

Norton man works hard on parks commission

Norton's own Doug Sebelius loves to go fishing and camping, which is one of the reasons he accepted an appointment on the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission.

Mr. Sebelius said he was appointed by the governor in 2003 and officially took his place on July 1 of that year. He was offered the position on the commission because he, as a Republican, met the requirement for the Republican vacancy and also had some experience working with state parks.



Doug Sebelius

In the 1970s, he worked for the National Park Service, Department of the Interior at three state park stations — at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia as a seasonal ranger, at Capital Park in Washington D.C., and at Prince William Forest Park in Virginia.

"I've always had an interest in state parks," he said. "State parks are where we spend our family vacations with our kids. We like to camp and fish."

Mr. Sebelius said his term lasts for four years and he can be appointed again.

"It's very enjoyable," he said. "There is a lot more to it than a person would think."

Most of the regulations for state parks are put together by the commission. The commission also advises Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Secretary Mike Hayden on the budget, helps submit bills to the state legislature, and tries to work with the legislature on things that are in the best interest of the state park system.

Right now, the commission is trying to come up with new ways to increase the state park budget.

"The budget is the biggest issue," he said. "The future of our state parks depends on it. The governor is saying, very clearly, that there will be a time soon that state general fund money won't be available to the agency. Seven point three percent of what the agency

works with comes from the state general fund."

Another 70 percent of the state parks' budget comes from camping fees, selling ammunition, hunting and fishing fees, and park entrance fees.

He said they have to look into the long-term to find the best answer for the budget problem. There is a proposal out right now that will get money from vehicle registration.

"This spreads the responsibility out to everyone," he said. "The proposal would make more money available than what we've been able to rely on in the past."

"It would also mean that state park fees

would possibly go down."

Until the proposal goes through, the commission and the parks department have to look at fees to cover the declining budget.

He said he was opposed to raising daily and yearly camping fees. The commission also had a few new ideas that could help with the budget crunch.

The commission meets about every two months and always meets at least once during the legislative session. The last meeting was Oct. 28 in Atchison.

See the details of the last commission meeting on Page 5 of the Reservoir News.

FISHING REPORT:

Sebelius Reservoir — Temperature: 52
Lake Elevation: 18.05' below Conservation Pool

Black Bass — Fair (10-18 inches) Fish are spread all over the lake with most of the fish being caught along the dam and in Leota Cove using spinner baits, crank baits and plastics.

Bluegill — Fair (5-9 inches) Anglers are catching a few off the public fishing dock, in Schoen's cove and along the dam using worms under a bobber.

Catfish — Fair (wide range) Anglers catching fish along the north shore south of the office and off the public fishing dock by the feeder using worms, shad and cut or prepared baits.

Crappie — Poor (wide range) Anglers are catching a few crappie using jigs and minnows off the public fishing dock, up into Leota Cove and in Schoen's cove, but is real sporadic. Look for these fish to start biting as the water continues

to cool off.

Saugeye/Walleye — Fair (wide range) Anglers are catching fish around the dam, off the point at the mouth of Schoen's cove and south of the office on the north side of the lake using jig and worms. A lot of throw backs, so remember the 18 inch length limit.

Wipers — Fair (wide range) Wipers are being caught along the dam, off the public fishing dock and south of the office on the north shore using jigs with shad.

General Comments — Currently, the water level is 1.13' lower than it was one year ago at this time. Look for the fishing to pick up as the water continues to cool off and the fish start feeding up for the winter. The Fall sampling revealed good numbers of wipers and good numbers of legal sized saugeye that were nice and healthy.

SEBELIUS RESERVOIR RESOURCES

The park office is now open from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Please wear your Personal Floatation Device when boating, your life may depend on it! The reservoir is 17.5 feet below conservation pool (approx. 1.6 feet below the spring level) and covers approximately 870 acres. The water in the shower buildings and campgrounds has been shut off and winterized.

Planning is underway to enclose shelter No. 3 and convert it into a primitive cabin. The new facility will include heating and air-conditioning, and mattresses. We hope this project can be completed before the 2005 Memorial Weekend. Watch for more details at a later date on this new opportunity at Prairie Dog.

Recently, the asphalt overlay has been completed on the road and parking lot adjacent to the fishing dock, and the access road in the Shady Rest campground. In addition, the access roads and camping pads in the pull through utility sites No. 31-40 have been overlaid with asphalt. Effective April 1, 2005, these utility sites will be classified as "prime sites" and a daily surcharge will apply.

A new restroom has been installed at the boat ramps. This Federal funded project will also include a new ADA drinking fountain and new sidewalks.

Fishing for catfish, saugeye, and wiper has been very good at times. Wildlife observation is outstanding at Prairie Dog this time of year. The park currently hosts approximately 20 whitetail deer, quail, pheasant, and waterfowl.

Due to our annual training requirements, the office will be closed occasionally, so please call the office before making a special trip to the park. Please call the office at 785-877-2953 with any questions you may have.

75th Annual Harvest Home Festival of the
Almena Congregational Church
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13
 at the Northern Valley High Gymnasium. Booths open at 4 p.m.—Crafts, Fancy Work, Baked Goods, Fish Pond for the Children. Auction at 7:30 p.m. — Public Welcome

Warm Up To SOUP
 SERVING FROM: 5-7 P.M.
 Homemade Chili, Vegetable Beef, Chicken Noodle, Oyster Pie, Relishes, Coffee and Tea

ADULTS: \$4.00
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