



El Dorado Wildlife Area News

Area News – Fall 2017

2017/2018 Hunting Outlook:

Upland Birds: The fall hunting outlook for quail on the area is fair to good. Hunters should see quail numbers that are again increased as compared to last fall. Quail production during the years 2007-2010 was believed to have been hampered by heavy rains, cool temperatures, and significant flooding during the critical reproductive months of May, June, and July. The 2011 and 2012 reproductive seasons however were notably different. Rather than too much moisture and associated cool temperatures, both years were marked with record breaking excessive heat and drought. Quail production during those years is believed to have suffered as well. More moderate weather conditions in recent years (2013 – 2017) are believed to have resulted in improved production, as several coveys were observed or reported early this fall, often in areas where habitat work has recently been completed. Within most habitat areas, natural vegetation and area crops should provide good food and cover conditions for wildlife, including quail, and should help to sustain breeding populations into next spring. Timely precipitation throughout much of July and August produced robust habitat conditions. Hunters should expect to find many area habitats to contain tall and dense vegetation. The wildlife area lies outside the primary range of ring-necked pheasant. Hunters occasionally encounter pheasants on the area, but numbers are low.



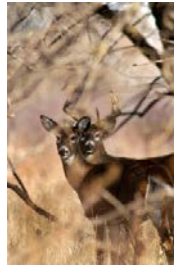
Northern Bobwhite.

Waterfowl: The fall hunting outlook for waterfowl on the area is fair. Waterfowl populations are reported to remain strong following another good production year within breeding habitats to the north. Habitat conditions however here are not nearly as strong as those experienced in 2013. The lake flooded in late March and generally remained flooded into late June. Flooding peaked in late-May (5.2') and the lake remained full through August. Food producing vegetation could not become established on lake fringes because of the floods and full lake levels. As such, few food resources will be available for waterfowl this season along lake edges. Warm and dry conditions throughout September and water releases to facilitate maintenance work to the dam have reduced lake levels. In many locations water is a significant distance from shoreline cover. With current conditions, hunters may find it difficult to conceal themselves for a hunt. Weather will undoubtedly play a part (as it always does) in determining the extent of waterfowl use this year as well. Hunters are encouraged to visit the area website to view weekly waterfowl population and habitat condition updates. Hunters are reminded that El Dorado Lake lies within the Southeast Duck Zone.



Drake wigeon.

Deer: The fall hunting outlook for deer on the area is fair. Although area deer numbers were believed to be negatively influenced by the 2012 EHD outbreak and habitat degradation following the 2015 flood, habitat conditions have largely been favorable in 2016 and 2017. Like last year, improved woodland habitat conditions and robust native grass and cropland habitats that benefited from timely precipitation during much of the summer, will provide attractive habitat for deer, particularly as weather conditions deteriorate later this winter. Although deer sightings and deer sign appeared less frequently this year, antlerless deer and fawns were a common sight again this summer, and reports of a few nice bucks have been received.



White-tailed deer.

Turkey: The fall hunting outlook for turkey on the area is good. Area populations remain strong following good production dating back to at least 2012. Several broods were again observed this summer indicating a moderate level of production on the wildlife area. Hunters should find good turkey numbers early this season with numbers declining later in the year as some harvest occurs and remaining birds spend more time on nearby private property as a result of hunting pressure.



Wild Turkeys.

Small Game: Opportunities to hunt fox squirrel and cottontail exist. Of the two, fox squirrel, typically provide greater opportunity. With much of the area wooded and with hunting interest in squirrels often low, the area can provide some attractive hunting. Cottontail populations are often not strong, but can provide some opportunity during most years.



Successful squirrel hunt.

