

Pittsburg District Fisheries Newsletter

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Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks Fisheries Division

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Written By:

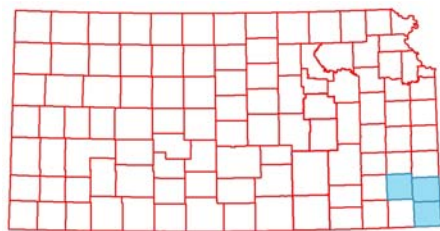
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District Newsletter Aims to Keep Anglers More Informed

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks recently began yet another initiative to keep you more informed about what is happening on the fishing scene: a district newsletter. In addition to the KDWP website at www.kdwp.state.ks.us, newspaper articles, public meetings like the recent Fishing Information Night in Ft. Scott, printed literature, radio and TV spots, and phone or in-person contacts, the new district newsletter is just another way to keep you informed. Through this newsletter, you'll learn about fisheries management activities, management concerns, and the many opportunities available to anglers here in southeast Kansas.

KDWP's fisheries section goals are to: (1) conserve Kansas sport, non-sport, and threatened and endangered fishes, the water they rely on, and their habitat (2) increase fishing opportunity (3) increase fishing success, and (4) market our fisheries programs.

In this newsletter, we'll be informing you of how we are addressing all of these of these important mandates.



Who Pays for Fisheries Management Programs?

Sport fish stockings, boat ramp construction, habitat developments, fish hatcheries, purchase of fish feeders and feed, electro-fishing boats and sampling equipment, salaries for biologists, informational literature -- it takes a lot of money to survey, protect, and manage our aquatic resources. Where do we get the money to accomplish all these things?

Contrary to popular belief, it is **not** from the general taxes you were recently required to send to Topeka on April 15.

KDWP's fisheries division relies on license fees paid by anglers and boaters, and federal funds from the Sport Fish Restoration Act to fund our programs. The Sport Fish Restoration Act applies a 10 percent manufacturer's excise tax on fishing rods, reels, tackle boxes, lures, trolling motors, fish finders, and pleasure boats, with revenues distributed back to the states through a grant program. Approved sport fishing enhancement, boating, and aquatic education projects are reimbursed at 75 percent. KDWP uses fishing license dollars to pay the 25 percent match, and a lot gets accomplished. The Act has been America's most effective and successful user-pay/user-benefit success stories in resource conservation.

So you, the anglers and boaters, pay for aquatic conservation and sport fish management efforts in Kansas. Give yourself a pat on the back. Recruit others to participate, so we can do even more to enhance sport fishing opportunities.



Get Outside – Go Fishing Many Opportunities Close By

Most of us are anxious to spend some time outdoors. It's been a long, cold winter. The kids have been spending countless hours on their electronic devices texting and playing video games. We feel the need to get outside for fresh air. To stay in touch with nature. To have fun together. Fishing is a great way for you and your family to accomplish these things. And the good news is that there are many places to go within a 30-minute drive from anywhere you live in Crawford, Cherokee, or Neosho counties.

If you live in Pittsburg, PSU Lake is an outstanding place for a family fishing outing. Fish with a worm on a small hook placed a few feet below a bobber, and you'll soon be catching bluegill, green sunfish and channel catfish.



PSU Lake, just east of the football stadium, is one of many great places for a family fishing outing.

Lakeside Park is another good place for family fishing. One can also catch fish at Frontenac's three small lakes in their City Park. For more adventurous anglers, you can take a quarter-mile hike to fish two large strip mined lakes in Wilderness Park. And there is the Mined Land Wildlife Area. There are about 20 MLWA units within a half hour drive from Pittsburg. One of the most popular is Area No. 6, where the district office is located (the old quail farm). Small boats are an advantage for most lakes, but there are also quite a few places for the shore angler. Area #No. 6 has a handicapped assessable pier, as does Area No. 1, just north of town.

In Chanute, there is the City Lake at the south edge of town (Santa Fe), or Highland Park Pond. A short drive and you can fish at Thayer City Lakes, Wilson State Lake, or the public access sites on the Neosho river.

In Girard, Crawford State Lake, Bone Creek Lake, and several Mined Land Wildlife Areas are close by. In Columbus, you have the VFW Lake, Empire Lake, Spring River, and again, more Mined Land Wildlife Areas



Mined Land Area No. 6, 2.2 miles west of 20th St. and the bypass, is another popular fishing spot close to town.

We are truly blessed to have so many fishing and boating opportunities here in southeast Kansas. You can go to the KDWP website to get information about all of your public lakes. If you pick up a 2010 Fishing Atlas and a 2010 Fishing Regulation Summary brochure at a KDWP office, or license vendor, you should be good to go. Or, you can give us a call. We just hope you get outdoors soon and enjoy.

Big Bass – Where are They?

Largemouth bass are a very popular sport fish, and catching a trophy-sized bass is a dream of many anglers. Southeast Kansas has long been noted for producing lunker fish. As a kid, I remember admiring a state record bass caught nearby that was displayed at John's Sport Center in Pittsburg. The current state record 11.8 pound bass was caught in a private Cherokee County strip pit in 2008. Although your chances of catching a state record fish are small, it sure is fun getting outdoors, enjoying a beautiful sunrise or sunset on the water, feeling that tug on your line, and hoping to get lucky.

Bone Creek Lake is the best bet for big bass in the Pittsburg district. There are lots of quality-sized fish within the protected 13- to 18-inch slot limit, and a few much larger. Half the bass collected in the 2009 electrofishing sample were 12- to 15-inch fish. An astounding 44 percent were 15 inches or larger. 2009 bass

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



Big Bass - Where are They?...continued

tournament anglers reported that 55 percent of their fish were 15 inches or larger. Bone Creek is a very good bass lake, but remember, because of clear water conditions, you'll have to fish deeper than in your typical southeast Kansas lake.



