

Wilson Lake

The Clearest Lake in Kansas



Welcome

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers welcomes you to Wilson Lake, "The Clearest Lake in Kansas", located North central Kansas. Set amongst the Smoky Hills, which is a rolling landscape of hills, buttes, and hazy valleys, grand in scale, yet possessing a delicate and subtle beauty. We hope you enjoy the area's geologic formations, mixed grass prairie, and recreational opportunities of the Corps of Engineer's most western Kansas reservoir. Additional information can be obtained at the Corps of Engineer's visitor center below the dam, at any of the parks, or from any of our park rangers. Please make your visit to Wilson Lake an enjoyable and safe experience.

Lake Benefits

Wilson Lake is a multipurpose project situated on the Saline River that serves primarily for flood and silt control, recreation, and fish & wildlife management. The Wilson Lake Dam construction cost \$20 million when it was completed in 1964. Since then, Wilson Lake has saved an estimated \$1.5 billion in property losses by preventing downstream flood damages to farmlands and developed areas. The substrate of the Saline River is limestone, creating water high in salt content that restricts it from being used for drinking water and irrigation without special treatment. This high salinity content has proven beneficial in stocking the ocean native Striped Bass.

The grassland drainage basin of 1,917 square miles filters sediments resulting in Kansas's clearest lake. At multipurpose pool, 1516.00 feet above "mean sea level" (MSL), Wilson Lake has 9,000 surface acres of water and 12,842 acres of land. During periods of flooding, the lake can accommodate approximately 20,000 surface acres of water at flood pool, 1554.00 MSL.



US Army Corps
of Engineers ©
Kansas City District

Recreation

Located in a region with few large bodies of water, Wilson Lake offers a diversity of recreational opportunities that attract a quarter million visitors every year. Activities include picnicking, camping, swimming, boating, skiing, wind surfing, sailing, kite boarding, scuba-diving, fishing, hunting, trail hiking, mountain bike riding, and remote controlled sailplane racing.



Minooka Park– Corps of Engineers

Named from the Otoe Indian word Mi-Nook-A, meaning “Good Earth,” contains 3 boat ramps, 2 shower buildings, 3 playgrounds, a fish cleaning station and 158 campsites, 118 of which are electric. Many of the campsites provide scenic lake views and excellent shoreline access.

The western half of Minooka Park contains a reservable picnic shelter, swimming beach, boat ramp and a reservable group camp. The group camp contains 12 electric and water campsites, a group shelter, and a waterborne restroom. Marshall Cove houses privately owned boat docks.

Lucas Park – Corps of Engineers

Located on the North shore of Wilson Lake, Lucas Park contains developed campgrounds nestled between a line of steep hills and shoreline. The updrafts along the shore have made the hills in Lucas Park one of the top 10 remote-controlled model sailplane racing sites in the United States.

The 305 acre Rocktown Natural Area, a registered Natural and Scientific Area by the Kansas Biological Survey, has a rich diversity of mixed prairie grasses and wildlife. Unique 15-30 foot Dakota sandstone pillars carved by wind and rain are natural landmarks of Rocktown.

Lucas Park contains 103 campsites, 70 of which are electric. The group camp also provides an additional 15 electric and water sites that are great for large reunions or gatherings. The non-developed areas of Lucas Park provide a great hunting experience for winter sportsman.

Sylvan Park– Corps of Engineers

Located below Wilson Dam, Sylvan Park offers 27 campsites, 24 of which are electric and water. Sylvan Park boasts shade and protection from the wind for campers. A couple of primitive camping and picnic sites overlook the Saline River exiting the Dam. While the 8 water and electric sites of group camp overlook the old Saline River channel. The handicap accessible shower building is climate controlled and open year round for winter sportsman and campers. Fishing is accessible from the Saline River or by boat from the Spillway boat ramp located SW of the Dam along Highway 232.