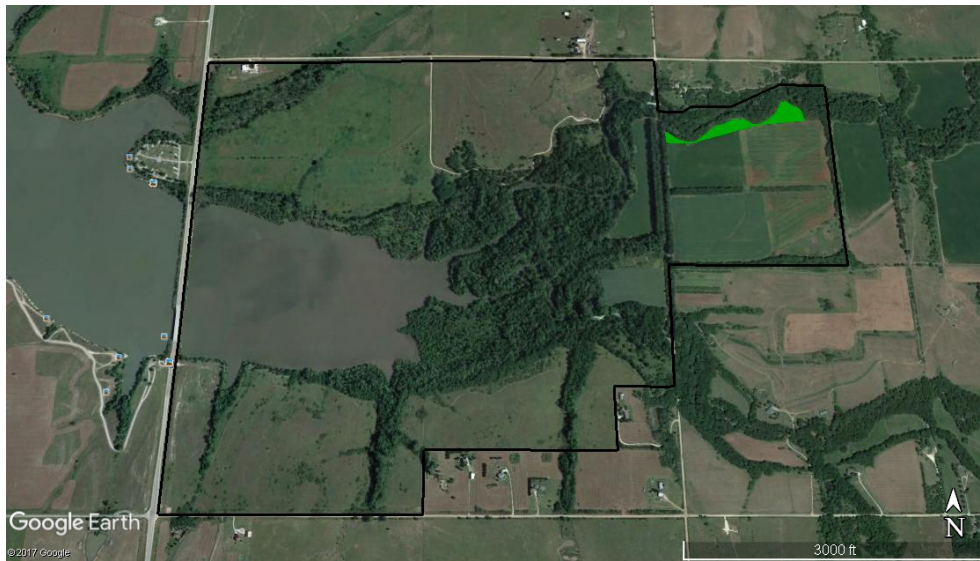
Furbearers & Coyotes: The area is open to the hunting and trapping of furbearers. In most years, good opportunity to harvest beaver and raccoon exists. Coyote and bobcat populations are generally fair, providing some opportunity.



Kansas Coyote.

Fifth and Final Year of Upland Habitat Planting Plan Completed:

A 5 year plan designed to provide multiple benefits, including those to enhance water quality, wildlife habitat, and associated recreation was initiated in 2013. Beginning that year, portions of agricultural lands along 5 lake tributaries were idled and planted to native grasses and forbs. These annual planting projects were designed to enhance grassland cover availability in areas dominated by woodland and cropland habitats. As a result, plantings have enhanced habitat diversity within the wildlife area, ultimately enhancing habitat for wildlife species such as quail, turkey, deer, and others, while enhancing lake water quality by filtering some run-off from adjacent agricultural lands. In 2013, six former agricultural tracts were planted totaling approximately 30 acres along Durechen Creek. Similar efforts were completed in 2014, converting portions of 4 tracts totaling 10 acres along Cole Creek. In 2015, 3 tracts were converted totaling 34 acres along the Walnut River. In 2016, approximately 12 acres were planted within 4 tracts along Satchel Creek. In 2017, approximately 5 acres were planted within a tract adjacent to Bemis Creek. With the completion of this five-year plan, each of the primary drainages leading into El Dorado Lake has received habitat improvements. The total treated area then involves approximately 91 acres within 18 tracts!



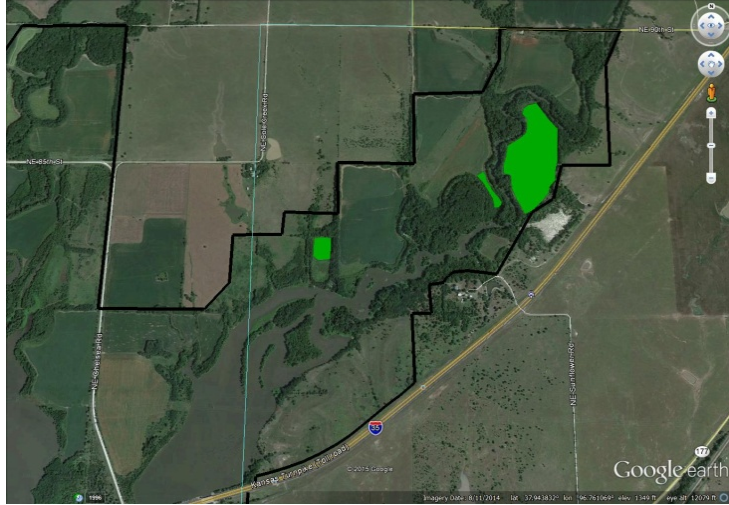
Bemis Creek Area. 2017 habitat planting locations.