State record 11.8-pound bass caught by Tyson Hallam in a private Cherokee County strip pit on May 3, 2008.

The next best option for big bass in the Pittsburg district is the Mined Land Wildlife Area (MLWA). With hundreds of small lakes all supporting bass populations, there is ample opportunity for some fish to survive to trophy size. It's just a matter of finding and fooling those big fish.

The best places to find big MLWA fish are in the out-of-the-way or overlooked lakes that don't get heavy fishing pressure. A small boat getting to a remote site, or a long walk to an overlooked lake are likely spots for lunker fish.

MLWA lakes with flooded timber are also likely candidates for bigger fish. Constructing dams that raise water levels into shoreline timber has created some excellent bass habitat. Flooded timber lakes can be found in Areas 3, 5, 6, 8, 20, 22, 24, 27, 31, and 42.

Another lake with great big fish potential is the trout lake in Area No. 30, where bigger bass can feast on thousands of 10-inch trout that are stocked annually.

Other options within an hour drive that are highly rated for big bass are Big Hill and LaCygne Reservoirs. Check out the 2010 Fishing Forecast on the KDWP web page, or pick up a printed copy at one of our offices to find the best of the best.



Raising water levels to flood shoreline timber creates great bass habitat on the Mined Land Wildlife Area.

KDWP & KDHE Cooperating to Make Improvements on Mined Land Wildlife Area

The product of past coal mining, the Mined Land Wildlife Area is a 14,500 acre public wildlife area that is like no other in the state. The distinctive topographical features, numerous strip-mined lakes, and abundant wildlife make the Mined Land Wildlife Area a favorite destination of many anglers, campers, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts.

The Surface Mining Section of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has been completing reclamation projects on abandoned mined land areas in Crawford and Cherokee counties for many years. The primary purpose of these reclamation projects is to remove safety hazards to the public. Many of the previous projects were completed on private land, eliminating vehicle safety concerns of steep-sided high-walls next to public roads. These projects are paid for by KDHE, with funding coming from a tax placed on coal. The tax money is distributed back to states to reclaim old mine sites that were abandoned long before reclamation laws were on the books. The highest priority sites have been completed, and now many of KDHE's projects are being completed on the Mined Land Wildlife Area.

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KDWP & KDHE Cooperating... continued

A million-dollar project was recently completed in Areas 1 and 6 of the MLWA. The interior roads within these rugged properties are needed to access remote fishing areas, but were not constructed with safety or long-term use in mind. They were just a necessity to get the coal out. The roads had degraded and posed significant safety hazards and maintenance problems.



Boat ramp and improved shoreline angler access on the Mined Land Wildlife Area that was funded by KDHE's Surface Mining Section.

KDWP and KDHE work together closely to plan reclamation work that eliminates safety hazards, while minimizing the impacts to existing vegetation, wildlife, and aquatic habitats. Oftentimes, angler access and fisheries habitat improvements can be incorporated into the project.

In Areas 1 and 6, many improvements were completed. The interior access roads were reworked to improve alignment, grade, sight distance, and surface course; high-walls were eliminated along county roads; marginal ponds were eliminated; improved access was provided for boating and fishing in newly interconnected lakes; several water control structures were installed or replaced; two wetlands were constructed; a new two-acre lake was constructed; and, wildlife habitat diversity was improved.

According to Rob Riggan, Wildlife Manager of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks's Mined Land Wildlife Area, "The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Surface Mining Section of the KDHE worked together to come up with a design that improved vehicle safety, provided increased boating and shoreline angler access, and improved wildlife habitat for all to enjoy. The improvements will greatly decrease maintenance costs and improve habitat diversity."

In 2010, KDHE will initiate reclamation projects in Mined Land Wildlife Areas 12, 13, and 15. These areas are located two miles southeast of Scammon.



New two-acre lake and boat ramp in Mined Land Wildlife Area No. 6 that was funded by KDHE's Surface Mining Section.

Cabins Popular Addition to Crawford State Lake and Mined Land Wildlife Area

KDWP now offers more than 70 rental cabins statewide. In the Pittsburg district, Crawford State Lake has four cabins and the MLWA has one, with another becoming available this summer. These cabins feature the comforts of home while providing access to good fishing, hunting, and outdoor adventures.



Cabin at trout lake in Mined Land Wildlife Area No. 30.

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Cabins Popular Addition... continued

The MLWA cabin is located in Area No. 30, and overlooks the 28-acre trout lake. It accommodates up to six overnight guests. The trout lake is a deep, clear strip mined lake best known for its productive trout fishery. This is the only public lake in Kansas where trout survive year-round, creating some unique opportunities for bigger fish.

At the 150-acre Crawford State Lake and Park, four lakeside cabins offer a boat dock, shoreline fishing and swimming, and close proximity to hiking trails, picnic areas, a playground, swimming beach, and the Farlington Fish Hatchery. A marina provides bait and great meals Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Throughout the work week you can visit the fish hatchery, and see first-hand how we raise thousands of sport fish that are stocked statewide. The Farlington Fish Hatchery is one of four hatcheries in Kansas. The others are located at Pratt, Milford, and Meade.

Cost of cabin rentals is very reasonable, about \$60 per night plus a deposit. Check out the cabins on our web site. To reserve a cabin, log on at reserve.ksoutdoors.com, or call KDWP's regional office in Chanute at 620-431-0380.

I hope this newsletter has given you some information that will make your upcoming fishing trips more enjoyable and successful. Another edition will be coming out in late summer. Until then, best of luck to you. Get out there and enjoy the outdoors, and take advantage of the many sport fishing opportunities made available through your support.

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