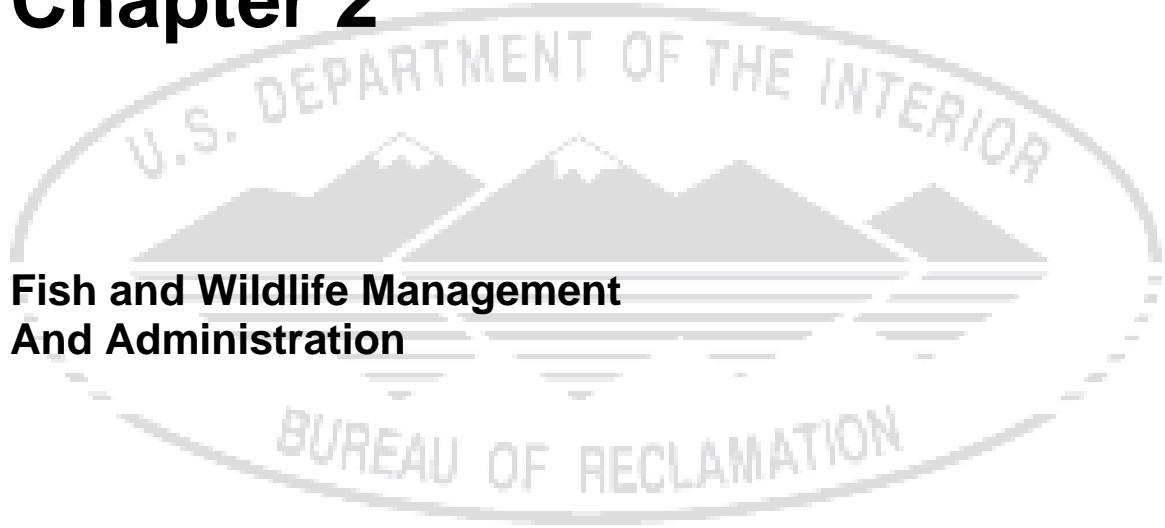


Chapter 2



**Fish and Wildlife Management
And Administration**

CHAPTER 2 - FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Managing Agency Policy

Under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq., the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks have determined that certain lands and waters at Webster Reservoir and Woodston Diversion Dam are to be administered by the Department for management of fish and wildlife resources. Webster Reservoir lands to be administered by the Department encompass 3,164 acres when the Reservoir is at the top of conservation pool. This area can increase by nearly 1,100 acres due to severe reservoir draw-downs. Habitat management on Webster wildlife lands include development of nesting, escape, brood, loafing and hunting cover, and food plots. The Department will implement practices to make reservoir lands and waters productive for fish and wildlife. (see Appendix A1 for the lease agreement and amendments).

Resource Management

Wildlife

Specific Biological Inventory

The Solomon River drainage area in north Kansas is within breeding ranges for many bird species. Common mammals found in the area include those species which inhabit upland and riparian habitats. The amphibians and reptiles known to occur in northern Kansas are listed in Appendix C3 along with birds and mammals common to the area (Bureau of Reclamation, 1998).

Existing Wildlife Habitat

The cover types at Webster Reservoir can be identified broadly as prairie, grassland, floodplain forest, woodland, water, marsh, and cultivated land. A map of the habitat cover types found at Webster Reservoir is included in Chapter 1.

Wildlife Water Sources

The water surface elevation at Webster Reservoir drops annually due to irrigation releases and evaporation. This fluctuation reduces the volume of surface water available for wildlife use. As a result of water level fluctuations, aquatic plants are prevented from becoming established. As previously flooded soils become exposed along the shoreline ideal growing conditions exist for phreatophyte growth especially for cottonwoods and willow species. Noxious weeds also thrive in this moist soil environment, including Canada thistle and salt cedar.

Management Objectives

Under the terms of the lease agreement, the Department is responsible for the conservation and management of all wildlife resources and habitat developments on 1,853 acres of land at T.O.C. pool at Webster Reservoir. (Appendix A1)

The Department's management goal for Webster Wildlife Area is:

"To manage the area's wildlife recreation, wildlife habitats, and other natural and historic resources. To provide diverse public recreational opportunities that are compatible with maintaining optimum wildlife populations, and preserving the area's natural and historic resources for future generations within available manpower and budget resources."(Webster Wildlife Area Management Plan 2005-2009)(Appendix A3)

Habitat Development Planning

Webster wildlife area management plans are completed by the Department every five years. The current plan is for 2005 – 2009. This management plan includes techniques and practices described below. All management plans are available to the public for review and comment.

