



# LOVEWELL STATE PARK SPRING NEWSLETTER

  
 Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism  
 March 2021

*Welcome to this edition of the Lovewell State Park Spring Newsletter! We sincerely hope you enjoy it and will provide us feedback on the format and content.*

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### STATE PARK FEES FOR 2021

★ Annual Vehicle	\$25.00
★ Kansas SR/Disabled Annual	\$13.75
★ Daily Vehicle	\$ 5.00
★ Kansas SR/Disabled Daily	\$ 3.25
★ Unconventional Vehicle Permit	\$52.50
★ Annual Camp Permit	\$202.50 (\$252.50 after March 31)
★ 14 Day Camp Permit	\$112.50
★ Daily Camp	\$ 10.00
★ Prime Site (all 50amp sites)	\$ 2.00
★ Electricity	\$ 9.00
★ Elect/Water	\$11.00
★ Elect/Water/Sewer	\$12.00
★ Seasonal Campsite Elect	\$371.50 per month
★ Seasonal Campsite Elect/Water	\$431.50 per month
★ Seasonal Campsite Elect/Water/Sewer	\$491.50 per month
★ * Transaction Fee of \$2.75 will be added to each campsite transaction TOTAL.	

★ OFFICE HOURS THRU APRIL ARE 8AM TO 4:30PM MONDAY–FRIDAY.  
★ WEEKEND HOURS WILL BEGIN IN MAY.

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### 2020 — A Record Year!!

★ With the outbreak of a global pandemic in March of 2020, the future of Kansas State Parks was at first uncertain. But by mid-April, as visitors began to see the state parks as a way to social distance and still get out of the house and make wonderful outdoor memories, the flood gates opened and parks like Lovewell State Park were busier than ever before! All primitive and utility campgrounds were full from late April through the end of July, and nearly full for most of August. Many of the visitors were completely new to camping, fishing and boating. This resulted in a record year for visitation and revenue for all of our Kansas State Parks. Catch phrases like the “new normal” have become a reality. This is evidenced by the launch of our 2021 camping inventory this past December, which was DOUBLE that of the launch date in 2020! Therefore, it is seemingly imperative to reserve your 2021 camping cabin or campsite stays as soon as possible! All utility campsites are reservable (with the exception of designated seasonal and handicapped restricted campsites), plus the 24hr Generator Loop at Willow. Remaining primitive campsites at Lovewell State Park are all still first come-first serve. Use the CampItKS app, kshuntfishcamp.com or reserveamerica.com or call the Lovewell State Park office!



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**Kansas Residents! Don't forget about the Kansas State Park Passport!**  
 Available at the time of your vehicle license registration, only \$15.50 per vehicle!



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*Advice from a Star:*

- Set a Shining Example!
- Make a Wish!
- Keep Looking Up!
- Have a Stellar Attitude!
- Keep a Twinkle in Your Eye!
- Stay Full of Wonder!
- Be Out Of This World!

### Camping Cabin Changes

With the increasing popularity of our camping cabins, some changes have been required for check-in procedures. In order to allow enough time for proper cleaning after check-out, **the CHECK-IN time for a camping cabin stay is 3PM.** This will allow park staff enough time to prepare each cabin when multiple cabins have to be cleaned on the same day. **CHECK-OUT time remains at 12 noon for all cabins!** It is very important to adhere to the check-in/check-out rules for everyone's benefit. As a reminder, pets are allowed in FOUR of the rustic camping cabins: Frontier, Pioneer, Pine Ridge and Sunrise. A \$50 pet fee must be paid to have pets inside any of these four cabins. Pets inside any of the other cabins: Lookout, Scout, Settler, Pilgrim or Southwinds Cabins is strictly prohibited, and must be kept outside on a leash, chain or in a kennel.



## SPECIAL EVENTS AT LOVELLELL FOR 2021

A full slate of fun special events was planned in 2020, but most had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns and strict guidelines for gatherings. This year, for 2021, only a few events are currently scheduled, those that can be held with proper social distancing. Should the guidelines and restrictions be relaxed, some of your old favorites such as the Kids Fishing Clinic, Whatever Floats Your Boat, and Lovewell Fun Day could be scheduled back in for later in the season. We will cross our fingers and hope! The Kansas Dept of Health and Environment is looking at ways to reinstate the Earth Day Cleanup events that were scheduled for last spring, while still following CDC guidelines. That decision is yet to be made and remains "To Be Announced", so watch websites and social media for further information. But for now, the special event season begins with a Free Park Entrance Day on May 1st to promote the "Let's Camp America" campaign. Let's Camp America! is an initiative by the National Association of State Park Directors, to showcase the wide array of activities available to campers on an extended trip or close to home. LET'S CAMP AMERICA! is about building outdoor moments with family and friends. America's State Parks are primed and ready to create America's next camping generation.



