

# BIG HILL LAKE

Pearson-Skubitz Big Hill Lake is located in an oak-bluestem forest, in the Big Hill Creek Valley, just southwest of Parsons and east of Cherryvale. It provides a wide variety of native vegetation,



© Doug Stamm

fish and scenery for any nature lover. The 1,240 acre lake is a fisherman's paradise.

Pre-impoundment planning and the continued "Trophy Lake" management has developed Big Hill Lake into one of the best fishing lakes in Kansas. Technically

defined as a trophy managed reservoir, Big Hill Lake has an 18-inch minimum length limit for smallmouth bass and a 21-inch minimum length limit for largemouth bass.

Popular with tournament and recreation anglers alike, Big Hill offers two concrete boat ramps and several shore access points for fisherman targeting a number of species.

Standing timber throughout the lake provides wonderful cover for largemouth bass and the south end

of the lake supports a strong smallmouth bass population with its rocky banks and points.

Crappie is king in the spring and a number of good sized catfish are taken each year by shore and boat anglers.

White bass and bluegill are found throughout the lake and will keep anglers of all ages busy.

For those interested in scheduling a fishing tournament, for more information or regulations and limits, contact the Army Corps of Engineers Big Hill Project Office at (620) 336-2741.



# CAMPING

## Big Hill Parks

Several areas are offered by the Corps of Engineers for camping, picnicking & other outdoor activities. Seasonal fees are collected at three of the areas.

**Cherryvale Park (Class A)** - located 4 miles east of Cherryvale.

**Mound Valley North (Class A) & Mound Valley South (Class A)**- located five miles east of Cherryvale. Located on the main body of Big Hill Lake.

**Timber Hill Park (Class B)** - located 5 miles east of Cherryvale. Timber Hill Park is for those who like to get back to nature with the bare minimum.

## Chetopa

At Elmore Park, you'll find plenty of RV parking, a boat ramp, shelter houses, picnic tables, electric and water hook-ups.

East Park runs along the Neosho River. Electric hook-ups are available for RVs or campers.

## Idle Hour Lake (Altamont)

The Louis P. Gartner Recreational Area is a beautiful, quiet escape to camp, fish or picnic. Rent camp spots or the shelter house by calling (620) 784-5582. The site is open to both tent and RV campers.

## Lake Parsons

Campsites with and without electricity are available. Permits are available on a daily or annual basis. Call (620) 421-7030. There is no charge for camping in areas where no improved pad is available. City ordinance limits camping to 10 days per calendar month and not more than 10 consecutive days.

## Oswego

Take advantage of Oswego's two campgrounds. Danny Elliot Park offers five sites, with electric and water. For directions, call (620) 795-4433.

Kamp Siesta features 30 sites, electric, water, dump station, restrooms and showers.

# GREATER LABETTE COUNTY KANSAS OUTDOOR RECREATION GUIDE



# IDLE HOUR LAKE (ALTAMONT)

The Louis P. Gartner Recreational Area at Altamont's Idle Hour Lake is a beautiful, quiet place to camp, fish or picnic with family and friends.

Rent the camp sites or shelter house by calling (620) 784-5582.

The site is open to both tent and RV campers, and is complete with nine RV campsites; including water and electric hookups, picnic tables, grills and fire rings for each camping spot and a playground for children. A bathroom facility is available.

The lake is stocked with bass, catfish and crappie.



© City of Altamont

# LAKE PARSONS

Beautiful 980-acre Lake Parsons is a peaceful retreat for campers, a fun-filled beach for swimmers and a sportsman's paradise for hunting and fishing.

Fisherman can take advantage of this rural lake and catch buffalo, channel catfish, crappie, flatheads, sunfish, largemouth and white bass and a variety of other fish. This year-round recreational area draws visitors from near and far.

Lake Parsons is best known for its deer hunting (archery only) and very good wild turkey and duck hunting.



Check out more fishing information at [www.centralmidwestbass.com](http://www.centralmidwestbass.com)

# MINED LAND

## History of the Mined Land Area

The first land donation was received in 1926. The largest acquisition, totaling 8,208 acres was donated by the Pittsburg & Midway Coal Company (P&M) to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) in 1981.

## About the Land

This area is more than 14,500 acres in size, comprised of 1,500 acres of water and 13,000 acres of land. All but 2,000 acres of the property was surface mined for coal during the 1920s through 1974. The property is rugged country dotted with more than 1,000 strip-mine lakes, steep-sided hills and dense vegetation. Unmined areas consist of mature bottomland woodland and small crop fields. The strip-mine lakes vary in size from ¼ acre to 50 acres in size with depths to 60 feet.



© KDWP

Native grass and some cool-season grasses dominate 4,000 acres of the property. The remaining 9,000 acres of land is comprised of bur oak, pin oak, walnut, hickory and hackberry with a thick understory of dogwood, green briar, honeysuckle, poison ivy and blackberry.

Primary terrestrial use on the property includes hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing and mushroom/berry picking.

