FISHING

Several hundred water-filled pits dot the MLWA, creating about 1,500 acres of public waters. More than 200 lakes on the area are managed for fishing. Strip-mine lakes produce some of Kansas’ finest fishing. Sportfish include largemouth bass, rainbow trout, walleye, channel catfish, crappie, bluegill, reed sunfish, spotted bass, wipers, bullhead, and warmouth. Several MLWA waters are quite clear, and fishing is successful. Boats help reach many of the prime fishing spots. The lakes are mostly sheltered from wind and too small for large craft. Small boats and float tubes work best.

Alternative water characteristics allow the trout to survive and grow year-round. A trout stamp is required for anyone 16 or older to fish the trout lake. Most MLWA waters include native grass establishments, timber stand improvement, wetlands restoration, the Mined Land Wildlife Area, and Mine 19 (east) to represent the coal mining era that once dominated this landscape. The lakes are mostly sheltered from wind and too small for large craft. Small boats and float tubes work best.

WILDLIFE

The Mined Land Wildlife Area has a diversity of habitats, including native grassland, woody shrub areas, oak-hickory forests, and wetlands. Native grass establishments, timber stand improvement, food plots, and shrub planting continue to improve quail habitat. Cottontail rabbits and fox squirrels are abundant. Several large food plots are managed specifically to attract doves in September. Doves can be abundant and offer good opportunities for all ages. The MLWA offers two modern rental cabins as an alternative to tent and RV camping. The cabins are located on Unit 30 of the wildlife area overlooking the Trout Lake. The cabins are named Coal Ridge (west) and Mine 19 (east) to represent the coal mining era that once dominated this landscape. The cabins are available for rent year-round and will accommodate up to six overnight guests. For reservations go to: www.reserve.ksoutdoors.com.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Photographers and wildlife observers will find a variety of birds and other animals at the MLWA. A bison display herd is located on Unit 42 near West Mineral. Canoeing is allowed on all MLWA waters, while motorized boats may only be used for fishing and hunting. No water skiing or personal watercraft use is allowed.

Vehicles are restricted to maintained roads and parking areas. Some roads are closed to all traffic. Do not leave vehicles parked on boat ramps. Use caution when launching boats because ramps drop off sharply, and trailers backed too far may become high-centered. Boat ramps are available on most large lakes.

Swimming is NOT allowed on the area. Many of the lakes are steep-sided. Anglers wading the shorelines should use caution.

Tent camping is allowed at any location except refuge areas. RVs may be parked in designated areas or parking lots. RVs may not block boat ramps, restrict road traffic, or drive off roads. No hookups are available. Visitors must take their trash with them. Check the Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary and all posted notices before fishing.

Certain areas may be closed to hunting and fishing periodically. Target shooting, trotlines and setlines are prohibited on all areas.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

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