Daniel Schrag, McPherson, was trying his luck in the same waters when he hooked a big fish. This catch was also a brown trout, even bigger than Linquist's. After official identification and weighing, Schrag's brownie tipped the scales at 4.18 pounds and measured 20.25 inches in length. After Schrag's 30-day waiting period, Kansans had set two state records for the species within two months.

2010 Sportsmen's

TURKEY

2010 SPRING TURKEY

- Regular Season
(firearm/archery): April 14 - May 31, 2010
- Archery-Only Season: April 1 - 13, 2010
- Youth/Disabled Season: April 1 - 13, 2010

2010 FALL TURKEY:

- Season: Oct. 1-Nov. 30, 2010 and
Dec. 13-Dec. 31, 2010; and Jan. 10-31, 2011.

FISHING SEASONS

PADDLEFISH SNAGGING

- March 15-May 15, 2010
- Designated areas on Neosho and Marais des Cygne rivers and Browning Oxbow Lake — see 2010 Fishing Regulations Summary for details. Special permit required.
- Daily creel limit: 2
- Season limit: 6

TROUT SEASON

- Oct. 15 - April 15, 2010
- Daily creel limit: 5
- Area open: Designated trout waters listed at www.kdwp.state.ks.us

HANDFISHING

- June 15-Aug. 31, 2010 (flathead catfish only)
- Two locations: Arkansas River from John Mack Bridge in Wichita downstream to Oklahoma border and Kansas River from origin to confluence with Missouri River. Special per required.
- Daily Creel Limit: 5

BULLFROG

- July 1-Oct. 31, 2010
- Daily Creel Limit: 8

FLOATLINE FISHING

- July 15-Sept. 15, 2010
- Daylight hours only – Hillsdale, Council Grove, Tuttle Creek, Kanopolis, John Redmond, Toronto, Wilson and Pomona reservoirs only.

BIG GAME

DEER:

- Youth/Persons with Disabilities: Sept. 11-19
- Archery: Sept. 20 - Dec. 31, 2010
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 20-Oct. 3, 2010
- Early Firearm (Subunit 19 only) Oct. 9-17, 2010
- Regular Firearm: Dec. 1 - Dec. 12, 2010
- Firearm Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season:
Jan. 1 - Jan 9, 2011
- Archery Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season (DMU 19 only): Jan. 10 - Jan. 31, 2011
- Special Extended Firearms Whitetail Antlerless Season: Jan. 10- Jan. 16, 2011 (Open for unit 7, 8 and 15 only.)

ELK (residents only)

Outside Fort Riley:

- Muzzleloader: Sept. 1-Oct. 3, 2010
- Archery: Sept. 20 - Dec. 31, 2010
- Firearm: Dec. 1 - Dec. 12, 2009 and
Jan. 1-March 15, 2011

On Fort Riley:

- Muzzleloader and archery: Sept. 1-Oct. 3, 2010
- Firearm Season for Holders of Any-Elk Permits:
Oct 1 - Dec 31, 2009
- Firearm First Segment: Oct. 1-Oct. 31, 2010
- Firearm Second Segment: Nov. 1 - Nov 30, 2010
- Firearm Third Segment: Dec. 1 - Dec. 31, 2010

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

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

- Season: Sept. 1 - Oct. 31 and Nov 6-14, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 15
- Possession limit: 30

EXOTIC DOVE

(Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves only)

- Season: Nov. 20, 2010 - Feb. 28, 2011
- Daily bag limit: No limit
- Possession limit: No limit

Calendar

RAIL (Sora and Virginia)

- Season: Sept. 1 - Nov 9, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 25
- Possession limit: 25

SNIPE

- Season: Sept. 1 - Dec. 16, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 8
- Possession limit: 16

WOODCOCK

- Season: Oct. 16 - Nov. 29, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

SANDHILL CRANE

- Season: Nov. 10 - Jan. 6, 2011
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

DUCK

- to be set

CANADA GEESE

to be set

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

- to be set

LIGHT GEESE

- Conservation Order: Feb. 15-April 31, 2010

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

PHEASANTS

- Season: November 13, 2010 - January 31, 2011
- Youth Season: November 6-7 2010
- Daily bag limit: 4 cocks in regular season, 2 cocks in youth season

QUAIL

- Season: November 13, 2010 - January 31, 2011
- Youth Season: November 6 - 7, 2010
- Daily Bag Limit Quail: 8 in regular season, 4 in youth season

PRAIRIE CHICKEN

- Early Season (East Unit): Sept. 15-Oct. 15, 2010
- Regular Season (East and Northwest Units):
Nov. 20, 2010 - Jan. 31, 2011
- Regular Season (Southwest Unit):
Nov. 20, 2010 - Dec. 31, 2010
- Daily Bag Limit: 2 (Southwest Unit)
- Possession Limit: twice daily bag

SMALL GAME ANIMALS

SQUIRREL

- Season: June 1 - Feb. 28, 2011
- Daily bag limit: 5
- Possession limit: 20

RABBITS (Cottontail & Jack rabbit)

- Season: All year
- Daily bag limit: 10
- Possession limit: 30

CROW

- Season: Nov. 10 - March 10, 2011
- Daily bag/Possession Limit: No Limit

FURBEARER HUNTING & TRAPPING

NOTE: All furbearer hunting, trapping, and running seasons begin at 12 noon on opening day and close at midnight of closing day.

- Season: Nov. 17, 2010 - Feb. 15, 2011
Badger, bobcat, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, swift fox, red fox, gray fox, striped skunk, weasel:

BEAVER TRAPPING

- Season Dates (statewide):
Nov. 17, 2010 - March 31, 2011

A member of the Missouri-Iowa-Kansas Brigade for three decades, Hannon serves as Brigade Booshway, which means leader of a brigade or party, and derives from the word, Bourgeois. Hannon has also earned the AMM's official highest rank of Hiveranno, which means that he is able to survive in the wilderness for days on end using only the implements and skills familiar to a mountain man living between 1800 and 1840 in North America.

Hannon discovered the Brigade, a sub-group of the American Mountain Men, during the late 1970s in a J. Wayne Fears article published in an issue of *Outdoor Life*. "I inquired about the AMM through information in that article," Hannon said. He also became acquainted with area members and became an official AMM member in 1979.

With a father who grew up in rural Ireland, intimately connected to the land, Hannon inherited a natural affinity for the outdoors and wilderness. "The outdoors was in my blood from the beginning," Hannon said. From a very young age, Hannon pursued his interests in trapping, horseback riding, and the early American West. Joining the Brigade gave Hannon the opportunity to concentrate all of these skills and experience in a single organization.

To qualify for membership in the AMM, Hannon had to complete certain prerequisites. Hannon began as a Pilgrim, or probationary member. He progressed to the intermediate level of Bossloper, and finally, to Hiveranno, which is the highest rank achievable through the AMM. Before a member

Modern Men of the Mountains

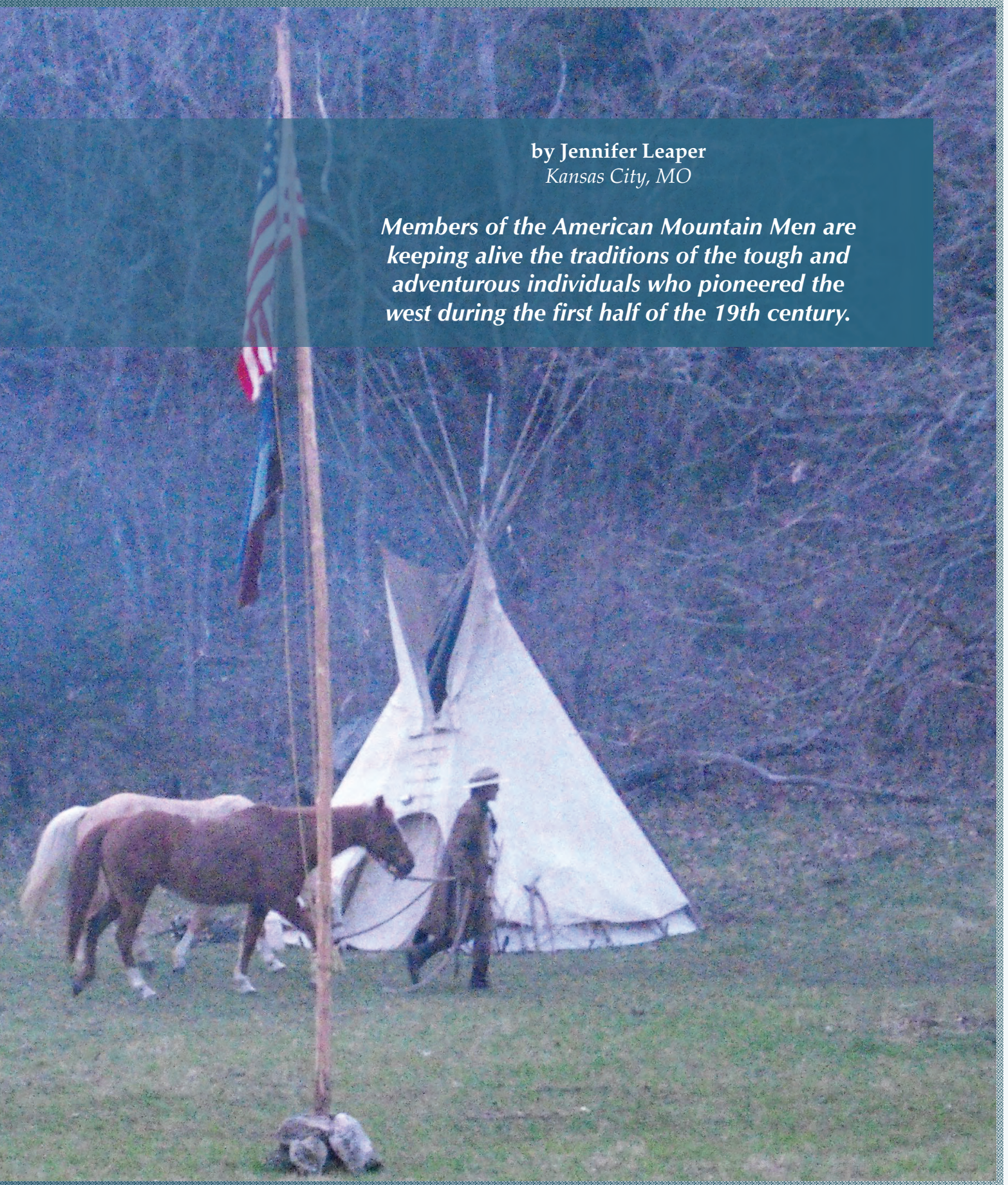
For some, there is nostalgia for an era they never lived through. There is a yearning to experience a point in history with all the senses. For Jim Hannon, a member and ranking officer of the Missouri-Iowa-Kansas Brigade of the American Mountain Men (AMM), his nostalgia led him all the way back to the first half of the 19th century, to the height of the fur trade in the Rocky Mountains.