Species hunted include whitetail deer, eastern turkey, mourning dove, bobwhite quail, fox squirrel, cottontails and waterfowl. Fisherman can take advantage of regional species, including one large pit is stocked with trout.

## Special Use Regulations:

- Off Road Vehicle & Horse use is prohibited.
- Special fishing regulations are in effect.
- Unit 1 is open to Archery hunting only.
- Set lines are prohibited.

## Special Attractions:

Big Brutus, an 11 million pound coal shovel & coal mining museum is open to the public.

# BONE CREEK RESERVOIR

Bone Creek Reservoir north of Arma, serves as a source of drinking water for many residents in southeast Kansas, however, it is more readily known as one of the area's best fishing lakes. Bone Creek offers more than 540 acres of nature's splendor.

Fisherman have reported catching Bluegill, Black Bullheads, Channel Catfish, Crappie, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Walleye, Redear Sunfish and Green Sunfish.

Note that recreational use permits (vehicle permits) are not required at Bone Creek.

# NEOSHO RIVER

The Neosho River runs through a large portion of southeast Kansas. There are three public access boat ramps on the Neosho River in Labette County.

## Chetopa

The City of Chetopa has four parks, three of them along the Neosho River with access to fishing and two that include concrete boat ramps.

Chetopa also has great camping areas with a quiet atmosphere. In Chetopa you'll find cozy restaurants, convenience stores, a grocery store, an old-fashioned drug store and other attractions.

A special Paddlefish Snagging season runs March 15 through May 15 on the Neosho River below the Chetopa City Dam.

## Oswego

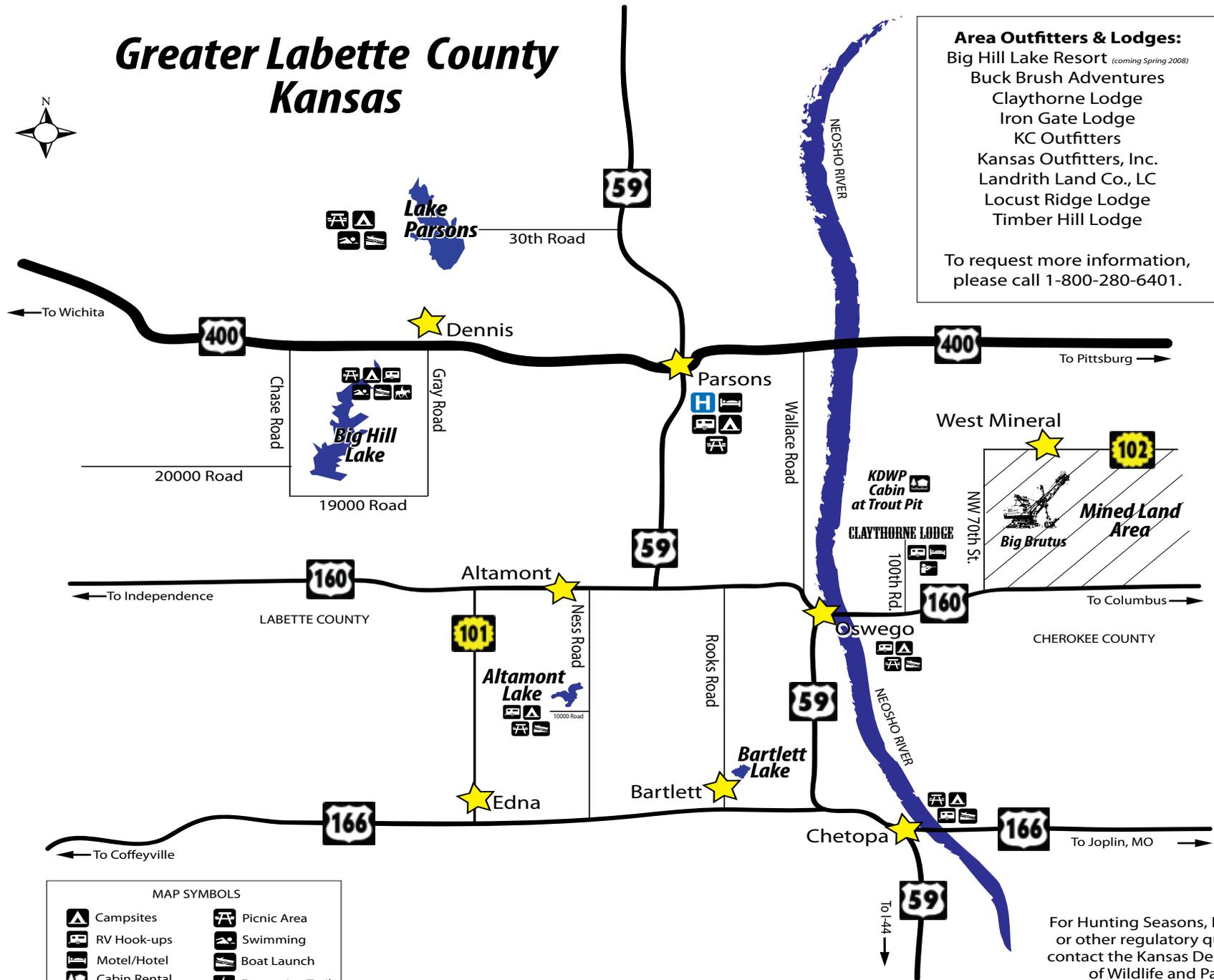
If you are seeking river access above the Chetopa Dam, then go to Oswego. Just west of the city's water plant is a concrete boat ramp providing public access to the river.

