ROCKY FORD

Rocky Ford Fishing Area was donated to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks by Kansas Power and Light, a division of Western Resources, in 1967. Native Americans used this site as a river crossing. The flat, rock bottom made the crossing safe under normal conditions. The ford was used by pioneers for many years. A timber and rock dam provided hydro-mechanical power for a flour and saw mill that served the community for many years.

The mill was converted to a concrete power dam, built by the Rocky Ford Milling and Power Company in the early 1900s. The area had long been used for community picnics and swimming. The hollow dam was also used by employees to get to and from work, from company-owned housing on the west side of the Big Blue River to the power plant on the east bank.

In 1988, a retaining wall with a walkway was constructed below the dam, improving angler access and fishery habitat below the dam.

In 2005 an additional 55 acres of land and water were purchased through a National Recreation and Trails Grant (NRT). This added nearly one mile of river access on the east side of the Big Blue River from Tuttle Creek State Park's Rocky Ford Campground to the original Rocky Ford Fishing Area and then south to the bridge at Dyer Road. A concrete walkway, named The Heritage Trail, runs the entire length with benches and angular access sites. The trail is open to outdoor enthusiasts including hikers, bikers, anglers, and nature enthusiasts.

Rocky Ford Fishing Area is located 4 miles northeast of Manhattan. Drive north 1.5 miles on U.S. Hwy. 24 to Barnes Road, turn right and go 1.5 miles to Rocky Ford Road, turn left and go 1 mile to the Rocky Ford Fishing Area. The trail may be accessed from a trail head either at the Rocky Ford Fishing Area or from the Rocky Ford Campground in the River Pond Area at Tuttle Creek State Park.

FISHING

The old power dam offers some ideal stream fishing due to the dam restricting fish from moving upstream. Channel catfish are abundant below the dam. Worms, shad baits, crawdads, grasshoppers, and prepared bait are good bets.

White bass can be caught year-round, depending on the outflow of Tuttle Creek Dam. Jigs, imitation shad lures, and minnows are best for taking these fish. Large flathead catfish inhabit the water below the dam and are often caught using worms, crawdads, and small- to medium-sized bait fish.

Walleye and saugeye fishing can be fair throughout the year. Early spring finds walleye making their annual run upstream to spawn. They can be caught on jigs, minnows, and shad-imitation lures.

Depending on the outflow of Tuttle Creek Dam, crappie fishing can also be good. Jigs and small minnows work best.

BOATING

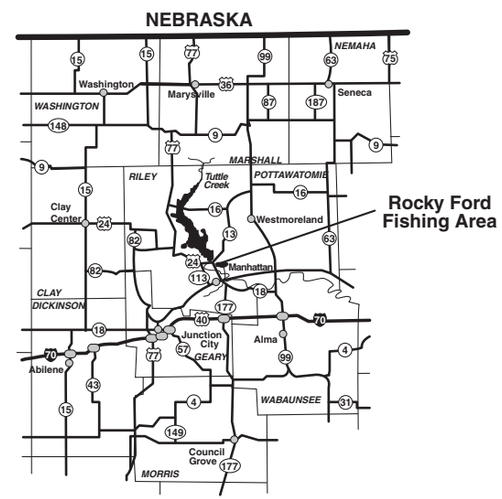
The riffles below Rocky Ford Fishing Area Dam offer kayak and canoe enthusiasts a place to try their skill during certain water releases from Tuttle Creek Dam. Boaters are reminded to obey state boating laws.

The Big Blue River is not listed as a navigable stream. Therefore, you must obtain permission from each adjacent landowner before you kayak, canoe, or boat any portion of the river that is not publicly owned or managed.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Visitors are reminded that outflows from Tuttle Creek Dam frequently change. Caution must be used when fishing from the walkway. High water can create excessive turbulence which may flow over the walkway. No foot traffic or angling is allowed on the dam apron. Prior to a release of water from the dam, the United States Army Corps of Engineers will sound a warning siren. At anytime that you hear the siren, or notice a rise in the water level leave the area immediately.

- Vehicles are permitted on parking areas only.
- Please take your trash with you.
- This area is closed to hunting.
- Consult area information signs for additional rules and regulations on the area.
- Ground fires are not permitted.

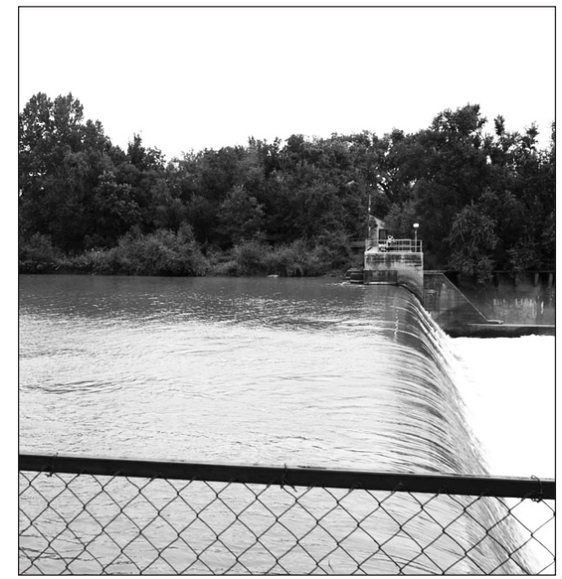


General Area Map

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, and military or veteran status. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612-1327. 05/09

