CHAPTER THREE

Trends

Despite the downturn in the economy over the last half decade, the pursuit of outdoor recreation experiences in the state has remained relatively stable; possibly more impacted by weather and detrimental biological conditions (e.g. blue-green algae) than economic.

Participation Trends

Participation in outdoor recreation activities is reasonably well documented nationwide. Kansans’ use of resource-based recreation areas shows trends slightly lower than the following data, excerpted from the 2012 Outdoor Foundation Report. (This data includes all outdoor recreation activities, not just visits to state or federal parks.) The data provided by this report is encouraging, suggesting the highest participation level in five years. Among the highlights:

- Nearly 50 percent of Americans ages 6 and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2011. That equates to a total of 141.1 million Americans.
- In 2011, outdoor participants made 11.5 billion outings – that is 1.4 billion more outings than 2010.
- Most popular activities of relevance to Kansas outdoor recreation experiences in the state has remained relatively stable; possibly more impacted by weather and detrimental biological conditions (e.g. blue-green algae) than economic.

Outdoor Foundation Report – 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although participation rates among youth ages 6-17 are up, average annual outings are down from 98 outings per participant in 2010 to 81 outings in 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth who do not participate in outdoor activities say they are not interested in the outdoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For young adults, lack of time is a bigger barrier than lack of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing outdoor recreation and physical activities early in life has a lasting effect: Among adults who are current outdoor participants, 82 percent report having a physical education class between the ages of 6 and 12. Forty-five percent of adult outdoor participants took part in outdoor activities from the ages of 6-12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly 50 percent of Americans ages 6 and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2011. That equates to a total of 141.1 million Americans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2011, outdoor participants made 11.5 billion outings – that is 1.4 billion more outings than 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost half of all outdoor enthusiasts participate in outdoor activities at least once per week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most popular activities of relevance to Kansas:

- **Wildlife Based Recreation** showed encouraging gains. Fishing and several forms of hunting saw new participants.
- **Boating/water based activities** (when grouped) all fared well. These include the new paddle boards, but also kayaking, board sailing, windsurfing, sailing, and canoeing.
- **Health and Fitness Enhancing Activities** dominated the list of activities attracting new participants. A subgroup (trail running – adventure racing – triathlons, etc.) leads specific activities. This participation is supported by input from agency professionals who rank it high in popularity. Recent Warrior Dash type activities in the K.C. metro area drew as many as 30,000 young adults (18-35).

Each of these categories is explored in some detail in the following section of the report.
Wildlife Based Recreation

Wildlife based recreation accounts for a substantial amount of the state's outdoor recreation demand, both by its own residents and by visitors. After a period of decline, more recent statistics show generally favorable growth in various sectors of this user group.

A newly released study, Exploring Recent Increases in Hunting and Fishing Participation, documents a number of reasons for the significant increases in both hunting and fishing participation between 2006 and 2011, as reported in the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The new research reports that there was no single reason for the 9% increase in hunting and 11% increase in fishing reported in the national study, but instead that there was “a perfect positive storm of reasons,” with each one contributing to increases in hunting and fishing participation. The research identified 10 reasons for those increases:

- The economic recession providing more time for hunting among unemployed and under-employed hunters
- Higher income among some population segments providing more resources to spend on hunting and fishing
- Increased interest in hunting and fishing for food and increased interest in local and organic food
- State fish and wildlife agency recruitment and retention programs
- State fish and wildlife agency access programs
- State fish and wildlife agency marketing programs, including advertising of new or repackaged hunting and fishing licenses
- Higher participation by current hunters and anglers
- Resumed participation among returning military personnel
- Re-engagement of lapsed hunters and anglers
- Participation by new hunters and anglers, including women, young people and suburban residents
- Participation by new hunters and anglers, including women, young people and suburban residents

According to American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall, “This new research clearly shows that proactive initiatives undertaken to change behavior – like the recruitment, retention, access and marketing programs undertaken by state fish and wildlife agencies – can make a difference. Plus it reminds us that it’s important to confirm that these efforts are really working – a good lesson for anyone trying to affect public attitudes and activities.”