Free Fishing Weekend is June 5 and 6. A fishing license is not required to fish any public waters in the State of Kansas on these two days. Campground Christmas will be held August 14 with lots of campsite decorations and holiday fun. Enter your campsite or group of campsites, decorate with your favorite holiday lights, inflatables, decorations and props, or even dress yourselves up in costumes! You could win a great prize! Everyone is encouraged to cruise the park, taking in all of the holiday sights and sounds! Last year's fireworks display needed a little extra time for fundraising to make for a great show so the event was scheduled for Labor Day weekend in September. The location was also moved from Walleye Point to the new Cedar Point Rock Jetty, for a better environment for detonating the fireworks. Both the date and location were so popular, that this event will now continue to be held in September! We can't think of a better way to celebrate the workers that make America great, than having a spectacular fireworks show in their honor! But remember, this event can't occur without sufficient donations for the purchase of the fireworks! The Lovewell Lake Fireworks Committee appreciates any donations. If you are interested, contact Lovewell Marina to make a donation or to request contact information for the Fireworks Committee. Another Free Park Entrance Day will be September 12th in conjunction with the 3D Archery Shoot. The final Free Park Entrance Day of the season is part of the #OPTOUTSIDE campaign, encouraging folks to trade their traditional Black Friday shopping plans for a day in the great outdoors!

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

Earth Day Cleanup	TBA
Let's Camp America	
Free Park Entrance	May 1
Free Fishing Weekend	June 5/6
Campground Christmas	August 14
Fireworks Display **	September 4
3D Archery Shoot	September 12
Free Park Entrance	September 12
#OPTOUTSIDE	
Free Park Entrance	November 26

\*\* TENTATIVE

Are you interested in a bowfishing hobby, but don't know where to



start? Lovewell Staff is considering hosting a bowfishing clinic. Let us know if you would be interested, by calling the state park office!

*Lovewell State Park is a popular destination for family reunions, alumni reunions, weddings and company picnics. Reserving a shelter is very economical, at only \$34.00 for the day. Contact us to schedule your own special event today!*

### DISC GOLF COURSE RELOCATED

A 9-hole disc golf course was installed in the Pioneer Day Use area in 2011, however the layout of the course with basket stations confined to the day use area itself, was never felt to be ideal. Efforts were engaged in 2020 to relocate the entire course to make it more challenging and fun for its users. The first basket station is now located just north of the Pioneer Fish Cleaning Station, with the rest of the course winding to the north into an area of trees and challenging obstacles resulting in a variety of "par" designations. The course will be fun and challenging for beginning and expert disc golfers alike! A few golf discs are available to check out from the state park office, if you don't have your own equipment. The Disc Golf Course adds to the many day use facilities available at Lovewell State Park. Visitors can enjoy a set of horseshoe pits, concrete basketball court, sand volleyball court, giant checkerboard table, and Dave Collette Memorial Playground, all located at the Pioneer Day Use Area.

### Lovewell Marina To Showcase Local Talent!

The staff at Lovewell Marina looks forward to seeing you this summer! We hope to return to as normal of operations as possible this year, but we will continue to follow guidelines and recommendations to ensure a safe environment. We are hoping to provide live entertainment this summer, including opportunities for local artists who are trying to get their name out there to showcase their talents. Keep updated by visiting our Facebook page (Lovewell Marina & Grill). Our hours will be similar to the past, and we will continue to provide a full menu. We thank you for your continued patronage. Come escape to the lake with us!