Wildlife Management Practices

Techniques and practices used by the Department stress habitat management for game species including: migratory waterfowl (ducks, Canada Geese), ring-necked pheasants, Northern bobwhite quails, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, mule deer, mourning doves, cottontail rabbits, and furbearers. Game species benefit from habitat enhancements such as (a) tree and shrub plantings, (b) food and cover plots, (c) promoting growth of beneficial weeds, and (d) maintaining existing old growth trees. Often, many game and non-game wildlife species derive benefits from the intensive management program on disturbed areas. Habitat management techniques for undisturbed native grassland communities focus on returning natural events in an effort to rejuvenate native plant species, reduce exotic vegetation, and increase species diversity. Prescribed burning is performed at pre-determined tracts around the reservoir to maximize native plant and animal diversity.

Food Plots Agricultural plots are the primary habitat management practice at Webster Reservoir. Wheat, corn, milo, cane, soybeans, sunflowers, and alfalfa have all been planted with the goal of maximizing wildlife production. Agricultural plots can be used to provide wildlife with food, cover, and nesting areas. Farming can also be used to control noxious weeds and increase wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. Figures 4 and 5 depict examples of the food plots at the reservoir.



Figure 4 – Wildlife Food Plot



Figure 5 – Wildlife Food Plot

Strip Disking During project development in the 1960s many abandoned crop fields and borrow areas were planted to brome grass or were taken over by brome. Brome grass is a non-native perennial cool season grass that often forms mono-typical stands. Brome requires high levels of nitrogen to maintain healthy growth levels. Brome grass can displace native grasses and forbs and is of very little value to wildlife for either food or cover, particularly in the winter.

The Department has been actively managing brome grass stands by disking strips

through brome grass fields. The disked areas typically respond with vigorous growth of beneficial weeds such as annual sunflowers and kochia which provide both wildlife food and cover. Disking is also used to maintain and develop firebreaks. (see figure 6)



Figure 6 - Strip disked plots through Brome grass along hillside terraces

Tree and Shrub Plantings By selecting native and adapted species and arranging them for maximum wildlife use, tree and shrub plantings provide food and cover for a variety of wildlife species. Webster Reservoir has large areas of naturally occurring timber growth and to a lesser extent, areas that were planted to trees and/or shrubs intended to serve as wildlife habitat sites. The areas for wildlife development purposes were planted either in blocks to form shelterbelts or in strips along field edges or along property boundaries.

Cottonwoods are the most common species in naturally occurring timbered areas. Cottonwoods readily germinate and rapidly colonize the bare un-vegetated soils exposed by receding Webster Reservoir waters. (Figure 7) Other common species include eastern red cedar, Siberian elm, green ash, and hackberry. The most noticeable species lacking in the area are mast producing trees, such as walnut and oak.

The naturally occurring shrub communities at Webster Reservoir area occur in areas favorable for their growth. The shrub communities are commonly found along the side slopes of ravine areas, rocky outcroppings, and hillsides with gentle or moderate gradients. Common species include skunkbush sumac, western snowberry, American plum, and chokecherry. (Figure 8)



Figure 7 – New growth of Cottonwoods on previously flooded soil



Figure 8 – Shrub / brush habitat

Prescribed Grazing A high intensity grazing program can be an effective management technique to improve native plant and animal communities. Grazing, when timed properly with adequate stocking intensities can improve plant vigor, reduce litter, cause retrogression, reduce unwanted vegetation, and improve or maintain desired plant and animal community composition. The Department intends to use prescribed grazing on an as needed basis.

Prescribed burning A prescribed burning program is an effective management technique to maintain or improve native grassland communities. Such a program removes litter, recycles nutrients, reduces unwanted vegetation, and diversifies vegetation. The burning program at Webster is carefully planned and coordinated by the Department with cooperation from local fire and emergency personnel. Burning usually takes place in late spring (Figure 9).



Figure 9 - Prescribed burn in progress

Water Level Fluctuations

Webster Reservoir experienced unusually high water levels in the mid-1990s refilling the lake which had declined dramatically through the 1970s and 1980s. In 1971 Webster Reservoir approached its historic low level at elevation 1,857.35 feet with a surface area of only 616 acres. In 1995 after several years of above average precipitation the reservoir reached elevation 1,907.04 feet with a surface area of 5,551 acres. Water levels are once again in serious decline due to persistent drought, upstream groundwater depletion, and irrigation. The end of the month readings for April 2006 shows the reservoir at elevation 1,865.28 feet with a surface area of 1,340 acres. The historical inflows and yearly precipitation are plotted in Figures 10 and 11 on the following page. This lake level information shows the potential for a variance in reservoir surface area of over 4,000 acres. These drastic fluctuations create serious management challenges impacting nearly every aspect of wildlife and fisheries management.

