

# FISHKS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2017

Volume I

## In this issue:

- Learn about Aquatic Education programs
- Get Involved! Help make fishing better in your community
- Tips on navigating the ksoutdoors website

## Inside this issue:

Sport Fish Restoration Act	2
Aquatic Education Program	2
Mobile Aquarium	3
Angler Instructor Program	4
Fishing's Future	4
Urban and Trout Stocking Programs	5
Newsletters and Publications	5
Navigating the KDWPT Website	6
New Fishing Regulations	6

## Program Introduction



This is the inaugural newsletter for the FishKS Aquatic Education program. Our intent for this issue is to familiarize both the public and those involved in the program with all the facets of the Sport Fish Restoration Act, FishKS activities and responsibilities, and how YOU can be directly involved in enhancing fisheries and fishing in Kansas.

Unfortunately, we cannot cover each topic in depth, but we hope you take the time to read the articles and contact your local KS Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) staff or visit the agency website, [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com), for more information.

Thank you for your time and interest!

David Breth  
Fisheries Program Specialist



## FishKS enters 8th Year

Although fishing clinics and derbies, school programs and various outreach events have been a part of KDWPT activities from the beginning, FishKS only became an official program in 2010. The program is tied to a Sport Fish Restoration grant with federal funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Until recently, aquatic education fell solely on the shoulders of department staff. Fisheries biologist had to plan events around

managing their fisheries. Unfortunately, they could not meet the demands of the public, especially during the sampling duties.

In 2013, the department partnered with the non-profit group, Fishing's Future, and developed an Angler Instructor program similar to Hunter Ed. The mission is to reconnect families through the outdoors, specifically fishing. This group is comprised of



volunteers with a passion for fishing and a desire to teach others about the sport.

Learn more about the instructor program and Fishing's Future on Page 4.



**“This important provision prohibits state governments from using license dollars to pay for activities not related to fishing or fisheries management.”**

## A Brief Overview at the Sport Fish Restoration Act

*The majority of the information in this article was obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service website .*

Commonly called the Dingell-Johnson Act after the authors of the original bill, the Sport Fish Restoration Act (SFR) was passed in 1950 but has been amended several times. In its current form, the act provides funding to states for fisheries programs having “material value in connection with sport or recreation in the marine and/or fresh waters of the United States.” Funds are collected through an excise tax on fishing equipment, import duties on tackle, yachts and pleasure craft, and a percentage of motorboat fuel tax.

To qualify for this federal

aid, states must pass assent legislation agreeing to the provisions in the SFR act, ensure the conservation of fish, and restrict state license revenue to the administration of the state fish agency. This important provision prohibits state governments from using license dollars to pay for activities not related to fishing or fisheries management.

Funds are apportioned to the states based on the number of paid license holders and the amount of land/water area in the state. Since the resource is a fixed commodity, the only way for states like Kansas to increase funding is to have more paid license holders. Unfortunately, angling participation continues to

decrease nationwide.

Federal aid is available to the states through grants at a maximum of 75% with a non-federal match of 25%. As you can see, without this amazing piece of legislation, state fisheries programs would operate on a budget the fourth of its current size. Imagine how this would impact the number of fish stocked, lake sampling efforts, information and publications, staff availability, aquatic education resources, and more.

For more information regarding SFR and other federal programs, please visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).



## The Aquatic Education Program

For different agencies and people, “aquatic education” can mean different things. For KDWPT, the term refers to resources and angling. The objective for the program is to teach everyone, not just anglers, how to appreciate, conserve, and utilize the resource. Events can be categorized as clinics or derbies, school programs, advanced aquatic education, and outreach.

The main difference between a clinic and a derby is how the activity is conducted. In general, a clinic focuses on teaching fishing skills and may not even include an actual fishing component. At a derby, the main goal is to fish and catch fish, usually for a prize or recognition. Both are effective at exposing young or new anglers to the

sport, and we encourage everyone to attend one in the area.

School programs are just that, activities that take place in a school setting or at a school function. They are geared to students and stress education and instruction. Many schools have incorporated hunter education for years. Recently, there has been a nationwide push to get fishing education into schools.

Advanced aquatic education include activities tailored to older youth and students, young professionals, and experienced anglers. Many involve water and fish ecology, not just identification and care. Participants will go out with biologists and use sampling gear and techniques to study the aquatic

environment. Fishing education at this level may include species specific techniques and other methods seasoned anglers might enjoy but have little experience in doing.

Other places you may see FishKS advertised include the Mobile Aquarium display, outdoor expos, and other community/agency events.

In addition to all the events conducted in a year, KDWPT also passes out thousands of literature items, tackle, and the ever popular Fish ID cards.

If you are planning a fishing activity and need assistance with volunteers or equipment, contact your local biologist or the program coordinator in Pratt.

