CHAPTER TWO
Kansas Highlights

This section of the report focuses on recent significant actions taken by public or private organizations that either reflect or address outdoor recreation issues in the state. Some of these actions are direct responses to issues raised in previous SCORPs (State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans); others are actions of opportunity, or highlight how the state is implementing the objectives of the America’s Great Outdoor Initiative (AGO).

Action Recommendations From 2009 SCORP
1. Respond to declining and under-represented participation in outdoor recreation activities by youth, urban and ethnic populations.
2. Communities are lacking non-motorized, shared use transportation/recreation trails.
3. Outdoor Recreation Planning at all levels of supply would be enhanced with improved comparative data.
4. Advocacy, in the form of elevated communication and collaboration with key partners, to advise both the public and policy makers of the values and benefits of outdoor recreation participation to public health and economic vitality is critical.
5. Park and Recreation Agencies need to serve as champions of resource stewardship.
6. Strive to supply an adequate level of quality recreation services in a challenging financial period.

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The rapids created by the new boat chute at the Lincoln St. Dam in Wichita are categorized as class 2 rapids and have delighted area kayak and canoe enthusiasts.

The Arkansas River Corridor Access (ARCA) Plan was mentioned in the last State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for Kansas (2009). The plan was developed to evaluate the possibility of creating recreational opportunities by enhancing access points along the river from the Rice/Reno county line downstream to Oxford, KS. Since 2009, notable progress on river access has been made.

In the ARCA plan the Lincoln St. and 21st bridges were identified as obstructions to recreational river use. A stated objective was the design of a recreational transition through these obstructions. That objective was reached with the completion of the boat chute in 2012.

To bring the project to fruition, several outdoor recreation funding sources were utilized. Approximately $300,000 came from the Recreation Trails Fund. Another $150,000 came from a Coast Guard grant. The city provided engineering assistance.

Other water projects:
In November 2013, several alternative approaches were presented to the Shawnee County Riverfront Authority, one of which included a water chute on the Kansas (Kaw) River in Topeka to address serious river navigation safety issues mentioned in the 2003 SCORP.

The Flint Hills Region of Kansas is the state’s legacy landscape.

Today, only a fraction (2-3%) of the once immense tallgrass prairie ecosystem remains, and nearly 80 percent of that lies within the Flint Hills region of eastern Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma. In this region, fire, grazing and hard flint rock combine to maintain the biome.

The greater Flint Hills area is by far the largest tallgrass prairie landscape on the continent, with more acres remaining than in all the other prairie states and provinces combined. Even so, a sizable portion of the Flint Hills has been degraded by invasive plants, urban sprawl, urban-to-rural migration, woody encroachment, and continued prairie and ranch fragmentation.

In Kansas some sections are still expansive, covering thousands of contiguous acres. The various Symphony in the Flint Hills sites serve as a credible guide to the larger of the remaining prairie segments. Locations have included Chase, Wabaunsee, Geary, Morris and Pottawatomie counties.

Grazing has always been a significant factor in maintaining prairie. Prior to non-native American settlement, large herbivores such as elk, bison and deer were the primary foragers. For the last century and a half, cattle have grazed the tallgrass and when used effectively – as part of a regimen – can help conserve, maintain and even restore prairie.

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The Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area is the product of efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, private landowners, and other agencies and partners to protect a unique and highly diverse area in eastern Kansas known as the Flint Hills Tallgrass Region.

“Thanks to the tireless efforts of private landowners, stakeholders, state agencies, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the tallgrass prairie of the Flint Hills will forever be protected as a crown jewel of America’s Great Outdoors,” said Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. “I am especially proud that the first new unit created under this Administration conserves working lands and recognizes the vital role farmers and ranchers play as stewards of our nation’s fish and wildlife resources. The Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area will protect land, water, and wildlife while creating new opportunities for economic prosperity in the region.”

Excerpts from Secretary Ken Salazar’s comments and USDI news release.

Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area

In November 2010, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced the creation of the 1.1 million-acre Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area, a new unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. “A major goal of the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative is to conserve working landscapes,” Salazar said.