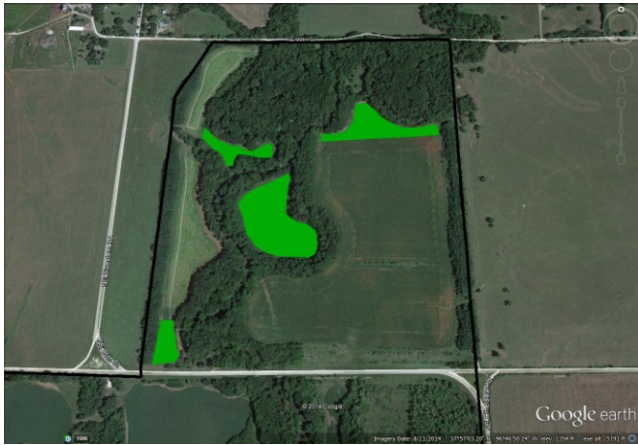
Satchel Creek Area. 2016 habitat planting locations.



Habitat planting within the Satchel Creek Area.



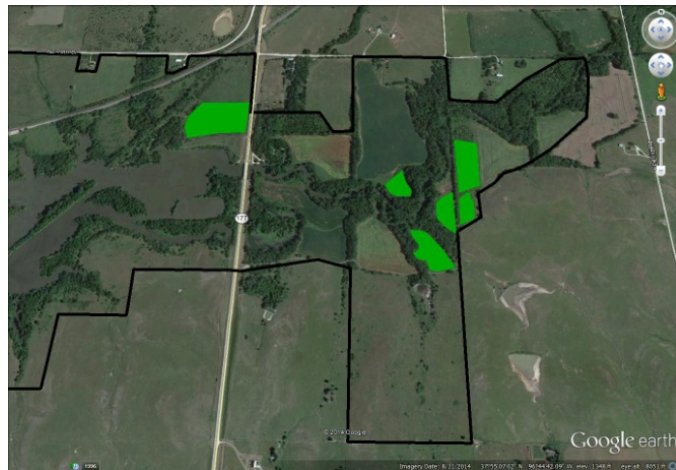
Walnut River Area. 2015 habitat planting locations.



Cole Creek Area. 2014 habitat planting locations.



Habitat planting within the Cole Creek Area.



Durechen Creek Area. 2013 habitat planting locations.

Welcome New Assistant Manager

Area staff are pleased to announce the recent hiring of Mr. Tyler Burt as our new Assistant Public Lands Manager. Tyler will be primarily assisting with management responsibilities at El Dorado Wildlife Area and Butler State Fishing Lake, but will also be available to assist with special projects at Council Grove Wildlife Area and Chase State Fishing Lake. Tyler brings a solid reputation as a passionate and dedicated employee with a diverse skill set and interests including public relation and communication abilities, biological expertise, leadership and supervisory abilities, land management experience, equipment operation and maintenance skills, facility and infrastructure management and maintenance abilities, law enforcement proficiency, community involvement, technological experience, and youth program involvement. Tyler is stationed at the El Dorado Wildlife Area office which is located just east of Hwy. 177 along NE 20th Street. He can be contacted at #316/322-7513 or tyler.burt@ks.gov.

Tyler grew up in Great Bend, KS, where he graduated from Great Bend High School in 2003. After one year at Butler Community College playing college sports, Tyler transferred to Kansas State University where he obtained his Bachelor's degree in Park Management and Conservation in 2008. While attending Kansas State University, he met his wife Shala and they married in the Fall of 2008. Tyler has been employed with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism for 9 years, previously in the Parks Division at El Dorado State Park. While working for the department, Tyler was actively involved in the management of park lands and public use areas, employee training, youth hunts, and special event coordination. In 2013, Tyler and Shala welcomed twin girls, Taylor and Sophie, who are now 4. Tyler enjoys spending time participating in outdoor activities including hunting and fishing with his friends and family, camping with family, participating in running events with his wife and friends, and teaching his daughters various outdoor activities. Welcome Tyler!



Tyler Burt with wife Shala and twin daughters Taylor and Sophie.



Tyler passing on our outdoor traditions.