WEBSTER DAM YEARLY HISTORICAL INFLOW

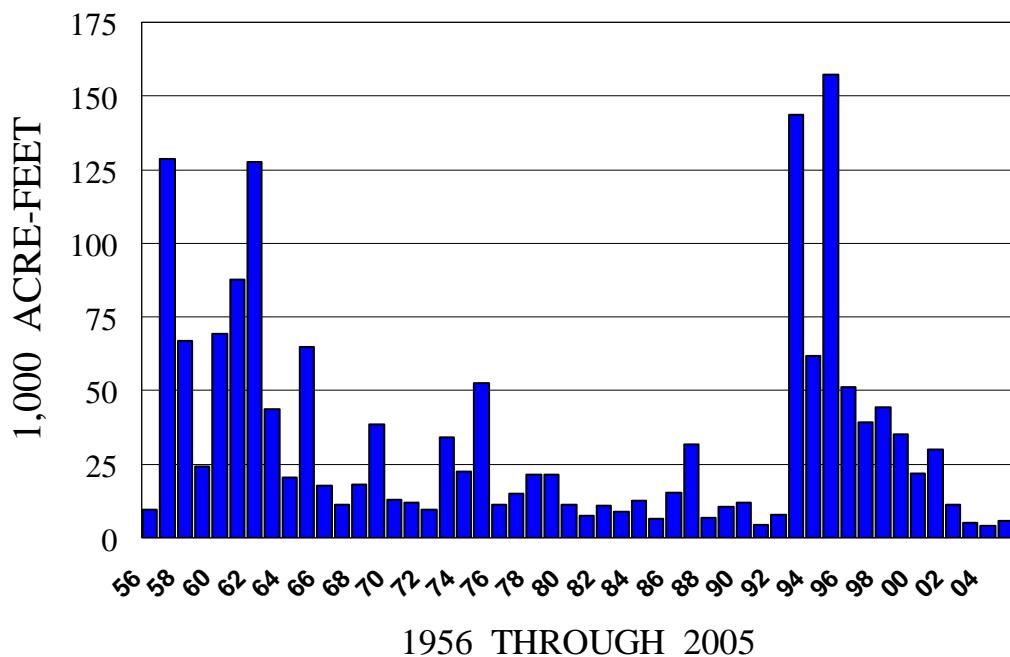


Figure 10 – Webster Dam Yearly Historical Inflow

WEBSTER DAM YEARLY PRECIPITATION

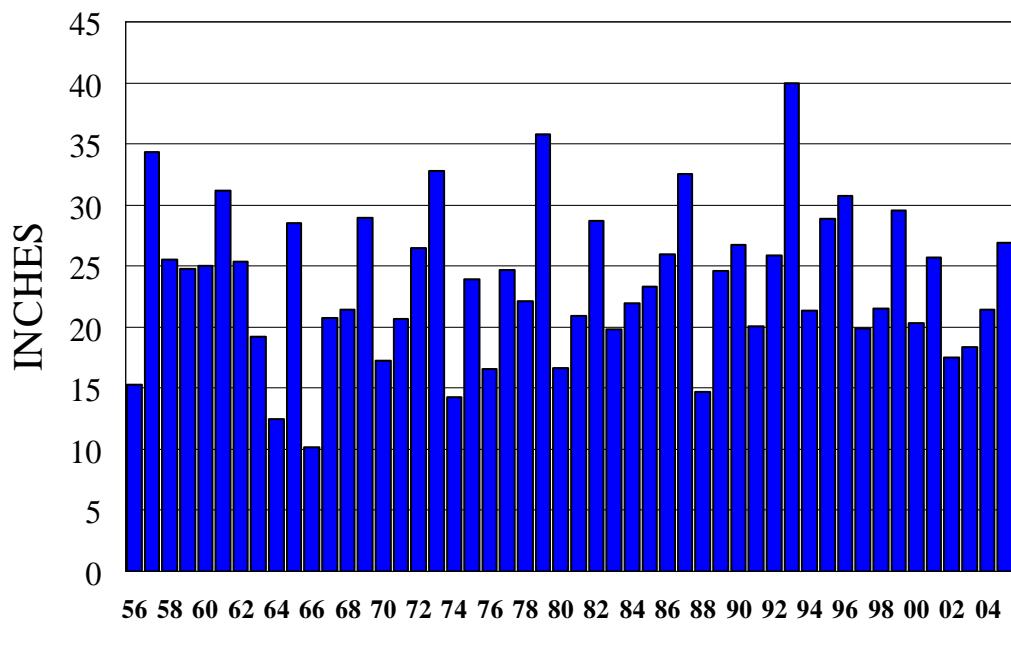


Figure 11 – Webster Dam Yearly Precipitation

As the water recedes, it leaves in its wake, hundreds of acres of newly exposed land covered only by dead timber. This newly exposed soil must be intensively managed (clearing dead timber and debris, establishing agricultural plots, replanting beneficial plants) to reduce infestation of noxious weeds (particularly Canada thistle and salt cedar) and to return it to productive wildlife habitat. The loss of water depth and volume obviously inflict devastating and potentially irreversible damage to fishery resources. Figures 12-15 show different pictures of areas that need to be managed when Webster Reservoir reaches these low water levels.



Figure 12 - Dead Timber



Figure 13 - Previously flooded area where intensive habitat management will be required.