The National Sports Goods Association’s 2013 Sports Participation Report provides the following insights relative to increases in shooting sports participation:

- Participation in hunting with firearms increased more than 18%, even more so among females (up nearly 29% over 2011). Target shooting grew comparatively, up 10.9% with female participation increasing over 27%.

License Sales Impacted by Drought:
Like visitation numbers for parks, the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold is an important indicator of demand, but demand for these outdoor pursuits of a consumptive nature are also dependent on the game and fish supply, and the resulting anticipated success ratios.

Hunting and Fishing Licenses Sold in Kansas 2007-2011

License Sales Impacted by Drought:
Despite the favorable increase in firearms hunting participation at the national level, Kansas participation continues to be impacted by drought conditions in much of the state. The impacts were felt on license sales. Non-resident hunting increased steadily from 2007 to 2011, when the drought impacts became very noticeable. Resident hunting followed a similar pattern.

Because of drought conditions occurring during mid-summer, 66 counties in Kansas were opened to emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grasslands. For many of these counties, this is the third consecutive year where CRP has been released for emergency haying or grazing. The emergency use over the last three years has created a cumulative negative effect within areas where the ongoing drought has resulted in little regrowth within fields that have been utilized over that time period.

Excerpts from the 2013 Upland Bird Forecast – KDWP
Change to senior hunting and fishing licenses

In 2013, Kansas seniors between the ages of 65-74 began paying for hunting and fishing licenses that were previously free. The KDWPT expects to raise over $1 million in revenue via this new policy, in part by making the state eligible for more federal funds. Wildlife conservation and management in Kansas is supported by revenue from license sales, not general tax dollars, along with federal aid from an excise tax on firearms and ammunition. The formula that is used to distribute the federal funds is based on the size of the state and the number of licensed hunters.

Prior to the change the state lost federal aid revenue because the older hunters didn’t buy licenses, which means they weren’t counted for the federal formula.

With the older segment of the population increasing at a significant rate in the state, the situation would have continued to deteriorate without action.

Shooting Sports Popularity Increasing

Adding to the previous reports, the following excerpts from “Sport Shooting Participation Trends in the USA, 2008–2012,” from the National Shooting Sport Foundation, provide additional evidence to the upsurge in popularity:

- 40 million adults, slightly over 17% of the adult population, participated in some type of target or sport shooting in 2012
- A significant number of shooters (20%) started to shoot for the 1st time in the last 5 years
- Approximately 2/3 of the new shooters are young, in the 18-34 age group
- 37% of the new shooters are female
- 47% of the new shooters are from urban/suburban areas

According to this report, these new shooters indicate their primary motivation is for recreation and to be with family and friends; self-defense is secondary. Still, approximately 60% of the new shooters are pistol shooters.

Recreation Resources Research Services estimates the number of shooting sports venues in Kansas to be approximately 120 sites, once the two separate datasets are merged and the duplicates removed. The KDWPT currently lists 72, as shown below.

| Kansas Outdoor Shooting Sports Venues, as of 2012 |
|-----------------|------------|
| Air gun         | 1          |
| Clay target     | 25         |
| Archery         | 16         |
| Handgun         | 3          |
| Multiple        | 18         |
| Rifle           | 9          |

Miss Kansas a shooting sports enthusiast

Kansas outdoorswomen in particular, and women across the country, will benefit from the message and encouragement offered by Miss Kansas 2013, Theresa Vail. Unfortunately, the designated “America’s Choice” winner in the Miss America pageant wasn’t allowed to demonstrate her archery skills in the event, but her message to women relative to the outdoors was one of encouragement and will likely lead to continued growth in outdoor pursuits by young women.

Theresa Vail found confidence and strength when she started bow-hunting and competitive shooting and is actively passing along the values of participation in outdoor pursuits by young people. Gaining benefits like independence and self-esteem through participation in more traditional male dominated shooting sports was an integral part of her pageant platform.
Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites (OWLS)

Kansas hosts over 206 Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites. These outdoor labs provide hands-on environmental awareness experiences for children of all ages. Each site may be customized to the available landscape and designed to achieve specific learning objectives. OWLS areas may range from a small plot of native shrubs and prairie, with a small pool in a corner of the school yard, to sites that feature several of the following possibilities:

- Feeding stations for birds, squirrels, etc.
- Shrubbs that represent woody songbird plantings.
- Butterfly and/or hummingbird gardens.
- Stands of native prairie managed by prescribed burning or mowing.
- Woody plantings that include trees and shrubs to be used as nesting, cover, food, and perching sites (may be associated with feeding stations).
- Nesting structures for songbirds, geese, and small mammals.
- Trails through woodland and prairie sites.
- Water: a lined pond, ground level tank, or developed wetland incorporating wetland plant species.