Water Safety

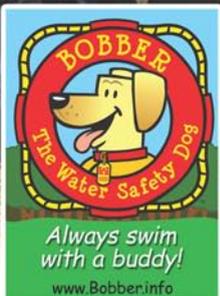
Boating

- Alcohol and boating do not mix
- Insure all safety equipment is aboard and functioning properly.
- Obey all state and federal boating laws and buoys
- Watch for boating hazards such as floating or sunken debris
- Be alert for changing weather conditions and head to shore immediately if bad weather threatens
- Always wear an approved personal floatation device (life jacket)
- Watch out for swimmers and other boaters

Swimming

- Cliff Jumping is prohibited
- Swim and wade only where you are familiar with water depth and conditions
- Do not swim alone
- Watch children closely and fit them with lifejackets
- Swimming around boat launching ramps and docks is prohibited

Do your part in making your visit to Wilson Lake memorable – not regrettable!



Trails

If you are looking for something to do, try a hike on one of following Wilson Lake trails.

Rocktown Hiking Trail is a 3 ½ mile hiking trail located in the Rocktown Natural Area in Lucas Park. The ½ way point on the trail takes you to a scenic shoreline area where you will see unique 15-30 ft Dakota Sandstone pillars. Be sure to bring your camera and plenty of water and sunscreen!

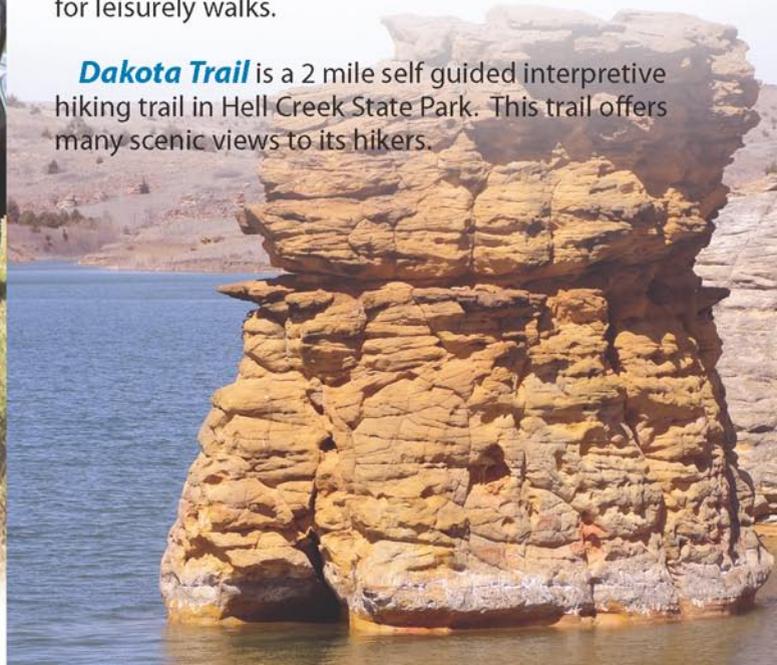
Bur Oak Trail is a ¾ mile gravel packed trail located West of Sylvan Park. This trail is a self guided interpretive trail that provides a great combination of exercise and education.

Minooka Hiking Trail is a newly developed trail in Minooka Park that incorporates a variety of scenic attractions, unique rock formations, and visits an abandoned campground that has a ghostly appearance.

Switchgrass Biking Trail is a 13 mile mountain bike trail located in Hell Creek State Park. This course offers challenges for all riders both novice and advanced.

Cedar Trail is located in Otoe State park. It is a 1 mile hard surface handicap accessible trail that is great for leisurely walks.