Oswego, the Labette County Seat, also offers campsites, RV parking and a variety of shopping and dining opportunities.



© Rob Riggins/KDWP

# Greater Labette County Kansas



### Area Outfitters & Lodges:

- Big Hill Lake Resort (coming Spring 2008)
- Buck Brush Adventures
- Claythorne Lodge
- Iron Gate Lodge
- KC Outfitters
- Kansas Outfitters, Inc.
- Landrith Land Co., LC
- Locust Ridge Lodge
- Timber Hill Lodge

To request more information,  
please call 1-800-280-6401.

MAP SYMBOLS	
	Campsites
	RV Hook-ups
	Motel/Hotel
	Cabin Rental
	Shooting Sports
	Picnic Area
	Swimming
	Boat Launch
	Equestrian Trail
	Hospital

Map Produced by: Labette County Tourism, (620) 421-7030

For Hunting Seasons, Licensing  
or other regulatory questions  
contact the Kansas Department  
of Wildlife and Parks:

[www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us)  
(620) 231-3173

# BIRDS/WILDLIFE

## Big Hill Wildlife Area

Bluestem prairie grasses and wildflowers such as woolly verbena, green and butterfly milkweed, western yarrow, partridge pea, spreading aster, and dotted gayfeather provide habitat for mice, cottontails, and coyotes.

Hedgerows of Osage orange, dogwood, and persimmon furnish nesting sites for Bell's vireo, northern bobwhite quail, orchard orioles and scissor-tailed flycatchers.

During migrations check the lake for snow and Canada geese, canvasbacks, redheads, pintails, and blue-winged teal.

## Ruth Nixon Trail at Big Hill Lake

The Ruth Nixon Trail follows the western shore of the lake through woodlands of post, blackjack, red, and chinquapin oaks. Their acorns provide nutrition for wild turkey, gray squirrels and fox squirrels.

Look for deer trails and watch for cardinals, chickadees, bluejays, and woodpeckers. Armadillos, foxes, woodchucks, & bobcats can be found here.

In spring, listen in the evening and early morning for great horned owls, whip-poor-wills, and chuck-will's-widow. In early summer watch for eastern bluebirds, American redstarts, Carolina wrens, and Kentucky warblers.



# SHOOTING SPORTS

## Claythorne Lodge

Claythorne Lodge is a premier resort, minutes east of Oswego. The lodge is nationally-known and has hosted a number of prestigious National Sporting Clays Association sanctioned shoots.

Hunters and sport shooters alike have taken advantage of Claythorne's skeet, trap and 5-stand fields. They offer shooters a variety of practice and tournament venues.

Claythorne offers five unique courses as well as both upland and continental style hunting with half or full-day quail and pheasant hunts available.

On-site shooting instruction is available by appointment.



© Claythorne Lodge

# HUNTING

Due to the quality and variety of wildlife in Southeast Kansas, hunting is a popular pastime that draws individuals from across the United States.

The region has an abundant supply of whitetail deer, dove and wild turkeys in addition to a growing number of quail.

To find out more about when seasons open, specific hunting regulations and licensing information, contact the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. (620) 231-3173



© Claythorne Lodge

# TRAILS & HIKING

## Ruth Nixon Trail at Big Hill

The Ruth Nixon Trail follows the western shore of the lake through woodlands for one mile. This trail allows hikers to view the natural habitats of a variety of wildlife.

Near the trailhead is a beautiful scenic overlook area. This overlook is especially inviting in the fall, when the leaves change to vibrant colors.



## Bridle Trail at Big Hill Lake

The Big Hill Lake Bridle Trail loops around the northern part of the lake. This natural equestrian trail provides a scenic route for relaxation, and the opportunity to enjoy Big Hill Lake on horseback.

The 17 mile trail provides a variety of terrain for all ages to enjoy. There are tethering areas and three parking areas equipped with limited facilities that may be used for overnight camping by riders.

## Tolen Creek Park Trail

The Tolen Creek Park Trail is located on the north edge of Parsons near the U.S. Highway 400 bypass. This trail is being developed as a premier nature experience for hikers and bikers.

The natural winding trail takes you past wooded areas where wildlife can be found, and a fully restored, century old stone house, which will become the Labette County Farm History Center. To the east of the stone house and the trail is a large pond and wetlands area.



  
**KANSAS**  
as big as you think™

## Greater Labette County Tourism

P.O. Box 1037 • Parsons, KS 67357  
(620) 421-7030 • 1-800-280-6401

*Portions of this outdoor reference guide are reprinted with approval from the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks.*