



News Release

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Ribbon cutting set for Hanger Family Preserve fishing pond

TOPEKA, KAN. – A 2:30 p.m. Oct. 29 ribbon cutting means far more than just the reopening of a popular fishing pond at Lake Shawnee. The fishing pond will formally become part of the Dick and Dotty Hanger Family Preserve and be renamed, supporting the Hangers' lifelong commitment to preserving and providing natural areas and outdoor education opportunities for today and tomorrow's youth. The pond is open to fishing by youth up to age 16 and seniors age 75 and older who do not require a fishing license to fish.

Through an endowment established through the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Foundation, the Hangers have made possible the preservation and development of the area immediately south of the entry drive to the Garden House and Yacht Club. The beginning of the Hanger Family Preserve is already established. The preserve completes the 37.5 acres that comprise Ted Ensley Gardens – the 9.5-acre garden area, the arboretum on the west side of West Edge Road, and the Dick and Dotty Hanger Family Preserve.

The fishing pond was in need of renovation as the banks were eroding and silting in the pond and encouraging weed growth along the bank area. The pond was drained so that decorative concrete blocks could be placed to shore up the banks and prevent future erosion. A 10-foot wide ADA accessible path was poured to encircle the pond and a waterfall feature was added to beautify the area. Through the Dick and Dotty Hanger Family Fund, the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Foundation contributed more than half of the funding for the \$421,500 project.

An entry on the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Foundation website reads:

As Topeka/Shawnee County develops, loss of open space and natural areas disappear. Similarly as these areas disappear and as the community becomes more urbanized the outdoor experiences and opportunities for today's youth to learn and experience angling and hunting are

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dwindling as well. Many of today's youth are suffering from Nature-Deficient Disorder. Likewise, study after study shows that people without access to green and open space suffer from higher rates of obesity and diabetes, and all the long-term complications that come along with these diseases. Preserving these areas and providing outdoor educational opportunities is the greatest reason for contributing to the Dick and Dotty Hanger Family Preserve Fund.

Funds are being sought to help complete the remainder Hanger Family Nature Preserve area. Donations may be made through the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Foundation. Call 785-251-6885.

The Hangers have had a lifetime love for Lake Shawnee. Dick served as Shawnee County Commissioner from the Third District from 1960 through 1968, a period that saw the creation of the Shawnee County Parks + Recreation Department, the construction of the Shawnee County Courthouse, and the development of Lake Shawnee as a public park, including the construction of Lake Shawnee Junior and the Lake Shawnee Golf Course. To honor their commitment and service to the community, the Shawnee County Board of County Commissioners officially dedicated the area surrounding the Lake Shawnee Junior as the "Dick and Dotty Hanger Family Preserve".

Present at the ribbon cutting will be Richard "Dick" and Dorothy "Dotty" Hanger, County Commissioner Bob Archer, in whose district Lake Shawnee lies, John E. Knight, SCP+R director, and Jarrod Holroyd, president of the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Foundation.

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