

McPHERSON

The many acres of marshes that existed prior to 1900 in west central McPherson County were historically equal in importance to Cheyenne Bottoms. This once vital series of wetlands occurs in three main sections northwest of Hutchinson: the Big Basin, two miles west of the city of McPherson, the Little Basin adjoining the north shore of the Big Basin, and the Chain of Lakes, which run from one mile south of the Big Basin south of the McPherson County line. These three areas are spread over approximately 126 square miles.

HISTORY

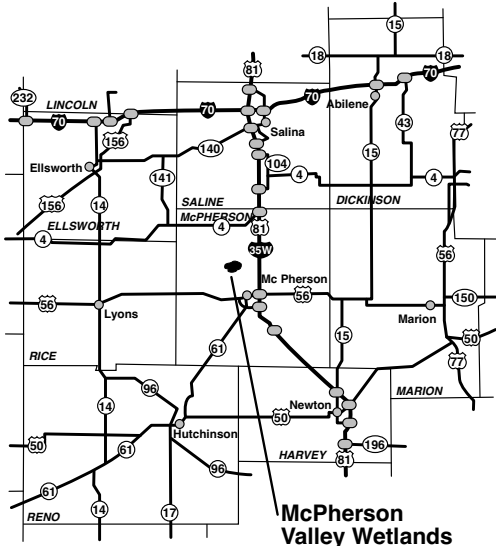
Before their destruction by ditching, these wetlands were comprised of more than 9,000 surface acres of water in 52 separate wetlands. The largest single marsh was the Big Basin, which was more than 2,000 acres. The other two areas were made up of separate smaller marshes ranging in size from 10 to 500 acres. With the exception of two pools, Inman Lake and Farland Lake, none of these marshes were ever more than 5 feet deep.

Due to concentrated waterfowl, the wetlands were an important area for waterfowl market hunters. In pre-1900, market hunters would hunt with horse and buggy across the north shore of the Big Basin, turn south and end up at the Conway train station with a wagon load of ducks. From there, the ducks were shipped to Kansas City and St. Louis for food. However, as new conservation laws began to restrict unlimited waterfowl shooting, market hunting waned. When the daily bag limit dropped to 15 ducks per day, market hunters could no longer make a living, and that era passed.

The construction of the Blaze Fork Drainage Ditch around the turn of the century completely drained the Big Basin and diminished the size and number of the other potholes. At more than 100 acres, Inman Lake is the largest natural lake in Kansas

FUTURE PROJECTS

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is currently restoring portions of this vital wetland complex. The department is interested in acquiring land from willing sellers when funding exists. This area is 4,455 acres to date, including 1,760 acres of wetlands in 51 managed marsh units.



General Area Map

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex (gender), sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or protected veteran's status, in employment, access to programs, or other KDWP benefits or services. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any employment, access to programs, or other KDWP benefit or service, please submit a complaint to: Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Office of the Secretary, 1020 S Kansas Ave. Topeka, KS 66612-1327 (785) 296-2281. 10/25

McPherson Valley Wetlands



McPherson Valley Wetlands
967 Mohawk
McPherson, KS 67460

24-hr hotline
(620) 241-7669

Regional Office
(316) 683-8069

www.ksoutdoors.gov



HUNTING

The wetlands are managed primarily for waterfowl and other hunting during the season and wildlife viewing the rest of the year. Pheasant, quail, and dove are present in huntable numbers. However, non-toxic shot must be used for all shot-gun hunting. Public hunting is allowed on most of the area. Sportsmen will need to check with the wildlife manager each year for possible changes in areas open to hunting. All marshes are located in the Low Plains Early waterfowl zone. All hunters need to obtain a daily hunt permit for all hunting activities. Permits can be found at any of the permit stations on the wildlife area.

The McPherson wetlands complex lies within a 50-mile radius of Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. McPherson Wetlands, will offer a hunting alternative and supplemental habitat when water availability is limited due to drought.

