



FishKS Newsletter

February 2019

Volume 3

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Program Overview: FishKS turns 10!

2019 marks the **10th** anniversary of aquatic education as an official program within the department. FishKS has evolved over that time, however, offering quality education and programs has remained the core objective.

Please visit the Aquatic Education Calendar at www.ksoutdoors.com for events in your area. If you want your event added to the calendar, please submit to david.breth@ks.gov.



KDWPT Reshuffle Puts Focus on Customers and Participation

Professionals in outdoor recreation and natural resource management constantly face challenges from societal shifts to environmental changes. Fish and wildlife agencies nationwide are adapting by reallocating resources. KDWPT has often been ahead of the curve and this time is no exception. As part of a larger R3 movement (learn more on page 2), KDWPT re-tooled and created new positions. Administration recognized a need to dedicate personnel and funds to programs in order to increase

participation in the outdoors.

Tanna Fanshier is the first R3 Coordinator for Kansas. Her focus will be on evaluating outdoor recreation efforts and programs within the agency, increasing awareness through marketing, and increasing KDWPT's reach by partnering with industry, retail, NGOs, and more.

David Breth is the first Sportfishing Education Coordinator for KDWPT. He previously coordinated the aquatic education

program as part of his position coordinating many fisheries programs. The demand created a need to dedicate a person fulltime to fishing education.

Jeff Conley is the Fisheries Program Specialist and coordinates the access, stocking and habitat programs. Removing aquatic education coordination from this position will allow Jeff to focus more on increasing opportunities for anglers and the effectiveness of other programs in providing quality fishing in Kansas.

“Fish and Wildlife Agencies are adapting to actively recruit ‘customers’ as fishing and hunting are becoming less and less a traditional activity.”



What is R3 - “Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation”

Fisheries is a “user-funded” division in Kansas. Hatcheries, research, management, and education are all made possible by license fees and the Sport Fish Restoration Program. As a result, the effectiveness and success of these programs is directly tied to the number of licensed participants.

Younger generations of Americans are participating at lower rates than the “Baby Boomers.” This has put a strain on fish and wildlife agencies as they try to keep providing services with a shrinking number of participants and funding.

“R3” is a national campaign led by the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (CAHSS).

Many of the tenets of R3 are already present within the KDWPT. For instance, district biologists offer fishing clinics and derbies, urban areas are stocked with high number of harvest-sized fish to encourage use, and fees removed from local lakes allow anglers to fish with only a state license. This national operational strategy allows states to develop, evaluate, share, and incorporate R3 efforts under a larger umbrella of resources and guidance.

How does this affect Kansans and KDWPT?

The Fisheries Division is evaluating its programs to determine effectiveness in serving anglers and success at

increasing participation in fishing of all Kansans.

In the 1970s, participation peaked at roughly 16% with over 370,000 licensed anglers. In 2017, that number dropped to less than 10% and 280,000.

Conversely, more fish are stocked annually and over 25,000 additional acres of water have been opened for public use now since 70s!

Through marketing efforts, access and opportunity programs should be more visible to current and potential anglers, making it easier for them to find places to fish and have a more satisfying outdoor experience.

2018 Event Highlights



Every year, FishKS sets goals on the number of events and participants we hope to reach as part of our Sport Fish Restoration Grant. In 2018, we saw a slight reduction in our numbers. However, the demand for events and the passion from our staff and volunteers was still there. In addition, there are always more events that take place statewide, we just do not always know about them!



147 fishing clinics, derbies and advanced education events were recorded in 2018. Many of these were one day events in conjunction with an organization, community, or park.

In most years, the mobile

aquarium is displayed at several. However, due to repairs, we only visited the Kansas State Fair in 2018. We estimated nearly 50,000 fairgoers actively engaged with the tank, staff, and volunteers during the fair. In 2019, the aquarium is scheduled for the Topeka Boat Show, the Wichita Sports Show and the Kansas State Fair.

