

# THE KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL

ESTABLISHED IN 1974

Volume XXVIII No. 1

Newsletter

June, 2002

## **Super Outdoor Weekend**

By Virginia Lefferd and Harriett Barber

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Super Outdoor Weekend took place on Saturday April 20, and Sunday April 21 at the Corps Campground near the spillway at Elk City Lake. A number of the participants arrived on Friday with their camping gear, horse trailers and/or campers. On Friday evening some of those among the early arrivals built a campfire and sat around it visiting and roasting marshmallows. They swapped stories related to camping, hiking and horsemanship. Since it was a cool and damp, most of the talk centered on the topic of how to keep dry and warm while out in the wilds.

The next morning more people began to arrive and set up camp for the weekend's activities. Long-time KTC member, Dolores Baker shuttled hikers out to various drop-off points on the Elk River Hiking Trail and also to the Table Mound Trail. Even though it was a little wet at times, it was a good weekend for hiking and horseback riding.

The horseback riders saddled up and headed out to the trail at 9:00 a.m. sharp. Since this is an early spring outing, the horses were anxious to move quickly along the trail. Because of this it was not long before one rider was out of the saddle and on the ground. Several riders headed back to help the downed rider and one of these horses began bucking rodeo style. This particular rider managed to stay on his horse until it settled down. After this incident the remainder of the day was uneventful for both the riders and their horses.

As the riders made their way along the trail, many of them were impressed with the sights encountered there. Whenever the trail took them through the trees, the riders had to be careful not to bump their knees against them in close quarters. Several places along the Elk River Trail are not suitable for horseback travel and the riders had to detour around them.

The large rock formations and outcroppings that they rode through were interesting and exciting especially for some of the riders who had not been on this trail before and did

not realize that there were rock formations like these in Kansas. Once again the riders had to be careful not to scrape their knees or heads as they passed near or under these formation. In fact, in one area they passed below a rock that was sitting precariously on the edge of an outcropping. There was some speculation as to how much longer the rock might hang precariously there on the edge of this particular outcropping, since water apparently washes more soil away from the rock each time it rains. Some of the riders hoped and prayed that they would not be under the rock when it decided to come down from its perch.



Occasionally in years past, there have been riders and/or horses that have not been able to complete the long ride and have been brought or hauled back to the campground, but not this year. All of the riders turned out to be hearty souls and everyone made the long trip back to the campground riding their mounts.

At six o'clock on Saturday evening everyone assembled at the Corps shelter house for the potluck supper. The meal consisted of venison burgers and a wide variety of tasty dishes supplied by the participants. Rocky Shire and Maxine Thorne cooked the venison burgers, which Bud and Dolores Baker donated. After considerable time and effort and with the aid of charcoal lighter fluid, Dolores Baker was able to

start a campfire in the pit next to the shelter house. All of the firewood was wet from the recent rainfall and this made it particularly difficult to start a fire.. After the dinner the board of directors conducted their April meeting, while others sat around the campfire laughing and telling stories.

The next morning members of the board prepared breakfast for about forty people who had previously signed up for it. The breakfast included pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, orange juice and coffee. This breakfast menu really hit the spot with the cool morning breeze coming off the lake. After breakfast several horseback riders saddled up and hit the trail once more for a short ride before departing for home. As the clouds began to break away and the sun finally came out, some of the hiking contingent took to the trails as well for a short hike.

Approximately one hundred people participated in this year's Super Outdoor Weekend, and as usual everyone seemed to have enjoyed the event in spite of the overcast skies and the cool and damp weather that characterized most of the weekend. As always the weekend provided an opportunity to make new friends as well as to renew old friendships and acquaintances. This year marked the twentieth anniversary of this event. The board wishes to express its appreciation to Elk City State Park for supplying the charcoal grills and picnic tables for the potluck supper and to the Corps of Engineers for making the campground and shelter house available free of charge to all of the participants. A special thank you also goes to Bud and Dolores Baker for donating the venison burgers, charcoal and firewood for the event.



### **Did You Know?**

The first annual Super Outdoor Weekend was held on April 16 and 17, 1982 at the Rockhaven Campground at Clinton Lake

## **KTC The Board of Directors**

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## Bear Essentials

By Rocky Shire

The Super Outdoor Weekend at Elk City Lake always provides an opportunity to share stories and experiences from the trail with other KTC members. This year's event was not an exception. At breakfast on Sunday morning John Haynes and I discussed our personal encounters with wild animals on the trail and in particular our encounters with bears. While backpacking in the Rocky Mountains, John came upon a large brown bear. John watched the bear feeding on the carcass of a deer from a vantagepoint in the trees no more than fifty or sixty feet from the bear. The bear finally disappeared into the forest and John continued on his way. At least this is John's story and as far as I know he is sticking to it.