The purpose of the Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area is to help maintain the integrity of tallgrass prairie wildlife habitat, stream water quality, and the rich agricultural heritage of the Flint Hills by acquiring and protecting up to 1.1 million acres of habitat through voluntary, perpetual conservation easements. These conservation easements will protect habitat for more than 100 species of grassland birds and 500 plant species, and ensure the region’s sustainable ranching culture – which directly supports conservation of the tallgrass prairie – will continue.

The area will be protected via the purchase of voluntary conservation easements from landowners. Service conservation easements are binding legal agreements that typically prohibit subdivision and commercial development activities, but allow for continued agricultural uses such as livestock grazing and haying.
Red Hills Protection
By Matt Campbell
1/10/2013 - The Kansas City Star

The Flint Hills are not the only hills in Kansas. To the south and west lies another region that is the target of a major new initiative by the Nature Conservancy in Kansas.

The organization is pursuing voluntary partnerships with landowners to achieve its goals.

Rob Manes, Director of Nature Conservancy in Kansas, said helping set up easements in Kansas ranch country works well with the group’s goal of protecting critical habitats, like remnants of the tallgrass prairie.

He said fear of the grasslands being plowed, dissected by roads, or becoming a patchwork of wind farms has helped propel a growing number of landowners to check into easements.

The Nature Conservancy says the Red Hills are one of the continent’s most important strongholds for the lesser prairie chicken, which has just been listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

But it is not the only wildlife in the Red Hills that the conservancy wants to guard. There are also several reptiles such as the southern prairie skink, the long-nose snake and the Texas blind snake.

The Red Hills also has the highest concentration in Kansas of bat caves, home to the pallid bat and Townsend’s big-eared bat. They are important for insect control and agriculture.

Kansas has designated a 41-mile section of U.S. 160 that runs through the Red Hills as a scenic byway, but it remains “one of the best-kept secrets of the state,” said Ken Brunson, of the Nature Conservancy. “Anyone with an interest in the outdoors of Kansas has to visit the Red Hills.”
Heritage Trails

Federal grant sparks $5 million investment into Flint Hills Nature Trail

In June 2013, the Kansas Department of Transportation announced that two of 35 projects included in the federal Transportation Enhancement program will enhance the Flint Hills Nature Trail. One of those projects, to be administered by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, is the development of the 117-mile rail-trail that traverses seven Kansas counties, including Osage County. The Flint Hills Nature Trail runs from Herington to Osawatomie on an old Missouri Pacific rail line. – Osage County News

According to Linda Craghead, KDWPT Assistant Secretary for Parks and Tourism, it is hoped the funds will finish the Flint Hills Nature Trail, sections of which have been gradually developed over the last 20 years or more.

“Our goal is to get it completed. This is an opportunity for us to connect some of the rural communities along the Flint Hills Nature Trail corridor, and hopefully gain some economic development along the trail,” she said.

According to KDOT, $1.5 million in federal Transportation Enhancement funds were awarded for the project, with a minimum of 20 percent of the project cost from the applicant. The balance of the project, estimated at $5 million, will come from KDOT Transportation Alternatives Program, the KDWPT Recreational Trails Program and contributions from the current trail operator, Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy, which has operated Flint Hills Nature Trail since 2001.

Full trailheads will be located in the major communities along the trail, such as Osage City, Ottawa, Council Grove and Herington, with a goal of enhancing economic development in those communities. Half trailheads will be scattered along the trail.

The Landon Trail (also illustrated on the map to the left) is being constructed on an old Missouri Pacific Railroad line. It is also a Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy project.

The Landon Nature Trail follows a 40-mile route between the Brown vs. Board of Education National Park Service site in Topeka south to a point east of Pomona Lake in Osage County.

As of early 2012, the trail runs for 6 miles between S.E. 15th and Monroe streets in Topeka to 77th and Croco Road near Berryton.

The Landon Trail is the only trail in America which connects and crosses both historic national trails – the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail.