## Mobile Aquarium

Kansas may have one of only a handful of mobile aquariums in the nation. Several states want to buy it but the thing is just too popular to get rid of!

KDWPT purchased the tank on wheels from the Missouri Department of Conservation in 2008. It has traveled the state from border to border, attending fairs, expos and park events and is a regular exhibit at the state fair.

The aquarium holds 3,200 gallons of water and weighs over 40,000 pounds when filled! To keep the axles from breaking and the tires

from popping, 12 bottle jacks are placed around the base.

The display fish are all native to Kansas with a few exceptions. Two species, the wiper and saugeye, are hybrids “created” in our hatchery system. The aquarium fish are kept at our Milford Hatchery.

The aquarium is essentially a cross-section of a lake. Viewers get to see how fish act. For instance, the walleye stay glued to the

bottom until the sun sets, the wiper and white bass never stop swimming, and the crappie and bluegill huddle around the wood cover for protection from the larger predators. It’s a great lesson in behavior and ecology.

Communities and event organizers can apply for the aquarium to attend their event. Applications are due in November for the following year. Due to the costs and labor to set up, we can only select 3-5 events a year (including the state fair). In 2017, we could only commit to the Topeka Boat Show and state fair. This was in part to the tank and system needing repaired.

For more information and to obtain an application, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)



### QUICK FACTS:

The aquarium must be hauled empty.

The fish are not fed when on display to keep the water clean. However, a few of the smaller sunfish tend to disappear...

The same fish are used for each event, year after year.

A chiller unit keeps the water cool and comfortable for the fish even during summer events.



Kansas State Fair – 2012



Kansas Sampler – Winfield 2016

## Certified Angler Instructor Program



Did you know you can play an active role in ensuring fishing continues to positively impact the lives of thousands of Kansans?

Started in 2013, the Certified Angler Instructor Program is one of the most important components of FishKS. The program is modeled after a similar effort in Texas and Fishing's Future helped mold the curriculum to fit Kansas.



Every year, at least six certification classes are held throughout the state. To date, over 400 people gone through the process! The classes are three to five hours long and cover topics includ-

ing fish identification and care, angling techniques, equipment, knot-tying, and information concerning fishery programs and management in Kansas.



After the class, those participants who pass a background check are able to use KDWPT resources to organize and conduct fishing events in their community. This is a great way to bring family, friends, and neighbors together and

pass on the great tradition of fishing. In addition, volunteer time and effort is used by KDWPT to match a federal grant from USFWS. The in-kind value of hours allows the agency to spread license dollars further to support all fishery programs. This means more people volunteer, more fish can be stocked, more habitat constructed, more private waters can be leased for public fishing and more!

Frankly, there is just too much to this instructor program to adequately cover in this article. If you are interested in participating, please contact David Breth at 620-672-5911 in the Pratt office.

## Fishing's Future - "More than a Sport"

**"Positive people bring positive change and this is what Fishing's Future is."**

Fishing's Future is a non-profit organization that helps promote fishing and family togetherness. Founder Shane Wilson recognized the same issue all those involved in outdoor recreation are dealing with more and more - families are not participating in outdoor activities as much as they were in years past. Technology, fast pace of life, work, lack of community, and other factors have contributed to this decline. Wilson decided to take action and created Fishing's Future.

One can see just by viewing the homepage on their website the important footprint they are creating for the sport of fishing. Through "Family Fish Camps" and other events, their mission is

to bring families closer by introducing them to fishing, resource appreciation, and environmental stewardship. The key concept is providing the knowledge and tools to help them on their own, well after leaving the event. All members are encouraged, sometimes even required, to attend and participate.



Many state agencies identified a shared interest and goal with Fishing's Future. Over 20 states now partner with the group to host events and promote angling

opportunities. In 2016, Fishing's Future was awarded the Roland Sigurdson Outstanding Aquatic Education Program Award, recognizing the organization as the "No. 1 Aquatic Education Program in America" by the Aquatic Resources Education Association. This is an impressive and well earned achievement for a group comprised almost entirely of volunteers who have full-time jobs, including Wilson, who is a school teacher in Texas.

KDWPT thanks all those involved with Fishing's Future here in Kansas. Without their passion and hard work, FishKS would not have near the reach it has today. For more information please visit [www.fishingsfuture.org](http://www.fishingsfuture.org).



## In-Depth look at Urban Stocking and Trout Program

KDWPT coordinates two put-and-take stocking programs. Put-and-take means that the fish are stocked at a harvestable size with the expectation that all will be caught and kept.

**The Urban Stocking Program** involves stocking channel catfish in ponds and lakes around large populations of people and anglers. For 2017, 90 locations will be stocked between April and October with over 140,000 catfish large enough for an angler to take home and eat if they so choose. A list of these waters is available on the website.