Fishing Access Enhanced

In an effort to reduce barriers to boating and fishing, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has used federal funds from the U.S. Sportfish Restoration Act to lease the fishing rights from multiple municipalities over the last 5 years. During the period of these Community Fisheries Assistance Program agreements, the public no longer needs the municipality’s fishing license (with some exceptions—e.g. trout stamps), and in return, KDWPT stocks and manages the fishery. Currently there are 205 CFAP sites listed statewide.

New Angler Instructor Course

A new course designed to certify anglers to teach fishing techniques in Kansas was offered in late summer 2014. The course is part of a new educational program designed to enlist qualified volunteer instructors to teach fishing techniques throughout the state.

Fishing Statistics

- Freshwater fishing attracts roughly 13.6% of the population nationwide, continuing a downward trend from the high of 16.3% participating in 2006.
- The data also show that fishing is a family-friendly activity that inspires Americans to get up and get outside. More than 19 percent of adults with children in their households participate in fishing, while only 13 percent of adults without children in their households participate. And, it’s common that families don’t stop their outdoor activities at fishing.
- Nearly 85 percent of fishing participants engage in other outdoor activities, instead of fishing alone.
- The fastest growing United States population segment, Hispanic Americans, represent an extraordinary opportunity. While Hispanic Americans make up only 12 percent of fishing participants, those Hispanics that do fish make more annual fishing trips than any other group—indicating that fishing has huge appeal and potential with this group.
- Females and youth 6-12 added the most new participants.
- The profile of participants that decided to stop fishing is very similar to the profile of all fishing participants—mostly males over the age of 44.
- More than 8% of Americans who do not currently fish are interested in taking up the sport (almost 40% of these are female).
- 46.2% of freshwater fishermen travel less than 30 minutes to fish.

(From A Special Report on Boating and Fishing, 2012 – the Outdoor Foundation)

Kansas Situation

Kansas non-resident fishing remained relatively flat during the same period. Resident fishing fluctuated but showed a noticeable decline in 2011, likely attributable to low water and algae conditions in many reservoirs. (See license sales table, page 43)
Boating in Kansas, like hunting and fishing, has been noticeably impacted by drought since 2011. 2012 was particularly severe with several water bodies completely inaccessible. 2013 brought some relief in the eastern half of the state, but water shortages/drought is still in the forecast statewide for several years.

Water based recreation is a crucial aspect of outdoor recreation in Kansas, making up a substantial core of the visitors to U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and State managed parks. Recreational boating activities that involve a boat in Kansas are expected to be significant in a fashion not unlike that illustrated in the following chart, depicting the national relationship.

Inspection of the boating data by gender reveals that women enjoy a number of boating activities at even a higher rate than males.

Kansas specific data provided by KDWPT suggest that boating is more male dominated here with 87% of the participants being white males. The most common boat is the 16-26’ open runabout (fish and ski). The most common on-the-water boating activity is fishing.
When compared to its neighbor states, Kansas doesn’t fare particularly well relative to several boat ownership and participation statistics. Kansas ranks in the lower one-third in all categories and last in the percentage of youth participating. Targeting boating as a family activity and increasing the focus on boating skills instruction for youth offer approaches to improve this deficiency.

The percentage of the population participating, even at 21% though, fares well when compared to the national average of 17.8%.

With a change in boat property taxation reducing the rate significantly, beginning in 2014, several of these categories should improve for the state of Kansas.

