

HAYDEN OUTDOORS

Mr. Rick Billinger
State Senator

Dear Rick,

I appreciate your support of the project at the Smoky Gardens and the headwaters of the Smoky River. I believe that it is a critical piece of habitat for the State of Kansas, Sherman County and the surrounding counties.

Currently, the State Lake is underutilized because of its size, and the inability of the dam to hold water. This purchase and addition to the property, will insure an excellent property and its usefulness for the State.

As kids, my friends and I were really into fishing growing up in that area, and the Smoky Gardens allowed my family, and all of our friends, to have a safe place for us to learn the outdoors. Many areas of Kansas have good water, state parks and even excellent access to fishing and youth activities, right in town; which makes it is easy to take for granted. However, northwest Kansas is different. When you are a kid in Northwest Kansas and you see water, you go to it! Now, "going to water" from Goodland, Kansas, means traveling to Scott County Lake (2 hours), Antelope Lake near Hoxie (1.5 hours), Swanson Reservoir near Atwood (1.5 Hours); This is just not feasible for the youth of many small towns, for safety and monetary reasons. The Smoky Gardens and this State land can benefit the youth and communities from Tribune to St. Francis and Burlington to Colby, Kansas.

This property is also very unique as it holds excellent Turkey, White-Tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Pheasant and Prairie Chicken. It is not only a very diverse property in the area, but also in the nation, as there are few public areas offering successful habitat for all of these species. The local and state Pheasants Forever organizations have recognized its value and coordination of improving this sensitive area, I hope that you, and the Senate, will recognize it, as well.

I would also like to thank you, Rick, for being such a good "steward of the land", yourself. You have done more for habitat in Northwest Kansas, than any landowner, and I know that leading by example has been first on your list. I am proud to call you my friend and I hope you are successful with this project.

Sincerely,


Dax Hayden
Hayden Outdoors, LLC.

Division of Wildlife



KANSAS LEADER