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The KS Statewide Rail-to-Trails Plan was completed in 2013. A toolbox for current and future trail developers, the plan promotes a network of rural and urban trails, some just conceptual – as illustrated in this map, compiled by the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Table: Kansas Rail Trails Mileage Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kansas Trails using rail-beds</th>
<th>30 trails – 300 miles in length</th>
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<td>43 cities in 22 counties</td>
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Source: Kansas RecFinder – Sid Stevenson Phd, editor compiler

Atchison Community Lakes

A series of publicly accessible fishing lakes in and around the city of Atchison is unlike any other natural experience available to urban residents in the state. While some other communities do manage large multi-use community lakes, the focus here is on walk-in, shore fishing type access.

The City of Atchison owns 25 dams in the district, but 10 are stocked and open and accessible to the public; with most of the others on private land and not open to the public. These 10 lakes are illustrated in the map at left.

Natural Playground – DeVictor Park, Lawrence

Input from area residents resulted in Lawrence’s first natural playground, comprised of buried boulders and logs. The feature complements the natural park experience, where hiking trails, green-space and an outdoor learning lab are additional highlights.
AGO Initiative: Urban

Overland Park Soccer Complex
Synthetic turf fields are a significant trend across a variety of sports venues and offer water saving benefits and flexible scheduling. They also serve as substantial community attractions and economic impact generators.

For a sports complex, this is as good as it gets ... The Overland Park Soccer Complex was named the best city soccer complex in the nation by Livability.com. The complex has already hosted national events and is booked far in advance.

Discovery Center Development:

KS Children’s Discovery Center
Gage Park, Topeka, 2011
“HOME OF SERIOUS FUN” – In 2012 the Association of Children’s Museums announced that the Kansas Children’s Discovery Center had been selected as a “Good to Grow! Going Wild at Children’s Museums” pilot site, positioning the Discovery Center as a model to bring sustainable natural spaces that promote play and learning to communities across the nation. The $65,000 Going Wild matching grant launched the Phase II Outdoor Learning Adventure expansion, which includes the “Streams, Dreams and Other Things” water play area, berm tunnels, a designated Monarch Watch site, Native Kansas Medicinal Plants Garden and more. Additional community partners continue to provide outstanding educational outreach and resources.

Flint Hills Discovery Center
Manhattan, 2012
All programs at the Flint Hills Discovery Center are intended to inform about the Flint Hills, but even more than just teach, they inspire and motivate individuals to go out and experience the Flint Hills. The education staff of the Flint Hills Discovery Center is constantly developing new classes, new concepts and new programs to fit an ever-changing Flint Hills community. From fun hands-on activities developed for preschoolers to more lecture based events and classes for adult and senior groups, all FHDC programs provide individuals with a fresh, fun and fascinating take on the ecology, history and culture of the Kansas Flint Hills.

Exploration Place – The Sedgwick Co.
Discovery Center, Wichita
Exploration Place is Kansas’ premier hands-on science center for all ages, located on a 20-acre site along the Arkansas River in Wichita’s downtown Museums on the River district. Five hands-on exhibit areas focus on flight, Kansas, medieval life in a three-story castle, imaginative spaces for toddlers, and a special traveling exhibition area. In Kansas’ largest domed theater, the Boeing Dome Theater and Planetarium, travel to faraway destinations and embark on unforgettable adventures during these state-of-the-art, digitally produced films.

Kaw River State Park
Kansas’ newest State Park is an urban resource park, the only urban park in the system. Kaw River State Park consists of 76 donated acres of land on the south bank of the Kansas River in west Topeka, and it is adjacent to MacLennan Park and Cedar Crest (the Kansas Governor’s residence). It was opened to public use on September 4, 2010. Forested trails, Kansas River access and wildlife viewing are among the attractions to be found in the park.
Three work groups have been established to create plans addressing the outcomes identified in the Executive Order that created the Kansas Coalition for Children in Nature (KCN). Each workgroup has its own plan linked to the KCN website:

- Environmental Education (formal learning experiences with children in a variety of settings)
- Outdoor Experiences and Recreation (including play, recreation, exploration, etc.)

Outdoor Experience and Recreation Group Draft Plan excerpts: Connecting children with role models who represent outdoor advocacy could be achieved with the creation of an Outdoor Mentors Program.

