

Independence District Fisheries

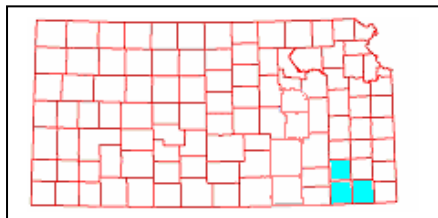
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Independence District Happenings

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Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks

The big news is we have a new Conservation Officer in Montgomery County. I recently had the opportunity to pull some nets with Ryan Walker and this is what he provided me for some background on himself.

I grew up in Salina then Mulvane with my mom Cathy, dad Scott, and little brother Case. I went to Mulvane to High School and graduated in 2000. Then went to Kansas State University and graduated in 2005 with a Parks Management and Conservation Law Enforcement Degree. After college I got a job with Winfield Police Department and Southern Kansas SWAT. I worked there for 4 years, where I met my wife of 3 1/2 years Katie. In May of 2009 I made a switch and moved to Independence to be a Park Ranger at Elk City State Park. During that time I got to know the past Game Warden Dennis Knuth and when he retired I saw my opportunity to move into my dream job and I took it. Other than work I love to hunt, weight lift, jog, and spend time with family and friends.



What does it Weigh??

Anglers have always had the notorious reputation of stretching the truth, taking a little liberty on the facts and on occasion downright lying about the size of their fish. As a fish biologist part of my job it seems is to listen patiently to these tales of fishing accomplishments and then nod in agreement that that was a big fish.

This summer I assisted in manning the Mobile Aquarium at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. It is amazing the wide ranges of fish weight estimations thrown out at some of our display specimens. — cont. on page 3.



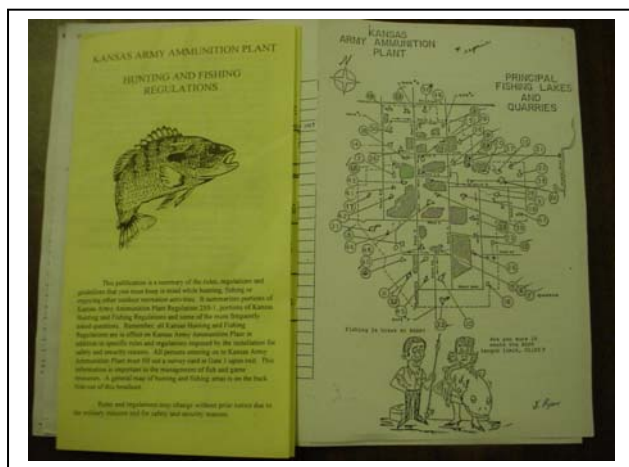
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From Bombs to Bass

The Kansas Army Ammunition Plant (KSAAP) is located 3 miles east and ½ mile south of the town of Parsons, in Labette County, KS. The installation is bounded on the southwest by Labette Creek and to the south by the unincorporated town of Labette City. The northern boundary of the installation is approximately ½ mile south of US 400. The installation currently consists of 13,727 acres plus an additional 111 acres of easement right-of-way.

There are approximately 162 ponds on the installation with 51 of them considered managed ponds. The designation of managed indicates the ponds have length limits in place and have received stockings in past years. The stretch of Labette Creek on the southwest border also provides angling opportunity.



History and Background

The U.S. Secretary of War authorized construction of the Kansas Ordnance Plant on August 4, 1941. Construction began immediately and was completed on July 14, 1942. Employment during WWII was 7,358 workers, which produced over one million tons of ammunition. From August 1945 to August 1950, the plant was in standby status and was operated by government personal. The plant was re-activated during the Korean War in August 1950 and produced a variety of ammunition until July 1957. The plant was again placed in standby status until December 1966. In December 1966, the installation was partially activated and the name was changed to the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant. On December 31, 1969 Day and Zimmerman, Inc. (DZI) was named the operating contractor, as is current.