Jim Hannon photo

by Jennifer Leaper

Kansas City, MO

Members of the American Mountain Men are keeping alive the traditions of the tough and adventurous individuals who pioneered the west during the first half of the 19th century.



can become a Hiveranno, there are a total of 20 prerequisites to accomplish. These prerequisites range from the ability to “properly field dress (clean and skin) a game animal under primitive condition” to spending “at least two days and one night in a primitive camp during each season of the year.”

It may appear to be a given, but gender is also an official factor in qualifying for AMM membership. Hannon said that although his wife and two daughters accompany him on many of his wilderness outings, they are not eligible

to join the AMM.

“Fortunately, there is an unofficial companion organization that my wife belongs to, and which someday my daughters can join if they are so inclined, called the Women of the Fur Trade,” Hannon said.

According to Hannon, the WFT requires that members complete many of the same prerequisites as those required by the AMM. Hannon said that in some cases the WFT prerequisites are more challenging than those of the AMM.

Currently, there are around 600 official AMM members, with 27 of these being members of the Missouri-Iowa-Kansas Brigade, a subgroup of the AMM. These 600 members represent the Eastern and Western territories of the AMM.

“Interestingly, estimates for the number of original mountain men place the figure close to 600 at any given time during the height of the fur trade,” Hannon said.

According to Hannon, the modest size of the AMM can be attributed to the long list of membership requirements, which encourages only serious applicants to consider joining.

AMM members come from all walks of life.

“Young and old, white collar and blue collar, corporate managers and farmers, doctors, lawyers — you name it, and there is probably someone in the organization that performs a given profession,” Hannon said.

Though each man arrives to the AMM with a different set of professional skills, those members that endure in the organization share one thing, which is a desire to fully experience a lifestyle that would be foreign in many respects to contemporary Americans.

To immerse themselves in the old, American West familiar to mountain men and women of the early 19th century, AMM and brigade members participate in activities and events that provide relevant educational opportunities.

“We strive to have a half dozen or so AMM-sponsored events per year from which members in our area can choose,” Hannon said. These



Jim Hannon photo

While the AMM accepts only men as members, family members accompany members to many of the events, including this one, the 2009 AMM Western Territorial Rendezvous, which was held in Kansas. A companion organization called Women in the Furtrade is available for interested women.



Three mountain men on their way to rendezvous, riding through native tallgrass prairie in Kansas. (L - R - Buster Schmitz (KS) / Denny Leonard (IA) / Larry Hanson (IA).

locally sponsored events are sometimes scheduled to accommodate hunting and trapping seasons, so members are able to authentically participate in activities that would have occurred all year long for the mountain men of two centuries previous. Members can hone outdoor and wilderness skills during such events and work on completing prerequisites for achieving a certain organizational rank.

As one might imagine, foodstuffs and other supplies are kept to a minimum in order to accurately recreate the camps of a more primitive period in history. Camp events like the “Aux Aliments du Pays,” which translates to “live from the land camp,” reflects this minimalist approach to survival, according to Hannon. He said that for such an event, not much more than tea and coffee, sugar, and salt and pepper are packed.

Annually, the AMM sponsors national events that are

hosted by local, AMM groups.

“Our brigade has hosted two in the last five years,” Hannon said. He added that the most recently hosted event was the AMM Western Territorial in Kansas, which took place in April of 2009.

“At these rendezvous, we host ‘Rocky Mountain Colleges’ on a variety of topics that, again, help members along their own per-

sonal journeys.” During the event last April, there were colleges held for beaver trapping, cordage, primitive snares, elk butchering, fishing, and primitive archery.

Appropriately held on July 4th every year, the AMM holds the “Nationals,” which takes place in the Rocky Mountains. “This type of activity is a highlight that brings all of the skills together in a single event,” Hannon said. He said that some brigade members have journeyed to this rendezvous on “back-country horse packing trips,” where only “period tack and equipment” are used.

Though there are many structured moments of learning during organized events and activities, there are those unexpected encounters in the wilderness that are just as valuable if not more so. During a ride along the original Oregon and California trails through the Flint Hills, Hannon said he discovered country he had not known about previously:



An AMM Pilgrim hooping a beaver pelt on a willow hoop, after skinning and fleshing the 'furry banknote' at an AMM rendezvous.



Jim Hanon, who has attained the rank of Hiveranno, demonstrates the ignition mechanism of his flintlock rifle. The rank of Hiveranno means that he is able to survive in the wilderness for days on end using only the implements and skills familiar to a mountain man living between 1800 and 1840 in North America.

Riding south, we covered country that had recently been burned, as the natives would have done centuries ago. We had the opportunity to ride through tall-grass prairie, and saw deer, prairie chickens, turkeys and loads of other wildlife. Our final night's camp, prior to riding into rendezvous, was tucked into a small, green valley, surrounded by brown, Flint Hills benches, with a sparkling clear stream flowing around camp. To see horses picketed out to graze, a mess fire with coffee steaming and bedrolls rolled out under the stars around the fire truly harkens back to a

simpler time period and takes you back into time, far removed from the 21st century.

Frozen Butt Rendezvous

Curiosity about an event called "Frozen Butt Rendezvous" is nearly unavoidable. The Kaw Valley Muzzleloaders, the group that hosts this annual, February event at a place called Corndodger Station, was probably counting on this curiosity when they named this weekend of "living history" that has taken place in Kansas for three decades. This past February, AMM members contributed their own histor-

ical reenactments to this "demo" camp, as they have for the past few years.

"I refer to these non-AMM sponsored camps as demo camps because they give our members the opportunity to demonstrate to others what we do as an organization," Hannon said.

The AMM demo camp at Corndodger Station is one of several, annual, "public facing, living history" events in which AMM members participate, according to Hannon.

Corndodger Station is appropriately situated in a remote area, located roughly 45 miles north of

I-70 off Highway 99. The Flint Hills are the ideal background for the authentically primitive activities of the AMM/Brigade.

It was as if I had stepped out of one century and into another as I journeyed up a hilly and winding mud trail, amidst a series of tents and kettles boiling over fires, before I finally came upon the camp of Hannon and his Rendezvous gang. I was warmly welcomed and as a guest was promptly offered a portion of buffalo. Several men wearing handmade, period clothing and accessories stood or sat around the fire that heated the buffalo meat.

One of these men, "Nabor," whose real name is Darrell, demonstrated the process of making bullets. First, he melted

lead over the fire in a small hand-forged ladle and then poured the melted lead into a mold. The resulting ammunition was manually loaded into the barrel of a muzzleloader.

"Everything has to be loaded through the muzzle," Nabor pointed out. He was careful to return any excess lead to the ladle where it was reused for the next bullet molded.

Nabor is the epitome of what one might expect to find in a modern man who has a fervent passion for the lifestyle of the fur trappers of the 1800s. He wears clothes made from animal skins and his full, white and gray beard framing his face makes one think of untamed wilderness.

"You run out of shot, you can put anything down a smooth

barrel," Nabor said.

The molds for the bullets are designed to correlate with the weapon caliber, according to Nabor, who fired his flintlock at a one-dimensional rabbit target placed in a tree.

If you lose a mold, you can pour lead into a hole in the ground and make what's called a slug, 'Missouri Jim', another Brigade member, said.

Hannon said that there were two kinds of muzzleloaders used by the fur trappers of the 19th century, which were a flintlock and a percussion or cap-lock.

Among the members of the group that were present at this particular camp, a postal worker, a farmer, a heating and A/C specialist as well as other modern livelihoods were represented that don't involve melting lead into bullets or lighting a fire with only flint and steel or the ignition of a flintlock gun. Hannon said that he couldn't think of anyone who truly lived the life of a 19th century fur trapper full time.