Some of you may remember my article in the last issue of the newsletter concerning mountain biking in the North Woods of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan at Porcupine State Park. While my sons and I were mountain biking on an isolated double track trail, I rode on ahead of them and came face to face with a very large black bear. The bear was crossing the trail in front of me. I was not close enough to spit on it, but at the time it sure seemed like it. As in John's case, I stopped no more than sixty feet from it while the bear and I contemplated what to do about each other. Fortunately for me the bear made a good decision and lumbered off into the dense vegetation on the other side of the trail. Not all close encounters of the bear kind end well for humans, but these did for John and me.

This conversation with John reminded me of some of my other personal experiences with wild animals while hiking or mountain biking. There are two that stand out in my mind and both of them occurred with my brother, Robert. Once, while we were hiking in the wilderness area of the Gallatin Range south and east of Bozeman, Montana, we came around a sharp bend in the trail and found ourselves a very short distance—spitting distance—from a moose with a calf at its side. The potential for danger is always there when one comes upon a wild animal escorting its young, and we made a hasty retreat away from the moose. Okay, so we ran away. When we finally looked back we saw the mother and calf running away across a meadow at some distance from us. This was fortunate for us because further escape was cut off by the fact that we were backed up against a precipice and the next step was straight down. I will never forget the experience and I assure the reader that a full-grown moose grazing a few feet away is an imposing site.

The other incident occurred on a day hike in the low-slung rugged mountains west of Cody, Wyoming. Robert and I were hiking along the top of a ridge covered with loose dirt and fine gravel. We were blazing our own trail in this isolated region because there was scant vegetation and little danger of becoming lost. After we had hiked about a mile along the ridge of this range of mountains, we

suddenly looked down to see tracks of a large animal in the loose dirt. Neither of us has ever qualified as an animal tracker, but in this case we did not have to be. These were clearly the tracks of a mountain lion or cougar and they were fresh. The tracks were leading away in the direction we were going. We both became somewhat wary as we continued onward. We followed the tracks for some distance until they veered to the right and then back in the direction from which we had just come. It was at this point that paranoia set in for both of us. We decided that we had blazed enough new trail. We did not particularly want to retrace our footsteps given the fact that the tracks were headed back in that direction. We adopted a decisive course of action. We decided to head straight down the side of the mountain. The descent was steep and it consisted of the same loose dirt and gravel that covered the ridge. We very carefully made our way down the side of the mountain. Which is another way of saying that we slid most of the way down on the seat of our pants. More than likely there was no reason for concern on our part, but I prefer to think that we erred on the side of caution in our hasty departure from that ridge.

At Elk City Lake on the Eagle Rock Mountain Bike Trail, which I completed in 1996, I have had occasion to see a wide variety of wildlife while riding. Beavers have monitored my activities from the river, which runs parallel to part of the trail. The ubiquitous white tail has bounded away from me many times and startled armadillos have frequently darted between the wheels of my bike. A golden eagle has circled vigilantly overhead on several occasions forcing me to stop riding to watch its soaring flight. Twice I have seen a pair of foxes near the trail. Probably the most unique animal sighting on the bike trail occurred a little over a year ago. I was riding through the tall grass in the middle section of the trail and movement straight ahead of me on the trail caught my attention. I looked up to see a bobcat trotting away from me about thirty yards ahead on the single track. As soon as it became aware of my presence, it bounded off into the tall grass at the side of the trail. Of course there are the occasional appearances made by possums and wild turkeys. These are usually reluctant to yield the right of way to me. Then, there is the resident sentry, the hoot owl. It especially likes to make its presence known when I am riding the trail near sunset. As the shadows lengthen on the trail, the owl's hooting adds an air of mystery and an awareness of the splendid isolation along the riverbank.

If there is a point to this, then it lies in the fact that the trail, however and wherever one uses it, has much to offer. If we happen to be in the right place at the right time, we may be lucky enough to see some of Mother Nature's remarkable creatures running free—free of the compromises of civilization.

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(For my brother, Robert and the many wonderful trail experiences that we have shared over the past forty years.)

### **Did You Know?**

According to Internet sources the last verified and documented presence of a mountain lion in Kansas was in 1904, but there have been several credible but unsubstantiated sightings of a mountain lion in areas of eastern Kansas in the last five or six years?