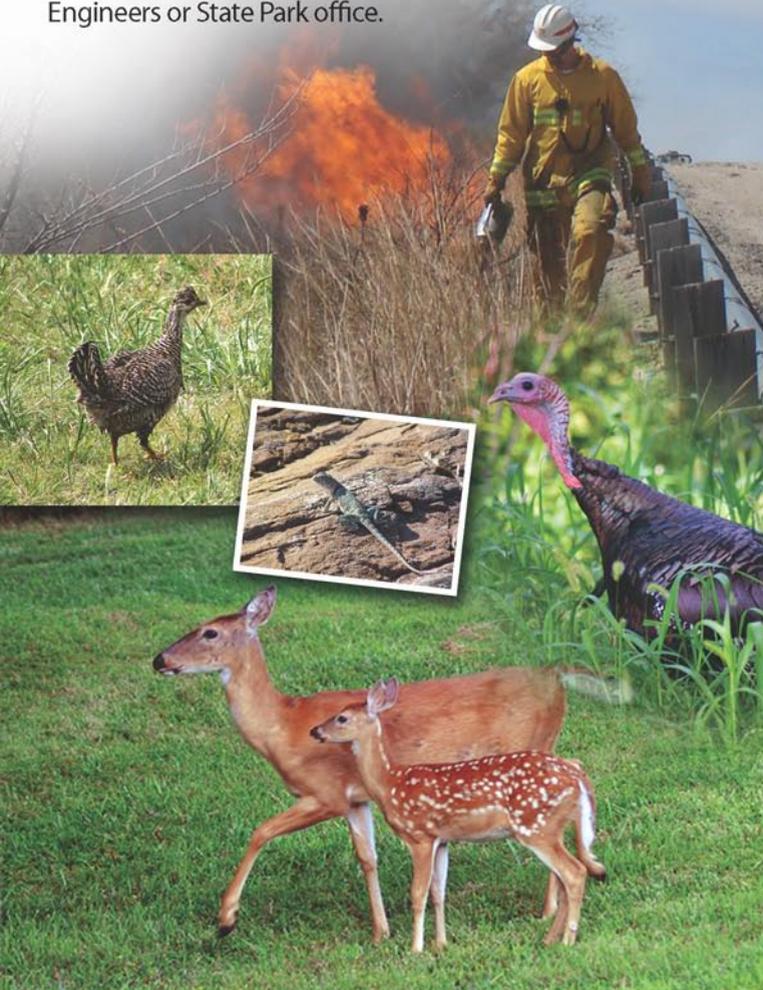
Dakota Trail is a 2 mile self guided interpretive hiking trail in Hell Creek State Park. This trail offers many scenic views to its hikers.



Wildlife Management

The Corps of Engineers manage 3,200 acres and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks manage 8,000 acres of native prairie and cropland for wildlife. Management tools used in these areas are prescribed burning, food plots, native grass and forb plantings, tree and shrub plantings, invasive species control, and agricultural leases. The wildlife areas are great places for sportsman to hunt, view wildlife, or access fishing areas. Wilson Lake is home to several popular game species including deer, turkey, ring-necked pheasants, quail, rabbit, prairie chickens, ducks, and geese.

Hunting is restricted in certain areas such as wildlife refuges and parks around the lake, be aware of public hunting area boundaries and regulations before entering the area. Limited special hunt opportunities are available from both agencies in a few restricted access areas. For more information about hunting or special hunts at Wilson Lake please contact the Corps of Engineers or State Park office.