This program is vital to many anglers who primarily fish from the shore and new anglers. Second only to cost, the biggest obstacle for those wanting to fish is distance to nearest fishery. This program brings quality fish to their neighborhood! Using basic tackle and equipment, a person has the opportunity to catch fish that are larger than most of

the ponds can support in greater numbers without having to search for the "right" spot at a larger body of water.

**The Trout Stocking Program** offers a fantastic fishing opportunity for anglers during the normal fishing "off season" in Kansas. Many experienced anglers know that any fish can be caught any day of the year, however, warm-water species become lethargic and difficult to catch in the colder months. During this time, trout flourish!

There is no natural population of rainbow trout in our state. In fact, no state hatchery or commercial producer raises trout in Kansas. Therefore, KDWPT contracts with vendors in surrounding states to stock designated waters during the season (November 1 to April 15).

A trout permit is required by all anglers at Type I waters. At Type II locations, only anglers

harvesting trout need a permit. Youth 15 and younger do not need a trout permit but can only harvest TWO trout per day. If the youth wants to harvest the statewide limit of FIVE, they must possess a valid trout permit. For a list of Type I and Type 2 waters, see page 9 of the regulations booklet.

Most locations receive rainbow trout once a month. Two locations (Kanopolis Seep Stream and Mined Land Unit #30) are periodically stocked with brown trout. The pit in the Mined Land area supports a year round trout population as the pond is deep and clear. A permit is required year round there.

The fish stocked in both these programs tend to be easier to catch than wild fish. Although success is never guaranteed, having a location where the density of fish is higher than normal increases the odds for new and young anglers. This can lead to higher participation rates and more people fishing!



A golden rainbow trout - a mutation causes the color variation

### Did you know?

**The catch rates for Rainbow Trout following stockings are the highest for any species of fish.**

## Sign Up for Fisheries Newsletters and Download Brochures

Newsletters are a great way to get information out to the anglers. Once or twice a year, the fisheries biologists breakdown sampling data for popular waters in their area. In addition, they provide insight on current and future management strategies. Readers may find answers to their questions and interesting tidbits they otherwise would never know about their local fishing hole.

To sign up, submit a "newsletter request form" for the designated area at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) by searching "newsletters" or at the following url: [www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/News](http://www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/News)

You can also find just about any publication or brochure you want on our website. Just click on "Publications" on the left hand side of the

homepage. Then, you can select the category you want information on such as fishing, hunting, state parks and trails including maps and contact information. Visitors can research unfamiliar areas of the state in order to plan their next outdoor adventure!



**KANSAS  
DEPARTMENT OF  
WILDLIFE,  
PARKS &  
TOURISM**

512 SE 25th Avenue  
Pratt, KS 67124

Phone: 620-672-5911  
E-mail: [KDWPT@ks.gov](mailto:KDWPT@ks.gov)

In the Fall Issue:

F.I.S.H. and CFAP access  
programs

Highlights from  
2017 FishKS events

Habitat program  
and fish attractors

School fishing programs

And MORE!

## **Navigating the KDWPT Website - [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)**

There is so much information available about the department, programs and wildlife conservation that navigating the agency's website can be a little intimidating at first. Here are some tips on how to find fishing and fisheries management content on the website.

The quickest way to find a specific topic is to use the **Search Box** at the top right-hand side of the page. After typing a word or two and pressing "Enter" on your keyboard, you will be directed to a results page. Each result will have a title and a description of content

(file, folder, image, article, etc).

To find general information about fishing, select the "**Fishing**" tab on the home page. The next page will have boxes with topics such as "Where to Fish" and "Regulations." You can even find where to purchase licenses and permits online. These and other topics are listed on the left-hand side of the page, as well.

The "**Special Fish Programs**" houses all the different fishing related programs offered by KDWPT. This includes Aquatic Education, Urban

Stocking and Trout, and the Master Angler Awards. It also includes information regarding our fishing access programs "F.I.S.H." and "CFAP". These allow anglers with a state license to fish without additional fees. Some of our best fishing opportunities could be in your own backyard!

### **SPREAD THE WORD...**

You can go directly to the "Where to Fish" page by typing [www.fishks.org](http://www.fishks.org) in your internet browser address bar!

## **NEW Fishing Regulations for 2017**

- ◆ *New ANS waters due to presence of zebra mussels: Hillsdale and Cedar Bluff Reservoir*
- ◆ *The statewide 15-inch minimum length limit for walleye, sauger and saugeye does NOT apply to rivers, streams and tailwaters. Statewide daily creel limit still applies.*
- ◆ *Floatline fishing is now allowed year-round, 24 hours a day in DESIGNATED waters*
- ◆ *Anglers who purchase bait from a commercial bait dealer are NO LONGER REQUIRED to possess a sales receipt while fishing. All other bait regulations are still in place.*
- ◆ *Black Bass Pass increased to five fish. All other provisions unchanged.*
- ◆ *2017 Free Fishing Days - June 3 and 4*



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