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## Life Jacket Loaner Program Expanded



*Life Jacket Loaner Kiosk  
Installed Near Lovewell Marina  
Boat Ramp*

In 2020, Kansas State Parks partnered with the Sea Tow Foundation to place life jacket loaner stations at all of its State Park locations. The program has been extremely popular, and we are happy to say that it is expanding in 2021. A new MOBILE life jacket loaner kiosk will be available this year, and will be located most times at the Southwinds Beach area of the state park. But the beauty of the mobile kiosk is that it can be moved to different areas of the park depending on special events or needs. Boaters and swimmers may borrow the life jackets at no cost and are asked to return them when they are finished so that they are available for others to use. The stations are stocked with life jackets in a variety of adult and youth sizes. It has been a great program so far, and very well received. PLEASE, continue to use this fantastic program as it is intended, and return the borrowed life jackets as instructed, so that everyone can benefit from the program. Thanks, and safe boating everyone!



### **AmeriCorps Service Opportunity!**

AmeriCorps is a national service program which allows team members to gain service experience and knowledge through hands-on participation in a variety of projects. The grant is designed for long-term benefit to natural resources, recreational opportunities, and public awareness of the outdoors. Typical projects performed by AmeriCorps members are environmental and outdoor recreation development, renovation of public recreation areas, presentation of environmental and outdoor related programs, and disaster response, as needed. Team Members must be at least 17 years old, have a high school diploma/GED, or agree to obtain one; a citizen of the US or permanent legal resident; pass a background check; and possess a strong desire for community service. Members who complete a 300 hour term are eligible for a \$1252 education award, in addition to the \$305 bi-weekly living allowance. Contact the State Park Office for more information!  
Join Our AmeriCorps Team Today!

## SEVERAL FACILITIES GET A MUCH-NEEDED MAKEOVER!!



*Completed Cedar Point Rock Jetty with  
Solar Light Installed*

Thanks to funding from a Motor Boat Access Grant, a new rock jetty is part of the landscape at Cedar Point! This new project began in late 2019 and involved building a large rock jetty to protect the boat ramp and shoreline from wave action and erosion, previously protected by a floating breakwater. Construction was completed in March of 2020, and a solar light and bench were added during the summer season. Besides the advantages of protecting the boat ramp and cove, the jetty is popular with fishermen with lots of good fishing in the rock crevices at the base of the jetty.

Deteriorating log siding on the Sunrise Cabin was replaced in April of 2020, with wood-grain vinyl siding for better protection. As future funding is available, the log siding will be replaced on the remaining rustic cabins: Pine Ridge, Pioneer, and Southwinds. Hard surface flooring was installed in the Settler Cabin to replace aged carpeting, along with

planned updates of new interior paint and wall improvements. Similar plans await all of the deluxe camping cabins, as funds are available. All four of the deluxe cabins (Lookout, Scout, Settler and Pilgrim) have been updated with new dining table and chair ensembles, built by the Dept of Corrections.

An intense focus for the maintenance staff, beginning with the 2021 season, will be the refurbishing of picnic tables and Waconda shelters throughout the park, with new lumber, stain, and hardware. The desire of the Lovewell staff is to get all picnic table equipment into a regular rotation for repairs and refurbishing, as funding allows.

The lateral fields at Willow Utility Campground were completely rebuilt and upgraded in June of 2020, due to failure of the old leach system. A renovation project is planned for the Rose Hill Dump/Washout Station for 2021 to reduce the burden at the station and reduce down time due to intense of the facility. The new design will require the user to attach their discharge hose in order to use the facility, so only one camper will be able to use the station at a time. Inefficient tank water heaters were replaced in the Cottonwood and Willow shower and restroom buildings, with new and more efficient tankless/on-demand water heaters. This will definitely be an improvement that facility users will appreciate, as these facilities will no longer "run out" of warm water during high use periods!

An exciting addition coming in 2021, is a handicapped lift for boaters! A Wildscape donation received from the Lovewell Lake Association was earmarked for this type of equipment and it was purchased in 2020. It will be installed in the spring of 2021. The lift will allow for easier loading of handicapped individuals into a boat. The equipment, similar to a handicapped pool lift, will be installed in the parking area of the Walleye Point Restroom. It will be used to lift the individual into the boat prior to launching at either of the boat ramps. We are excited to offer this new equipment for those who were often excluded from boating activities because of mobility issues!