Despite the otherwise contemporary lifestyles outside of the brigade events, Hannon said that very few modern conveniences are allowed at brigade events and outings. Some exceptions are prescription (period only) eyeglasses, medication, and water purification tablets.

At that reference to modern comforts, I left the Brigade members to their roasted buffalo and their cigarettes rolled in corn shucks and wandered back down the winding mud trail, back toward my truck and the 21st century. ♡



An AMM member dressed in period attire pours a lead bullet at a recent rendezvous. Members at the events come from all walks of life, and all have a passion to keep the traditions of early 1800s-era mountain men alive.

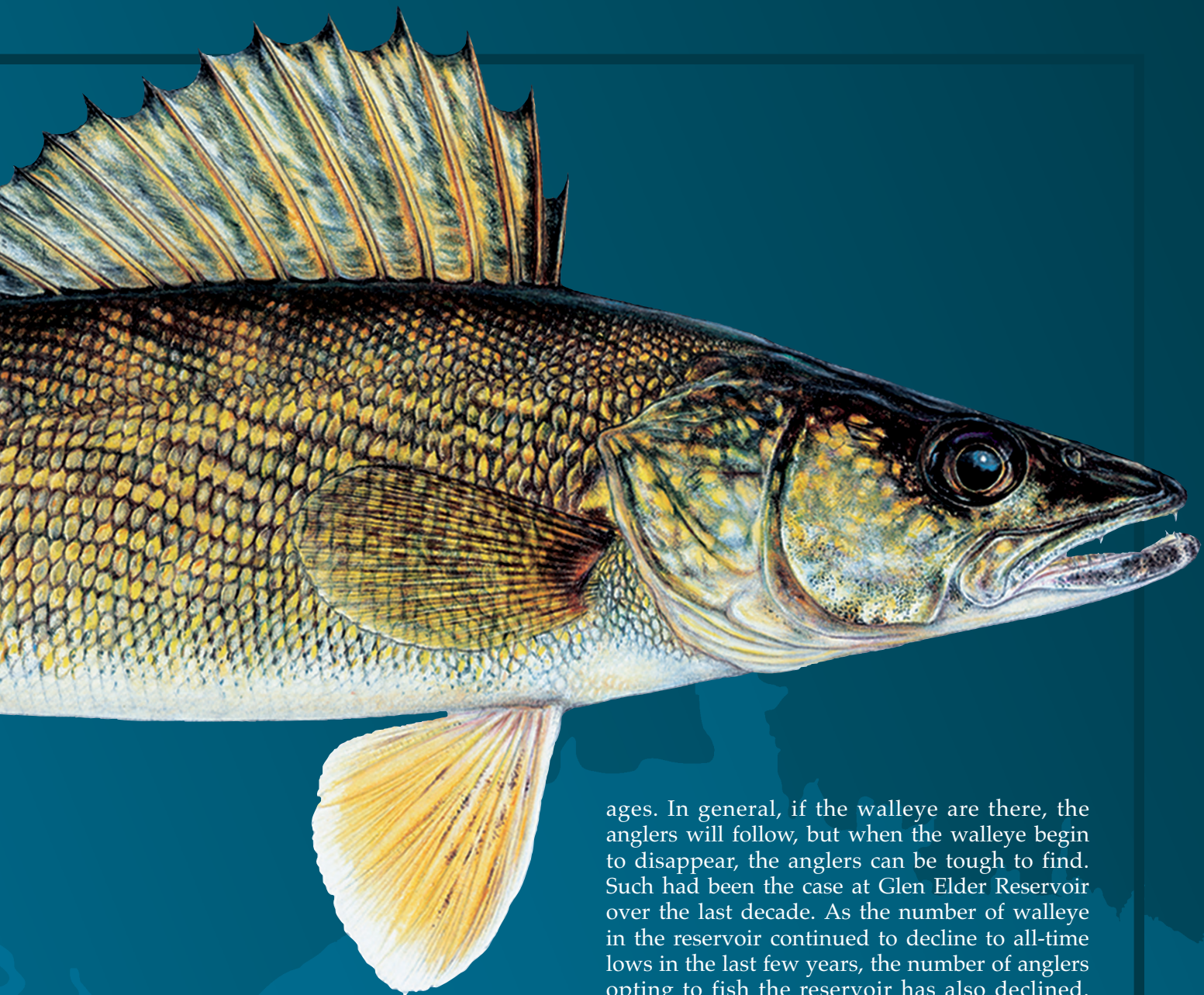
Joe Tomelleri Illustration



Walleye

walleye

by Scott Waters,
district fisheries biologist
Glen Elder



Back in the 1970s and 1980s when an angler hooked up the boat and headed out to chase walleye, more often than not the destination was Glen Elder Reservoir, also known as Waconda Lake in Mitchell County. The quality and quantity of the walleye fishery was a draw for anglers from all over, and the fish cooperated most of the time. Now days, many anglers opt to skip Glen Elder in favor of other reservoirs like Wilson, Cheney, Lovewell, Hillsdale, Milford, or Webster. Not coincidentally, these reservoirs have had some of the better walleye populations based on the 2010 Fishing Forecast 3-year aver-

ages. In general, if the walleye are there, the anglers will follow, but when the walleye begin to disappear, the anglers can be tough to find. Such had been the case at Glen Elder Reservoir over the last decade. As the number of walleye in the reservoir continued to decline to all-time lows in the last few years, the number of anglers opting to fish the reservoir has also declined. However, the good news is that things appear to be turning around now.

The Glen Elder dam was completed in December of 1968 for use as a flood control, irrigation, and municipal water supply reservoir. The reservoir first reached conservation elevation during the spring of 1973. As with most new reservoirs completed at that time, the table was set for an excellent fishery to develop due to newly inundated habitat, an ample, clean water supply, and a virtually silt-free substrate. As a result, Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game biologists began a stocking program in 1968 with supplemental stockings made in later years.



For anglers to catch walleye in Kansas waters, state hatcheries supplement the natural spawn with hatchery-spawned fry – eggs taken from wild fish. Even when natural spawns are successful, hatch rates are very low. However, many as 70 percent of the eggs incubated at hatcheries will hatch.

The first Glen Elder walleye stocking consisted of 1.5 million fry using eggs collected from Webster Reservoir in May 1968. Stockings occurred annually through 1972 with a total of 15.2 million fry stocked. Sampling records and low angler harvest in the reservoir indicated the population remained limited through 1973, but as the reservoir filled,

several areas that appeared to offer high potential for natural reproduction had been inundated, enhancing the possibility for natural reproduction. The confirmation of naturally spawned walleye was apparent in 1973; however, test netting catches and angler harvest of walleye remained low in 1974.

Sampling in 1975 indicated that

insufficient recruitment existed for a dynamic walleye population to develop, likely due to a lack of suitable spawning habitat. Plans were developed to create an artificial walleye spawning bed at Glen Elder. In 1976, biologists saw the potential for increasing the natural recruitment of the population and created additional spawning habitat along the west end of the south bluffs.

During that same year, anglers began to better locate and harvest walleye in the reservoir, and improved netting equipment and techniques helped increase catch rates by state biologists. Basically, the public and biologists were beginning to learn more about walleye habitat preferences and locations in the reservoir and determined a suitable population already existed. In 1978, the population was described as the best yet in the reservoir, and Glen Elder had officially become one of the top destinations of walleye anglers.

Through the 1980s and early 1990s, Glen Elder remained one of the premiere walleye angling destinations in the state. The flood of 1993 had a significant negative

impact on that billing, though, as a combination of high fish loss through the flood gates, heavy siltation, and destruction of suitable spawning habitat all contributed to the sharp decline in the walleye population over the next decade. In addition, a general change in the aquatic environment and species composition probably contributed to the decline in walleye numbers. Still, the department has been determined to restore this popular fishery and return it to one of the top walleye destinations in the state. So what has been done in the past and what do we hope to accomplish in the future? Let's examine each aspect of walleye management individually.

Growth Rates

Age and growth data are valuable management tools for biologists when determining the health of a fishery. Fast, consistent growth over years and between sizes indicates the food supply is adequate, intra-specific competition is minimal, and stockpiling is not occurring. Slow growth, on the other hand, presents a red flag to biologists that something is out



Walleye are popular with anglers because of the challenge in finding and catching them, as well as the top-notch table fare they provide. In the 1970s and 1980s, Glen Elder Reservoir was one of the top walleye fisheries in Kansas.

of balance or a new problem has arisen in the reservoir.

Mike Quist, graduate student at Kansas State University, spent several years studying the walleye population at Glen Elder examining age and growth. Average growth rate is shown in the table.

I completed a comprehensive age and growth study in 2008 and found similar results indicating growth rate has remained relatively constant over time. In addition, when comparing the current growth rates with those from the late 1980s, the data shows things have not changed much in the last 20 years.

Quist also compared growth rates from our Kansas reservoirs with others across the country. He found that Kansas walleye, including Glen Elder, exhibited growth rates similar to more southern latitudes (e.g., Mississippi and Texas), and were faster than those of northern latitudes (e.g., Manitoba, Minnesota, and South Dakota) and middle latitude populations (e.g., Colorado and Iowa). He also found that growth increments of younger fish were dependent on gizzard shad densities, whereas growth of older fish was inversely related to mean summer air temperature.