The most encouraging stat from 2018 is we hosted more school programs (25) than in any previous year. School programs are events specific to a school event and may take place at the school or as part of a field trip. The increase in these events shows school districts are

becoming more aware of either the FishKS program or the benefits of teaching kids to fish or BOTH! FishKS will continue working with schools to get fishing included as an extracurricular activity or, better yet, incorporated into existing classes!

Overall, we collected more than **2,300** hours of volunteer time. These hours are vital to the survival and effectiveness of the Aquatic Education grant and program. This number is down from previous years, but nonetheless, we sincerely appreciate all the time and work volunteers contribute to the program!

FishKS Instructor Spotlight - Heidi Albin



When I heard about the opportunity to become a certified master angler educator through Fishing's Future, I knew it was the perfect opportunity to bring deeper meaning to my students' education. I am the science teacher and the Character Education Coordinator at Complete High School Maize, a small alternative high school in Maize that focuses heavily on character development and life skills. I am passionate about teaching character and life skills through experiences, and Fishing's Future is the perfect program for this. Knowing that many of my alternative high school students have faced diverse challenges that have made education a struggle, I jumped at the chance to bring the practical art of fishing into my science curriculum. I knew it would help students connect with the environment and biological concepts through the visceral object lessons that nature provides.

Through the hard work of volunteers in the Fishing's Future program, I received free training to become a certified angling educator and establish a Fishing's Future chapter at my school. The new chapter was outfitted with 30 fishing poles and all the associated bait and tackle thanks to the generosity of Fishing's Future's sponsors. With the equipment in place and the approval of my ever-supportive and innovative principal, Kristy Custer, I began writing curriculum to incorporate fishing into several of my content areas,



including biology, environmental science, earth science, and character education. The results were fantastic.

Complete High School Maize biology students witnessed life cycles, physiology, and aquatic biodiversity firsthand. Earth Science students gained a better understanding of landforms required for aquatic biomes. Environmental Science students made real-life connections to the importance of preventing aquatic pollution and developed such concern for their fishing environments that they began picking up trash without being asked. But, the most visceral of lessons were learned in the area of character. Fishing teaches community, cooperation, and respect for life. When a student is surrounded by nature and a caring community, it benefits all areas of their well-being. Cell phones disappear, frustrations dissolve, and new friendships are made. As Phil Taunton of KVOE's *What's in Outdoors* says, get "outside for a better inside."

As my students have discovered a love for the outdoors, they have been eager to extend their learning to their community by hosting Family Fish Camps, in which families can learn to fish together, thus strengthening family bonds. The students in the CHSM Fishing's Future Chapter have experienced the joy of fishing that extends beyond recreational pastime and into a life style of respect for people, animals, and the environment.

— Heidi Albin



What are Youth/Mentor Ponds?

List of current
"Youth/Mentor
Ponds"

Demon Lake,
Dodge City

Elk City State
Park Pond

Fall River State
Park Pond

Kanopolis State
Park Pond

Melvorn
Mentoring Pond

Pratt Kids Pond,
Pratt

Wilson State
Park Pond

Even if not stated, "Kids Fishing Pond" infers a restrictive angling opportunity and lack of diverse or quality fishery. For instance, a father may avoid a kids only pond when taking his children on a fishing trip because he cannot participate. Instead, he will visit another location that may have lower angling satisfaction and increased use obstacles such as limited shoreline access, high number of snags in the water, and high angling pressure. The children and father can become frustrated with constant tackle loss and the conditions of the fishery.

In addition, parents might believe the kids pond only has small fish or panfish species,

which may deter participation if they want the children to have the opportunity to catch a quality or trophy fish. This is often not the case.

To address these concerns, a Youth/Mentor Pond designation was created to encourage use of the fishery.

The official regulation governing use of a Youth/Mentor pond is written as follows: "*At Youth/Mentor locations, licensed adults may fish ONLY if accompanied by a person younger than 16 years of age who is actively engaged in fishing*".