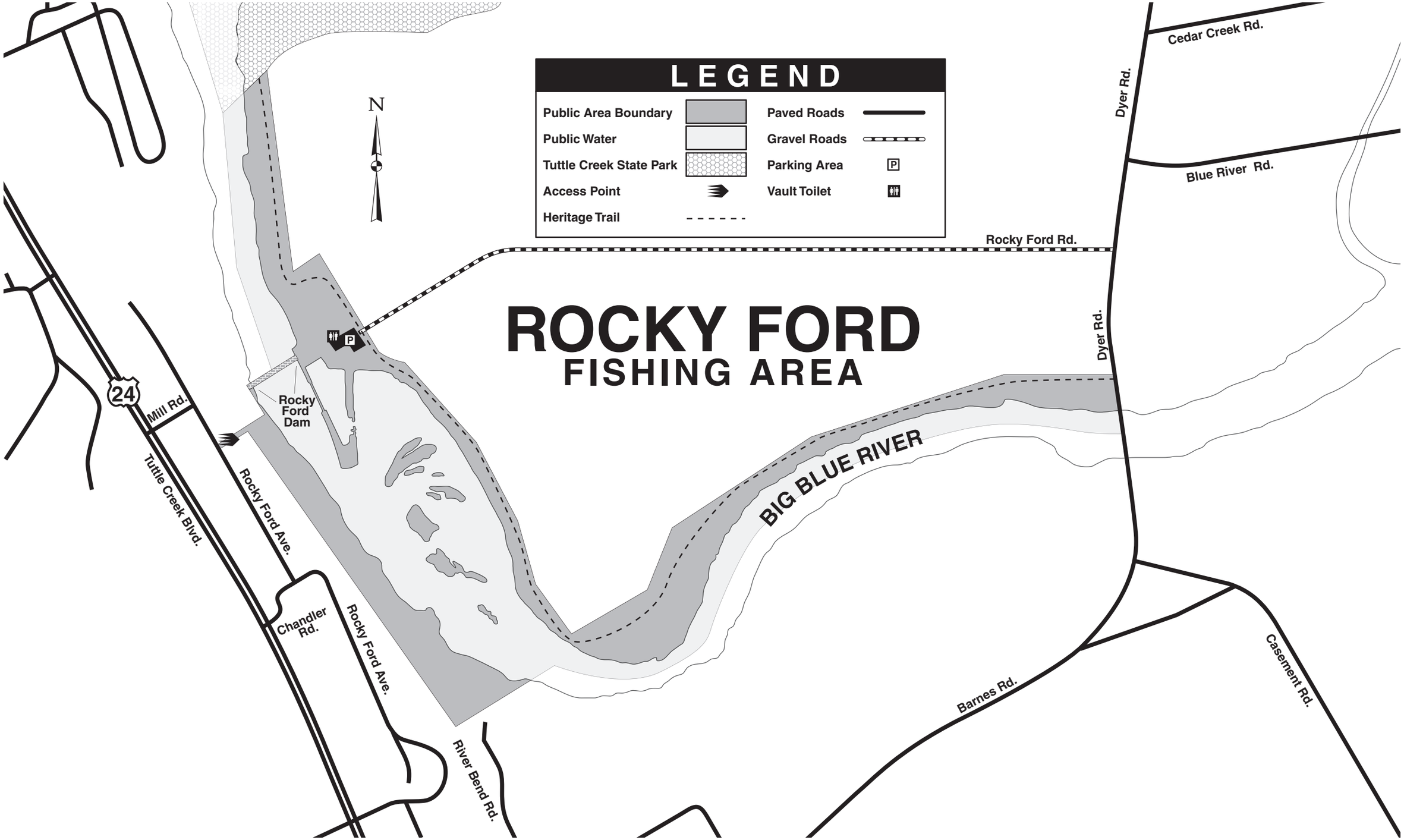
Rocky Ford

Fishing Area & Trail



Rocky Ford Office
7960 State Lake Rd.
Manhattan, KS 66592
(785) 539-9999 (Area Office)
(785) 539-7941 (Park Office)
(785) 273-6740 (Regional Office)

Department Website:
kdwp.state.ks.us


ROCKY FORD
FISHING AREA
LEGEND
Public Area Boundary
Public Water
Tuttle Creek State Park
Access Point
Heritage Trail
Paved Roads
Gravel Roads
Parking Area
Vault Toilet
N
Rocky Ford Rd.
Dyer Rd.
Cedar Creek Rd.
Blue River Rd.
Rocky Ford Dam
BIG BLUE RIVER
24
Mill Rd.
Tuttle Creek Blvd.
Rocky Ford Ave.
Chandler Rd.
Rocky Ford Ave.
River Bend Rd.
Barnes Rd.
Casement Rd.