AGE/LENGTH RELATIONSHIP OF WALLEYE AT GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

AGE	LENGTH	LENGTH	LENGTH
1	10.2	09.8	09.4
2	14.9	15.1	14.1
3	17.4	18.5	16.6
4	20.5	20.9	20.0
5	NA	22.8	NA
6	NA	24.4	NA
7	NA	25.3	NA

Note: The table is overlaid on a silhouette of a walleye fish. The columns are labeled with the study years: KDWP 1992, KSU 2003, and KDWP 2008.

Mortality

Research biologists from KDWP and Kansas State University conducted an extensive tagging study of the Glen Elder walleye population between 2000 and 2003 to determine walleye mortality rates. A total of 2,429 fish were tagged with 1,132 fish harvested during the study. This yielded an exploitation rate (fishing mortality) of 65.4 percent, a figure that is among the highest in the literature. This figure indi-

cates 65 out of every 100 walleye that are of legal size are harvested from the reservoir each year. They concluded that with a 15-inch minimum length limit, both growth and recruitment overfishing were occurring and that more protective length limits are required to better manage the walleye fishery. This explains why several consecutive poor year classes can cause a quick decline in the walleye population if the larger fish aren't being protected.

Length and Creel Limits

The statewide management plan for walleye included a daily creel limit of five fish (possession limit of two daily bags) with no minimum length limit through 1980. Between 1981 and 1988 the daily creel limit was increased to eight fish (possession limit of three daily limits), but in 1989 the creel limit returned to five fish daily. In 1990, a minimum length limit of 15 inches was placed on walleye at Glen Elder to help protect the smaller fish that were experiencing higher mortality than could be managed. This length limit was kept in place until 2009 when it was increased to 18 inches. This experimental change will be evaluated for four years (2009-2012) and will either remain or a new regulation will be proposed. The statewide options now are limited to a daily creel of two or five fish with a minimum length limits of 15, 18, or 21 inches. A 21-inch minimum length limit generally requires unusual circumstances to be established on a reservoir, such as the presence of white perch; otherwise, 15-inch or 18-inch length limits are the only options. There is the possibility of creating new regulations, which would allow for more varied management practices on our state's reservoirs, and one of these new regulations could be the best option for Glen Elder.



Mike Miller photo

Creel and length limits are tools used to manage walleye populations. The statewide minimum length limit is 15 inches. The length limit at Glen Elder is 18 inches.

Stocking

Stocking is likely the most popular management tool to the angling public and can be invaluable in certain situations when trying to maintain or improve a fishery. Stocking of walleye, in particular, has shown positive results in some situations while others have not seen worthwhile returns.

Since 1979, 113 million walleye fry and 455,000 walleye fingerlings have been stocked at Glen Elder Reservoir in an attempt to supplement the naturally reproducing population. We have been able to evaluate our stockings to gauge how effective they have been enhancing the walleye population. It seems during some years, lack of food, weather, predators, water level fluctuations and flow-through can significantly minimize recruitment of walleye no matter how many fish are stocked. Other years, the fish do extremely well and stocking may not even be necessary. The goal is to find a happy medium where a moderate number of fish can be stocked each year without having to expend too much time and effort on producing an excess number of fish.

Through oxytetracycline marking (OTC), hatchery staff have occasionally marked fry and fingerling walleye prior to stocking. We have been fortunate at Glen Elder to receive OTC-marked fish for 10 years since 1997 and have a good database from which to draw conclusions of stocking effectiveness. Overall, stocked fish accounted for 58 percent of the age-0 (young-of-the-year) fish collected in fall sampling. However, when examined a little closer, the contribution of stocked fish increases as the year class strength increases. Stocked fish accounted for 77 percent, 86 percent, 57 percent, and 34 percent of the fish collected with year class strengths of excellent, good, fair, and poor, respectively. There is a strong indication that good recruitment of stocked fish leads to the strongest year classes, but weak year classes are due to a low contribution of stocked fish. In addition, fingerling stockings have been much less successful than fry stockings and will be discontinued at Glen Elder.

While this has been found at Glen Elder, other reservoirs behave differently and may not require any stocking to maintain their numbers. There is still a lot we don't know about supplemental stocking and its effect on natural recruitment of walleye. It's tough to gauge success, and while it can be beneficial, it is

not always effective at all lakes, or consistently effective at any lake. As some research has found, supplemental walleye stocking tends to be much less effective than maintenance or production stocking. At Glen Elder, however, we will continue to stock walleye fry in April at a rate of 500/acre.



At Glen Elder, stocking of walleye fry appears to be a contributing factor in creating strong year classes. Since 1979, 113 million walleye fry and 455,000 fingerlings have been stocked in Glen Elder. However, environmental factors during some years cause low recruitment no matter how many fish are stocked.

Conclusions

The history and the future of walleye angling has and will always be driven by recruitment of young walleye into the fishable population. Simply put, the more young fish that can be produced, mature into brood stock, spawn, and eventually show up in the angler's creel, the better. But it all starts with the little guys; if you can't produce and protect them, the population will struggle.

Glen Elder historically produced very good numbers of

young walleye during the first 25-30 years following impoundment. The spawning conditions were prime and the fish basically took care of themselves. The reservoir is now over 40 years old, anglers have greatly improved their ability to locate and harvest walleye, and their popularity continues to grow. The times have changed for the walleye and so must the management.

Getting those little fish produced is the first step in the walleye chain of events. To do so, we will continue our stocking pro-

gram at Glen Elder with hopes of producing strong year classes each year. This seems like an easy enough task, but those young fish must battle the wind, temperature, water level fluctuations, water releases, predators, or a lack of food supply most years. Despite all our efforts, it is nearly impossible to reach that level of high recruitment year in and year out. We have improved several methods to tip the odds in our favor and will continue to do so in the future.

Once these young fish are produced and survive their first winter, they need to be protected and allowed to reach sexual maturity. Most walleye will mature at age two with approximately half the females not maturing until age three. Allowing these fish a chance to spawn before they are available for harvest is critical and should be considered when setting creel and length limits. We will continue with the 18-inch minimum length limit at Glen Elder for the next three years but will be looking at alternate solutions depending on the results.

The future of the Glen Elder walleye population looks great right now, and I have high hopes for good angling over these next couple of years. We have been able to produce good to excellent year classes of fish five of the last six years and these fish are now offered a little more protection under the 18-inch minimum length limit. Growth rates remain very good, and anglers should expect many of these fish to reach legal size by the end of their third growing season or sometime during their fourth.

We've already seen an increase in the number of anglers targeting walleye at the reservoir and hope that trend will continue in the near future. ♡



Marc Murrell photos

This trophy-class walleye is four or five years old. Length limits not only help keep fish in the lake long enough to allow them grow to trophy status, they also play a role in natural recruitment, since walleye aren't sexually mature until age two or three.



Marc Murrell photos

Crappie Motherlode!

text and photos by Marc Murrell
manager, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita

For those who love to catch big crappie, spring is a magic time of the year. It's the same each year when water temperatures reach the 60s; everyone is looking for the lake with the giant slabs. Lucky for us, Kansas lakes grow big crappie.



Marc Murrell photo

You can tell by the color of this male white crappie that spawning time is near. Holding the fish is Bob Roberts, of Salina, who usually knows where the fish are biting. The rig pictured at right is commonly used for shallow spring crappie. It can be fished just above the rocks or brush avoiding the snags, and wind and waves will impart great action.



Spring is a wonderful time of year in Kansas' great outdoors. Everything is waking up from a long winter and warm days are reason to celebrate. Turkey hunters are out in full force, and those who like the fungus in the form of morel mushrooms share the woods now, too. And if your pursuits are more piscatorial in nature, then chances are you're headed to your favorite watery haunt in search of spawning

crappie. The action is heating up in many bodies of water across the state.

"I love fishing the spawn," said avid angler Bob Roberts. "I love fishing for many species, but when those crappie move up shallow it's a hoot."

Roberts has decades of experience fishing. He fishes reservoirs in the central and western part of the state like Milford, Wilson, Kanopolis, Cedar Bluff, Glen Elder

and Marion and even some smaller state fishing lakes. More often than not, he catches his share of crappie, and the only thing between him and a day on the water is the chance to go. He tries to fish during the week when most anglers are at work and often has many of his favorite spots all to himself. Spring is when he loads the boat with spawning crappie at any number of reservoirs.

“When that water temperature starts getting close to 60 degrees, it’s time to start checking some spots,” Roberts admitted. “You’ll find that some banks warm up quicker than others if they’re protected from big winds and those are the ones fish usually go to first.”

Winter crappie fishing is also a favorite of Roberts and he said that fishing for spawning crappie ranks right up there.

“You probably don’t catch as many fish as you can in the winter when you really get into them, but you can usually catch some really nice fish in the spring,” Roberts said. “And once in a while you get the conditions right and you REALLY get into them during the spawn if they’re up on the banks.”

While winter fishing is primarily restricted to anglers who own boats, crappie fishing in spring doesn’t discriminate. More crappie are caught now by jig and minnow-dunking bank anglers than at any other time of year. Fish often move to shallow areas in coves, many of which are accessible from shore.

“When they get going, they can be on most any bank that has suitable spawning habitat,” Roberts said. “Many of our state fishing lakes and reservoirs have plenty of good places for them to spawn.”

Roberts looks for a gradually sloping bank, usually with some brush or gravel along it. But he doesn’t rule out steeper banks, either, as fish will still spawn in some of these areas but just hang deeper.