At these ponds, parents and guardians are now

encouraged to fish with young anglers learning the sport. These locations are easily accessible and provide beginners and skilled anglers a more enjoyable fishing experience even if the fish are not biting.

Please note, the key phrase in the regulation is "**actively engaged in fishing**." Youth cannot just be present with the adults.

All other regulations are in effect at these locations and harvest and daily creels may vary. Please review the posted KDWPT signage and fishing regulations summary for more information.

Fishing Forecast - Better than Local Weather Report!

The fishing regulations summary is a staple for many anglers. They grab their free copy when renewing a license or visiting a local tackle store. The booklet outlines public fisheries and the length/creel limits at each. However, it does not give anglers much insight on how the sport fish population are fairing in those waters. Sure it says largemouth bass are in Milford Reservoir, but what does the biologist say about your chances of actually catching one? The Fishing Forecast bridges that gap.

First, a little background on how the forecast is created. District fisheries biologist sample fish populations throughout the year. The methods and species sampled vary with the seasons such as electrofishing for largemouth

bass in the spring or netting for walleye in the fall. Fish size, condition, and numbers are recorded on the water. Biologists then use this data to evaluate the population based on numerous factors including population densities and size structure.

Pairing these calculations with the biologist's experience and knowledge of the fishery, results in a "rating" assigned to each species that ranges from POOR to EXCELLENT using. The Fishing Forecast compiles all these ratings and allows anglers to see which ponds, lakes, and reservoirs they should visit based on target species. As a bonus, it shows the biggest fish sampled to get your heart pumping!

If you just want go catch

something, the "**Whatever's Biting Rankings**" show the top places to visit. These locations were determined to give any angler the best chance to feel a tug on the end of their line.

The forecast is available online and in print at KDWPT offices and some vendors. For more information on how the forecast is produced, please contact our Emporia Research Office. For questions about a specific lake, please contact the local fisheries biologist. These numbers and more can be found online and in the Regulations Summary and Fishing Atlas.

Good Luck on the water, although with the forecast in your pocket, you might not need it!



In-Depth: Community Fisheries Assistance Program

KDWPT coordinates two angler access programs. The most visible and utilized is the Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP).

CFAP started as the “Community Lake Assistance Program” in the late 1980s. This program directed agency funds to help communities start or manage their fisheries through grants. In return, the lake must be open to public access. However, communities could still require a local fishing license for anglers. This additional fee was recognized as a significant barrier for anglers.

In 2005, a federally funded program, CFAP, was developed to incorporate the original CLAP and remove the additional license concern. Under the current structure of CFAP, most communities that had historically required a local fishing permit, now receive an

annual license agreement payment from KDWPT. Presently, more than 140 communities are enrolled in CFAP, opening up over 13,000 acres of water to public fishing with no additional fees.

A lesser known, but just as important, component is the development and fisheries improvement grants. These are competitive grants cooperators can use to assist with funding for projects designed to enhance fishing access, improve fishery conditions, or develop facilities to enhance angler use at the property. Cooperators must provide at least 25% local match and the maximum assistance from KDWPT is \$40,000. The applications are scored and the number awarded depends on the funding available that year.

Examples of projects awarded funding include fishing piers

and docks, shoreline stabilization, aeration and fountains, fish feeding, fish cleaning stations, dredging and renovation, restrooms, pavilions, parking areas, access trails, and boat ramps. Many of these communities used a grant to help make their property family friendly and can be identified in the annual fishing regulations summary with an “FFF” next to the location.

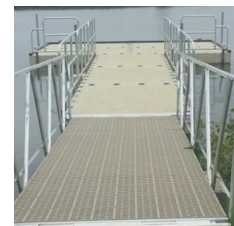


Since the first grant was awarded in 1987, communities statewide have invested over \$3.5 million in local funds on nearly 700 projects to improve angler access and fishing in Kansas! KDWPT would like to thank all cooperators in this highly successful program!