### BOATING PARTICIPATION and OWNERSHIP DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Water Area Acres</th>
<th>Water Area per 1000 POP</th>
<th>Rec Boating</th>
<th>% of POP</th>
<th>% of Youth Boating</th>
<th>% of Boating Households</th>
<th>% Households with Regis Vessels</th>
<th>N of Reg Vessels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>735,360</td>
<td>2,926,229</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>849,000</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>32% 208,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>290,560</td>
<td>5,044,930</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1,080,000</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>9% 99,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>330,240</td>
<td>2,863,813</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>16% 103,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>335,360</td>
<td>1,631,825</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>496,000</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>18% 74,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>629,440</td>
<td>3,764,882</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>749,000</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23% 192,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>631,680</td>
<td>6,011,478</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1,995,000</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>24% 325,346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KANSAS RANKINGS**

4th/6 in WATER ACRES PER CAPITA

5th/6 in % PARTICIPATION

6th/6 (LAST) IN % OF YOUTH BOATING

5th/6 in % of BOATING HOUSEHOLDS

5th/6 in THE % of REGISTERED VESSELS PER CAPITA*  
** believed by KDWP to be 2000 data (Current data more like 85,000) but date of other comparable data unknown  
* NEW STATUTE REDUCING KS PROPERTY TAX ON BOATS WILL IMPROVE THIS RANKING, STARTING IN 2014

2011 National Recreational Boating Survey – US Coast Guard

### National boating statistics

Reversing the downward trend in the percent of the public participating needs attention, but there are promising signs that boating participation is improving. The total number of boating outings has increased. The type of boat being used is changing as well. Pontoon boats now lead in popularity.

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Americans ages six and up participate in boating at a rate of 17.8 percent, down slightly from 18.1 percent in 2010. The good news is that the average number of outings per boater increased from 13.2 annual outings to 14 annual outings. Overall, the total number of boating outings increased from 675.9 million outings to 710.1 million outings.

Boating participants went out on the water most in pontoon boats, at a rate of 22.4 percent. This is followed closely by kayaks, canoes or row boats at 20.4 percent and cruisers at 19.6 percent.

Boating participants spend an average of 14.2 days on the water. Those between ages 45 and 64 average the highest at 18.3 days.

Most boating participants enjoy outings with friends at 63.1 percent, and most outings are taken in freshwater at 63.7 percent. More than 18 percent of boating participants rent or charter a boat while on vacation.

2012 Special Report on Fishing and Boating, Outdoor Foundation and the Recreation Boating and Fishing Foundation
Fitness and Health Enhancing Outdoor Recreation

Fitness and health enhancing outdoor experiences are popular in a variety of formats. Those of an individual nature are increasing while traditional team sports (football, baseball and even soccer) are in decline.

Triathlons, Adventure Racing and Trail Running

Triathlons and road racing both ranked in the top 5 outdoor activities attracting new participants. Support for this type of activity was also provided by agency professionals, who in a 2013 Supplier’s Survey ranked fitness and trail running as the fastest growing outdoor pursuits.

Recent Warrior Dash type activities in the KC metro area drew as many as 30,000 young adults (18-35) over a single weekend.

Active pursuits rank high, with fitness running, trail use, bicycling and using dog parks among the top 5 in the state, as reported by public suppliers. Relaxing outdoors (picnicking) remains a favorite pastime, however.

Team Sport Decline

The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) data indicate that since 2008, team sports have lost 16.1 million participants, or 11.1% of all team participants. It notes an increase in specialization participation and a continued decline in casual (more recreational) participation. SFIA warns that the decline in casual participation should not be ignored, in part because these experiences serve as a gateway to broader participation. SFIA suggests the dropout could be caused by a combination of the following factors: overspecialization, overuse injury, athlete burnout, safety concerns, and the marginalization of the recreational player. Data from the KS Supplier’s Survey indicates a similar trend, with the rec leagues declining at the higher rate.

The role that declining school budgets play has prompted Dick’s Sporting Goods to initiate a new campaign, Sports Matter, that it hopes will help athletic programs with successful fundraising.

Youth gains in area of fitness:
The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) found the following changes in youth participation from 2001-2011. Noticeable were the gains in fitness enhancing pursuits.

Notable changes in Youth Participation (age 7-17) 2001 – 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gainers</th>
<th>Losers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Walking</td>
<td>Backpacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>Boating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running/Jogging</td>
<td>Snowboarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workout at a Club</td>
<td>Water Skiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Exercise</td>
<td>Mtn. Biking (off road)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth sports most in decline – Kansas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>2001 Participants</th>
<th>2011 Participants</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>-33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>-50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>-60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>-50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>-50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Skiing</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racket Sports</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Walking</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness hiking</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-60.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Natural Resource Based Recreation

Participation in natural resource based recreation at state and federally managed parks is measured in visitation figures provided by agencies. Visitation figures are impacted by a number of variables, including weather, fee changes and biological impacts (e.g. blue-green algae blooms). For this reason, users of the data should view 3-5 year trends, instead of focusing on a single season.