“And if you’re going along and you see a bunch of cloudy water along the bank, you know it’s probably a male crappie in there stirring things up building or guarding a nest,” Roberts said. “And if that female isn’t right there nearby, she’s often hanging out in just a little bit deeper water.”

A favorite tactic for Roberts



Doodlesocking, or dabbling, with long rods and jigs is another common spring crappie technique. The two anglers above are fishing a rocky/gravel bank, easing the boat parallel to the shore, and fishing vertically with flyrods. Below an angler wades flooded brush. The long rod and vertical presentation is the only way to reach fish in this habitat.



now is to use a spinning rod and reel and pitch an 1/8-ounce jig near shore and slowly retrieve it. If the shore is particularly rocky or brushy, he likes to suspend his jig with a small bobber placed about a foot above it.

"Some days they want that bobber stopped and the jig just sitting there and other days they'll whack it on the move," Roberts said. "But that bobber allows you to fish a slower (presentation) and shallower water and not get hung

up as much."

Such was the case on a memorable day last spring when Roberts made a late afternoon call to a friend.

"What time can you get over here to Kanopolis?" he said to his buddy who was working. "If you want to catch a bunch of crappie you better hurry up because we've been catching some."

A hot fishing tip is a sure-fire method for most any angler to figure out a way to slip out of

work a couple hours early. Roberts and his suddenly-sick friend hit the water about 4:30 p.m. and started pitching jigs toward a shallow, muddy gravel bank.

"He caught one on his second cast and I think he knew right then he was glad he made the trip," Roberts laughed. "We stayed in one spot for an hour and never moved and caught a bunch of fish."

The duo fished similar looking banks as the first and caught scrappy crappie most every stop. The livewell began to fill with brilliantly-black male white crappie and the occasional egg-laden female white crappie. Throw in an occasional black crappie, and there was plenty of slab-sided action 'til the sun disappeared behind the horizon.

"We caught about 75 crappie in about three hours," Roberts said. "We kept 54 between us and most of our keepers were between 10 and 12 inches. We had about a dozen that would weigh a pound to a pound-and-a-quarter so we had some pretty decent fish, and most of our fish were males."

Mostly males means the spawn is just getting started as they're usually first on the scene. Scenarios just like this are being played out on many waters all across Kansas and some are better than others.

"There's nothing like a lake being down for a while and then filling back up which floods all that vegetation and new growth," Roberts said of the seasonality of Kansas reservoir water levels. "High water at the right time of the year gives those fish places to spawn and also places for those young-of-the-year fish to hide from predators."

"You really can't manage crappie; only Mother Nature can," he said of the hit-or-miss timing of the water coming up or going down which is naturally beyond



Gene Brehm photo

Paul Miller, Manhattan, lands a white crappie on Council Grove Reservoir. Miller likes to fish the creeks and upper ends of lakes early and move toward the dam later in the spring. Some seasons, the spawn can last two months.

any fisheries biologist's control. "It can make a lot of crappie when it's right."

Since a crappie's lifespan is relatively short, most reservoirs don't have length limits. However, a few Kansas reservoirs do have a 10-inch minimum length limit. In addition to the 50-fish statewide creel limit on crappie, some bodies of water have more restrictive creel limits. For example, popular crappie hotspots like Council Grove, Perry, Melvern, Clinton and Hillsdale reservoirs have a 20-fish crappie creel limit and a 10-inch minimum length limit. Other bodies of water may have similar restrictions, so anglers are advised to check the *2010 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary* when planning a trip to fish the crappie spawn.

Another sure-fire method for catching Kansas spawning crappie involves a leisurely approach favored by many anglers. A lawn chair, minnow bucket and a beverage of choice are three key ingredients in many after-work expeditions. A peaceful sunset is made better by hungry crappie inhaling a medium-sized minnow dangled 1-2 feet below a bobber that was pitched out from shore anywhere from a few feet to several yards or more. Rip-rap areas of fishing jetties or breakwaters surrounding boat ramps, marinas or bridge causeways are ideal spots. Crappie often move in from deeper water to these shallow, rocky areas as nightfall approaches and fishing often gets better closer to dark.

The spawning action should continue through late-May in some Kansas locations, depending on Mother Nature.

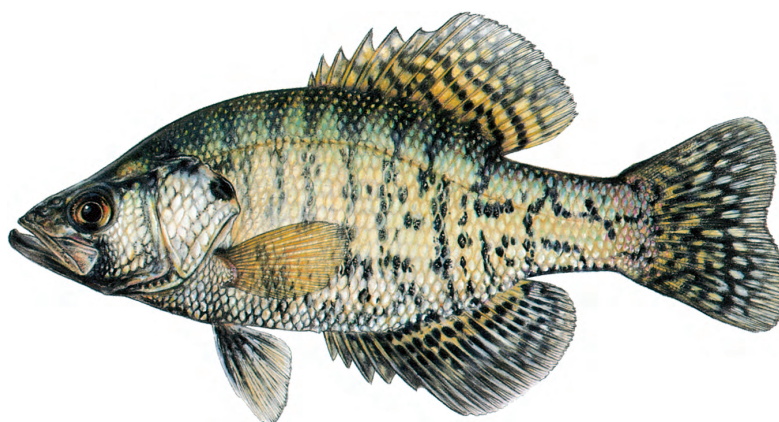
"I've done well on some reservoirs as late as Memorial Day," Roberts said of fishing the crappie spawn. "It just depends on the weather." ♡

Black or white?

Avid crappie anglers can tell the difference between white and black crappie at first glance. However, many novice anglers mistakenly identify (not that it matters as they both look the same sizzling in hot grease) spawning male white crappie as black crappie. These spawning male white crappie are often the blackest of black and much darker than their female counterparts.

The easiest way to tell the two apart is to look at the overall coloration and pattern of black or dark blotches on the sides. White crappie have vertical barring that may be only slightly darker than the rest of the body to coal black. Black crappie don't have any pattern to their black spots and they appear random over much of their sides.

If you want to positively identify your fish (which isn't really necessary since creel or length limits don't differentiate between the two) you can count the spiny dorsal fins on the top of the fish. White crappie have six or fewer spines while black crappie have seven or more.



white crappie male



black crappie

Illustrations by Joseph Tomelleri

Solomon Sojourn: Webster State Park

text and photos by Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

This picturesque recreation area on the shores of Webster Reservoir just 8 miles west of Stockton is a Kansas Treasure. After years of drought, the lake's levels are back to normal, and that's good news for those who use the park.

Webster State Park: open a state highway map, and you'll find its blue thumbprint in western Rooks County. Northwest Kansas, well north of I-70. No-man's land, right? The landscape along I-70 in Kansas is commonly described as flat and featureless, by the likes of national sports writers and others who have been no farther west than Lawrence. But regarding western Kansas, the stereotype is a traveler's gospel. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who has ventured into the Smoky Hills has seen country as ruggedly beautiful as it comes, and while a few observant vacationers may have wondered about the landscape that aprons the great highway from Abilene to Wakeeney, few have ventured off the concrete.

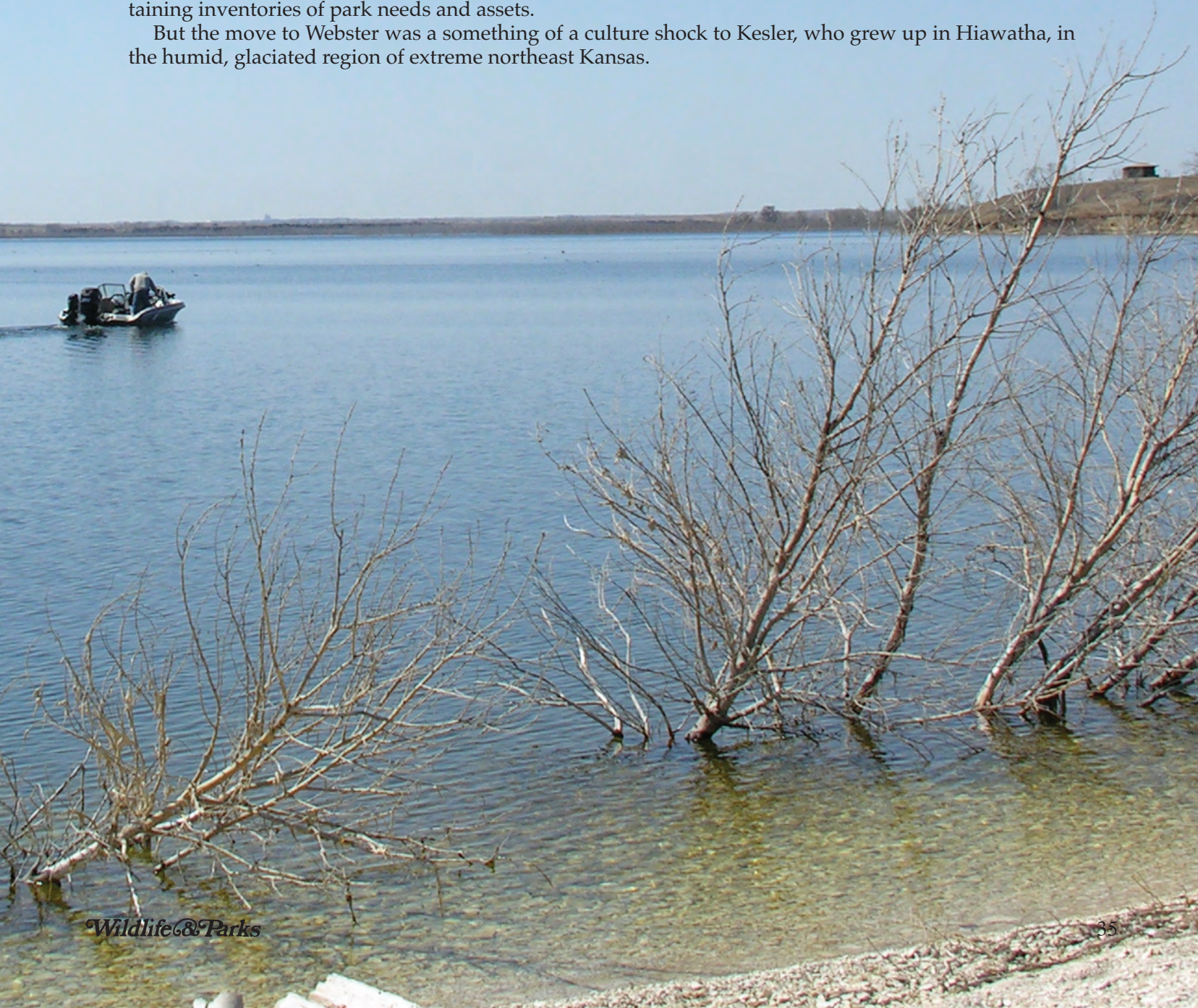
I have. I've explored the great Arikaree Breaks in northwest Kansas and driven roller coaster roadways north of I-70 between Ellsworth and Salina, so it was with exasperation that I slapped myself upside the head last March as I traveled north of Hays, toward Webster State Park. I had never been in this particular part of the state, and for some reason, I had a mental picture of the area that fit the stereotype I have just so priggishly derided. As I crossed over the first great rise a few miles north of Hays, it dawned on me where I was. The Smoky Hills. God's country. Several breathless vistas later, I crossed the Solomon River below the bluffs near Stockton and headed west, humbled but gratified. This would be a good day.