Figure 14 – Stockpiled Dead Timber



Figure 15 -Habitat Management: Food plot establishment on previously flooded area.

Fisheries

Webster Reservoir is capable of supporting an outstanding fishery depending on water level. As previously noted, rapid and extreme water level fluctuations can create unmanageable fishery conditions. The lake's surface area has fluctuated from a maximum of 5,551 acres to a minimum of 616 acres. This fluctuation represents a change of nearly 50 feet in elevation (Figure 16 and 17).

Low water levels of the 1980s were followed by unusually high water levels

during most of the 1990s. The newly flooded vegetation created ideal aquatic habitat and a subsequent boom in the fisheries resource. The lake supports harvestable populations of many species including, walleye, wiper, black and white crappie, black and largemouth bass, channel and flathead catfish, bluegill, and green sunfish. Fishing has accounted for as much as 60,000 visitor use days per year at the reservoir. See Appendix A4 for the Departments 2005 Fishery Management and Progress Report.

WEBSTER RESERVOIR 1990 - 2004 EOM Reservoir Levels

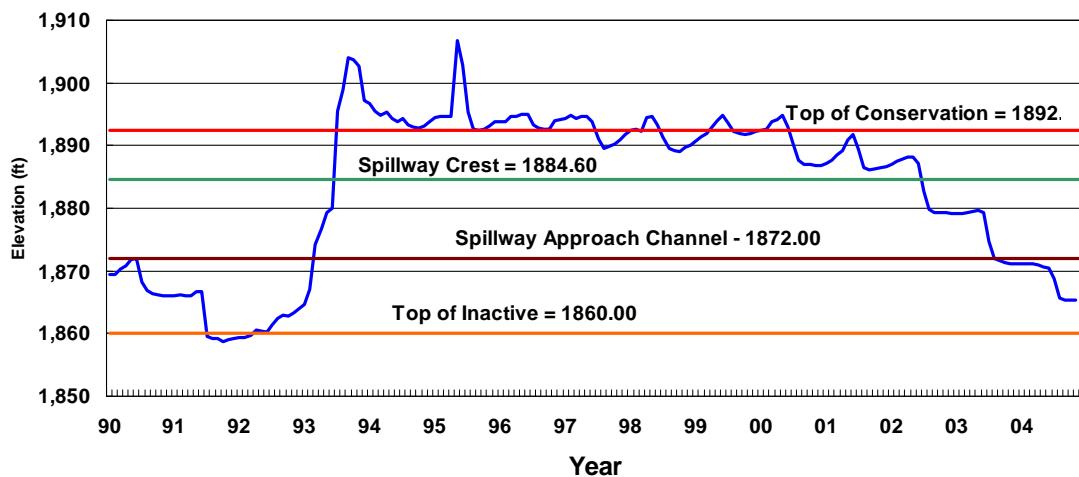


Figure 16 – Webster Reservoir End Of Month (EOM) Levels

WEBSTER 10 YEAR RESERVOIR LEVELS