While the following visitation data may be accurate, it does not paint the full picture. Visitation at specific parks may have shown notable declines for a given year, due in some cases to full park closure for a period due to a blue-green algae outbreak. The significant impacts of such closures prompted discussions between the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, resulting in some modifications of warnings and changes in park closure policy.

Kansas state park annual visitation has fluctuated over the last decade and a half as illustrated in the chart below. Since 2008 (the focus period of this report), visitation rebounded, declined and rebounded again. When queried as to possible impacts, KDWPT staff offered several, including:

- Variations in entrance fee pricing and passes
- Reservations
- Weather/Climate
- Biological conditions (e.g. blue-green algae), Invasive species
- Economics

When compared to the state’s population change during the same period, the decline in visitation is more dramatic, however – dropping from a high of 2.75% of the population visiting in 2002 to a low of 2% in 2011 (a decline of 28%) in per capita visits.

Corps of Engineers managed parks, shown here by District, generally showed a slight increase in demand from 2009-2011, but that changed in 2012, where visitation was down across the board, due most likely, according to USACE officials, to weather and related biological factors (blue-green algae blooms).
All of the national park units in Kansas have a cultural/historical focus, including the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, which has the dual purpose of tallgrass prairie protection with special attention given to ranching heritage.

Therefore, one would expect that visitation fluctuations should be less impacted by climate variations than the other park units previously mentioned. That appears to be valid. The fluctuations that did occur appear to have been more due to special events than climate changes. When visitation totals for the two year period 2007-08 were compared to totals for 2011-12, visitation to KS national park units increased 5.5%.

Visitation is expected to increase measurably for the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in upcoming years, as the unit opened a visitor’s center in 2013. Additional trails were added in 2012 that give access to sections of the Preserve not previously open.

Where the changes in visitation occurred is of interest. Visits to parks and lakes nearest the KC metro area (Clinton, Hillsdale, Perry) generally declined. Some of the greatest increases occurred in less populated areas (Cross Timbers, Fall River, Glen Elder, Webster, Cedar Bluff, Elk City, Eisenhower, and Pomona). Impacts at Cheney and El Dorado were drought based, and algae blooms were credited with temporarily closing several parks (e.g. Milford), but a full park-by-park explanation is not available. The data do suggest that change in population had less effect than would be anticipated.

Changes in the Camping Experience

Increasingly, overnight visitors to state and federal parks in Kansas appear to desire more enhanced levels of comfort. One illustration of this trend can be found in the number of cabins now available for overnight use in state parks.

**Change in Visitation at KS State Parks from 2008/09 to 2011/12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Parks Ranked</th>
<th>Visitation Change from 2008/09 avg to 2011/12 avg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Dorado</td>
<td>(400,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Timbers</td>
<td>(300,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall River</td>
<td>(200,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Elder</td>
<td>(100,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Bluff</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elk City</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomona</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Hills</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Dog</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Spirit Trail</td>
<td>(400,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanopolis</td>
<td>(300,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaw River</td>
<td>(200,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>(100,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milford</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowwood</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meade</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallgrass</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkins</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsdale</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheney</td>
<td>900,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**# of Cabins available in State Parks and State Fishing Lakes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also reflective of this trend is the continuing utility upgrade request to at least 50 amp service in state park campgrounds. Overnight stays continue to be an important aspect of the Kansas state park experience, accounting for 53% of the state park visits. This level is notably above other states in the region.

State and Federal agency respondents to the Supplier’s Survey – 2013 echoed this trend – suggest that primitive campgrounds (those without utilities) continued to lose favor with the public, and they are being phased out of some parks.
Seasonality

As illustrated in the following charts, visitation at KS resource based parks (at the State and Federal level) is characteristically seasonal, with levels peaking in the early to mid-summer.

