

Update on the range

In this month's column, I would like to update everyone on the park projects and how they are progressing. Park staff has been busy keeping up with the routine maintenance and working on the new cabins. It has been a busy summer with both revenue and visitation higher than last year.

Fishing Dock Vault Toilet: During a hail storm last summer, the solar light in the parking lot was destroyed which left the area with no lighting. With the location of the new cabins, we were able to supply electricity to the vault toilet and install lighting inside the toilet. This improvement was frequently requested by users of the public fishing dock.

Rock Jetty: Work has been steadily progressing on the rock jetty in Leota Cove. The KDWP heavy equipment crew has been doing the work and they have been doing a great job. Concrete fill material for the jetty was taken from the Norton County landfill and we greatly appreciate the cooperation from the County. In addition, we were able to utilize the concrete from the hospital parking lot that was removed for the construction of the new clinic. We are currently waiting on the delivery of several hundred ton of more rock for the project to be completed. Once done, the area will be re-seeded and opened as a day use area.

Reservation System: Kansas State Parks will be implementing a reservation system for camping in 2011. Unfortunately, many of the details are still unknown and the tentative starting date was December 15. From what I have been told, the starting date might be pushed back into 2011. I hope to have more information for our fall newsletter.

Modern Cabins: Work has been progressing at a steady pace and the open house will be October 15. More details on the open house will be provided at a later date. We will begin taking reservations when the

cabins are entered into the online reservation system. The news media will be contacted with the date they are available. Please remember that reservations can be made 364 days in advance of your arrival date. Park staff is anxious to get them open and they will be a great addition to the park. I appreciate everyone's patience as the work is being done. Landscaping and tree transplanting will be ongoing throughout the fall and next spring. KDOT has been a great help in supplying us with millings for the road and parking areas. We appreciate their assistance.

Playground: Park staff applied for an additional grant from Land Water Conservation Funds and the playground is out for bids. The bidding process is being conducted from the Pratt office and we are hoping to hear the results soon. We will be responsible for the installation of the equipment, sidewalk, parking area and the protective surfacing. The structure will be located in the open area south of sites 31-40 in Prairie Dog campground. We are hoping to have the work done this fall and continue to develop the area next spring. Future plans include a basketball court and horseshoe pits.

Title 28 BORADA Improvements: All of the accessibility changes were completed earlier this spring and the park passed inspection with no deficiencies listed. The relocation of the office self-pay station was the last project.

Branded Cedar Shelter: The old shower house at the Branded Cedar campground was renovated into a day use shelter with electricity and a barbecue grill. Park patrons have enjoyed an additional location to have a picnic with a view of the lake.

New Adobe Roof: Roofmasters was awarded the bid to install new cedar shingles and replace the flashing that was damaged from last summer's hail

storm. The Adobe looks great with the new shingles and we were glad the roof was replaced before any interior damage was done. Park staff will be applying a new sealant to the exterior walls next spring.

Campground Renovations: The additional fourteen water/electric sites in the Shady Rest campground were heavily used this summer. The new electrical service in the Prairie Dog campground was very well received and no low voltage issues were experienced this summer. With the heat this summer, campers enjoyed being able to run their air conditioners on the 50 amp service. Additional buffalo grass was planted in both campgrounds and more seeding might be needed next year. The trenches are continuing to settle and be filled.

Jet Ski: As we hoped, the jet ski

hasn't had to be used for any rescues. It has been used for lake patrol and to assist in dock work. We plan to enroll in the program again next year.

AmeriCorps: This summer Zach Dreher and Jacob VanSlike were AmeriCorps members at the park. AmeriCorps members are grant funded positions. The guys did a great job with park maintenance and assisting with the new cabins. In addition, they did tours of the Adobe and School House. The tours were very well received by the park patrons. Recently, Ashley Esslinger started full-time at the park as a member. We are excited to have her working for the next year.

Prairie Dog State Park News

Toby Kuhn, manager



Storm Damage: Park staff is working with FEMA and the State Emergency Management Office to recover some of the costs from storm damage that occurred this summer. There are still trees that need to be removed and the public fishing dock needs to be reset. The dock was moved by a strong wind storm and the anchor poles were bent. We will be replacing the poles and moving the dock back to deeper water later this fall. Additional fish habitat will also be submerged as time allows.

Hopefully, you enjoyed the park updates and I welcome any questions. As always, thanks for keeping your park clean.



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 renovated adobe house. Sebelius Reservoir is well known for its excellent fishing op-

portunities. In recent years, anglers have found productive fishing for black bass, walleye, wiper, crappie, catfish and saugeye.

The area also offers good prospects for pheasant, waterfowl and rabbits. Both whitetailed and mule deer can be found here, as well as a variety of furbearers.

Dinner Special: Tuesday through Saturday: 5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Lunch Special: Tuesday through Friday: 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

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