## REGULATION REMINDERS

Our state park regulations are not new, but its always good to remind visitors as we look forward to the new park season. **VEHICLE AND CAMPING EXPIRATION TIMES**—All daily vehicle and camping permits expire at 2 pm following the last day purchased. If your vehicle is still in the state park or your camping unit is still in a primitive or utility campsite after 2 pm, another day **MUST** be purchased. **14-DAY STAY LIMIT**—A camping unit is limited to 14 consecutive days in a campsite, **utility and primitive**, with the exception of designated seasonal campsites. Following the 14th day of your stay, you must move your camping unit to another campground, or remove it from the state park area, for at least five days. **GREY WATER DUMPING**—all wastewater from camping units (GREY and BLACK tanks) must be disposed of at dump stations only. **SPEED LIMIT**—there is a **25 mph speed limit** throughout the entire park. Speed should be reduced even further when entering and driving the individual campground roads.

The **UNCONVENTIONAL VEHICLE PERMIT** is still available for golf-cart and UTV type vehicles (no ATV's) but use restrictions and regulations do apply. **PETS**—are allowed at Lovewell State Park, however must be kept on a 10 foot or shorter leash or chain **at all times**. Pets are **not allowed** inside any of the facilities, unless for assistance purposes. This includes all shower and restroom facilities, swimming beach, park office, group shelters, and **state park camping cabins (except for designated pet-friendly cabins>>see page 1)**.

**WATER USAGE**—Although it is not a statute or regulation, we also want to remind our constituents that due to significant increases in our fees paid for water usage, Lovewell State Park does not allow extra water use for things like waterslides, wading or swimming pools, etc. Please use only the water that is necessary to operate your camper, keep your water hose connections in good operating condition, and notify us as soon as possible of any leaks discovered at your water hookup, or the appearance of an underground water leak near your campsite. **With everyone abiding by state park regulations, we can continue to provide a safe and family-oriented park and enjoyable visits for all!! Thank you!**

### THE GREAT GENERATOR DEBATE!

The popularity of the reservable sites in the 24HR Generator Area in the Willow

Primitive Campground has grown exponentially in the last couple of years, and most noticeably in 2020 when utility campsites were filled to capacity for much of the season. Generators in these campsites can be operated 24 hrs, with noise restrictions. Many of the portable generators sold by suppliers in recent years are nearly undetectable in the amount of noise produced. Thus a debate has grown, whether these super-quiet generators should be allowed to be operated outside of the quiet hours of 11pm to 6am throughout ALL of the primitive areas in the park. This would only be allowed for the newer, quiet generators that produce no more than 65 decibels at 65 feet. Do you have an opinion? Let us hear it! We need everyone's input to make a decision like this! Thanks!



### Follow Us On Facebook!! Lovewell State Park –Kansas Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

“Like” us and turn on the push notifications for our page. You will get the latest on upcoming events, past events, information on facilities and lake status, great park photos, anything you want to know! Now you have the **inside track** on the most up to date information, no need to worry about unsubstantiated rumors! Status updates can also be found at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) (click on **State Parks >> Lovewell, >> Park News**) or simply call our office during business hours. We will be happy to give you the most accurate, up-to-date information for your planning!



**GIVE THE GIFT OF THE OUTDOORS!!** Birthday, Anniversary, Christmas, or Thank You gifts for the outdoor person in your life just got a whole lot easier, with a gift card for any dollar amount over \$25. The lucky recipient can use their gift card for any type of purchase at KDWPT office locations, for 5 years from the purchase date! Treat your friends or family to a great adventure at a Kansas State Park this year!



## 2021 FISHING FORECAST!!

**LOVEWELL RESERVOIR** - is 1 ft below conservation pool, as of February 2021.

By Scott Waters, Fisheries Biologist



**CATFISH - Good.** The catfish population will again be very good in 2021 with all sizes of channel cats and flatheads available to anglers. Lovewell ranks sixth in channel catfish density (16”), third for preferred size fish (24”), and fourth for lunkers (28”). The fall 2020 channel catfish catch rate was down for all sizes compared with the 2019 sample, with the biggest numbers of fish in the 17 to 21in range. The biggest fish weighed 14 lbs with good numbers of fish greater than 5 lbs. 43% of the fish were between 17 and 21in, 33% were 12-16in, 19% were between 22 and 33in. Flathead catfish sampled this year were 119 fish ranging from 8 to 47in, with the biggest fish weighing 56 lbs. Plenty of trophy flatheads are available to anglers. Channels and flatheads will be vulnerable in all arms of the reservoir as well as up White Rock Creek near the Highway 14 bridge. During irrigation releases, catfish can be caught close to the inlet and outlet structures and are susceptible along the dam and other rocky areas during the spawn. We collected over 150 blue catfish in 2020 using electrofishing, float lines, and fall gill nets. **Be on the lookout for blue catfish which have been stocked since 2010.** There are now over 800 tagged blues at Lovewell as we continue to study their movements and growth rates. Fish ranged from 19-37in and weighed up to 26 lbs. Natural reproduction of blue catfish has not been documented and will be needed to sustain this population without stocking. **For that reason, the 35 inch minimum length limit on blue catfish is still in place.**

