

Position	Secretary
Organization	Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP)
Location	Topeka, KS
Reporting Relationship	
Website	https://ksoutdoors.com/

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) is an executive branch agency in charge of operating and regulating the use of state parks, state lakes, recreational grounds, wildlife areas and sanctuaries, fish hatcheries, natural areas, historic sites and other lands, waters, and facilities for the promotion of public health, safety, and for the use and pleasure of visitors. The agency is also charged with the development and conservation of wildlife and the natural resources within the state. The agency oversees 29 state parks, 500 miles of trails, approximately 460,301 acres of leased or owned public lands, management of four hatcheries, and four nature centers.

To meet our mission, projects, and goals, KDWP employs approximately 466 full time employees and up to 350 temporary employees, throughout the state, with diverse and varying skillsets. The largest agency office is the Operational Headquarters in Pratt, Kansas. The Office of the Secretary is maintained in Topeka, Kansas. There are three Regional Offices located in Topeka, Wichita, and Hays; three District Offices in Kansas City, Chanute, and Dodge City; and a Research Office located in Emporia, Kansas. Various wildlife, public land, and parks offices are located across the state.

KDWP has an annual budget of \$110 million for Fiscal Year 2024. The agency is primarily funded through license fees, grants and federal funds that are provided through the Pitman Roberts and Dingle Johnson Acts.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Governor Kelly seeks a new Secretary who will lead the agency through a transformative period in State of Kansas government. The Governor envisions KDWP becoming a national leader in the development, protection, and conservation of our state's natural resources, while providing exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities. The new Secretary will oversee the management, communication, and political strategies necessary to achieve this vision.

The selected candidate will be an inspiring leader, an exceptional communicator, and an experienced problem-solver who will effectively work with a wide range of people, interests, and viewpoints.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Secretary is appointed by the Governor and is subject to confirmation by the Kansas Senate. This position is unclassified and receives an annual salary approved by the Governor. The Secretary will have frequent contact with the Governor, legislators, NGO partners, the seven-member, non-partisan Wildlife and Parks Commission and other Executive-level officials within the State of Kansas.

In addition to serving as the head of the agency responsible for all full and part time staff, the Secretary directly oversees the following twelve positions:

Assistant Secretary of Operations
Assistant Secretary of Administration
Chief Counsel
Chief Fiscal Officer
Parks Division Director
Law Enforcement Colonel
Director of Federal Aid, Budget, and Engineering
Human Resource Director
Chief of Public Affairs and Engagement Officer
Chief of Information Technology
Legislative Liaison
Senior Administrative Specialist

The Secretary retains the ability to structure the senior leadership team in a manner that best aligns with his/her working style and advances the overall mission of the agency.

THE SECRETARY'S KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is expected that the person in this position will provide effective executive leadership; execute the Governor's vision for conservation, natural resource, and outdoor recreation; administer agency finances including federal funds and grants; and, further the agency's mission, vision, and operational needs.

The Secretary will lead by example, provide performance objectives, midyear performance feedback discussions with direct reports, timely performance reviews, coaching and counseling, discipline, and will ensure that professional development opportunities are available for employees.

Program Administration:

- Adopts rules and regulations as necessary to implement, administer and enforce the provisions of the wildlife and parks laws of the state.
- Supervises the biologists, engineers, accounting, resource management, law enforcement, communications, information technology, and education professionals.
- Acquires, establishes, develops, constructs, maintains, and improves state parks, trails, state lakes, recreational grounds, wildlife areas, fish hatcheries, and all facilities under control of the agency.
- Develops licenses and fees associated with fishing, hunting, and boating, and enforces those associated laws.

- Responsible for agency compliance with Kansas Statutes, working with the Kansas Legislature on developing or modifying statutes, and with the Wildlife and Parks Commission in developing new agency regulations.

Personnel Management:

- Work with the Governor's Office to appoint persons to fill various positions within the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and/or to serve on relevant advisory boards.
- Work constructively with the Wildlife and Parks Commission.
- Administer, direct, and supervise the personnel, planning, development and operation of the various conservation and recreational areas and programs under the jurisdiction of the agency.

Public Service and Stakeholder Engagement:

- Provide information to and answer questions from elected leaders and engage with stakeholders to advance the work of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.
- Carry on conservation, natural resource, and recreational management work, and cooperate with local, state, and national organizations for the support and advancement of these programs.