Efforts continue in these parks to broaden and diversify this demand. Cabins have proven successful and are useable year-round, prompting an exploration of more venues and experiences aimed at attracting non-peak visitors, particularly in off and shoulder seasons.

The Prairie Spirit Trail is an exception, showing more shoulder season use, dropping off primarily during the winter.

A new visitor center and new trails at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve should help attract more non-peak visitors.

Winter events like eagle watches and guided trail hikes are examples of experiences to attract a wider range of visitors, particularly in off and shoulder seasons.

Environmental Impacts

Temperature and drought conditions varied widely in two recent summers (2012 and 2013). The summer of 2012 was particularly hot and dry with drought and the resulting low water levels preventing boat use at some reservoirs. The summer of 2013 was much cooler and saw most of the reservoirs filled. The situation provided an opportunity to examine the impacts.

This chart illustrates, and was confirmed by park staff, that while some visitors simply quit going, many found substitutes.

The most obvious was the variation in attendance at El Dorado Lake (a 45 minute drive from the Wichita metro area). In 2012, visitors left Cheney (due to low lake levels as illustrated below) for El Dorado ... but in 2013, they found other options. Participation increased at 75% of the parks over that two year period.

USACE/KDWPT Staff comments on impacts of 2012 drought (Supplier’s Survey):

- Increased in camping with drop in visitation
- INCREASE IN REVENUE AND USAGE
- Increased Utility Expense
- Drop in fall and winter usage due to low water levels, leaks
- Drought conditions resulted in low reservoir levels; however, a countywide burn ban may have been most detrimental to visitation
- Blue-green algae blooms also affected visitor use
- Usage maintained until we got into late July/ August, then when the heat and dry conditions did not abate usage reduced
- Dramatic increase in electric and water consumption and expenses from RV’s. Visitors spent far more time inside in a climate controlled setting. This was also due to a substantial blue-green algae bloom
- Noticeable drop in primitive camping in both paying and free campgrounds
- Drought conditions caused many of our newly repaved roads to crack and become uneven on the sides. This also occurred to some of our camp site pads, making both uneven and somewhat hazardous
- Has been tough on camping, day use and boating
- Low lake levels reduced boating, and hot weather reduced camping, trail use, and picnicking

Visitation Differences Between
Sum 12 (Hot/Dry) and Sum 13 (Cool/Wet) KS STATE PARKS

Note: The green bars above reflect 2013 data, where the visitation was below 2012 levels (20% of the parks).
Possible water sale would affect El Dorado businesses, recreation

Wichita Eagle Jan. 2, 2013
by Michael Pearce

Mike Morgan, who owns the marina and nearby boat dealership, is worried low water levels and a corresponding drop in lake usage might become the norm. He’s one of many lake users concerned about what could happen if the city of El Dorado sells water from the lake to Wichita.

“I think (boaters) would just quit coming here if the water level drops too low,” Morgan said. “(El Dorado officials) say it will be fine if they drop it down five feet. We’re down 4 1/2 feet now (because of drought), and it’s not fine out there.”

Morgan said he has heard of several boats recently being damaged by hitting submerged trees or rocks. Others have gotten stuck in the shallows.

He’s not the only lake user opposed to selling the lake’s water. “I have some very serious concerns, and I know a lot of people do, probably the majority” said state Rep. Will Carpenter, R-El Dorado. “What’s happening out there right now, with the low water from the drought, shows it can make a huge difference. I got my boat stuck out there last weekend, and it looked like I should have been in deep water.”

Like Morgan and Carpenter, Ernie Condon worries the uncertainty of Kansas weather could quickly add to problems created by any amount of water sold. “If we have a five-foot drop (by sale), and then we get two years of drought, like we’ve had, where will we be?” asked Condon, Walnut Valley Sailing Club commodore. “We could have some big problems with the water depths around our boat slips. We already do with current water conditions.”

Water is crucial to outdoor recreation in the state

Outdoor Recreation in Kansas is closely tied to water. It is estimated that over 80% of the demand for state and federal parks is linked directly to it. Drought impacts over the last couple of years demonstrate the negative impact on lake use of low water levels and related biological impacts at the state’s reservoirs. Forecasts by the Kansas Water Office for drought relief in the foreseeable future are not promising.

