Melvern Lake

Kansas

US Army Corps of Engineers
Kansas City District

Welcome

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers welcomes you to Melvern Lake. We invite you to use and enjoy the lake, the parks and the surrounding public lands. We hope your visit is pleasant and safe and that you will return often.

Benefits

Melvern Lake and Dam were constructed from 1967 to 1972 at a cost of $37,436,530.00 for the primary purpose of providing flood control on the lower Marais des Cygnes River. As of 2005, Melvern Lake has prevented approximately $166,573,000.00 in downstream flood damages.

Melvern Dam is a rolled earthfill embankment with an impervious clay core making the dam nearly watertight. The dam extends 9,650 feet and rises nearly 118 feet above the river valley. The lake elevation is maintained via a series of hydraulically operated gates located at the bottom of the control tower. The lake water passes through an 11.5-foot conduit for approximately 754 feet before entering the Marais Des Cygnes River.

Other authorized purposes include recreation, water supply and fish and wildlife management. The 349 square miles of drainage basin above Melvern Lake is composed primarily of warm-season grasses intermixed with agriculture and hardwood forests. The presence of an upstream prairie ecosystem provides a better than average water quality for Melvern Lake.

Water Safety

Every year in the United States more than 1,000 people die from drowning and 800 people die from boating accidents. Please help reverse this trend by following these basic water safety tips.

Boating

- Boating and alcohol don't mix.
- Always wear an approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD).
- Do not overload your boat.
- Watch for underwater obstructions.
- Be alert for changing weather conditions.
- Children 12 and under must wear a PFD at all times while boating.

Swimming

- Learn to swim and never swim alone.
- Swim in areas you are familiar with.
- Keep a close eye on children.
- Know the depth of the water before diving.
- Stay clear of launch ramps or docks.
- Avoid using alcohol.

Skiing

- Stay in open water and away from restricted areas.
- Watch for swimmers, divers and other boats.
- Always wear an approved personal flotation device.
- Keep a watchful eye for obstructions such as trees and stumps.

For more information on Kansas boating laws and water safety visit: www.kdwp.state.ks.us or http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/.

Early History

The earliest known inhabitants of the Melvern Lake area was the Kansa Indians. They occupied the Melvern Lake area for less than a century, when in 1825 they ceded most of their territory to the United States. In 1846, a reservation for the Sac and Fox Indians was established in the southern two-thirds of Osage County and parts of Lyon, Coffey and Franklin counties. In 1867, the area was opened to white settlement and the reservation was removed from the Marais des Cygnes River Valley.

Arvonia School, circa 1872

In 1868, a town called Olivet sprang up in the Marais des Cygnes valley. This new town was established by the Swedenborgian Followers from England. It was proposed by the founders of the town to build a college and make Olivet the headquarters for the Swedenborgian Church for the entire western United States. The town grew to over 300, but later struggled because the proposed railroad went another route. In 1873, a prairie fire swept through the town destroying part of it. The town was completely gone by 1885.

Arvonia was the second town to be founded in the river valley. Originally settled by Welsh farmers and coal miners in 1869, the town was settled, like Old Olivet, in anticipation of the railroad which was to run adjacent to the Marais des Cygnes River. Unfortunately, the line did not run to Arvonia. Though it did grow to over 300 people by 1879, it slowly dwindled to just a handful today.

Corps of Engineers User Fees

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates five parks and charges user fees for camping, boat launching, beach use, and shelter reservations. Fees are seasonal, and vary depending on the facilities and services provided. Discounts for recreation use fees are available for individuals 62 years of age or older and individuals with a permanent physical disability.

Reservations for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers campsites can be made through the National Recreation Reservation Service. To contact this service call toll free 1-877-444-6777 or TDD 1-877-833-6777. Reservations for campsites may be made on the internet at www.reserveusa.com. To reserve group picnic shelters, the Outlet Park Pavilion or the youth group camping area contact the Melvern Lake Project Office at 785-549-3318.

The four major causes of drownings are:

- **Not wearing a life jacket;**
- **Abuse of alcohol;**
- **Lack of sufficient swimming skills;**
- **Hypathermia**

Wear your life jacket!

Eisenhower State Park

In 1990, Eisenhower State Park, formerly Melvern State Park, was renamed by the Kansas Legislature to honor Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th U.S. President and Abilene, KS native. The park is located on the north shore of Melvern Lake, with 1,345 acres of prairie, 440 acres of woodland, and many areas for recreational activities. Eisenhower is the perfect place for family gatherings and fishing and hunting trips. Whether you are staying at the park for a day or even a week, there are plenty of activities to keep everyone busy. Hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, swimming, picnicking, two boat ramps and outdoor games are available to campers or day users. The park even has kayaks for rent.

