

# Perry District Fisheries Newsletter

Fall 2018

## Friends of Reservoirs

### Special points of interest:

- Friends of Reservoirs
- Go Catch Catfish!
- Gar are Good!
- Fishing Reports

Fellow Fishermen: We have a problem on our hands. Our reservoirs and impoundments in Kansas are aging. The habitat that was once abundant when these state fishing lakes and federal reservoirs were created has since deteriorated. Fisheries biologist and some avid anglers have been putting in brush piles and Georgia cubes as they see fit but is it enough?

Perhaps, maybe on some of the federal reservoirs with a good group of anglers. But on our state fishing lakes or our larger CFAP lakes, I would be surprised if there are many,

if any, people dropping brush piles in. Well, what if I told you that you could help out!

Eight years ago Friends of Reservoirs was formed as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization aimed at helping angler groups obtain and utilize grant funding to enhance and/or restore impoundments or reservoirs that are in need of fish habitat. All you need to get involved is a group of people who are interested in helping out. If you are wanting to work on just one body of water, such as Perry Reservoir, then your dues are only \$25. That then grants you the oppor-

tunity to apply for grant money anywhere from \$1,000-\$30,000. If your group is a more diverse crowd there is also a membership option for multiple impoundments, such as Clinton and Perry Reservoir, for only \$100. Regardless of which membership you choose, that is a pretty small price to pay for the opportunity to receive those grants. What other investment could turn \$100 into \$30,000? And improve the fishing opportunities on your favorite waters?

For more information head on over to [www.friendsofreservoirs.com](http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com). They have all the information you could want to know. If you are wondering what sort of projects to do they also have a summary of some of their past projects on the website.

If you are interested in this but do not have a group of friends/fellow anglers, send me an email at [nick.kramer@ks.gov](mailto:nick.kramer@ks.gov). I will keep a list of interested people and get you all in contact with each other.

If you are content with just putting brush into a lake by yourself, that is fine. Just get a hold of me to obtain your habitat permit if you don't have one already.



# Two ponds on Fort Leavenworth are full of Channel Catfish



Photo Credit:  
Prudence Siebert,  
Fort Leavenworth  
Lamp

Fort Leavenworth, located in the city and county known by the similar name, has two five acre impoundments on base; Smith and Merritt Lake. The ponds were recently renovated and are very aesthetically pleasing. The edges are mowed down and completely covered with rip-rap. The west pond, Merritt Lake, even has a fishing dock and a fish feeder. Get it?; they are some nice ponds.

Both of these impoundments are included in our Urban

Fishing Program and as such are stocked every month of the summer with keeper sized Channel Catfish. In the case of these two, they are each stocked with around 200 pounds of 3/4 to 1 1/2 pound catfish each month from April through September. These fish are stocked to supplement heavy harvest often experienced with these urban ponds. But Fort Leavenworth is different.

Neil Bass, Fort Leavenworth's natural resource specialist, has reason to believe that not enough of these fish are being harvested out of the ponds. He ran a creel survey in 2016 on the two ponds. He found that residents on base did not use the lake too much. And they had even lower harvest. Based off of their numbers they estimated that the two lakes saw 4,060 hours of fishing combined. In that time, an estimated 5,858 fish were caught but only 660 were harvested and only an estimated 238 of those would have been Channel Catfish.

So, do you like to catch and keep Channel Catfish? Then head on over to Fort Leavenworth and fill your cooler; but of course follow the regulations.

The regulations follow the statewide creel limits of a daily limit of 10 Channel Catfish with no length limit.

To gain access to the ponds you will need either a Department of Defense issued ID card or a pass from the visitor center. The visitor center is located on Sherman Ave, just north of the intersection of Metropolitan and N. 4th St.

At the visitor center, reception clerks will verify that the vehicle driver has a valid license, registration and proof of insurance. All passengers 16 and over will need to have either a driver's license or other form of photo ID. Following a routine background check, visitors will receive a temporary pass.