Did you know?

Kansas's Community Fisheries Assistance Program received the American Fisheries Society Outstanding Sport Fishing Restoration Program Project of the Year Award in 2009!



Synthetic Fish Habitat - PVC Cubes

In 2015, the Fisheries Division searched for a way to create lasting fish habitat instead of just fish attractors made from brush. After careful research, a PVC cube structure was selected. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources created the original design, hence these cubes are often called “Georgia Cubes” although they don’t call them that. A study in North Carolina showed these artificial structures to be as effective

as natural brush habitat. A more recent study out of Texas showed a direct positive impact on largemouth bass size and quality.

These synthetic structures can last over 10 years and provide a more snag-resistant target for anglers to fish. At the end of 2018, over 2,500 cubes have been placed in waters statewide. Locations of most of these structures are available online under Fishing

Reports. Fisheries staff are focusing on creating “fish cities” by placing large clusters of these cubes for fish to congregate around all year.

We want to hear from you! If you have fished around the cubes, please share your experiences with the local fisheries biologist or contact the program coordinator Jeff Conley in the Pratt office.



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Correction from
April 2017 Newsletter

I noted in the newsletter from April 2017 that it was the “inaugural” issue. After publishing, I was informed my predecessor, Bryan Sowards, had published “Newline” the original newsletter for the aquatic education program. This was an oversight I would like to correct by recognizing Bryan and the other contributors for their effort! You can find this and other newsletters on the KDWPT website, ksoutdoors.com.

We hope you enjoyed this **third** issue of the FishKS aquatic education newsletter.

— David Breth

Sportfishing Education Coordinator



Useful Links and Resources for Anglers

The following are websites and resources available to anyone wanting to become a better angler, learn about fishing and the aquatic resources, get ideas on how to teach other how to fish, and more!

[KDWPT Fishing Page](http://www.fishks.org)
www.fishks.org

[National R3 Plan](http://www.nationalr3plan.com)
www.nationalr3plan.com

[Take Me Fishing and Recreational Boating
and Fishing Foundation](http://www.takemefishing.org)
www.takemefishing.org

[Council to Advance Hunting and the Shoot-
ing Sports](http://www.cahss.com)
www.cahss.com

[Pass It On!](http://www.outdoormentors.org)
www.outdoormentors.org

[Fishing's Future](http://www.fishingsfuture.org)
www.fishingsfuture.org

[KS Dept of Health and Environment
\(Algal Blooms and Fish Consumption\)](http://www.kdheks.gov)
www.kdheks.gov

[Sign up to receive Newsletters by email](https://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/News/Newsletter-Request-Forms)
[https://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/
News/Newsletter-Request-Forms](https://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/News/Newsletter-Request-Forms)

NEW Fishing Regulations for 2019

- ◆ *Free Fishing Days - June 1 and 2*
- ◆ *Bowfishing - It is unlawful to take blue catfish, channel catfish and flathead catfish with archery equipment in rivers and streams.*
- ◆ *Wild-Caught Baitfish - The maximum mesh size for dip and cast nets used to catch baitfish has been increased from 1/2 inch to 1 inch.*
- ◆ *Paddlefish - New regulations govern the amount of paddlefish eggs that can be processed, the transportation of eggs and harvested paddlefish.*
- ◆ *Trophy Sunfish - A 6- to 9- inch slot length limit is in effect for bluegill, redear sunfish, green sunfish and their hybrids at Jewell State Fishing Lake, Lake Lenexa, Miami State Fishing Lake, and Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #2. The daily creel limit is five sunfish 9 inches or longer and unlimited sunfish 6 inches or shorter.*
- ◆ *Youth/Mentor Waters - See Page 4 of this newsletter*
- ◆ *New Trout Waters - Lake LeClere in Coffeyville and Eisenhower State Park Pond have been added to Type 1 Trout Waters.*

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