WILDLIFE VIEWING

The wetlands attract a large number of migrating birds during the fall and spring migration. Opportunities for bird watching can be excellent during these times. Especially during spring migrations when hunting seasons are closed, the marshes offer a smorgasbord of bird life presented in their finest breeding colors. Most notably, for the first time in 100 years, whooping cranes visited the area in 1995. Marshland mammals including deer, coyotes, bobcats, muskrats and beavers, as well as small game species, may be seen in the wetland complex. Marshes are accessible by foot or in some cases, roadways. Additionally, a handicapped-accessible photo blind is a permanent feature on the area. Because of viewing distances involved, binoculars or spotting scopes are recommended for close-up looks at the wetland's varied animal life.

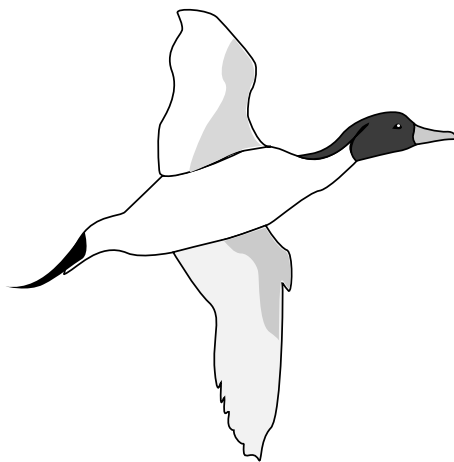
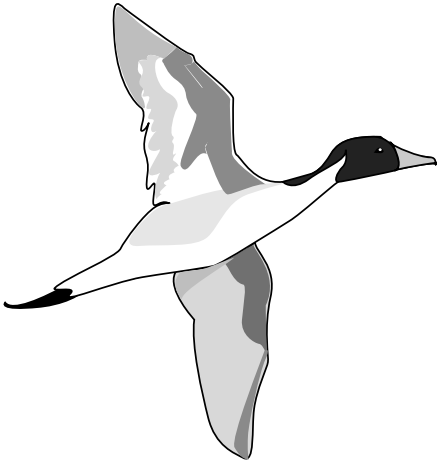
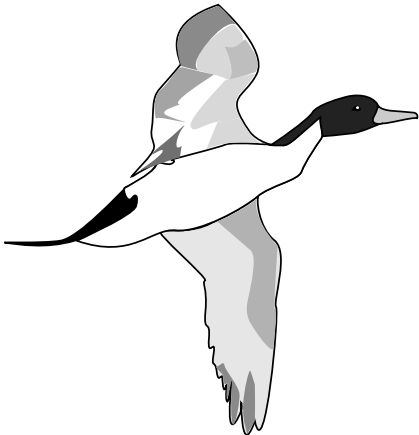
THINGS TO REMEMBER

A weekly waterfowl count and water condition report can be obtained by calling the area headquarters listed on the front cover, or by visiting the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks website.

