**BIG BASIN**

The Big Basin Prairie Preserve is 1,818 acres of native mixed grass prairie managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks (KDWPT) and Tourism. This area is in the Red Hills region of Kansas. The landscape can generally be described as rolling hills with both level uplands and small canyons. The preserve also includes an intermittent stream, Keiger Creek, which flows through the northeast corner of the preserve, and two non-draining basins that make the preserve topographically and geologically unique.

**ACQUISITIONS AND HISTORY**

KDWPT purchased the property in 1974. Big Basin was acquired through the efforts of Mrs. Jane Stein and local Clark County citizens. The previous owner, The Nature Conservancy, sold the property with the stipulation that it be managed as a nature preserve. In December of 1978, the preserve was designated as a National Natural Landmark and was added to the National Registry of Natural Landmarks.

**BIG BASIN**

Big Basin is a large circular depression. It is about one mile in diameter and about 100 feet deep. The walls of the basin are nearly vertical. Scattered across the floor of Big Basin are a number of small ephemeral ponds that catch and temporarily hold the water that flows into the basin. U.S. Highway 283 bisects Big Basin, with approximately two-thirds of the basin lying east of the road and within the confines of the preserve. The remaining western third of the basin is privately owned.

**LITTLE BASIN**

The Little Basin is about 280 yards in diameter and 35 feet from rim to floor. Within Little Basin is a small permanent pond known as St. Jacob’s Well. St. Jacob’s Well is a pool of water about 84 feet in diameter that has never been known to go dry. The well has been the subject of many local legends, most associated with the idea that catch and temporarily hold the water that flows into the basin. U.S. Highway 283 bisects Big Basin, with approximately two-thirds of the basin lying east of the road and within the confines of the preserve. The remaining western third of the basin is privately owned.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective in managing the preserve is to maintain the site in its natural state and thus preserve a unique ecological and geological area. Grazing is a natural and healthy activity in the prairie ecosystem, and herds of bison are maintained at the preserve to continue this natural process. The preserve is also utilized as an education center, providing opportunities for conservation education and research. Those visiting the preserve will develop a greater appreciation of the natural resources of Kansas and more concern for the conservation of all natural resources.

**PUBLIC ACCESS**

Vehicles are restricted to the improved trails. Maintenance of these trails is minimal so visitors should drive slowly and with caution. Foot traffic on the remainder of the area is allowed and encouraged. However, persons on foot should stay clear of the bison area. No hunting is allowed on the area.

**CAUTION - BISON**

Bison are wild animals and should not be harassed or approached. They are unpredictable and can charge without provocation.