YEAR ONE CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR THE SECRETARY

- Assess Kansas' conservation and recreational goals, policies, programs, and direction and recommend to the Governor a plan for improvement and, as necessary, revision of these goals, policies, programs, and direction to achieve the vision articulated above.
- Develop strong partnerships with KDWP personnel, the Governor, legislators, the agency's Commission, and other state and federal agencies, regional and local governments, among others.
- Assess the current staff at KDWP and the professional development and advancement of those employees and, as necessary, recruit additional talent from diverse candidate pools to successfully achieve KDWP's goals.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The next KDWP Secretary will have a minimum of ten years of executive management experience in a public or private organization or a combination thereof, with significant experience in conservation, natural resources, finance, policy, and/or programs. This individual will possess superb leadership, communication, problem solving, collaborative, innovative, and management abilities.

The selected candidate will have a keen awareness (or a willingness to learn) of the unique and varied cultures and regions within the state, a strong understanding of the agency's role in advancing Kansas' economic, social, health, and conservation goals, and a steadfast commitment to ensuring that Kansas' conservation, natural resource, and recreational opportunities meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population.

Ideally, the successful candidate will possess many of the following qualifications:

- A track record of responsible management of a state or complex regional or national systems, with a focus on maintaining and enhancing conservation, natural resource, and recreational assets and prioritizing their safe and efficient use.
- A keen understanding of the landscape across the State of Kansas and the role conservation, natural resources, and recreation plays in building the economy of the

entire state through investments of property acquisition, management of conservation resources, and the provision of a variety of recreational opportunities.

- A strong natural resource and conservation knowledge base.
- Demonstrated ability to build robust relationships with federal, state, and local governmental entities advisors and opinion leaders.
- A commitment to taking a fresh look at KDWP's functions, and to making decisions for advancing the agency's relationship with external stakeholders and partners.
- Experience in leading a diverse staff and encouraging innovation, collaboration, diversity, inclusivity, and a team approach to achieve core business objectives.
- Experience in working with, and an astute understanding of, the media and the agency's public presence.

Ideal personal attributes include:

- Visionary and energetic leader
- Open and approachable personality
- Effective listener
- Collaborative and decisive
- Transformational and innovative
- Committed to conservation, natural resources, and recreational opportunities
- Politically savvy
- Problem solver
- Team builder
- Committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Knowledge of the state's business and political climate
- Strong communication skills

EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

An undergraduate degree from an accredited college/university or equivalent experience is required.

Additionally, per Kansas Statute, the successful candidate *“shall be fully qualified by education, training and experience in wildlife, parks or natural resources, or a related field, and shall have a demonstrated executive and administrative ability to discharge the duties of the Office of Secretary.”*

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract the most qualified candidates. The State of Kansas also offers excellent health care coverage and participation in the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System. KDWP will cover relocation expenses, if necessary. A pooled agency vehicle is available for business use.

HOW TO APPLY

Go to the State Employment Center at <https://admin.ks.gov/services/state-employment-center> and follow the directions below:

- Click in the middle of the page under the Sunflower. From there either **Sign in** to your existing account or **Register** for a new account.

- **Review and complete** your contact information on the **My Contact Information** page. Please make sure to include your **email address**.
- **Upload documents** listed in the **Required Documents** section of this job posting to the appropriate location.
- **Complete and Submit** your application.
- **Check your email and My Job Notifications** for written communications from the Recruiter.
 - **Email** - the **email** listed on the **Careers>My Contact Information** page.
 - **Notifications** - view the **Careers>My Job Notifications** page

The following are the required items to apply:

- 1) a letter of interest**
- 2) a detailed resume; including a valid e-mail address**

Applicants are notified whether or not they are selected to interview. The interview is generally a one-time, panel interview consisting of position-specific questions for all applicants (same questions for each applicant), with the selection being made after all candidate interviews are completed.

Veterans' Preference Eligible (VPE): Former military personnel or their spouse that have been verified as a "veteran" under K.S.A. 73-201 will receive an interview if they meet the minimum requirements of the position. The veterans' preference laws do not guarantee the veteran a job. Positions are filled with the best qualified candidate as determined by the appointing authority. Additional VPE information can be found at <https://admin.ks.gov/services/state-employment-center/veterans>. Applicants claiming veterans' preference for the first time must mail a copy of your DD-214 to the Office of Personnel Services, 900 SW Jackson, Room 401-N, Topeka KS 66612, or FAX to 785/291-3715.

DEADLINE TO APPLY – OPEN UNTIL FILLED

The State of Kansas is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We value diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential elements that create and foster a welcoming workplace. All qualified persons will be considered for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, political affiliation, disability or any other factor unrelated to the essential functions of the job.

If you wish to identify yourself as a qualified person with a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act and would like to request an accommodation, please address the request to the recruiter.

Inquiries regarding this position should be directed to Melissa King at the Governor's Office at melissa.king@ks.gov or 785-581-4734.