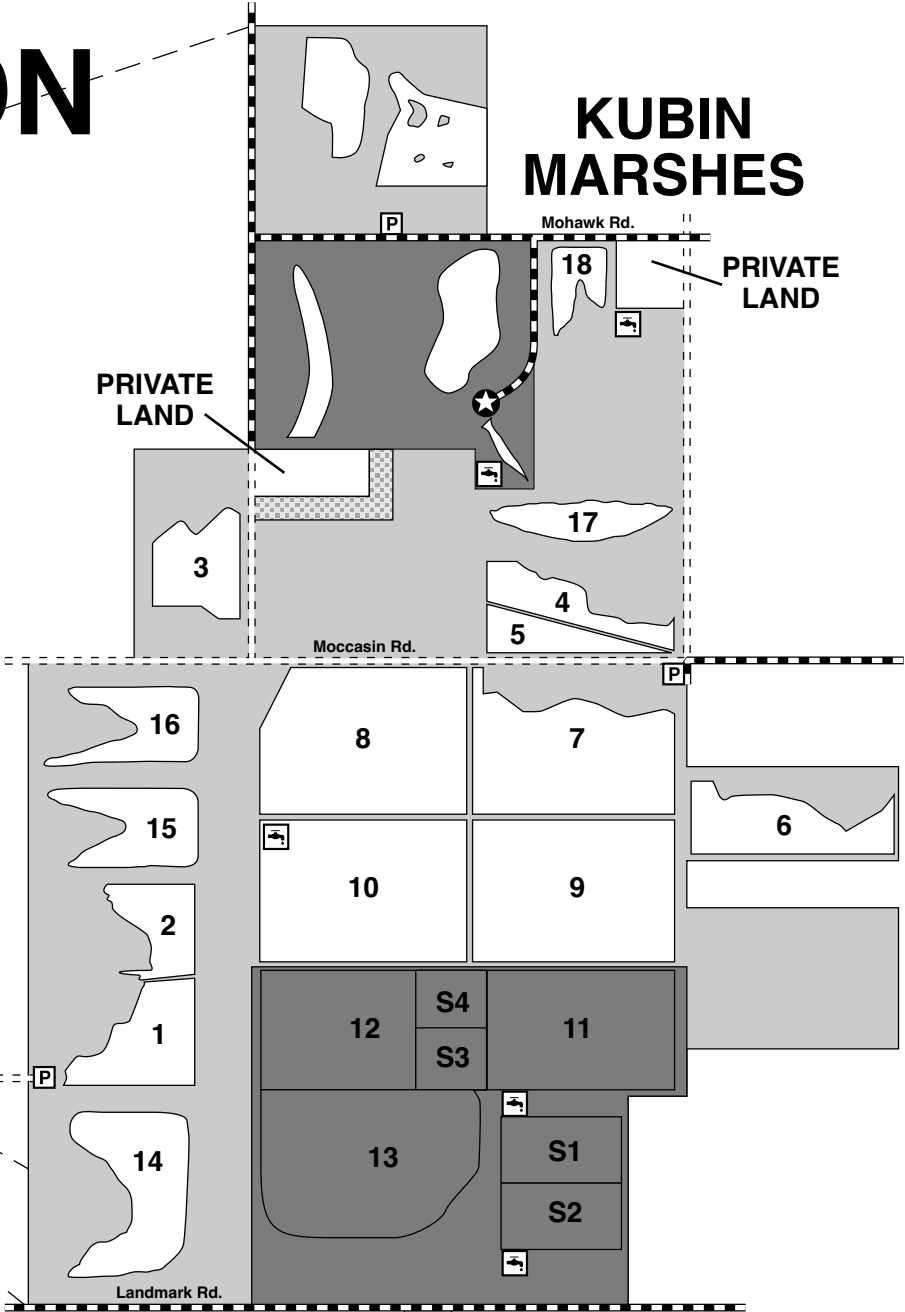
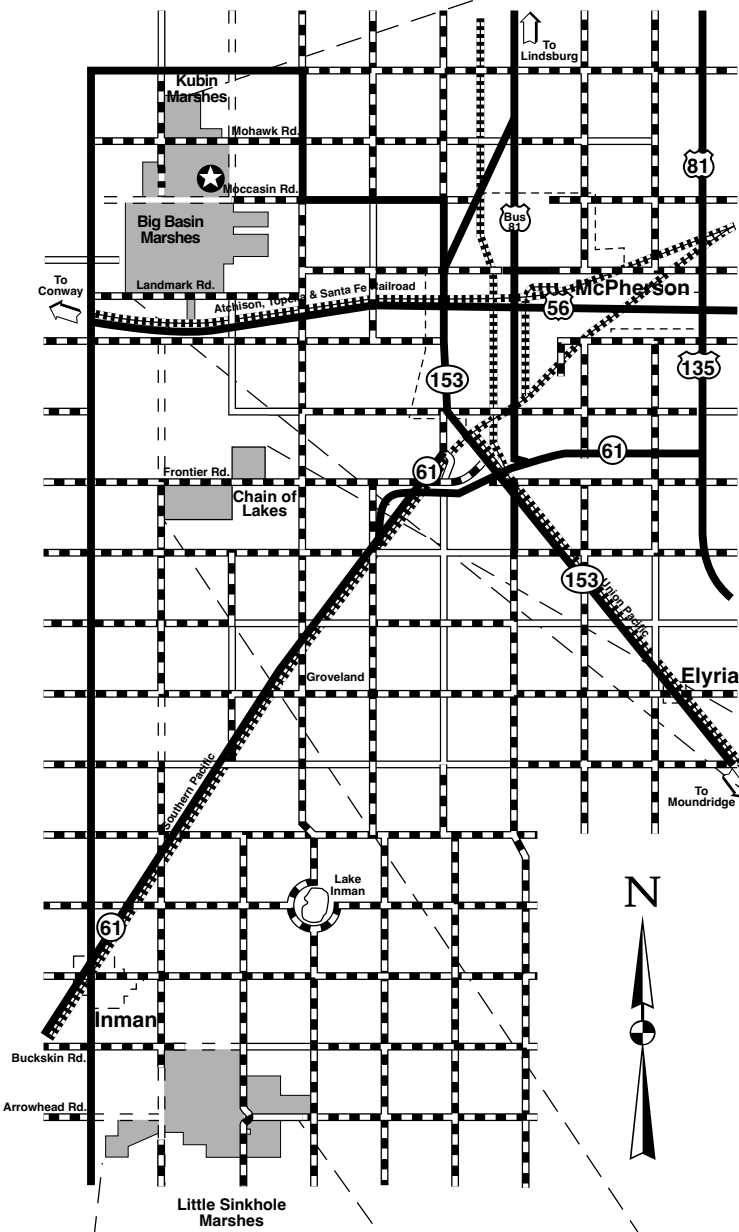
Non-toxic shot is required for all hunting on McPherson Valley Wetlands. All marshes are located in the Low Plains Early waterfowl zone.

