

Here's update on projects

In my last column, I discussed all of the upcoming projects that were in the various stages of development. Since we have been receiving quite a few questions, I thought I would start out with the update on all of the projects.

Since the last column, Prairie Dog State Park received two new visitor facilities. On Oct. 10, the new Shady Rest CXT vault toilet was delivered and installed. Park staff installed the adjacent water hydrant and did the concrete work for the sidewalk and curb. On Feb. 3, the new Cottonwood CXT vault toilet was delivered and installed. Once again, park staff did the concrete work and installed the adjacent water hydrant. The landscaping at both toilets will be completed in the near future. Funding for both of these facilities was due to Americans with Disabilities Act improvements through the Bureau of Reclamation.

Another new building installed in the park is the 40' X 50' maintenance/storage building. Due to the deteriorating condition of the park's storage facility located on the east end of the maintenance building, the park has received a new storage building. The old storage facility was built with used materials in the early 1980's and nearly collapsed in 2007 during the ice storms. Then in 2008, high winds from the south again nearly removed the roof. Therefore, it was imperative that the storage area be replaced. Construction of the new building was completed in early spring. The old storage building was demolished and a new enclosed parking area was constructed.

After an in-depth assessment of our compliance with the ADA was completed by the Bureau of Reclamation staff in 2007, much work is underway to bring the park facilities into compliance. The contractor for the concrete flat work is currently working on numerous sites throughout the park to bring Prairie Dog State Park in

compliance. Currently, he is working in Prairie Dog campground sites 12, 20, 34 and L. Concrete pads and/or patio areas will be poured at those sites which will cause some disruption of their availability. Additional concrete camp sites will occur in each of the following locations: Shady Rest, Meadowlark and Branded Cedar Campground (W3).

Further concrete work includes a parking area at the Cedar Crest Cabin and concrete parking at mushroom shelter #6. There will be some disruption in these areas during the Memorial Day Holiday and we apologize for any inconvenience due to the construction. We also plan to install handicap accessible fire rings and picnic tables at all mushroom shelters and designated campsites. All of these ADA improvements will make our park more accessible for all of our constituents.

Park staff was able to complete the preliminary water and electrical work to the Shady Rest campground renovation last fall before the project was 'frozen' due to state budgetary cuts. We are very pleased to be able to once again begin work on the project. Currently, all of the electrical and water materials have been purchased and the project is out for bid. We should know in the next couple of weeks who received the bid and when the project is going to be completed. The additional 14 water and electric sites that this project is funding will be a much needed improvement to Prairie Dog State Park.

The modern cabin is currently under construction at the Norton Correctional Facility and we are expecting delivery in late summer or early fall. The water well has been drilled for the cabin and foundation work will begin after July 1. The current plan calls for us to receive two of these cabins, one this year and one in 2010. Both of the cabins will be placed along the south side of the road that goes to the public

fishing area and they will be open all year.

As most of you are aware, the floating wave breaker which was installed in Leota Cove just south of the boat ramps during 1999 has been destroyed by wave action. Several of the floating wave breakers were installed around the state as an experiment, but nature has won the contest.

With that in mind, park staff requested Motor Boat Access funds for the construction of a rock jetty, or earthen wave breaker. Since this is a federally funded project, planning has

On the Range

by Toby Kuhn

Park Ranger, Prairie Dog State Park



been initiated, but construction will be later in 2009 than was originally expected. We do hope the project can be completed in late 2009 or early 2010. The wave breaker will greatly decrease erosion and choppy water around the department owned boat dock which also enables park patrons

easier loading and launching of boats. Another positive impact of the rock jetty is enhanced fishery habitat in Leota Cove.

All of us at Prairie Dog State Park look forward to seeing you this camping season. As always, thank you for keeping your park clean.



- Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

Welcome...to Prairie Dog State Park

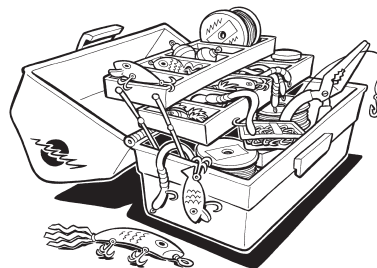
A prime place to experience the shortgrass prairies of western Kansas, Prairie Dog State Park occupies 1,150 acres on the shores of Keith Sebelius Reservoir in Norton County. The park is home to a thriving prairie dog colony and is the site of the last remaining adobe house in Kansas. The renovated adobe house was built on the site in the early 1890's. A 1.4-mile nature trail complete with interpretive signage is a great way to explore the park and observe wildlife. Historical interpretation is a hallmark of this park. Two vintage 19th century buildings are preserved here, including a one room school and the renovated adobe house. Sebelius Reservoir is well known for its excellent fishing opportunities.

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