The goal of the Outdoor Mentors Program would be to identify individuals who will help encourage more kids to get involved with nature. The Outdoor Mentors Program could serve as a speaker resource for schools, scouting, YMCA’s, camps, nature centers, at-risk and minority programs, among others, and help develop programs that serve to educate and stress the importance of outdoor activities.

- Health (time/access to nature and relationship to children’s health)

Kansas has accomplished much in its work over the last 5 years to engage youth and their families in outdoor recreation, environmental education, and volunteerism.

**KS Coalition for Children in Nature**

An Executive Order created the Coalition in 2009, to foster Kansas youths’ appreciation, understanding and involvement with the outdoors.

Camp Wood YMCA, one of several NGO camps in the state, has also helped many schools meet state standards. One school meets 23 state standards with their annual field trip to Camp Wood YMCA.

Rock Springs 4H Center employs a full-time environmental education coordinator and plays host to a number of environmental and outdoor recreation events focused on youth each year.

**Environmental Literacy Plan**

Through the efforts and vision of all partners, Kansas is one of only a few states to have a plan that insures our Kansas children gain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to become citizens who make informed and responsible personal and collective decisions and choices about our environment and its natural resources.

**Scope of the Kansas Environmental Literacy Plan**

The Environmental Literacy Plan for Kansas addresses three comprehensive goals toward preparing Kansas students to become environmentally literate citizens. Embedded within each goal are plans for quality implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The plan outlines major goals, background information and research related to the goals, and key objectives and strategies designed to support achievement of the broad goals. Also, when appropriate, real world examples designed to bring the ELPK “to life” are included.
Work Plan: Environmental Literacy Plan for Kansas

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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1:</strong> EE Standards benchmarks evidenced in assessed indicators</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2:</strong> Develop instructional examples supporting environmental literacy</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3:</strong> Instructional resources for environmental literacy provided for KSDE website</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 4:</strong> Work to include one unit of EE as qualified admissions approved by the KS Board of Regents</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 5:</strong> Develop environmental literacy, teaching “maps”, documentation models and recognition to support KS 21st Century Learning Skills</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 6:</strong> Establish environmental education as a listed alternative for the three credits of science required for high school graduation</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2a:</strong> Develop a “best practices” guidelines document for environmental education teacher professional development</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2b:</strong> Implement Guidelines for Preparation of Environmental Educators from NAEE with formal educators</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2c:</strong> Develop guidelines for presentation to Board of Education for adoption consideration to integrate EE content into a multi-disciplinary curriculum</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2d:</strong> Increase access, incentive and opportunities for formal educators to participate in EE professional development</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2e:</strong> Increase by 50% the number of EE professional development programs and materials that are aligned with the NAEE Guidelines for Excellence</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2f:</strong> Assist non-formal educators to interpret state education standards and new initiatives to support formal educators to integrate EE into curriculum</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3:</strong> Develop certification program for EE PD instructors to provide EE PD for formal educators in accordance with KSDE professional development standards</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 4:</strong> At least 35% of certified PreK-12 educators participate in EE-related professional development</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 5:</strong> Increase awareness/understanding of NAEE Guidelines for Excellence and benefits to education programs among non-formal educators</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 6:</strong> Develop self-evaluation of EE programs and materials for non-formal education programs and materials, aligned with the NAEE Guidelines</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 7:</strong> Expand and update infrastructure for ongoing professional development and networking for non-formal environmental educators</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 8:</strong> Evaluate the first two years of the Kansas Green Schools Program (KS Green) to identify challenges and opportunities to expand the program to all schools in Kansas</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 9:</strong> Develop “best practices” guide for sustainable school implementation, to illustrate what types of models have been successful</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 10:</strong> Coordinate and expand opportunities for students to experience an outdoor learning environment at school</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 11:</strong> Coordinate and expand opportunities and access for children and families to enjoy outdoor experiences throughout the community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 12:</strong> Work with the KSDE and KSBE to develop and collect assessment data of environmental education learning experiences in PreK-12 settings annually</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 13:</strong> Utilize the Kansas Green Schools Network to collect data on successful school-based models</td>
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The WildLifer Challenge encourages parents and children of all ages to become more involved in the outdoors through the use of an interactive, web-based program that challenges children to accomplish 15 outdoor "WildLifer" challenges. To PROVE that they're not the types of kids who lounge around the house all day!

