

## Benefits

Melvern Lake and Dam were constructed from 1967 to 1972 at a cost of \$37,436,530 for the primary purpose of providing flood control on the lower Marais Des Cygnes River. As of October 2012, Melvern Lake has prevented approximately \$220,637,000 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 water supply, recreation 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 and clarity for Melvern Lake.



## 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 through the America the Beautiful Passport program, 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:

- by phone toll free (877)444-6777
- via the internet at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

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.



# 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 enjoy the recreational opportunities the lake, the parks and the surrounding public lands provide. We hope your visit is safe and pleasant so that you will return often.

## Early History

The earliest known inhabitants of the Melvern Lake area were the Kansa Indians; they inhabited the area for nearly a century. In 1825, the Kansa Tribe ceded most of their territory, including the Melvern Lake area, 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. By 1867, the area was opened to white settlement and the reservation was removed from the Marais des Cygnes River Valley.

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 almost 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 the town did grow to over 300 people by 1879. Like Olivet, Arvonia's population has slowly dwindled to just a handful today.

## 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, Kansas 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, fishing, or base camp for your next hunting trip. 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, a covered dock, fly-fishing pond, kids fishing pond, Frisbee golf, and Wi-Fi are available to campers and day users. The park even has kayaks and canoes for rent.



Eisenhower has complete facilities available, including 186 utility campsites available for RVs and primitive camping. Cabins and Yurts are also available. The park has an equestrian campground and approximately 20 miles of trails available for horseback riders. Contact the park office at (785)528-4102 or [eisenhowerpsp@ksoutdoors.com](mailto:eisenhowerpsp@ksoutdoors.com). Make online reservations at <http://www.reserveamerica.com>



## Fishing

Through a vigorous fisheries management program conducted by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, 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 the stocking of game fish, more stringent regulations and better lake level management have combined to substantially improve the overall fishing quality in the lake.

The 90-acre Outlet Park River Pond is managed intensively via game fish stocking, placement of habitat structure and an aggressive feeding program. Species targeted include crappie, catfish, black bass, walleye and wiper.



## Hunting

Melvern Lake offers access to more than 13,000 acres of public hunting managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism. The Melvern Wildlife Area, managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, has approximately 10,000 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 tallgrass 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. The Wildlife Area also offers a Youth Mentoring Area open to anyone under 16 or anyone hunting with someone under 16.

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

- A free daily hunting permit is required when using the Melvern Wildlife Area.
- Contact the Melvern Wildlife Area at 620-699-3372 or visit them at: <http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/KDWPT-Info/Locations/Wildlife-Areas/Region-5/Melvern-Wildlife-Area>

## Trails

**Marais des Cygnes River Nature Trail**- a self-guided interpretive trail approximately 1 mile long located along the original Marais des Cygnes River channel within Outlet Park.

**River Bottom Nature Trail**- approximately ¾ mile long located in a hardwood forested river bottom within Outlet Park.

**River Pond Trail**- approximately 1 ½ mile long trail surrounding the Outlet River Pond. The River Pond was created during initial construction of the dam from fill material of the embankment.

**Overlook Nature Trail**- approximately ¼ mile long through forested areas located within Coeur D' Alene Park. This trail connects the Coeur D' Alene Day Use Park to the Overlook area.

**Breakwater Nature Trail**- over ½ mile long through timbered areas along the shoreline located on the east side of Coeur D'Alene Campground.

**Tallgrass Heritage Trail**- approximately 4 ¼ miles long stretching through tallgrass prairie, ephemeral streams, timbered areas, as well as the shoreline of Melvern Lake. This trail stretches from Coeur D'Alene Campground to Arrow Rock Campground.

**Crooked Knee Horse Trail**- approximately 20 miles long located within Eisenhower State Park. This trail is open to hiking, biking, and horse riding. Named after a knee injury President Eisenhower received while at West Point.

**Five Star Multiuse Trail**- approximately 5 miles long located within Eisenhower State Park and is open to hiking and biking. A 2 mile section is set aside for archery. It consists of 20 targets set at various ranges and difficulties.

**Scooter Trail**- approximately 1 ½ mile long located within Eisenhower State Park and is open to hiking, biking, and motorized scooters 50 cc and under from 10 am to 6 pm.

## Recreation – U.S. Army 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 43 campsites, a small group picnic shelter, boat ramp and numerous individual picnic sites. Other amenities include a shower building, sanitary dump station, restrooms, a courtesy dock with fish cleaning station, playground and hiking trail.

### Coeur D' Alene Park

Coeur d' Alene Park offers 56 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, restrooms, a courtesy dock with fish cleaning station.

### Turkey Point Park

Turkey Point Park offers 47 campsites, two group camp areas with shelters, a boat ramp and numerous individual picnic sites. Other amenities include a shower building, two playgrounds, a sanitary dump station, restrooms, a courtesy dock with fish cleaning station and a day use area 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 provides free camping to the public. The campground offers 25 basic campsites with gravel pads. In addition, vault toilets, and a boat ramp with a courtesy dock are available for lake users.