Butler State Fishing Lake Added to Areas of Responsibility

Beginning in late August of this year, Butler State Fishing Lake (SFL), located in southeast Butler County, became an area of additional management responsibility. Butler State Fishing Lake and Wildlife Area provides scenic outdoor experiences within a nearly 120-acre lake and 200-acre public land complex. Noted for its quail hunting, largemouth bass fishing, and summer wildflower viewing opportunities, Butler SFL can help to satisfy year-round outdoor recreation interests. Recently hired Assistant Manager, Tyler Burt (please see above article) will have direct responsibility for the property. Plans are currently being developed to enhance the visitor experience by improving shoreline angler access, area roadways, restrooms, shelters, signage, and courtesy docks. Habitat management efforts will continue to incorporate periodic prescribed burns and greater emphasis will be placed on control of noxious and invasive plant species. Plans are also currently being developed to remove woody vegetation from the lake dam. With the addition of Butler SFL, staff are now responsible for the management of 4 properties within 3 counties of the Flint Hills region, including Council Grove and El Dorado Wildlife Areas and Chase State Fishing Lake. Outdoor recreation opportunities abound within these nearly 6,500 acres of public lands!

Welcome new NWTF Forestry Specialist

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and KDWPT are pleased to announce that Dan Moser was hired as an NWTF Forestry Specialist this past spring. Dan will be working with KDWPT managers throughout eastern Kansas to develop and implement woodland habitat enhancement plans. He will be responsible for developing or overseeing woodland inventories and management plans and will assist with educating natural resource professionals and the public of issues facing forest resources in Kansas. Plans are currently being developed to begin annual efforts to enhance woodland habitats at El Dorado Wildlife Area. Those efforts will be highlighted in future newsletters.

Dan will be based in Council Grove, sharing space at the wildlife area office. He was raised in Logan Utah and from a young age knew that hunting, fishing, hiking and just being in the woods would be his life. This passion directed him to the University of Montana where he earned a B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation with an emphasis in forest management. He's worked several years traveling around the western U.S. as a consulting forester instituting forest management, timber management, stewardship and conservation programs. His professional objectives are to work in collaboration with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to assist in advancing timber management programs. Dan can be reached at #785/559-0054 or dmoser@nwtf.net. Welcome Dan!



New NWTF Forestry Specialist, Dan Moser

Why all the ATV tracks?

Nearly every fall I'm asked, "Why are there ATV tracks through all of the fields?" The answer is a simple one. ATV's have become an essential public land management tool. They are utilized extensively by staff to conduct annual habitat reviews and to implement management actions designed to conserve and enhance area habitats. ATV tracks are often still evident each fall after late summer noxious weed treatment efforts have been completed. Each year, area staff may spend more than 250 hours utilizing an ATV to spot spray noxious weed species such as Johnsongrass and sericea lespedeza, or other invasive plants such as crown vetch and bush honeysuckle. Habitats are often thoroughly reviewed in a grid like pattern from an ATV to ensure that area habitats receive appropriate treatments to remove such harmful plant species. Ultimately their use improves staff efficiency and effectiveness, allowing us to better manage more acres, enhancing wildlife use, and your outdoor recreation experience.



ATV tracks are often evident within area grasslands after KDWPT staff utilize such equipment to treat noxious and invasive plants.

Area Visitors are Reminded that Trapping Takes Place

Occasionally I am asked whether trapping takes place on the wildlife area. Often the question comes from a dog owner that may utilize the area for hunting, training, or exercise. **Area visitors should be aware that trapping is allowed on the wildlife area and does occur.** Signs located at area information kiosks do announce that public trapping (in addition to hunting and fishing) takes place. Dog owners wishing to learn more about traps should consult the annual hunting and fur-harvesting regulation summary. Within pages 36 and 37 of the 2017 summary are detailed descriptions and illustrations of several trap types and instructions showing how to release a dog from a land trap. Those not familiar with fur-harvesting should know that it is a regulated activity, with the KDWPT responsible for stipulating certain species of take, prescribed seasons, license and education requirements, equipment restrictions, and tending and inspection requirements. Except for the coyote (trapping is allowed year-round for this species), trapping seasons begin in November and may conclude in February or March depending upon the species sought. Like hunters, trappers pay license fees which are utilized to help manage our public lands, and trappers can help to maintain healthy wildlife populations. Responsible trapping has a place on our public lands.



Would you like more information about the El Dorado Wildlife Area?

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