Eisenhower has complete facilities available, including 192 utility campsites available for RV's and primitive camping. Group camping is also available. The park has an equestrian campground and about 17 miles of trails available for horseback riders. Contact the park office at 785-528-4102 or eisenhower@wp.state.ks.us for reservations.

Public Hunting and Fishing

Hunting

The Melvern Wildlife Area has 10,008 acres located primarily in the upstream reaches of Melvern Lake. This unique area provides for a diversity of plant and animal life. Wildlife management goals seek to provide quality public hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities through habitat development and management. Habitat includes tall grass prairie, riparian timber, wetlands and croplands. Habitat improvement efforts include controlled burns of native grass, tree and shrub planting, grass and legume planting and management of crop fields to provide winter food and cover.

Public hunting is allowed on the wildlife area except for the 1,100-acre waterfowl refuge. The refuge is closed to all activities from October 21 to January 15.

Fishing

Through a vigorous fisheries management program conducted by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Melvern Lake enjoys a healthy population of game fish species for anglers. Walleye, crappie, bass and catfish comprise the bulk of the game fish present.

A number of management efforts such as stocking walleye, introduction of smallmouth bass and blue catfish, more stringent regulations and better lake level management have combined to substantially improve overall fishing quality in the lake. In 1990 and 2001, the 90-acre Outlet Park River Pond was renovated and has been managed intensively via game fish stocking, placement of habitat structure and an aggressive feeding program. Species targeted include crappie, channel catfish, black bass, bluegill and wiper.

Recreation – U.S. Corps of Engineers

Melvern Lake offers the outdoor enthusiast a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Camping and day use activities are permitted in the five Corps parks surrounding the lake. The day user can access the water from one of the five boat ramps or take advantage of the two developed swim beaches, four reservable group shelters or utilize the shoreline at one of the waterfront day use areas.

Outlet Park

Outlet Park offers 150 campsites, a boat ramp, a group pavilion, a youth group camp and numerous individual picnic sites. Other amenities include three shower buildings, a sanitary dump station, swim beach with change house and showers, reservable group picnic shelter, a stocked fishing pond, vault toilets and waterborne restrooms, a softball field, a handicapped accessible fishing dock, three miles of hiking trails, two playgrounds and a courtesy dock with fish cleaning station.

Arrow Rock Park

Arrow Rock Park offers 45 campsites, a small group picnic shelter, boat ramp and numerous individual picnic sites. Other amenities include a shower building, sanitary dump station, vault toilets, courtesy dock with fish cleaning station, playground and hiking trail.

Coeur d' Alene Park

Coeur d' Alene Park offers 60 campsites, two reservable group picnic shelters, a boat ramp, marina, swim beach, two nature trails, three playgrounds, overlook area and numerous individual picnic sites. Other amenities include a shower building, sanitary dump station, vault toilets and waterborne restrooms and courtesy dock with fish cleaning station.

Turkey Point Park

Turkey Point Park offers 50 campsites, a group camp area with picnic shelter, a boat ramp and numerous individual picnic sites. Other amenities include a shower building, two playgrounds, a sanitary dump station, vault toilets, courtesy dock with fish cleaning station and two day use areas including a waterfront day use park which provides users access to the lake.

Sun Dance Park

Sun Dance Park is located at the southwest corner of the lake and is free to the public. The camp ground offers 30 basic campsites with gravel pads. A picnic area with a shelter is available on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition, a boat ramp is available for lake users.

Campsite Utilities

A Loop - Sites 1 - 61
Water, 30 Amp Elec.