**CRAPPIE - Good. Don't forget the daily creel limit is 20 crappie per day and the minimum length limit is 10 inches.** Crappie populations remain strong but catch rates declined from record highs in 2019. This is partially due to the higher water levels during sampling, but also due to the high angler harvest in 2020. The new regulations worked well as young fish were protected and plenty will be growing into legal size range in 2021. Lovewell ranks third in crappie density (8”), 13<sup>th</sup> for preferred size fish (10”), and 17<sup>th</sup> for lunker rating (12”). Density rating was only 2.7 in 2014 but climbed to a record high 64.5 in 2019 before declining to 11.9 this past fall. 91% of adult crappie were between 6 and 9in. Higher water levels in recent years allowed for excellent crappie production with 2019 and 2020 year classes dominating the population, and these young crappie should produce good fishing in the next few years. Over 150 fish were collected per trap net indicating a very strong year class. Approx. 25% of the adult crappie were black crappie between 4 and 12in. Biggest white crappie weighed 1.2 lbs and biggest black crappie weighed 1.1 lbs. These fish all appear to be very healthy with excellent body condition. Several brush piles are maintained to help concentrate fish for anglers, and decent success can be found fishing around the flooded vegetation in Montana Creek, Inner Mill Creek, and the marina during late April and May during the spawn.

**WALLEYE - Fair.** Lovewell continues to support a low density walleye population but provides quality size fish that anglers can catch throughout the year. Poor recruitment from 2013 to 2018, combined with a summer fish kill in 2018 that resulted in extensive walleye mortality, has continued to keep total numbers lower than desired. The density rating improved for the second consecutive year from 0.8 to 1.2, the preferred rating held steady at 0.3, but the lunker rating remained at 0 for the third consecutive year. The walleye density ranks 10<sup>th</sup> while the preferred rating will rank 9<sup>th</sup>. This continues a trend of lower catch rates since the 2012 sample but the 2019 year class should provide legal fish over the next couple of years. Due to Covid-19, walleye egg collection was limited in 2020 and no fry or fingerling walleye were available for stocking. A combination of fry, fingerlings, and intermediates have been requested for 2021. Approximately two-thirds of the fish in the sample were greater than 18 inches. Overall, 38% were 14 to 17in, 55% were 18 to 22 in. Biggest fish weighed 8.2 lbs. Fish condition was excellent. Fishing continues to be good from late April through mid-June with anglers drifting jig/nightcrawler combos having the best success, especially along 2-mile road. Trolling a variety of crankbaits in late July and early August around the dam and Walleye Point has yielded good catches of big walleye the past several years. Anglers are encouraged to carefully measure any questionable fish and handle sublegal fish with care. **18 inch minimum length limit in effect.**

**WHITE BASS - Fair.** White bass catch rate and density declined significantly with the worst catch rate observed at Lovewell in many years. White bass are traditionally good to very good and anglers annually harvest high numbers of fish. But forecast ratings reached all-time lows in the 2020 sample. This is partly due to the weather during the week of sampling but is mostly due to poor recruitment in recent years. The density rating (9”) reached a low of 2.1 in 2014 and gradually improved to 4.9 in 2018 but dropped to 1.1 this year which ranks 20<sup>th</sup> for 2021. The preferred rating (12”) also declined from 4.6 to 1.1 and ranks 19<sup>th</sup>. The lunker rating improved from 0 to 0.4 as the catch rate of larger fish was the highest since 2013. Fish over 15 inches were collected for the first time since 2014 with the biggest fish measuring 16 inches and weighing 2.2 pounds. Overall, 30% of the sample was between 6 and 9in, 47% were 12-15in, and 23% were 15 to 16in. As in the past, the best time to fish for Lovewell whites will be in the summer, during peak irrigation releases. The inlet and outlet areas historically produce the majority of whites harvested while summer topwater activity can also be productive. Night fishing using floating lights can be fair to good and drifting or slabbing over submerged roadbeds and humps throughout the year is also an effective method for hooking into a nice stringer of whites.