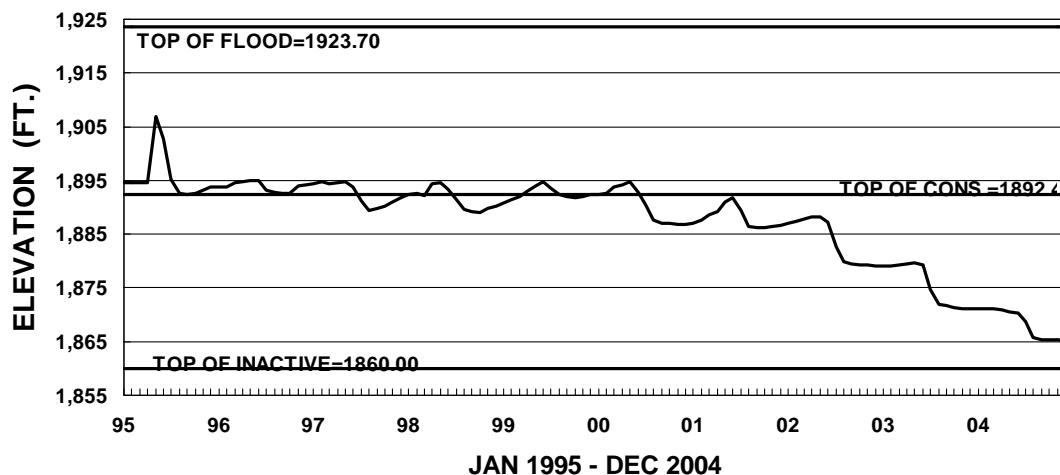


Figure 17 – Reservoir Levels

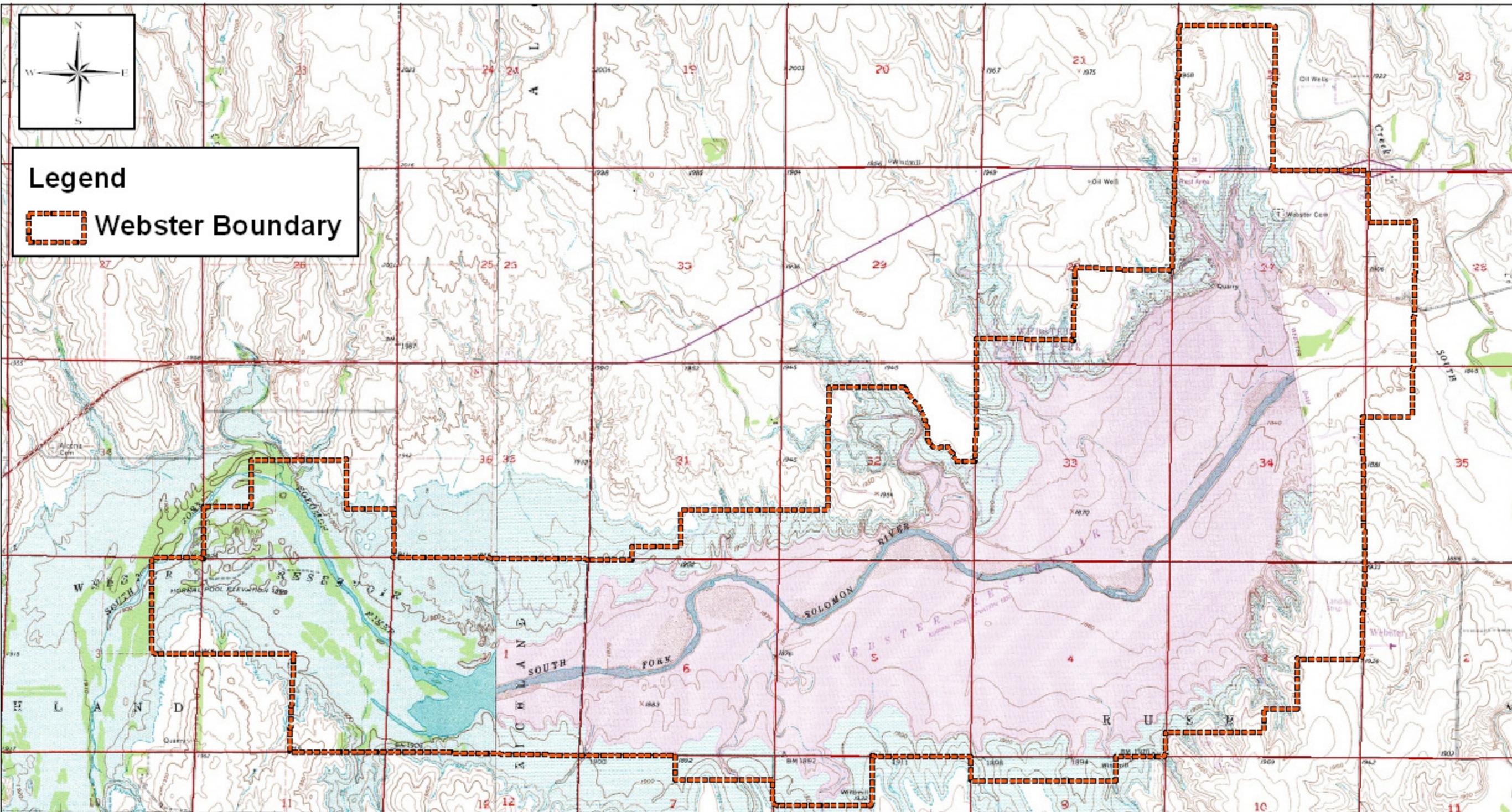


Photo Date: 8/22/1997

0 0.5 1 2 Miles
1:35,000



**Webster Reservoir
Topography**

Threatened and Endangered Species

Current Federally-listed and proposed threatened or endangered species, and candidate species that reside in, migrate through, or otherwise may be affected by operations in the Solomon River basin and associated reservoirs, including Webster Reservoir are listed in Table 3. Candidate species are those plant and animal species for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient information to propose them as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Five species have been listed as threatened or endangered. One species has been designated as a Candidate species. No proposed species, species of concern, or critical habitat have been identified in the Solomon River Basin. Species of concern are plant and animal species that may be threatened but for which insufficient information exists to warrant listing. These species enjoy no legal protection but are considered to minimize future impacts and potential listing. No critical habitat has been designated for these species in the Solomon River Basin or Webster Reservoir.