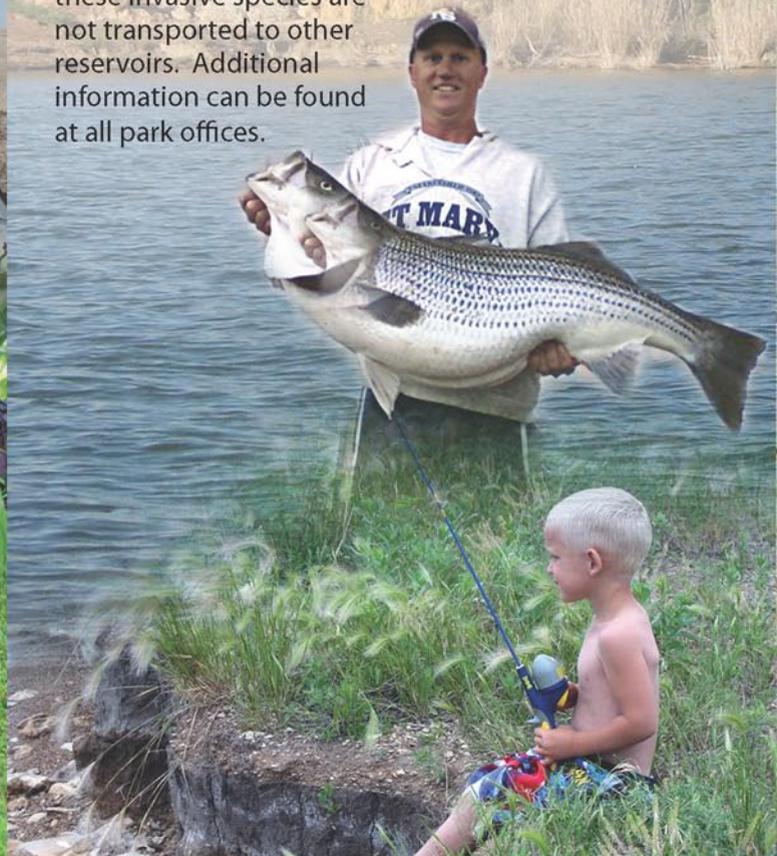


Fisheries

Wilson is home to 2 state record fish, a 13.16 pound walleye and a 44 pound striped bass at the time of publication. It has also held the smallmouth bass record several times. Fishing success is often affected by water temperature, water level changes, weather conditions, abundance of food, and habitat.

Fisheries management activities include fish sampling, creel surveys, habitat work, aquatic vegetation enhancement, fish stocking, and special studies. All activities are aimed at monitoring fish populations and to improve fishing opportunities.

Wilson Lake is home to two aquatic invasive species, the White Perch and the Zebra Mussel. The White Perch is a fish that aggressively competes with native fish for food. Many fishermen seek out these invasive fish as they provide a tasty treat in the frying pan. The Zebra Mussel is a small clam-like mussel that aggressively reproduces and out competes native mussels. Zebra mussels are also detrimental to the native aquatic ecosystem. Large numbers of Zebra mussels can ultimately hurt or destroy fish populations. Please ensure you take the necessary precautions, so these invasive species are not transported to other reservoirs. Additional information can be found at all park offices.



Post Rock Country

Wilson Lake is nestled in the heart of Post Rock County. Thousands of miles of limestone fencepost surround fields and pastures in this area. They stand as a tribute to the ingenuity of early settlers who solved their fencing needs on the treeless plains by quarrying rock to use as fence posts and building materials. These stone posts have become a trademark of Post Rock Country.

The stone was quarried from a rock layer found near the surface. This limestone, 8-9 inches thick, is soft enough to be sawed and shaped with hand tools when quarried. After prolonged exposure to air it hardens and becomes a hardy and weather resistant rock. Each individual fencepost weighs several hundred pounds, so constructing several miles of fence was a physically demanding task for early settlers without the use of modern equipment such as tractors.

Communities surrounding the lake have many interesting buildings constructed of quarried limestone from this area. Schoolhouses, churches, homes, barns, businesses, jails, and bridges may still be found standing as architectural heirlooms from the early settlers.



Area Attractions

Surrounding communities are rich in Volga German and Czech heritage. Many unique attractions inhabit these local communities whether it is the prize winning meat markets, ethnic foods, artistic treasures, or historic buildings. You can learn about the oil boom and bust. Experience the Kansas wind and view the fields of wind turbines. Enjoy the scenic rise and sunsets of this peaceful country setting. For more information regarding the area attractions contact the following County Visitor's Bureau: Ellsworth, Russell, Lincoln.



Entrance and User Fees

The Corps of Engineers and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks are separate agencies; therefore agency user passes are not interchangeable. Park rules and regulations may vary between agencies so please familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations governing park use. Copies of these rules may be obtained at both the Corps and State park offices.

The Corps of Engineers manage the Spillway Boat Ramp, Lucas, Sylvan, and Minooka Parks. User fees are charged for camping and boat launching permits. Permits for boat launching can be obtained at self-pay stations at the ramps, and camping permits can be obtained from Park Booths. Reservations for Corps' campsites may be made through the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS).

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks manages Otoe and Hell Creek State Park located on the Southeast side of the lake. Entrance and camping fees are charged at the state parks. Rate information can be obtained at the State Park entrances or at the State Park office located within Hell Creek State Park.



**Reserve
Your Place
Under the
Stars**

www.recreation.gov

1-877-444-6777 or for TDD 1-877-833-6777

Contacts:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Wilson Project Office

4860 Outlet Blvd.

Sylvan Grove, KS 67481

785-658-2551

<http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/wi/>

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Wilson State Park and Area Office

#3 State Park Rd.

Sylvan Grove, KS 67481

785-658-2465

<http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us>