Highway 24 twists and dips the 8 short miles from Stockton to the park, comforted on the south by trees feeding off the Solomon alluvium and buffeted on the north by Dakota sandstone, limestone, and chalk bluffs. As I rounded a curve, my eye caught an old limestone cellar nestled in a hill next to the road, a lone yellow arch surrounded by little bluestem and gamma grasses, as if embedded there just to see if it could be done. No other structure remained to tell its story. I didn't have long to ponder this, however, because I had to slow down for a flock of turkeys crossing the road. Perhaps it was their storm shelter.

A few minutes later, I climbed a rise that crossed just north of the dam, and the landscape opened to the shimmer of Webster Reservoir, some 3,800 acres of crystal clear water, a god-sized diamond pressed into the rugged High Plains.

State park manager Zach Kesler was waiting for me at the park office. Young, unassuming, and intelligent, Kesler is one of the state's youngest park managers, but his passion for this area convinces me that he will add to the legacy of excellence in Kansas state park management. In fact, he already has. A graduate of Kansas State University in 2002, Kesler was hired that same year. His years as a seasonal worker for Perry State Park and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Tuttle Creek Reservoir while working on his degree in park resource management, combined with the degree itself, had paid off. He is part of a new generation of land managers equally skilled in outdoor management procedures and use of modern computer technology necessary for filing reports, writing grants, and maintaining inventories of park needs and assets.

But the move to Webster was a something of a culture shock to Kesler, who grew up in Hiawatha, in the humid, glaciated region of extreme northeast Kansas.



“When I was growing up, I didn’t know anything about western Kansas except that we drove through it on I-70 during family vacations in Colorado,” he confides. “But now I really love it here. I would never move back east. I’m really a high-plainsman now, and I have all the hunting and fishing I could imagine right at my fingertips. Plus the people are really friendly.”

Love of the land and love of people: these are two essential ingredients to being a good park manager. Webster has benefited from Kesler’s dedication, and it shows in the park’s facilities. Using 50-50 matching funds from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (which owns the reservoir and much of the property surrounding it), the park added two new shower buildings last year. This saved having to renovate older open-air showers that were in need of much repair and were not ADA-accessible. A new park office building opened on June 23, 2006,

and a deluxe cabin was added in 2003. This cabin was rented 176 nights in 2009, and another, under construction at the Norton Correctional Facility, is due for installment in June.

In all, the 880-acre park boasts 7.5 miles of paved roads, 2 miles of trails, and approximately 174 campsites, 74 with utility hookup. Both utility and primitive campgrounds (approximately 100), are located in five park areas: Eagles Landing, Goose Flats, Lakeview, Old Marina, and Rock Point. Water is available from April 15 through Oct. 15 at all park areas except Eagles Landing, which has 20 sites with year-round water supply. (These sites were built with Parks 2000 funding.) Three boat ramps with five lanes provide easy access to the lake. Playgrounds, picnic areas, an amphitheater, sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, and a swimming beach complete a list of facilities that would make any park experience a pleasure. The adja-

cent 7,622-acre wildlife area provides plenty of room for summer exploration and hunting in the fall and winter. All this in a setting that overlooks a sparkling reservoir in rugged Great Plains terrain can make a weekend — or a week — rival any vacation spot. Why leave Kansas?

Although updated facilities greatly enhance the park experience, it takes more to make a park. It takes people. And while Webster operates with a full-time staff of only three — Kesler, park ranger Mark Billinger, and administrative specialist Sharyn Dowdell, plus eight seasonal employees — volunteer camp hosts are always on hand to answer visitors’ questions, help them find and use facilities, or just visit. Throughout the summer, three couples are assigned a campground each, where they live in their campers, cleaning bathrooms and maintaining facilities in addition to handling visitor requests.



This rental cabin was added last year and has been popular with park patrons. Another cabin is scheduled to be added this summer. Both cabins are deluxe, offering heating and air conditioning, full kitchen and bathroom and all the comforts for home.

No park would be complete without special events, either. Each year, Webster staff host a Hill City Elementary School hike for about 25 kids, an OK Kids Day, a hunter education course, and a Skins and Skulls seminar for Stockton Elementary School. In addition, they partner with Fort Hays State University's Sternberg Museum of Natural History to host the Webster/Sternberg Eco-Meet, in which approximately 80 students demonstrate their knowledge of the natural world and win money for college scholarships. Other events teach outdoor crafts, Native American history, fishing techniques, and trap shooting. Park staff frequently give presentations at local libraries and schools, and a barbecue cook-off is a popular annual event. In the fall, a special youth waterfowl hunt is conducted on the wildlife area.

Like most state parks in north-west Kansas, business is brisk when the lake is full. Webster is no exception, and recent years demonstrate the importance of water. Drought in the first few years of the 21st century steadily dropped lake levels. At normal



After years of low levels, Webster Reservoir was full in 2009. Water levels are right at conservation pool this year, as evidenced in the photo above.

conservation pool, Webster Reservoir covers approximately 3,760 acres, but by 2006, the lake was down 29 feet below conservation pool, covering only 1,202 acres. Boat ramps and campgrounds were 300-400 yards from the water. Park visitation that year dropped with the water levels: 109,581 park visitors, down 91,467 from year 2000's high of 201,048,

almost half the visitation the park received when the lake was last at conservation pool.

In 2007, however, heavy rains along the Solomon River Basin began flowing into the lake. In 2008, the lake rose 6 feet in May and June — up to 1,660 acres — and rains throughout the summer and fall continued the rise. Although still down 12 feet in the fall of 2008, by March 1, 2009, the lake was back at conservation pool for the first time since July of 2000. By June, the lake was 5.7 feet above conservation pool, and the lake covered 4,104 acres, rising into campgrounds in some areas. In 2009, 195,348 visitors sojourned to Webster State Park, up 67,000 visitors from 2008.

While many park visitors find rejuvenation in camping and enjoying the park's abundant amenities and lake view, others come to fish. Anglers whose destination is Webster Reservoir should not be disappointed, according to area fisheries biologist Mark Shaw, who manages several lakes in the region and has an office at the main state park building.



When the lake refills after years of drought, flooded timber and vegetation create ideal conditions for sport fishing populations to boom and fishing will be fantastic.

“Test netting this spring was really encouraging,” Shaw said. “We caught good numbers of walleye over 15 inches in our test nets, and white bass and crappie fishing should be good, too. Channel and flathead cat-fishing should be fair. Our largemouth bass population is fair, too, but the population is young. Largemouth fishing should be good in a couple of years.”

A large percentage of anglers who come to Webster are after walleye and wipers, and I was curious about how well their populations held up over time.

“I request walleye and wiper from our hatcheries for stocking every year,” Shaw explained. “Of course, wipers don’t reproduce naturally, but with walleye, I would like to have three good year classes. That way, if we have a year without stocking, natural spawn will provide fish to be caught.”

Wildlife is abundant in the area, as well. For those who love to



A new showerhouse and rest room was completed in 2009, along with a new park office.

hunt, Webster State Park can make a great base camp while in pursuit of pheasant, quail, deer, rabbit, turkey, and waterfowl on the nearby wildlife area. In milder weather, those who hike the trail on the west end of the Oldtown Area (on the north shore of the lake), or venture into the wildlife area, can expect to see coyotes and hawks in search of prey, as well as a variety of songbirds, from woodpeckers and scissortail flycatchers to yellow warblers and lark sparrows. Forty to 50 bald eagles winter on the area. Sandhill cranes are common and whooping cranes are occasionally spotted

during fall and spring migration. Sandpipers, dowitchers, and other shorebirds comb the flats at these times. Badger, beaver, raccoon, fox, and other furbearers can be seen year-round.