Table 3 - FEDERALLY-LISTED AND PROPOSED THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES, CANDIDATE SPECIES

Species	Current Status
Threatened or Endangered Species	
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	Threatened
Interior least tern (<i>Sterna antillarum athalassos</i>)	Endangered
Piping plover (<i>Charadrius melanotos</i>)	Threatened
Whooping crane (<i>Grus americana</i>)	Endangered
Topeka shiner (<i>Notropis topeka</i>)	Endangered
Candidate Species	
Swift fox (<i>Vulpes velox</i>)	
Black-tailed prairie dog (<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i>)	

Habitat Use and Status of Species

Threatened or Endangered Species

Bald eagle Bald eagles are large opportunistic birds of prey that feed largely on fish and waterfowl. Eagles tend to use areas along rivers, lakes, and reservoirs where large trees provide perch sites for roosting and for locating and securing prey. Winter die-offs of shad and alewife at reservoirs in the Solomon River

Basin provide readily available forage. Under adverse conditions, bald eagles will search for prey in upland areas and feed on carrion. If severe conditions persist, eagles will concentrate in areas with open water or migrate further south.

Nesting and wintering eagles are found near water that provides a reliable food source and isolation from disturbing human activities. Eagles can be expected to occur along any stream or reservoir in the Solomon River Basin during winter. Bald eagles wintering in Kansas are thought to originate in the central provinces of Canada and the Great Lakes states. Migrant and wintering bald eagles begin to arrive in the Solomon River Basin in early to mid-October and begin to leave the area for breeding areas in the north by late March. Adult migrants tend to winter repeatedly in the same area but remain mobile when seeking food during changing winter weather conditions.

Cottonwood trees are the preferred nesting trees in the basin. Nests are large and are re-used annually. Nesting activities begin in mid- to late March; eggs are laid in late March to early April, and both adults incubate the eggs. Eggs hatch in mid-May and fledging takes place after 10 - 11 weeks, with immature birds remaining near the nest for another six weeks. The numbers of active bald eagle nests are increasing in Kansas. Since 2000, an average of 37 eagles have been sighted on the reservoir area from November - February peaking in 2002 with 64 eagles. The presence of eagles around the reservoir is a direct relation to the population of waterfowl in the area.

In 2003 a pair of bald eagles constructed a nest in a cottonwood tree below the dam. The pair tended the nest but apparently did not lay eggs. A pair returned in 2004 and continued to tend the nest. Again the pair apparently did not lay eggs. The site will be monitored in coming years for a successful nesting. The bald eagle is listed as threatened and has been proposed for de-listing.

Interior least tern The interior least tern, the smallest member of the tern family, may exist in the Solomon River Basin as a spring and fall migrant. Breeding interior least terns are normally associated with unvegetated shorelines, sandbars, mudflats of rivers, and sand and gravel pits. The occurrence of breeding least terns is localized being highly dependent on the presence of dry, exposed sand and gravel bars and favorable river flows that support a forage base and isolate the bars from the banks. Characteristic riverine nesting sites are dry, flat, sparsely vegetated sand and gravel bars within a wide, unobstructed, water-filled river channel. This swallow-like aquatic bird feeds primarily upon small fish, such as shiners (*Notropis* spp.) and plains killifish (*Fundulus kansae*), from shallow water in rivers and lakes. Least terns have nested at Kirwin Reservoir, approximately 35 miles northeast of Webster Reservoir, in 1970s - 2001. It is also known to nest outside of the basin in central and southwestern Kansas. The interior least tern is listed as endangered.

Piping plover The piping plover is a migratory shorebird that breeds along prairie rivers, alkali lakes and ponds of the northern Great Plains, sandy beaches along the Great Lakes, and the beaches of the Atlantic coast. Its primary food is aquatic invertebrates. Piping plover populations have fluctuated drastically since 1900 primarily as the result of market hunting. Populations rebounded by the 1920s; however, human encroachment, an increase in the recreational use of sandbars and beaches, channelization and impoundment of rivers, and the resultant modification and destruction of habitat have caused numbers to decline again. The piping plover is a rare migrant through Kansas and may occur widely throughout the Solomon River Basin during spring and fall migrations. There have been no reports of piping plover nesting in the basin in Kansas; however, plovers have recently been observed at Kirwin Reservoir and Waconda Lake. It is believed the northern Great Plains population of the piping plover winters along beaches and mudflats from Florida to northern Mexico. The piping plover is listed as threatened.

Whooping crane The whooping crane is one of the rarest North American birds. The whooping crane is the tallest North American bird at approximately five feet when standing erect with a wingspan approaching eight feet. The population breeds in Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories and winters in Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and along the Gulf Coast of Texas. Whooping cranes are known to migrate through central Kansas. Cranes forage for invertebrates, roots, tubers, and small grains in nearby wet meadows and agricultural fields. The whooping crane is a regular spring (March-April) and fall (October-November) migrant through Kansas where they may use wetlands, open agricultural fields, and grasslands that provide open views of the surrounding terrain and are isolated from human disturbance.