The KSAAP was decommissioned through the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act. The Great Plains Development Authority (GPDA) was formed to handle the closing of the KSAAP. Mostly funded by the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment, the goal of the GPDA is to develop the property into an industrial park. Day and Zimmerman, Inc. is negotiating with the Army to acquire a 4,000 acre parcel in order to continue the manufacturing of munitions and diversify its products.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will ultimately have 3,000 acres on the western side of the installation. The initial transfer of 1000 acres from the Army to KDWP will be completed in 2010. The Great Plains Development Authority will transfer the remaining 2,000 acres to KDWP which is also anticipated to occur in 2010.

KDWP Managed Ponds

The initial transfer of 1,000 acres to KDWP will include seven ponds; of the seven ponds five are fishable. Since the managed ponds are numbered it is recommended that the numerical designation of the ponds be kept after the KDWP acquisition. It is anticipated that certain ponds may be designated as youth-mentor, catch and release and handicapped accessible in the future.

The same ailments typical of other southeast Kansas ponds affect the ponds of the KSAAP. Dams are over grown with shrubs and trees and some have been damaged by beaver and muskrat. Most ponds have direct access by cattle, causing nutrient loading and increased turbidity. Algae blooms and dense beds of coontail are common. Undesirable fish such as spotted gar, common carp, and black bullheads have been documented in several of the ponds. Many ponds will have to be completely rebuilt and fish populations restocked. — cont. page 4.



What Does It Weigh?? — cont. from Page 1

So in an attempt to make us more honest, here is a quick and dirty fish weight calculator. Be sure no matter what species of fish it is to measure from the lower jaw to the fork of the tail and measure the girth at the widest part around the body. This calculator works best for fusiform fish like trout, bass and catfish.

I carry a measuring tape - a vinyl one that can be bought in any sewing/craft department for just this purpose. If you really goof up and forget or misplace the measuring tape, just use a couple pieces of monofilament to take your measurements and get the actual numbers when you get home. Be sure to somehow mark one in order to keep length and girth separate.

Then plug in your numbers in the formula below; inches will result in a weight estimate in pounds.

$$\text{Length} \times \text{Girth}^2 \div 800$$

$$(\text{length} \times \text{girth} \times \text{girth} \div 800)$$

Keep in mind that no length/weight formula can ever replace an accurate scale. However, the following calculators should enable you to get a fair estimate that's within about 10 percent of the actual weight. These measurements and a crisp color photograph are valuable tools in making a replica fish mount.

**Get your friends, get your family
... and FISH KANSAS!**



Stocking Report

Below is a summary of the fish stocked in my district during 2010. The Walleye were stocked as fry and the Saugeye were fingerlings. The Channel Catfish were stocked as intermediates and ranged between 8-12 inches in length.



Water	Species	Number
Big Hill Reservoir	Walleye	2,108,330
Parsons City Lake	Saugeye	24,500
Altamont City Lake East	C. Catfish	350
Altamont City Lake west	C. Catfish	100
Berentz/Dick WMA	C. Catfish	250
Big Hill Overlook Pond	C. Catfish	100
Big Hill WMA South	C. Catfish	100
Big Hill WMA North	C. Catfish	300
Cherryvale City Lake	C. Catfish	300
Coffeyville LeClere Pond	C. Catfish	200
Edna City Lake	C. Catfish	375
Elk City State Park Pond	C. Catfish	100
Montgomery SFL	C. Catfish	3,675
Parsons West Pond	C. Catfish	100
Parsons Tolen Creek	C. Catfish	300
Wilson SFL	C. Catfish	7,140

Zebra Mussel Questions

A fairly common question I receive from anglers is when the zebra mussels invade Big Hill Lake, just how will they affect the ecosystem there? Are there any fish that will eat them? How can we control them? While these are all good questions, I feel I need to stress a point before providing some answers.

The fact that zebra mussels are found in some lakes in Kansas does not mean that all lakes in Kansas will eventually get them. I know it is hard at times to have faith in the other guy, but we are all in this together. Zebra mussels were first discovered in Minnesota in 1989 and since then only a dozen inland lakes have been added to the infected list. We will have to do a few extra chores (clean, drain and dry) at the end of the day to prevent the spread but we can make a difference.