**WIPERS - Fair.** The catch rate of wipers declined after two years of improved numbers. A handful of fish recruited in 2020 but most of the catch included fish between 11 and 22in. The density rating decreased from 2.6 in 2019 to 1.7 in 2020. The preferred rating improved from 0 to 0.4 which is the highest since 2012. Approximately 21% of the catch was between 7 and 12in, 23% was 13 to 16in, and 56% were 19 to 22in. Lovewell ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in wiper density and preferred ratings, but no lunker size fish were collected, the biggest fish weighed 5.8 lbs. Wiper fry and fingerlings were stocked in 2020 and produced a fair year class. Fry and fingerlings have been requested for 2021 as this has provided good results in the past. Fishing for Wipers is very similar to white bass. **Be sure to identify your catch carefully as those young wipers look very similar to white bass. The daily creel limit on wipers is 2 fish!**

GET THE LATEST WEEKLY FISHING REPORTS FOR ALL AREA RESERVOIRS AT  
<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Fishing-Reports>



## WE LIVE IN AN "APP" WORLD!!

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has launched two very successful mobile apps,

CampItKS and HuntFishKS – making Kansas outdoors more accessible than ever before. Both have been very popular with our users! The CampItKS app has been downloaded by almost 15,000 users, and the HuntFishKS app has been downloaded by over 44,000 sportsmen! With the CampIt KS app, state park visitors can easily reserve campsites and cabins, and in the future possibly self-pay for a walk-in site. Directions, contact information, and important alerts are also available for each state park. Using the HuntFishKS mobile app, hunters and anglers can purchase their licenses and permits remotely, and store them electronically on their mobile device. Info on seasons and regulations are also available.



Download the CampIt KS mobile app to your Android device here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aspiraconnect.ra.ks>

Download the CampIt KS mobile app to your Apple/iOS device here: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/campit-ks/id1449813035?ls=1>

Download the HuntFishKS mobile app to your Android device here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aspiraconnect.hf.ks>

Download the HuntFishKS mobile app to your Apple/iOS device here: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/huntfish-ks/id1456586235?ls=1>

Also check out the informational YouTube video for the CampIt KS app!! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uhecl0fXl2Y>

Also check out the informational YouTube video for the HuntFishKS app!! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uhecl0fXl2Y>



## JAMESTOWN WILDLIFE AREA UPDATE

Matt Farmer, Public Lands Manager

For those that like to take Sunday drives, the managers at Jamestown Wildlife Area highly suggest taking the drive to the north end of the property just off Highway 148. The Florell Hill look out area and observation deck offer an excellent vantage point to see the results of the last renovation project at Jamestown. This project was challenging in many ways, however produced the biggest bang for the hunters' buck when it comes to habitat availability for wetland dependent wildlife as well as more hunting opportunities for the public. Since early 2018, the large wetland footprint at the north end of Jamestown Wildlife Area known as Gamekeeper Marsh was bustling with heavy equipment, piles of rock and dirt, and many times throughout the renovation project, copious amounts of water. To say the project was a challenge was an understatement as crews worked around one of the wettest years on record in 2019. However, with several delays and setbacks the partnerships persevered, resulting in an almost two-mile-long division berm along the west side of the marsh and added eighteen inches of concrete to the Gamekeeper Dam to compensate for decades of sedimentation that has washed into the marsh. This dam raise allows managers to inundate close to 500 new acres of habitat that is optimum for wetland dependent wildlife. The area received a large flood in late July 2020, which set the stage for some excellent moist soil habitat going into the fall migration and hunting seasons. This new habitat was utilized in the early teal season by the early migrants of little Blue-Winged Teal and the hunters that chased them got to experience the excitement of exploring a new area and they had great success hunting the little blue rockets. This area was part of the refuge starting October 1 and managers knew with all the new habitat and food availability, the potential was there to hold impressive amounts of waterfowl throughout the fall. The ducks and geese did not disappoint as the wildlife area held more birds throughout the season than it has ever held in the past. The birds had no reason to leave with all the food and protected habitat the refuge area provided. Waterfowl hunters took note, and the area had high hunter use throughout the fall and early winter. Gamekeeper Marsh itself saw the highest hunter use and bird harvest it has had in over 15 years. Hunter numbers were up 66% over the seven-year average and waterfowl harvest was up 73%. The July flood was severe enough it set back cattail growth across the whole property. This allowed for a flush of excellent moist soil plants, mainly Annual Smartweed to take hold, providing phenomenal food and cover for migrating ducks, geese, and shorebirds. Managers were able to utilize a new contractor to spray Phragmites with a helicopter in early September to reach the patches of hard to eliminate, invasive plant that was not accessible with the equipment available on the property. One small project that will be underway in the spring of 2021 is the development of a new boat ramp and gravel parking area on Marsh Creek just off the bridge on Highway 148. This will improve access to Gamekeeper Marsh by boat and will be much more convenient than pulling a boat trailer down to a muddy, primitive ramp that seems to wash away with every flood event. Managers plan to continue with cattail and Phragmites control and promote good moist soil production throughout the summer of 2021, looking forward to another excellent 2021 hunting season.