Beyond the natural causes though, a significant threat to recreational water use may loom for reservoirs with potential value as municipal water sources near metropolitan areas. One of these threats is described in the excerpts at left from an article written for the Wichita Eagle (Jan. 2, 2013) by Michael Pearce. Beyond the direct effects to State Parks of reduced lake use, loss of regional economic impact created by the reservoir’s use could be substantial.

Water fluctuations are the norm for the state’s western reservoirs, managed typically by the Bureau of Reclamation, as irrigation is part of the reservoirs’ purpose. A closer examination of the historical changes in use tied to fluctuating water levels would be of value in forecasting the impacts on use in potential scenarios like El Dorado Lake.

Outdoor Participation in Cities

The most popular outdoor recreation (individual participation activities) from 2009-2012, as observed by all public suppliers in Kansas, include:

1. The old standby – relaxing outdoors, picnicking and like social activities
2. Fitness running and/or outdoor challenge individual experiences
3. Off leash parks (exercise for man and beast)
The perceived need for service facilities is notable. Often overlooked, the value of quality restrooms, shower-houses, adequate parking, offices, and like amenities are important to quality and repeat experiences. Agency representatives at the local level of government rank this category of amenities as most important. Shared use connecting trails rank second. Acquisition of green space and raw land for future parks, when taken together, would rank highest. Specialized trails like equine and motorized appear to be viewed as the realm of state and federal agencies, given little importance at the local level.

In the Inventory chapter, an examination of the state’s outdoor facilities is conducted. Worth repeating here are some trends in facility construction. Readers should note that not all increases were due to new construction, but better reporting of data, as was the case for shooting sports venues and ponds and stream segments.

Nonetheless, the following features (as compiled in the KS RecFinder dataset) have been flagged as notable – and are being constructed in state and federal parks as well as local parks – in reaction to requests by the visiting public. Some of these features are obviously not all new construction, but more accurately new reporting (e.g. Lakes, Ponds and Stream Segments).

### Outdoor Recreation Feature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>2008 Supply</th>
<th>2012 Supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Parks</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes, Ponds and Stream Segments</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>1,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc Golf Courses</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pet Parks</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>1,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting Sports Venues</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Ramps/River Access pts</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate Parks</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splash Parks</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Shelter Houses</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*total reported in 2012, the difference from 2008 was not necessarily constructed during this period

**New reporting is the most likely reason for the illustrated increases in the following features:**

- Lakes, ponds and stream segments (not new but newly listed as a feature of interest)
- Playgrounds (a combination of new features and new reporting)
- Shooting sports venues have increased but many were not previously recorded
- There are several dozen new ramps but most illustrated are new reports

**Population Change and Outdoor Recreation Participation**

Given that change in population is the most predictive variable in the demand for outdoor recreation activity (1997, J. Loomis and R. Walsh) in non-destination sites, the focus of recreation demand over the next decade should include a close examination of areas of population growth.
**KS Cities and growth**

A sample of Kansas cities were grouped and measured by census class (not to be confused with the state’s own statute designation of city classes). Class 1 cities (N=25; pop > 15,000) represent almost 81% of the state’s population growth over the last decade. Class 2 cities (N=100; population from 2,000-14,999) accounted for the remaining 19% growth and represent 21.2% of the state’s population. Class 3 cities, those under 2,000 population, represent the greatest number of cities (N=366) but only represent 7% of the state’s population, and there was no population growth in this city class over the 2000-2010 period.

**Hispanic population continues to grow at an accelerated rate in Kansas.**

From 2000 to 2010 the Hispanic population in Kansas increased by 59.4%. Hispanics increased from 7% of the population in 2000 to 10.52% in 2010. While concentrations are still centered in a few counties the growth was noticeable statewide.

Population shifts as shown here illustrate the need for important planning considerations for outdoor recreation supply in the state over the next couple of decades. The population shift from rural to urban continues, as the population increases noticeably in the metropolitan areas, and generally in the eastern third of the state.
The older segment of the Kansas population is shown here to be increasing (highest increase = darkest purple) in the percentage of county residents, most notably in rural areas. Taken together, the data further illustrate the movement of young people away from the rural communities. Outdoor recreation opportunities of interest by population strata should naturally follow.