Zebra mussels affect natural ecosystems both directly and indirectly. The greatest direct impact relates to the mussel's feeding behavior. Zebra mussels are filter feeders and process up to 1 gallon of water per day/mussel. During this process, every particle in the water column is removed and either eaten by the mussels or wrapped in mucus and spit out. This feeding ability, in combination with high population densities, rapidly clears the water of even the largest lakes. Since zebra mussels became established in Lake Erie in 1988, water clarity has increased from 6 inches to 30 feet in some areas. In many cases, the increase in transparency and removal of "good" green algae resulted in blooms of "bad" Blue-green algae, which can pose a public health threat.

Unfortunately, the material removed from the water consists of other live animals and algae that supply food for larval fish and other invertebrates. In response to this changing food supply, populations of some animals have begun to decline. In Kansas the introduction has been relatively recent enough that impacts on the fish populations are not fully understood at this time.

Blue catfish, redear sunfish and freshwater drum will eat zebra mussels but none will control them. Once zebra mussels become established in a water body, they are impossible to eradicate with the technology currently available. Many chemicals kill zebra mussels, but these exotics are so tolerant and tough that everything in the water would have to be poisoned to destroy the mussel. Right now the only cost effective way to eradicate is to drain and dry the lake. That may be an option on smaller impoundments but is not feasible or likely on federal reservoirs.

I have included a link to our Department's web page that addresses zebra mussels more in depth.

<http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Fishing/Aquatic-Nuisance-Species/Aquatic-Nuisance-Species-List/Zebra-Mussels>



From Bombs to Bass — cont. from Page 2

Pond Access

Access to the ponds is varied as some have pre-existing parking spaces and easy access from the existing roads. Others are as much as a ½ mile from the nearest road. In order to facilitate easier access it is planned that access lanes be created and graveled. Fence stiles are needed for some areas.

There are no improved boat ramps on the ponds; therefore all boat access will be limited to small bass scamps, Jon boats and canoes. No gas outboards will be permitted. However, electric trolling motors will be allowed.

Property Access

Current security restrictions prevent access to the fishing ponds on the installation by the general public. Background checks are required for all visitors new to the installation. It is unlikely that unrestricted access to the general public will be allowed until security measures are relaxed. Demolition of infrastructure, reclaiming of ordinance and environmental remediation is to be carried out by the GPDA to meet the U.S. Corp of Engineers standards for industrial ground. Estimated time of completion for this project is 2015.

It is rare that land/water acquisition of this magnitude occurs in these days of tight budgets. There are still a lot of unknowns on this new property. However, the future looks bright and I am confident that these newly acquired resources will benefit the anglers of Kansas.

Keep posted friends it will be worth the wait.

Darrel Stice *In Memoriam*

Darrell Stice, my longtime friend and technician died of an unexpected heart attack, at age 54. The day prior we pulled trap nets together on Elk City Reservoir, at the end of the day he shook my hand and said "Thanks for the work ". This was his traditional parting statement. I told him I would call him the coming week to figure out a plan to finish off the sampling season. He passed the next morning.

I was first introduced to Darrell by Leo Dowlin. Leo was the fish biologist I was hired to replace after his retirement. Darrell was 12 years older than I and I was a little apprehensive of how he would handle a younger supervisor. Time proved early on that my concerns were unwarranted. After 16 years of working in all kinds of wind and weather we never had a harsh word. That is not to say we didn't frustrate one another at times but just that our friendship was enough to keep it civil.

Darrell was as uncomplicated a person as I have ever met. He lived with his wife Pam in a modest house along the railroad tracks in Cherryvale. He slowly added on to his homestead a little at a time and ended up with what he called the "Backyard Ranch". He enjoyed messing with animals and would always talk about his rabbits, goats and quail.

He was a dependable worker who took pride in his work. He relished teaching children how to fish and was very eager to help with my fishing clinics. I am sure I will think of him every time I am in the boat.

Goodbye my friend thanks for the work.



Darrell G. Stice
November 11, 1956-October 23, 2010

Parting Shot!

I hope you enjoyed the latest edition of the district newsletter. If you know someone who would like to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so [HERE](#). If you would like to unsubscribe, please send your info to [Contact Us](#) with "unsubscribe Independence District Fisheries newsletter" and we'll get you taken off of the list. If you have any questions or comments feel free to send them in.

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