### Visit the Jamestown and Lovewell Wildlife Area Information Pages

Visit [www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Locations/Wildlife-Areas/Northwest/Jamestown](http://www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Locations/Wildlife-Areas/Northwest/Jamestown)

OR [www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Locations/Wildlife-Areas/Northwest/Lovewell](http://www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Locations/Wildlife-Areas/Northwest/Lovewell)

for updates on area management, construction progress, upcoming events, and waterfowl migrations.



## CONTROLLED BURNING FOR WILDLIFE

***FIRE!*** This four letter word sends an ominous warning to anyone within earshot and it should. Wildfire can be a very destructive and dangerous force. Due to recent climate events, lack of moisture and very windy weather wildfire has damaged much property in the area recently. On the other hand, lack of burning has damaged much property in the area by the invasion of trees and shrubs into our grasslands. Burning when controlled can really benefit wildlife.

This area evolved as a grassland with trees and shrubs only being found near the stream drainages or north-facing slopes shaded from the sun. These areas were wetter and less susceptible to catching on fire and burned. Fire is a natural process that was present on the grasslands whether it was caused by lightning or man and grasses have a growing habit that makes them tolerant of fire. They in fact thrive with fire or with grazing, if not too frequent. Since the area was settled the frequency of fire has been reduced and any wildfire is fought and put out as fast as we can, that's understandable. But to mimic our native ecosystem we need to bring some of those natural forces like fire back on the land.

Wildlife areas are managed for the primary function of providing the best habitat for native wildlife or approved, introduced species, (ring-necked pheasant). They also provide opportunity for people to recreate and hunt those wildlife for food or other uses. In order to provide the best habitat we need to use the best habitat management practices that come as close to what was found before settlement. As I noted earlier, vast, random wildfire is not a good choice and it would be difficult to bring back the large herds of bison, deer, pronghorn and even elk to our areas to graze or even "tromp" the area for a short time to stimulate the grasslands and keep the woody plants out. Our most cost effective habitat management practice we can use is controlled burning.

The wildlife area managers have been working on plans and firebreaks to implement controlled burning on more acres of the wildlife areas. Firebreaks are constructed to limit where fire can be controlled. Some firebreaks only require a close mowing or mechanical removal of trees with a skid steer and saw. Some need more protection and need the firebreak to be disked to mineral soil. Smoke is also a concern and the planning addresses neighbors who might receive smoke during a burn. Many of these controlled burn plans involve the neighboring landowners willing to reintroduce fire on their property also. More smoke and greener grasslands will be in the future. We are not going to kill all the trees. "Every plant has its's place...when out of place it becomes a weed" Author Unknown