Participants log into the site using their own unique username and password to unlock all 20 challenges (must complete 15 of the 20 challenges) on the Challenge Tree. To earn credit for each task, participants must have a digital picture taken of themselves during their challenge experience and then simply upload that photo on the WildLifer user page. It’s that simple!

Once a participant has completed 15 challenges, they receive official “Kansas WildLifer” status and will receive the WildLifer pack of outdoor items, WildLifer identification materials and a glow in the dark WildLifer t-shirt. Waaaay cool!

Whether you’re a newbie to the outdoors or a veteran, this program is a blast for all.

The Kansas Wildscape Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to encouraging responsible use of natural resources by promoting a positive outdoor ethic. This will be accomplished through education efforts and awareness programs primarily focused on Kansas’ youth.

The organization works with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism in particular, but also with other public and private sector entities in pursuit of their outdoor missions. Efforts closely aligned with the AGO focus on YOUTH include:

**The WildLifer Challenge**

Across the state of Kansas each year, over 50 sites host O.K. Kids Programs. Participation has steadily grown with over 16,000 Kansas youth and their parents/grandparents enjoying their day outdoors at different sites throughout Kansas.

The O.K. Kids Program offers the opportunity for participants to experience the outdoor beauty of Kansas and to learn a little about its natural resources and wildlife through games and activities, at no charge. Activities include:

- **Fishing Derbies**
- **Fishing clinics**
- **Horseshoes**
- **Mini-triathlons**
- **Scavenger hunts**
- **Sack races**
- **Volleyball**
- **Archery**
- **Outdoor cooking**
- **Biking and Bike Safety Courses**
- **Hiking**
- **Bird Watching and Birdhouse Building**

**KS WildScape recognizes the best of these events through annual awards given each year at the Kansas Recreation and Park Association conference.**
**Urban programs**

Outdoor experiences for youth are not exclusive to the state’s rural areas. The father-son campout has been a popular addition to the Gardner recreation program.

**Father-Son Campout**

Enjoy an All-American summer night under the stars at Cornerstone Park with just you and dad! Evening includes dinner, setting up tents, swimming at the Gardner Aquatic Center followed by s’mores by the camp fire. Each pair will need to bring a tent, sleeping bags and any snacks you might want throughout the evening.

**Kansas Wildlife Federation**

KWF’s Outdoor Adventure Camp (OAC) is a six-day summer camp for kids who either enjoy the outdoors or want to learn more about it. This conservation education program is co-sponsored by the Kansas Wildlife Federation and KSU Cooperative Extension Service. This popular camp and educational opportunity has been operating since 1986. Over that period it has served approximately 1,000 Kansas youth.

In The North American Conservation Education Strategy: Benefits of Outdoor Skills to Health, Learning and Lifestyle: A Literature Review by Cottrell & Associates, several questions regarding youth outdoor programs were considered while conducting this literature review, including:

**Which programs or types provide a positive impact to healthy lifestyles and learning?**

Those programs that are well-structured, outcomes-oriented; provide mentorship / role models; address culturally appropriate messaging and communication for the appropriate target audiences (minority / ethnic groups versus Anglo); link to expectations and attitudes; address barriers and constraints to participation such as access, time limitations, and costs; all in the context of a more holistic approach to conservation education; will be more likely to contribute to healthy lifestyles and learning.

**Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism**

“Pass It On” is a program designed to reverse the declining trend in hunter numbers. The program is made up of many different subprograms, such as Outdoor Mentors, Shooting Opportunities, Hunting Access, Special Hunts, and Education and Awareness.

The program relies heavily on adult mentors, believing that it takes a hunter to make a hunter ... and that it is critical that youth learn important life lessons in the outdoors from experienced hunters.

In 2009, as part of a program to provide beginning hunters special hunting opportunities, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism designated a portion of Glen Elder Wildlife Area as a Mentor-Novice Hunting Area. The West Walnut Creek portion (1,000 acres) of the wildlife area surrounding Glen Elder Reservoir in Mitchell County was set aside for Mentor-Novice hunts.