Webster State Park has provided outdoor recreation for residents of northwest Kansas, and beyond, since its opening in 1965. These days, it’s a busy but tranquil place

to enjoy the High Plains at its best, with striking sunsets over shimmering water and nighttime skies so bright the Milky Way belts the heavens in all its glory.

“Even when we’re really busy, it’s pretty peaceful here,” Kesler said.

In a 1969 phone call to astronauts on the moon, President Richard Nixon said, “As you talk to us from the Sea of Tranquility, it inspires us to redouble our efforts to bring peace and tranquility to Earth.”

Make the sojourn to Webster State Park and see for yourself: it’s been here all along. ♡



This lake and park located on the eastern of the Great Plains provides a welcome oasis and recreation area for people of the region. A long way from population centers, Webster State Park can provide just the peaceful get-away you’re looking for.



Drawing Kids To The Bow

by Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

The National Archery in the Schools Program is getting middle school and high school students involved in archery. More than 130 schools now offer the program, and Ft. Hays University recently hosted the first state archery tournament.

Did you ever wonder what it would be like if you, or your kids, could shoot a bow in your school's physical education class? *Gimmie a break, you might say. We all know PE is about weird activities like dodge ball, balloon soccer, or running races with a broomstick between your legs. Who would ever think of archery in school? Still, it's a cool idea. And an inherently appealing one.*

Anyone who has seen the old Errol Flynn movie, *Robin Hood*, can appreciate the romance of the

archer. Whether splitting an arrow from 100 yards with a longbow or rescuing Maid Marian from the Sheriff of Nottingham, Robin's signature attraction was his skill with the bow. Today, this elegant weapon of old still grasps our fascination; much like sailing, shooting a bow combines elements of serenity and power in an ancient and seemingly simple tool.

In the 20th century, a few intrepid sportsmen and hunters revived interest in the bow and

arrow. In 1900, the Olympic Games featured its first archery competition. Perhaps the most notable 20th century archer was Howard Hill, who crossed the country demonstrating his trick shots, an endeavor that helped finance hunting documentaries and safaris in Africa. Hill's skills are legendary, and he never shot anything but a longbow, which takes considerable time to master. He was also technical advisor for Flynn's *Robin Hood*, and taught the actor how to shoot.



Archers in the state competition shot a total of 30 arrows from 10 and 15 meters. Rings on the target scored shots from zero to 10 points.

By the 1970s, however, technology made shooting a bow accessible to most adults with a little patience. The advent of the compound bow improved accuracy and shooting ease with split limbs and wheels or cams on each end. Unlike traditional bows, the compound bow's cams make it easy to hold at full draw until the shooter is ready to release the arrow. With the advent of these bows, archery hunting for deer became extremely popular, and as the technology advanced, archery became more accessible. Today, bows powerful enough to kill a deer can be drawn by youngsters.

But fascination with archery is not limited to the hunter. When I was a boy, a summer youth program in the park included archery with simple, 25-pound-draw fiberglass longbows. I loved shooting those little bows, and I especially liked it when I hit a nickel or dime "credit

card" on the target, valid at the local concession stand near the swimming pool. It wasn't a school event, but it was close.

So it was with fascination that I attended the first Kansas State Archery In the Schools Competition at Fort Hays State

University on March 27. The Kansas Archery in the Schools (AIS) Program promotes "student education and participation in the shooting sports." The focus of the program is to provide international style target archery training in grades 4-12 physical education classes. The Kansas Archery in the Schools Program operates under the umbrella of KDWP and the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP).

This event was the culmination of four years of AIS in Kansas. Started in Kentucky 10 years ago, Archery In the Schools came to Kansas in 2006. Gary Keehn, Holton, serves as coordinator of the state program. Keehn helps organize events, recruit instructors, set up ranges, and conduct certification workshops for instructors, many of whom are physical education teachers in elementary and secondary Kansas schools. Instructors are trained primarily through summer workshops.

Working under Mike Rader, KDWP wildlife education coordi-



Joyce Ellis photo

The first place middle school team from Clearwater poses for a team portrait. All participants received a medal, and winning teams were awarded a plaque.

nator, Keehn helps schools and other organizations start programs and obtain equipment. With support from the archery industry, a \$5,000 program equipment kit can be purchased by schools for about \$3,000. Any teacher who completes a training session receives assistance towards the purchase of a kit from KDWP. Schools that host a basic instructor training workshop receive additional assistance. The Kansas program currently has about 150 schools involved.

"The foundation of our program is Olympic-style archery," Keehn explains. "But we don't just train teachers; we train youth leaders. We also work with Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, and church leaders, anyone who works with youth. We're also in the process of training university instructors so that college education school students are certified to teach the program when they graduate."

Fort Hays State is the first university to establish a program, under the direction of Joyce Ellis, assistant professor in the school's Department of Health and Human Performance. Having no experience with archery just two years ago, Ellis took to the program immediately.

"Barry Kaaz from Colby Community College emailed me and asked if I was interested in attending an instructor workshop he was conducting out there," Ellis recalls. "I was curious, so I went. I loved it so much that I got hooked. I fell in love with the program because it's the kind of thing any kid — even the disabled — can get involved in. They all use compound bows, but it gets them physically active. Without it, a lot of kids wouldn't do anything physical in school. And it's a great

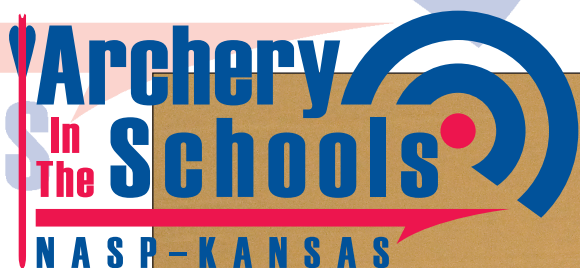
winter indoor activity.

"When I first got involved, I dreamed of Fort Hays hosting the first statewide event. When Mike Rader eventually asked me to become an instructor trainer, I knew it was a possibility. Now it's a reality."

It wasn't easy, though. Because archery is not sanctioned by the Kansas State High School Activities Association, some schools restrict money used to establish programs or pay travel expenses for competitions.

Schools with the program hold fund raisers with the help of supporters, students, local businesses, and community volunteers. (Partial funding for equipment comes from KDWP and NASP.) But for those who have implemented the program, it's worth the effort. Debbie Funke, a PE teacher and AIS coach who sponsored a Rose Hill team at Fort Hays, can testify to this.

"This has been a great experience for the kids and everyone involved," she said. "I never knew anything about this until I attended a Kansas Association of



NASP teaches the International style target archery techniques, and all students in the state shoot identical Genesis compound bows.

Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance convention. NASP had a booth there, and my curiosity was aroused. With the help of Gary Keehn and Bob Funke (natural resource officer, Fredonia, no relation), I hosted an instructor workshop. Walmart donated \$1,000 to help us get a program started, and we're now in our second year. Every 7th- and 8th-grader in Rose Hill now does a two week unit in archery, so we've generated enough interest that we were able to bring 22 kids to this event."

So on this cold, rainy spring day, 78 students attended the event, representing schools from Anthony, Chanute, Clearwater, Healy, Jackson Heights (North Holton), and Rose Hill. The format was simple. All archers had to have completed the NASP curriculum training in either their school or through a community organization. Students were divided into three age groups: 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12. Boys and girls competed in the same divisions. Not every school was able to field full 12-man teams in each age group, and middle school was the only age group to field more than one full team.

Using stock, unmodified Genesis bows (their own or ones provided by the tournament), students shot one practice round of five arrows and three scoring rounds of five arrows from both 10 meters and 15 meters — a total of 30 scoring shots. Scoring rings on the target provided points from 10 to zero. Team scores were the summation of the team's highest 12 individual scores, with at least four archers of each gender per team.

Each participant received a medal. The overall highest male and female scorers each received a new Genesis bow (donated by NASP); and the third place overall

winner received a \$50 gift certificate to Bass Pro Shops. Depending on the number of entrants, a plaque was awarded to the top two teams in each division. Corporate support came from Genesis Bows, Morrell Targets, and Bass Pro Shops. The top two teams and the top three individuals are eligible to participate in the NASP National Championships in Kentucky.

The inaugural Kansas State Archery In the School high school champion was Sergio Wagner, a Healy High School senior. Second place went to Micaela Keehn, a freshman with Jackson Heights High School, and the overall runner up was Caleb Morris, Rose Hill Middle School 7th grader. The winning elementary school team was Anthony while Clearwater took first among middle schools,

and Rose Hill took second among middle schools. Healy High took first among high schools. Teams took home plaques for their schools.

Archery In the Schools is rapidly gaining popularity, and it's easy to see why. As those involved attest, you don't have to be a great athlete to get started. It's also cheaper than most other sports, especially with funding help from NASP and KDWP. Boys and girls can compete against each other, which always invites friendly competition. Success is achieved in the very act of learning to shoot: the elegance of an arrow let fly from one's bow is a mystic symbiosis of body and machine that harkens back to a simpler, more romantic era. 🏹



Sergio Wagner (left), a Healy High School senior, was the overall champion while Micaela Keehn (right), a freshman with Jackson Heights High School, won second. Overall runner up was Caleb Morris (middle), Rose Hill Middle School 7th grader.