Whooping cranes have been reported at Kirwin Reservoir/Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge eight times over the last 25 years but never at Webster Reservoir. These visits are normally short-lived and likely represent layovers before reaching the Rainwater Basin or Platte River to the north. However, in the spring of 1998 seven Whooping Cranes used crop fields at the upper end of Keith Sebelius Lake for 5 to 7 days. Collision with power lines is the primary known cause of death for whooping cranes. The frequent stopovers necessary for migration have become increasingly hazardous for the whooping crane as more land is developed for agriculture, industry, and housing. Suitable resting sites during migration decrease every year. The whooping crane is listed as endangered.

Topeka shiner The Topeka shiner is a small, stout fish about three inches long. The Fish and Wildlife Service describes the species as having silvery sides with a well-defined dark strip along the sides. The tail fin has a characteristic black, wedge-shaped spot at the base. All of the other fins are plain except in the breeding male where all fins become bright reddish-orange.

The Topeka shiner is generally found in clear pools in small streams having sandy substrates. However, it has been collected from sites with extremely low water clarity. Sites with sufficient flow and habitat to support piscivorous fish will not normally support Topeka shiners. The species is relatively mobile and is capable of moving both upstream and downstream with changing water conditions during drought and/or flood. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, almost any small stream with reliable water and a remnant of perennial vegetation to filter surface runoff has the potential to support Topeka shiners. Spawning is thought to occur from late May through July.

The primary threats to the Topeka shiner include habitat destruction, degradation, modification, and fragmentation. Alteration of the species habitat results from excess siltation, reduced water quality from agricultural runoff, loss of habitat and modified hydrographs from tributary impoundment construction, stream channelization associated with flood control and agricultural drainage, and stream dewatering from agricultural diversions and ground water pumping. Introduced piscivorous fish prey upon and adversely impact the Topeka shiner where it still exists.

Currently, the Topeka shiner exists in highly disjunctive populations in a greatly reduced portion of its historical range. In Kansas, the Topeka Shiner exists in several streams within the Flint Hill region and in an isolated population in Wallace County. It has not been recorded on the Solomon River Basin or Webster Reservoir in Kansas.

Candidate Species

Swift fox The swift fox is a prairie-dwelling canid historically distributed throughout the contiguous short to midgrass prairie habitat from the south-central Prairie Provinces in Canada to the southern portions of the western Great Plains. Swift fox habitat consists of level to gently sloping topography containing an open view of the surrounding landscape, abundant prey, and lack of predators and competitors. A breeding pair of swift foxes generally requires 1,280 to 2,300 acres of short to midgrass prairie habitat with abundant prey. Swift foxes are commonly associated with prairie dog towns where they find both food and shelter.

Swift foxes are primarily nocturnal and are strongly associated with their dens. Dens have been found in short-grass prairie, mid-grass prairie, cultivated fields, pastures, under abandoned farm buildings, and in culverts. Swift foxes are opportunistic predators and, depending upon season and availability, consume primarily prairie dogs, jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, mice, ground-nesting birds, and carrion.

Swift foxes are characterized as naive and unwary making it susceptible to trapping. Inadvertent trapping combined with intensive prairie dog control in the

Great Plains has dramatically reduced swift fox numbers. The swift fox is extremely vulnerable to prey reduction caused by habitat modification and prairie dog control programs. In addition, the swift fox feeds on carrion from road kills and thus frequently succumbs to automobile collisions. It is often mistakenly taken for coyotes by individuals wishing to remove all canids for fear of livestock predation.

The swift fox is widely distributed throughout the Great Plains and small, disjunctive populations exist in the western third of Nebraska and Kansas. Most of the Solomon River Basin lies within its probable distribution. Its current status in Kansas is unknown but it is thought there may be some reoccupation of its former range.

Black-tailed prairie dog The black-tailed prairie dog is a small, stout ground squirrel 14-17 inches long and weighing one to three pounds. The black-tipped tail is characteristic of the species with mixed body colors varying from brown, black, gray, and white. Black-tailed prairie dogs are diurnal burrowing animals spending most of their day above ground. They do not hibernate as do other North American species. The species is very social, living in large population that can extend for miles. Within these colonies, prairie dogs live in territorial, harem-polygamous family groups called “coteries”.

The colonial nature of the black-tailed prairie dog is a significant characteristic of the species. Colonality offers an effective defense mechanism by aiding in the detection of predators and by deterring predators through mobbing behavior. It increases reproductive success through cooperative rearing of juveniles, and it aids parasite removal through shared grooming.

Many authors have recognized the biological importance of the black-tailed prairie dog as a keystone species. Keystone species influence ecosystem function through their activities in unique and significant ways. Prairie dogs act in several roles: they are prey, provide shelter, modify vegetation, and influence ecological processes in a manner not entirely duplicated by other prairie herbivores. Although the black-tailed prairie dog creates habitat for itself and other species, it is also affected by other species. Prairie dogs can create preferential grazing opportunities for herbivores that in turn create opportunities for expansion of prairie dog colonies along their perimeters. Black-tailed prairie dogs are especially important to the black-footed ferret, swift fox, mountain plover, ferruginous hawk, and burrowing owl.