**Diversification strategies include:**

- A whitewater kayaking course.
- Enhancement of under-utilized sites (Threshing Machine Canyon near Cedar Bluff State Park (Butterfield state trail historic site – Lacks amenities for public visitation))
- Geological formations (e.g. Garden of the Gods and Monument Rocks) on private land in need of recreational easements and interpretation
- Long-distance hiking and camping trails – the state should explore development of long-distance trails that offer hut-to-hut (or yurt-to-yurt) camping facilities.
- Dark sky parks

Two early implementation projects – areas of quick, focused action – noted in the report include:

- Cheyenne Bottoms Wetland
- The Flint Hills

**KDWP now KDWPT**

“My top priority is to grow our state’s economy,” Gov. Sam Brownback said. “Moving the Division of Travel and Tourism to KDWP creates a great economic development opportunity for our state. It combines the resources and talents of two state agencies who have the same goals – promoting our great state and increasing visitors to the many wonderful parks, historical sites and events Kansas has to offer.”

2011 – Kansas Governor Sam Brownback signed Executive Reorganization Order No. 36, moving the Division of Travel and Tourism from the Department of Commerce to the KDWP, and retitling the department as the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

The move makes outdoor recreation a primary focus of the tourism industry in the state.

2012 – Eco-Tourism Committee – Gov. Brownback formed the Kansas Ecotourism Steering Committee to help guide ecotourism efforts in Kansas.

“One of my priorities is to boost ecotourism to get Kansans outdoors and to attract visitors from around the U.S. and the world,” Gov. Brownback said. “There are many outstanding natural features in Kansas that are showcases for our state. This steering committee will help provide direction and guidance on ecotourism issues as well as recommend objectives, marketing strategies, and policies to grow this important industry in Kansas.”

**2012 – Eco-Tourism Committee**

- It combines the resources and talents of two state agencies who have the same goals – promoting our great state and increasing visitors to the many wonderful parks, historical sites and events Kansas has to offer.
- There are many outstanding natural features in Kansas.
- The committee will help provide direction and guidance on ecotourism issues as well as recommend objectives, marketing strategies, and policies to grow this important industry in Kansas.
In 2009, the Johnson County Park and Recreation District undertook the development of a Resource Management Plan. The plan guides all elements of the agency’s stewardship efforts.

Agencies Serving as Models: Johnson County Park and Recreation District

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District provides a notable example of the commitment of Kansas’ park and recreation agencies to maintaining the health and diversity of the natural resources under their jurisdiction.

The JCPRD works toward this goal via the following standards:

- Being an innovative and ecologically responsible land steward
- Balancing the protection and enhancement of native flora/fauna with recreation
- Identifying, protecting, and managing endangered species/habitats
- Providing quality fishing opportunities at all stocked bodies of water

Related Stewardship Efforts:

- Biodiversity plan
- Hiring of Agency biologist
- Nuisance Wildlife Plan
- Forest Stewardship Plan
- Prairie Stewardship Plan
- Riparian Areas, Lakes and Wetlands Plan

In an effort to become more efficient in the supply of outdoor experiences, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has made some initial attempts to explore service consolidation options at Kansas’ reservoirs.

The federal government shutdown of Oct. 1-16, 2013, appears to have prompted a letter from Kansas Governor Sam Brownback to the Army Corps of Engineers about the possible transfer of Corps recreation operations to the department.

“Given the call for efficiencies from Washington and many state capitols, in addition to recent events in Washington, D.C., it would be my suggestion that the COE consider a policy of divesting their recreation efforts in favor of effectively funding the other responsibilities of their mission which no other entity is capable of doing.”

Governor Brownback, in a Nov. 2013 letter to Assistant Secretary to the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy

KDWPT officials indicate that if there is a favorable response from the Corps of Engineers on the proposal the Department will make significant efforts to obtain stakeholder input on the subject and diligently explore the economics aspects of the venture before committing.

“Should two separate units of government do the same thing? Is it the most efficient way to operate the facilities?”

KDWPT Secretary Robin Jennison