GIFT FORTIFIES CABIN PROGRAM

text and photos by Marc Murrell
manager, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita

A generous donation will allow KDWP and its partner, the Wildscape Foundation, to continue establishing cabins at state parks and wildlife areas across state.

Nearly all of us have happy childhood memories of family campouts, park picnics, and fishing trips. And those precious memories drive us to do the same when we have families of our own. However, not everyone is cut out to be primitive campers, and not everyone can justify the expense of an RV. For those in this category, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) has the perfect solution: rental cabins. With cabins located at various state parks and wildlife areas, the cabin program has grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years. And anyone who has rented one hasn't been disappointed.

"They're really popular," said Alan Stark, Parks Division regional supervisor for KDWP. "Most all of them are rented out on weekends throughout the year, and many of

them are booked all summer long."

Currently, 85 cabins are available at nearly every state park and a handful of wildlife areas. Cabins range from sleeper-type cabins with minimum amenities to deluxe versions complete with kitchens, refrigerators, cooking utensils, and heating and air conditioning.

"Most cabins going in now are the deluxe models," Stark said. "People really enjoy having all the creature comforts of home while still having access to the lake, beaches, nature trails and other areas in an around our state parks and wildlife areas."

Blankets, linens, phones, internet access, televisions and radios are not available. Smoking and pets are not allowed in the cabins. Cabin rental prices range from \$55 to \$110 per night and vary based on peak or off-

peak times of the year and weekday or weekend rates.

Some of the first cabins were constructed through partnerships with state park friends groups. More recently, the cabins have been built and placed through a unique partnership between KDWP, Kansas Wildscape Foundation, Kansas Department of Corrections and Greenbush-SE Kansas Education Service Center. Another contractor, Skyline Manufacturing in Arkansas City, is building cabins as well. Funding of the cabins has come from a variety of sources, including private donations. Wildscape has been instrumental in securing funding to build new cabins through loans and private donations. A recent donation has been instrumental in continuing the popular program and allowed KDWP and the Kansas Wildscape

Foundation to place more cabins sooner than expected.

“Bud Walker’s monetary contribution was a huge boost to the cabin program,” said Charlie Black, executive director of the Kansas Wildscape Foundation. “He really stepped up, and his passion and love for the outdoors is evident in his gift to the cabin program.”

Walker was born in Kansas City in 1932. He served in the Korean War for two years and graduated from Kansas University in 1956. He’s been married to his wife, Margaret, for 52 years. He started a PVC piping business in Pittsburg, and then built others in Houston and Phoenix.

“I traveled all over five days a week, and I always looked forward to coming back home, seeing my family in Kansas and doing some quail hunting,” Walker said of his love of Kansas.

Walker sold his business in 2000 and retired in Pittsburg. He got involved in T & C Wildlife, a commercial hunting and fishing venture in Arcadia. Then he read an article about the cabin program and immediately became interested.

“I thought, ‘What a wonderful project,’” Walker said. “Once those cabins are paid for, they keep

CABIN LOCATION	CABIN TYPE NUMBER AVAILABLE		CABIN LOCATION	CABIN TYPE NUMBER AVAILABLE	
	Sleeper	Deluxe		Sleeper	Deluxe
STATE PARKS			PUBLIC LANDS		
Cedar Bluff	2 (1)	3	Atchison SFL		1
Cheney	7	(1)	McPherson SFL		1
Clinton		(2)	Mined Land WA		2
Crawford		4 (1)	Ottawa SFL		1
Cross Timbers		3 (1)	Kingman SFL		(2)
Eisenhower	3	2 (2)			
El Dorado	5	5			
Fall River		2 (2)			
Glen Elder		2			
Kanopolis		4 (4)			
Lovewell	6	(4)			
Millford		5 (5)			
Perry		4			
Pomona		2			
Prairie Dog	2	2 (2)			
Scott		2			
Tuttle Creek		7 (2)			
Webster		1 (1)			
Wilson		4 (2)			

Check our website for availability: reserve.ksoutdoors.com
() denotes planned cabins for 2010

giving forever.”

Walker provided a \$10,000 sponsorship for three cabins at Crawford State Park and one at the Mined Land Wildlife Area. He met Black a couple years later and in subsequent contacts, Walker quizzed Black about further involvement.

“I asked him, ‘What if I provided the seed money for all of the cabins?’” Walker said. “I asked Charlie to get me some numbers as I felt it was time for me to give something back. Hunting and fishing has always been my passion, and I couldn’t think of a better way than through this cabin program.”

The result of Walker’s generosity was a gift of more than \$300,000 which allowed more cabins to be built much sooner than expected.

“And his contribution came at a tough time economically,” Black said. “Honestly, without his support I’m not sure we would be as far along with this program as we are right now. His gift is truly appreciated and instrumental in creating more opportunities in more places for people to enjoy Kansas outdoors.”

Walker’s philanthropic support doesn’t stop with the cabin program. He’s also involved in southeast Kansas’ “Caring for Kids” program which provides items like clothes, shoes and beds to needy children and families. He also provides tickets to disadvantaged kids and their parents to attend Kansas University baseball games complete with hot dogs and a drink.

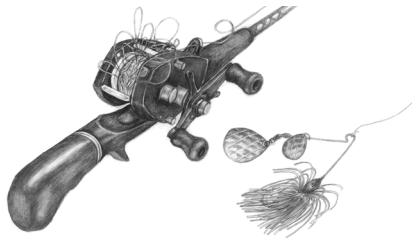
“Bud is a very generous man and we appreciate his support of the cabin program,” Black concluded. ♡



Wildscape Foundation executive director and Bud Walker stand on the front porch of one of the cabins Walker’s donation helped build at Crawford State Park.

IF YOU WANT TO GO

For more information on the cabins at your favorite state park or wildlife area, check out the KDWP website at www.kdwp.state.ks.us. To make a reservation or check availability, go to reserve.ksoutdoors.com.



Backlash

by Mike Miller

Teach Your Children To Fish

"The two best times to fish is when it's rainin' and when it ain't." **Patrick F. McManus**

"Tick," "bump," "nibble," "bite," "whack," "smash," "pow," "thunk," "hit," "bam" – all are words we anglers use to describe the moment when a fish bites our lure or bait. There are others, some more colorful, some unprintable, and some aren't even words, but they all represent the moment anglers live for. When a fish hits the lure of a *true* angler, it sends a jolt of electricity from the fingers and hands, through the wrists, up the arms, and into our core. It's our drug, and we're hopeless addicts.

I believe there's an angler in all of us – of different degrees. Everyone likes to catch fish, and most of us can get excited about going fishing. But true anglers fish to be fishing. Oh sure, we'll always try like heck to catch fish. Fish are the goal and a bonus.

When someone tells me they like to fish but can't understand how I can stay out all day when the fish aren't biting, I accept that they're destined to be a casual angler, nothing more. And that's okay. I'm sure casual anglers are good people, and some can be productive members of our society. I'm just pointing out that for some of us, fishing is more critical to life, and it makes us better people. (By the way, you'll never hear a true angler say "the fish aren't biting." A true angler says "I haven't caught any, yet.")

Symptoms will appear at a very early age for true anglers. For me, at five years old, it wasn't just fishing, it was being with Granddad, a fascination with fish, being outside, and being near water. Yep – attraction to water is a part of the drive to fish. I can't remember not wanting to be near water. Today, a relaxing peace comes over me when I'm on the water. There is also excitement because if there's water, there are fish. Water provides a delicious anticipation of what lies below its surface – fish that must be lurking just out of sight. And true anglers are always "sure" there are fish there. That's the optimism necessary to be a true angler. That's how we can continue to fish for hours when the fish aren't biting (yet).

So what's my point? Maybe it's that fishing is important. I'm certainly not the first true angler to ponder the importance of fishing.

"In these sad and ominous days of mad fortune chasing, every patriotic, thoughtful citizen, whether he fishes or not, should lament that we have not among our countrymen more fishermen." **Grover Cleveland**



"Lots of people committed crimes during the year who would not have done so if they had been fishing. The increase of crime is among those deprived of the regenerations that impregnate the mind and character of the fisherman." **Herbert Hoover**

I hesitate to reprint those quotes because if people take them to heart, my favorite fishing spots could be even more crowded. So, what's more desirable – world peace or uncrowded fishing? That's a tough one. Selfishly, I may not advocate that all adults fish more. Some are obviously not cut out for it, and that's okay because it leaves more fish for me. However, at the risk of crowding my fishing spots, I will say that I resolutely believe every youngster should be taught to fish. Not only is it possible that a youngster will discover the love of their life and begin a lifelong quest, but they will also have a better than average chance of growing into a good human being – not because they fish, although it won't hurt. No, they'll have a chance to be good because someone, Mom, Dad, Granddad, Grandma, whomever, took the time to teach them to fish. That's why fishing's important.

Teach your children to fish. Who knows? You might have a true angler on your hands, but even if you don't, your investment will pay off. I know the next time I pull up to one of my favorite fishing spots and it's crowded, I'll swear there are too many fishermen. I'll eventually get over my selfish attitude and be glad they are fishing instead of doing something less productive, especially if there is a youngster or two in the bunch. ♡

"The solution to any problem – work, love, money, whatever – is to go fishing, and the worse the problem, the longer the trip should be." **John Gierach**