Perhaps the most significant participation rates rose among America’s youngest generations. Thanks to nationwide efforts to reconnect youth to the outdoors, more children, adolescents and young adults got up and got outdoors in 2011.

For the first time since 2006, participation in outdoor recreation by young boys reversed its decline.

Although higher participation rates are encouraging, youth still don’t spend enough time enjoying the outdoors. 40% of youth participants take part in an outdoor activity less than twice per month ... so few outdoor outings suggest youth are not getting the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity.

For adults, getting exercise is the No. 1 motivation for getting outdoors. For youth the No. 1 reason is to be with family and friends (until they turn 18 – at which time it changes to getting exercise).

The older segment of the KS population is shown here to be increasing (highest increase = darkest purple) in the percentage of county residents, most notably in rural areas.

Prior to 2008 participation had been declining for several years, as illustrated in this chart (2006-2008) from a Special Report on Youth by the Outdoor Foundation.

Efforts to stem the decline in youth participation began to turn around in the period 2009-2013. As noted in the 2012 Report by the Outdoor Foundation:

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Exploring Youth Participation

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For adults, getting exercise is the No. 1 motivation for getting outdoors. For youth the No. 1 reason is to be with family and friends (until they turn 18 – at which time it changes to getting exercise).
As indicated in these data compiled in the Outdoor Foundation’s Special Report on Youth, emphasis needs to be placed on getting the parents involved in outdoor activities, in order to obtain greater youth participation. Other efforts should not be discounted, as all contribute, but the role parents play must be given additional focus.

What is hard to tell from the charts is whether school programs are low in impact because few exist, or whether they are low in impact because programs can’t follow-up and make experiences actually happen outside of the classroom.

Who influences children’s decisions to participate in outdoor activities?

**Ages 6-12**

1. Parents
   - All: 75%
   - Males: 75%
   - Females: 77%
2. Brothers, sisters, or other relatives
   - All: 36%
   - Males: 34%
   - Females: 39%
3. Friends
   - All: 33%
   - Males: 34%
   - Females: 32%
4. Myself – no one else influenced me
   - All: 13%
   - Males: 13%
   - Females: 12%
5. Community program – Boy Scouts, YMCA, neighborhood program, etc.
   - All: 13%
   - Males: 13%
   - Females: 12%
6. School program
   - All: 12%
   - Males: 11%
   - Females: 14%

**Ages 13-17**

1. Parents
   - All: 64%
   - Males: 65%
   - Females: 63%
2. Friends
   - All: 44%
   - Males: 46%
   - Females: 43%
3. Brothers, sisters, or other relatives
   - All: 26%
   - Males: 26%
   - Females: 27%
4. Myself – no one else influenced me
   - All: 20%
   - Males: 20%
   - Females: 20%
5. School program
   - All: 12%
   - Males: 11%
   - Females: 12%
6. Community program – Boy Scouts, YMCA, neighborhood program, etc.
   - All: 10%
   - Males: 13%
   - Females: 5%

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**Inputs**

**Data Collection:**
- Professionals survey
- General Public online survey
- Forum
- Published reports
- Published Needs Analysis from KS Communities
- Committee critique

**Listening to the Public and Professionals**

**Professional Input:** A survey of practicing public agency professionals at all levels of government was conducted to elicit opinions on the salience of issues, as well as opinions on appropriate service levels.

**Secondary studies:** Relevant results from published studies and reports on outdoor recreation demand/use and related strategic reports and planning documents were provided for committee review and liberally utilized throughout the compilation of this report.

**Public Input:** Three approaches were utilized to elicit input from the general public:
- **Community Recreation Needs Analysis Surveys** – (A number of Kansas communities have recently conducted needs analysis studies.) Rather than duplicate these efforts, this report includes comparisons of results from several questions from a number of these studies on issues relevant to this report (Wichita, Ottawa, Gardner, Olathe and Topeka).
- **An online survey** – was developed and advertised statewide via a KDWP'T news release and via the SCORP steering committee’s network. This survey was designed to elicit public opinion on outdoor recreation issues, paying particular attention to self-defined user categories.
- **An online forum/blog** was similarly advertised and hosted for 4 weeks on 4 different outdoor recreation topics.
- **Open ended input** – Identified user groups and associations were notified and asked to provide open ended input on perceived outdoor recreation issues facing their members.