The historic range of the black-tailed prairie dog included portions of eleven states, Canada, and Mexico. Its current range occurs from extreme south central Canada to northeastern Mexico from approximately the 98th meridian west to the Rocky Mountains. The species is found in scattered populations and at much-reduced numbers throughout central and western Kansas. The species continues

to decline from conversion of grasslands to cropland, urban areas, and other vegetative communities; structural deterioration of burrows; and habitat fragmentation.

Species of Concern

The State of Kansas also administers a program for the conservation of State-recognized threatened and endangered species. The following threatened and endangered species are known to occur or are likely to occur in the project areas:

- ❖ Eastern spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius interrupta*), threatened
- ❖ Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), endangered
- ❖ Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), endangered
- ❖ Snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), threatened
- ❖ White-faced ibis (*Plagadis chichi*), threatened

The State and Federally listed bald eagle is the only listed species with State-designated critical habitats within the area. All lands and water within 5 air miles of public lands near Webster Reservoir are State-designated as critical habitats for the bald eagle. Also, designated critical bald eagle habitats occur along a corridor that extends 100 yards landward from the water edge on both banks of the main stem of the Solomon River.

Visitor Management

Visitor Use

Visitor use in the wildlife areas consist mainly of hunting, fishing, and primitive camping. Some visitors may participate in wildlife observation and nature photography. The wildlife area designated camping areas are as follows: Morel, Bow City, Twin Pond, Browns Hollow, and Sand Plum.

Interpretive Program

No interpretive program is proposed for the wildlife area. However, the Department maintains five information centers at entry points to the wildlife area. A large map of the wildlife area, public lands regulations, special Webster regulations, and special program information are provided at these information centers.

Visual Resource Management

Visual resource management, according to Reclamation, is the art and science of planning and administering the use of Reclamation lands so the visual effects maintain or upgrade man's and nature's welfare through a compatible coexistence.

Visual resource management in the wildlife area should include minimizing the impact of man and his vehicles. Undesirable vehicle trails will be closed by

installing barriers and/or signs.

Future development and construction activities in wildlife areas might include:

- (1) Developing wildlife or fishing access areas
- (2) Improvement or maintenance of existing facilities. To maintain visual quality, the design of such facilities and the materials used must be compatible with the landscape.

Operations, Maintenance, and Capital Improvements

The Department's staff consists of a public lands manager, administrative assistant, conservation officer, and seasonal labor. A fisheries biologist stationed at Webster reservoir is responsible for fisheries management. Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and development activities at Webster are funded through an annual O&M budget, and wildlife fee funds, and are supplemented by agricultural funds. In addition, Reclamation provides limited funding when available.

Public Use, Regulations, and Enforcement

All hunting and fishing regulations are established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department. Recreation lands are open to hunting within certain restrictions. It is illegal to hunt within 100 yards of occupied campsites, concessions, or residences.

Park permits are required year round to enter developed recreational areas as established by the Kansas State Legislature. A valid sticker must be displayed on each vehicle. A daily permit can be purchased for periods of day use or a season-long permit can be obtained.

The area conservation officer is responsible for enforcing all game, boating, water regulations, and local laws. Game violations and acts of vandalism on recreational and wildlife lands are investigated by the conservation officer. The Rooks County sheriff and Kansas State Patrol have jurisdiction and the authority to investigate all cases of personal injury or property damage. The public lands manager also has law enforcement responsibilities and assists in emergency situations.

Although most uses are compatible with on-going management, the use of off-road vehicles has created problems. Four-wheel drive vehicles and motorcycles destroy vegetation, cause soil erosion, and cause conflicts with other users. Attempts are being made to restrict vehicles to established roads by placing regulatory signs and cattle gates at the entrances to the reservoir area.

Off-Road Vehicle Use

Reclamation lands are closed to Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) use, except for an area or trail specifically opened to use of ORV in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 420.21. There is currently no ORV use area designated at Webster Reservoir or Woodston Diversion Dam.

At the top of conservation pool there are approximately seven miles of roads open on the Webster Wildlife Area. A combination of permanent and seasonal roads is used to satisfy most user needs. Based on past experience there have been unauthorized vehicular roads created by the public around the reservoir as lake levels declined. These unauthorized and undesignated trails will be closed immediately by Reclamation and the Department to minimize the environmental effects to soils, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources. At times, designated roads and parking lots have deteriorated and have become safety hazards due to shoreline erosion and other natural events. In these cases, such roads and/or parking lots will be closed until conditions can be corrected.

Special Uses

In an effort to provide high quality hunting opportunities, the Department currently offers several types of special hunting opportunities commensurate with area wildlife resources. Youths under 16 are able to participate in pheasant, waterfowl, and deer hunts within the Webster State Park and Wildlife Refuges.

Safety and First Aid

All State vehicles in the park are equipped with first aid kits. Conservation officers are well trained in first aid procedures while seasonal employees receive some training. No visitor safety awareness campaign is presently being implemented.