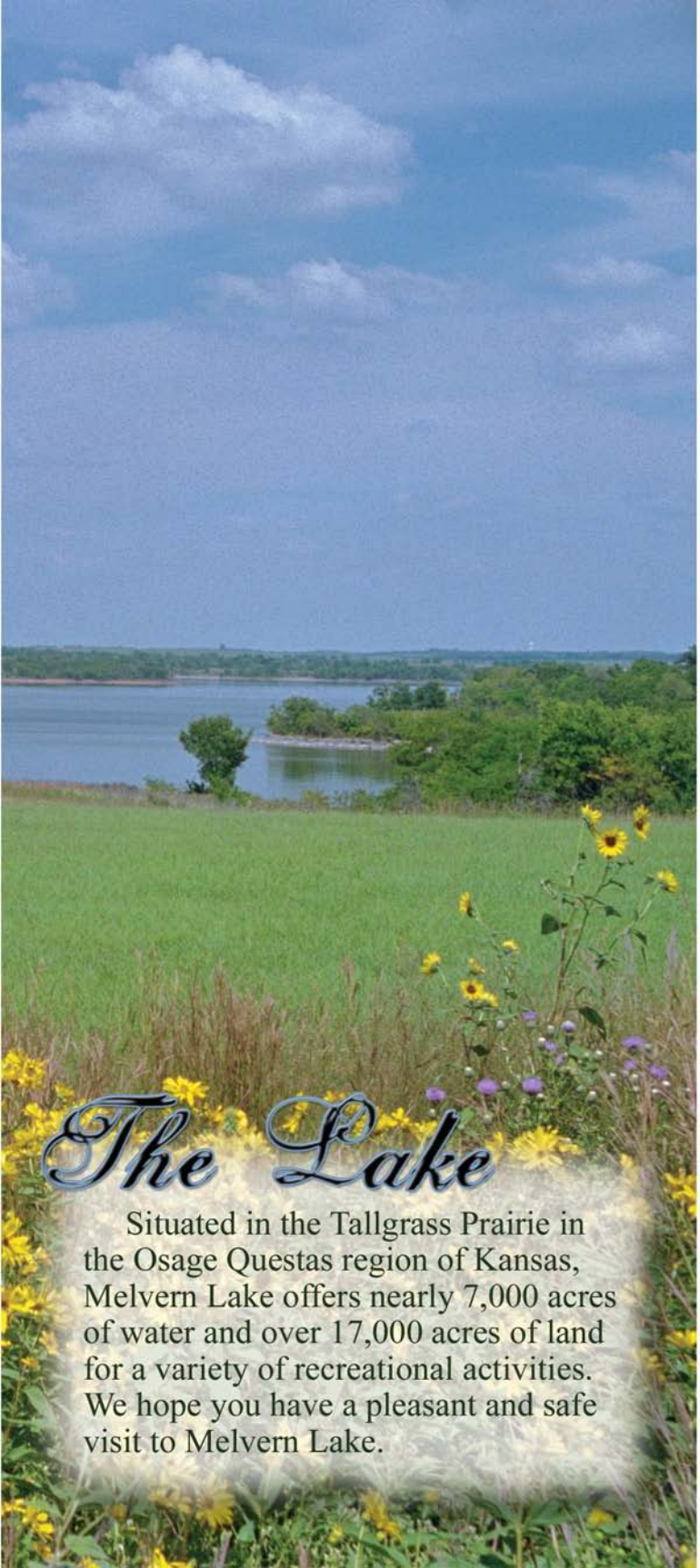
B Loop - Sites 62 - 112
Water, Sewer, 50 Amp Elec.

C Loop - Sites 113 - 150
Water, Sewer, 30 Amp Elec.

Sites 1 - 5 - 30 Amp Elec.
Sites 6 - 20 - No Hookup
Sites 21 - 34 - Water & Elec.
Sites 35 - 45 - No Hookups

Site 1 - Water, Sewer, Elec.
Sites 2 - 8 - 30 Amp Elec.
Sites 9 - 33 - No Hookups
Sites 34 - 60 - 30 Amp Elec.

Sites 1 - 8 - Water, Elec.
Sites 9 - 22 - No Hookups
Sites 23 - 50 - Water, Elec.



The Lake

Situated in the Tallgrass Prairie in the Osage Questas region of Kansas, Melvern Lake offers nearly 7,000 acres of water and over 17,000 acres of land for a variety of recreational activities. We hope you have a pleasant and safe visit to Melvern Lake.

Corps Lake Gateway

www.CorpsLakes.us

Your Recreation Guide To Corps Lakes!

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is proud to oversee 12 million acres of lands and water across the Nation. These water resource projects provide 4,300 recreation areas at 456 lakes in 43 states. This site is your gateway to recreation opportunities at Corps Lakes!

Visit us at: www.nwk.usace.army.mil
www.corpslakes.us\melvern
Email: Melvern@nwk02.usace.army.mil

For additional information about the facilities or operation of Melvern Lake Project, write to: Melvern Lake Project Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 31051 Melvern Lake Parkway, Melvern, KS 66510, Telephone: 785-549-3318