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The following article was in the Kansas City Star last Wednesday. If you notice it was on the AP newswire. Maybe it made into other papers as well.

Bob Harris

Posted on Wed, Sep. 21, 2005

Good news for budding river rats
Kansas to improve access to recreation on the Arkansas

The Associated Press

HUTCHINSON, Kan. – Kansas officials are working to increase public access to the Arkansas River in hopes of increasing recreational opportunities.

The state Department of Wildlife and Parks and the city of Wichita have spent a total of \$60,000 on the first phase of a plan that covers the river from Hutchinson to Oxford, south of Wichita. They hope to have at least 30 public access sites along 150 miles of river, from Raymond, in Rice County, to the Oklahoma border.

“This would give them a place they can park their vehicle, get their canoe or kayak on the water, fish, hunt, just paddle or bird-watch,” said Tom Swan, the Wildlife Department’s regional fisheries and wildlife supervisor.

Swan said sites could include just a gravel parking spot and dirt trail to the river, or paved parking, a pathway, lighting and rest rooms.

The plans are good news for Hutchinson resident Bob Harris, an avid rafter. He said trying to get permission from property owners to cross private land is the biggest problem for canoeists, rafters and kayakers.

“If we could make it known to Kansans these access points are available, you would see the river used a lot,” Harris said.

Jim Johnson, president of the Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association, said he thinks more Kansans are becoming involved in paddling, especially extreme sports such as kayaking.

He teaches whitewater kayaking in a series of rapids created from the flood-control system around Wichita, and many of his classes are full.