With your pass in hand, you can then proceed to the gate on Grant Ave, located one block west of the visitor center. All passengers will need to have their passes and IDs ready for the gate attendants to look over. Do not be alarmed if your vehicle is chosen for a random inspection. (They have done that to me before). From the gate, just head north and you will see the ponds on either side of the road after about a mile. Find a parking spot and have fun catching some Channel Catfish!

# Gar aren't bad! Quit Throwing Them On Shore!

Many people have grown up with the assumption that Gar are these 'voracious predators,' and 'eating all the good fish.' Because of these assumptions, people have gotten the idea to throw gar on the shore to die; often times right next to the boat ramp. This is not OK, please stop doing this. The fish begin to stink and attract vultures, people have to step over them to fish the shorelines, etc; all of which takes away from others' enjoyment of our great outdoor recreational activities.

There is no reason to harm a fish due to an inaccurate assumption of the fishes behavior. Gar are perhaps the most misunderstood fish other than sharks. In Kansas we have three different species of Gar. Shortnose and Longnose Gar, which are found in the eastern half of the state, and the Spotted Gar which is found only in the southeast corner of the state. All three generally grow to about 36 inches however the Longnose Gar can reach sizes twice that long. The Spotted and Shortnose reach about 7 pounds while the Longnose Gar can get up to 30 pounds.

Gar are pretty inefficient predators and they very seldom eat sport fish. The following is straight from the Fishes of Kansas:

"Gars feed primarily on fish...They drift or slowly swim...toward their prey and make a swift sideways snap to grasp it in their jaws. The captured fish is usually held sideways across the snout but is later turned to be swallowed head first." As for their prey items, it varies between the species but all three are summarized by this excerpt: "consumes small crustaceans, immature insects, and other fish fry. **IN GENERAL, ADULT GARS DO NOT SPECIFICALLY PREY ON SPORT FISH SPECIES**; instead, they are opportunistic ambush predators." This is pretty widely known in the science community and literature. If you have evidence otherwise, bring it to me, I'd like to see it.

If you still enjoy the thrill of shooting a gar with your bowfishing setup or if you're one of the few that chase them with a rod

and reel, have you tried cooking them up? There are a variety of resources available on the internet that will teach you how to go about cleaning a gar. It is a more laborious process and you will need some tin-snips. The meat turns a gray color when cooked so it is best served mixed with something. I personally have seen them made into gar-balls, similar to crab cakes, and they smelled and tasted delicious. There are also a handful of recipes online to try out so you can play around until you find one you enjoy.

So, Gar aren't bad! They are a native fish that doesn't harm our sport fishes. They provide a unique angling opportunity, both rod and reel or with bow. And they are tasty. Go out and enjoy this swimming dinosaur today.



Photo Credit: Phil's 1stPix, Flickr



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**We're on the web!**

**[www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)**

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## **Fishing Reports: Help Me Help You**



Have you ever caught a mess of Crappie and thought to yourself, "Man, I wish I could share this experience with someone else." or "The fishing is just too good right now to keep a secret." Perhaps you had some thoughts more along the lines of, "The fishing here just plain stunk today, I hope nobody else has plans of coming out here."

Those of you who frequent the fishing report pages on [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) may have noticed that some of the fishing reports leave something to be desired. If you have some information that you would like to contribute to make the reports better, give your biologist a call. We rely on the anglers to provide us with information from each waterbody about what is or isn't biting.

Despite the popularity of social media, the fishing reports section on the website is still one of the most widely travelled portions of the website. In an attempt to provide a better product, I am asking for your help in providing the information for area lakes. Just give me a call and talk fishing. I'm not going to give your secret spot away, I won't even ask for it! I'm just asking that you help your fellow angler out.

You could be providing information that helps a dad give his little boy or girl the opportunity to catch their first fish or help a teenage boy stay out of trouble.

If you're still reluctant to pass along your information, that's fine, you're entitled to that. Just keep in mind, it takes more than you think to completely fish out a population and length and creel limits are in place for a reason and backed by hours and hours of sampling and research.