All hunters need to obtain a daily hunt permit before any hunting activities. The permits are free of charge and may be obtained at any of the permit stations on the area. Hunters are reminded that they must have the daily hunt permit on their person while hunting. Hunters must also return the bottom portion of the permit, with requested information, upon the completion of their hunt.

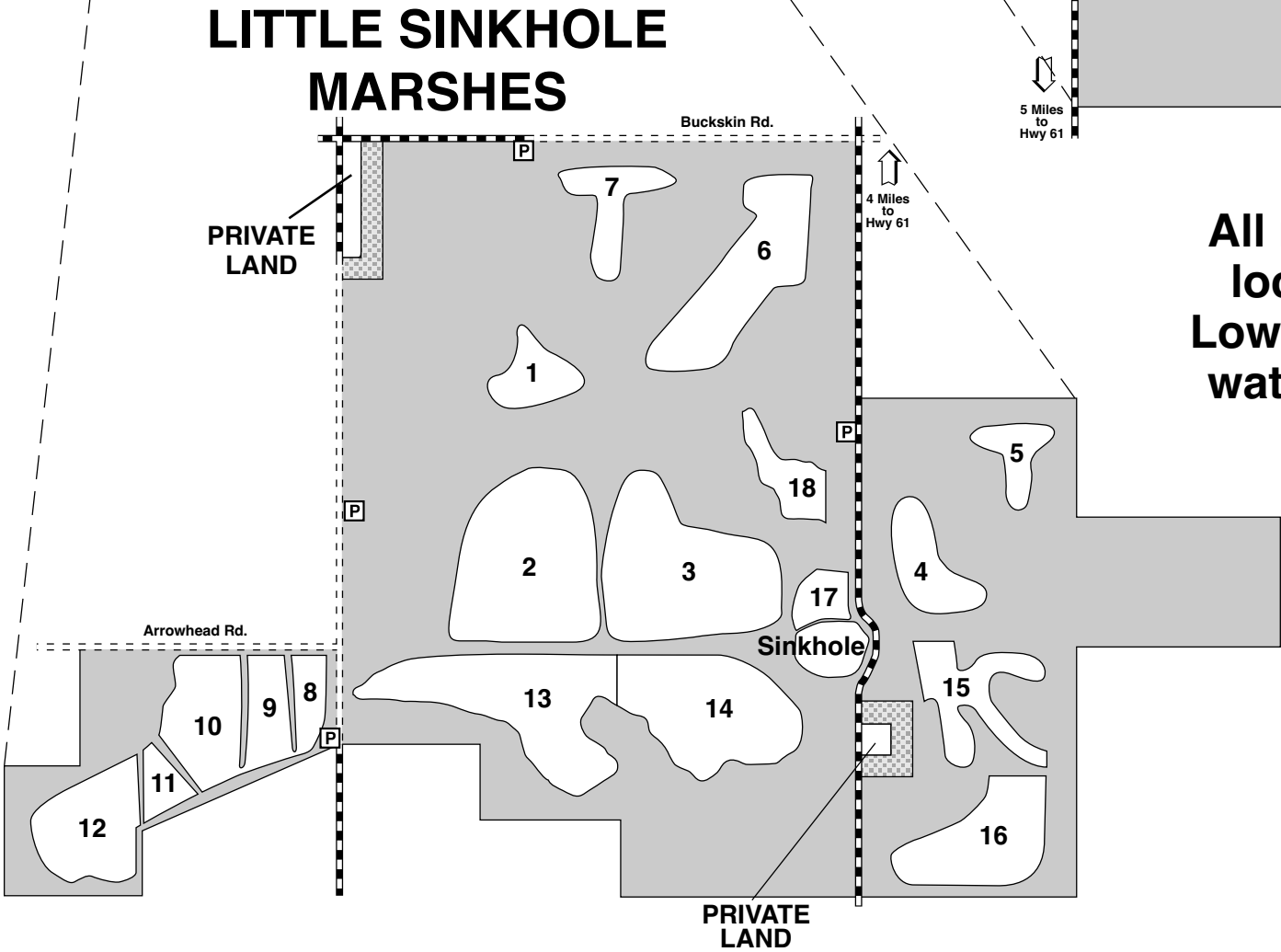
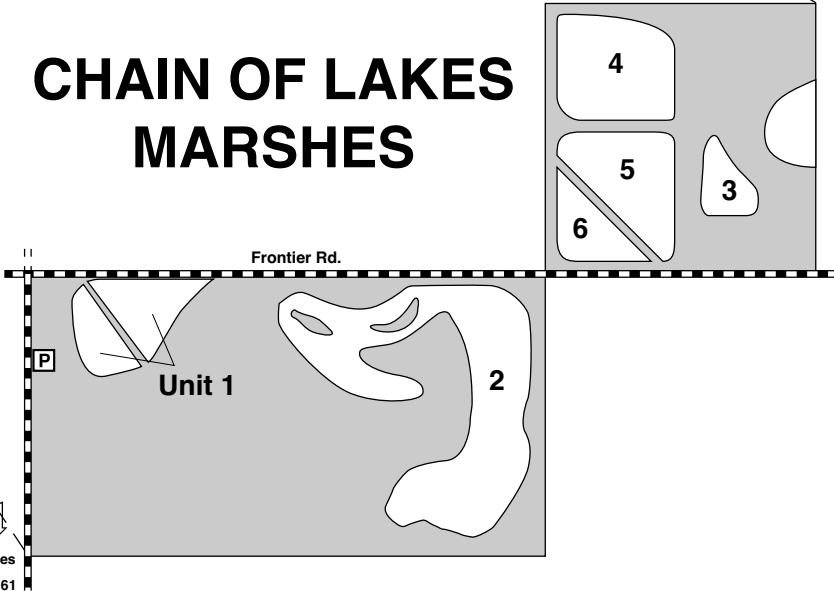
McPherson Wetlands are open to the public year-round, and all areas, with the exception of posted refuges, may be entered on foot. Vehicles are allowed on maintained roads only. Camping is not available on the McPherson Valley Wetlands, but accommodations are located a few miles away in McPherson. Plan to hunt or visit this beautiful area for some of Kansas' finest hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.



McPHERSON WETLANDS



LEGEND			
Area Headquarters	★	Paved Road	—
Public Use Area, Hunting allowed in posted areas	■	Gravel Road	- - -
Marshes	□	Unimproved Road	— — —
Refuge	■	Mud Road, Dry use only	= = = =
Safety Zone	■	Town or City	- - - -
Parking Area	P	Pumping Station	☞



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