### NEW FACE AT LOVEWELL AND JAMESTOWN

Joe Daniels is a new employee and a new position that is being provided by a



partnership between Pheasants Forever and Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism. The Pheasants Forever Habitat Specialist is a contractor that works on Public and Private Lands in Kansas and other states. They are supervised on a daily basis by KDWPT managers to target habitat projects. Joe is originally from Clearwater, KS; about 20 minutes south of Wichita. He grew up hunting, fishing and spending a lot of time outdoors, and these hobbies led him to pursue a career in wildlife. In May of 2020 he graduated from K-State with a degree in Wildlife and Outdoor Enterprise Management, with Biology and Business minors. Upon graduation he accepted a contract position with Pheasants Forever as the new Habitat Specialist for Jamestown and Lovewell Wildlife Areas. Most of his time is spent at Jamestown helping manage wetland and adjacent upland habitats, but also frequently spends time at Lovewell assisting with various projects to improve habitat for deer, quail, and turkeys. He also assists with the management of four smaller "satellite" properties besides Jamestown and Lovewell. Currently he is working on a plan to enhance the Republic County tract of Griswold Wildlife Area. Through prescribed fire, mechanical tree control and wildlife focused grazing management, the plan will make the area more suitable for upland birds, especially quail. Griswold is under invasion from smooth brome, cedars, mulberries, elms, and locust trees. To restore the area to a more natural grassland state, staff will use fire and a grazing rotation that keeps the range healthy, free of trees and provides quail a place to breed, feed, and raise broods. Joe enjoys working and hunting in the area and looks forward to continuing to help manage our public lands for hunters and anglers to enjoy! Welcome to the team Joe!



## Electronic Check-In Giving Managers A Better Tool

Rob Unruh, Public Lands Manager

Jamestown, Lovewell and Talmo Wildlife Areas are in their eighth year of utilizing the electronic daily hunt permit system, or iSportsman, and we have been gathering very valuable data and are using it as a tool to measure habitat management effects relating to hunter activity.

### **How do I start using the System?**

In previous newsletters we described how to start using the system. The card system is no longer available. If you are one of the few hunters who does not have access to a computer or mobile phone, we can arrange to get you checked in. A wi-fi hotspot is available 24/7 at the Lovewell Office. With cell phone coverage being spotty at best, it is recommended that hunters check in from somewhere where they have good signal. To increase the likelihood of finding good mobile or computer service, the system is set up to allow hunters to **check in after 8:00 PM the evening before** the hunt. That way hunters can check in from the comfort of their own home or hotel room. Hunters are **required to check-out before midnight on the day of their hunt**. Remember, hunters **MUST** register to set up their own account at [www.kdwpt.isportsman.net](http://www.kdwpt.isportsman.net). This is not your KDWPT account number. It is a new, separate permit number. Please use a password you can remember and write down or record the password, permit number and PIN. Many hunters store those somewhere on their phone. Hunters are finding that once they start using this electronic system, it is much more convenient and more user-friendly than the old paper permit system.

### **This is why we do it!**

The information gathered is so valuable for the managers. Managers know how many hunters are using the area, what and where they hunted, what kind of harvest success they had. As we renovate a marsh like the newly completed Gamekeeper Marsh, or convert cropland to warm season native grass, burn a field overgrown with eastern red cedars at Lovewell, or add cover crops to a crop rotation, we can track hunter success on those areas. The majority of our pheasant harvest is concentrated in our upland areas we converted from cropland to permanent native grasslands, and the first 3 days of the season is still the best. Pheasant hunter numbers were down but success remained steady compared to previous years, even following some of the worst flooding Jamestown WA had experienced. Waterfowl harvest doubled at Jamestown and Lovewell but the surprise was the increase in harvest from Gamekeeper Marsh, the newly renovated marsh. All the marshes recorded increased success, and Jamestown ended the season with a bird per hunter average of 2.35. More archery hunters use the wildlife areas than firearms hunters and the most hunters are on the area during the first week of November. Deer harvest has steadily declined over the past 4 seasons and managers are proposing that we reduce the number of antlerless only tags permitted on the Wildlife Areas from 5 to 1. The data supports this.

### **What did we find out?**

With the COVID-19 pandemic, modified work and school schedules and travel restrictions, we saw changes in hunter statistics. Turkey season success and hunter numbers were greatly reduced due to the suspension of permit sales to nonresidents just prior to the season opener. We found that 80% of our hunters at Jamestown were residents, but at Lovewell that same 80% were non-residents. Hunters came from 38 different states and 101 out of 105 Kansas counties. Our local County Boards of Commissioners, Travel and Tourism committee and Northcentral Kansas Economic Planning Commission have shown an interest in our numbers. The ease of getting numbers for reports and habitat development grant applications saves many hours; and time equals money on the administrative side. These savings are put back into the management of the wildlife areas.

### **Contact Information:**

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### **Lovewell Staff:**

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