### **Stop Me If You Have Heard This One**

Two men went bear hunting. While one stayed in the cabin, the other went out looking for a bear. He soon found a huge bear and shot at it, but he only wounded it. The enraged bear charged toward him, he dropped his rifle and started running for the cabin as fast as he could. He ran pretty fast, but the bear was just a little faster and gained on him with every step. Just as the hunter reached the open cabin door, he tripped and fell flat. Too close behind to stop, the bear tripped over him and went rolling into the cabin. The man jumped up, closed the cabin door and yelled to his friend inside, "You skin this one while I go and get another!"

### **Outdoor Kids' Day at Tuttle Creek**

By Olivia Huddleston

The Fancy Creek Area of Tuttle Creek State Park near Randolph was once again the scene of the Outdoor Kansas Kids Day on May 4. Yours truly along with a local trail user, Duane Daily, held the "Trails" station that morning. We handed out trail mix complements of the KTC and orange trash bags supplied by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The participants viewed a horse trailer, and some of the comforts of home that we use when "rough" camping with or without horses. We talked about tents, ground covers, solar showers and porta-potties. We had examples of different types of stoves to use in wilderness cooking. Water purifiers were explained and demonstrated. We discussed trail markings and trail maintenance. We also emphasized good trail manners including the "pack out what you pack in" and "leave no trace" ideals.

We had more parental participation this year and about 130 people visited our station. This is the second annual event of this kind and we enjoyed our station. There were also stations for fishing, shooting, and skins and skulls.

After the lunch, which was provided, we visited the new Fancy Creek Shooting Range for a sneak preview. This is located in the same vicinity and will be manned by the Friends of Fancy Creek Range. The supporting organization had colorful brochures available and these explained

how this is to be operated and maintained. This should be a welcome addition to the Tuttle Creek State Park and it certainly will be a boon for local Hunter Safety education.

## **Some of the Latest on Kansas Trails**

### **Milford State Park**

By Olivia Huddleston

On April 27 a friend and I attended the Grand Opening of the new horse/hiking trail at Milford State Park. The trailhead is at the Eagle Ridge parking area of the State Park. This area is on the north side of the dam. Park manager, Tom Silovsky made the formal introductions. Jerry Hover from the State Parks Office in Pratt and a representative from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office in Kansas City were also in attendance. The ribbon was cut and the trail was officially opened to the public.

This trail is just short of 18 miles in length, starting at the State Park trailhead and ending in Junction City. We managed to check out three of the parking areas along the trail and we hiked parts of the trail. The Park personnel and Amarcorps are responsible for maintaining the trail. It is a wide trail with good blazing and markings, which make it easy to follow.

For more information:

Call: (1-785-238-5714)

E-mail: [Milford@Nwk02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Milford@Nwk02.usace.army.mil)

### **Hiking Trails to Check Out**

By Virginia Lefferd

New trails are appearing in Kansas all the time and here are some good short trails that you might want to hike some time.

#### **Fall River State Park Nature Trails**

Post Oak Trail (¾ mile)  
Catclaw (1 and ¾ miles)  
Bluestem Prairie (1 and ½ miles)  
Casner Creek (1 and ½ miles)  
Turkey Run (1 mile)

#### **Toronto State Park Nature Trails**

Blackjack (1 mile)  
Oak Ridge (½ mile)  
Overlook (1 and ¼ miles)

Chautauqua Hills Blue Loop (1 and ½ miles)  
Chautauqua Hills Yellow Loop (4 miles)  
(They are currently lengthening the Chautauqua Hills  
Trail to 8 miles.)  
Ancient Cross Timbers Trail (1 mile)

(The degree of difficulty on most of these hiking trails is moderate.)

### **Highlights of the April, 2002 Board Meeting**

The Kansas Trails Council Board met at 7:15 P.M. following the potluck supper at the Elk City Lake campground.

- Board members present were, President, Olivia Huddleston; Vice-President, Rocky Shire; Secretary, Virginia Lefferd, Bud Baker, John Haynes and Harriett Barber. Guests were Susan Haynes and Roger Bryson.
- John Haynes reported on investments. They are making a slow recovery and he recommends no changes.
- The KTC Bylaws that were sent out in the newsletter were discussed and approved.
- John Haynes reported on the KTC Fall Festival to be held at Lake Perry. No date for this event was finalized.
- The newsletter was discussed and the board felt that they should try a different approach with the newsletter for a while. Rocky kindly consented to take over the editing and publication of the newsletter.
- The board voted to donate \$100.00 to Friends of Wildlife and Parks at Elk City State Park.

### **Kansas Trails Council Support**

The Kansas Trails Council supports the following organizations and pays yearly dues to them:

**The Santa Fe Trail Organization**

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**The International Mountain Biking Association**

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**The American Hiking Society**

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**The Kansas Horse Council**

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**Rocky Shire, Eagle Rock Mountain Bike Trail  
(Elk City State Park)**

Phone: 1-620-331-7670, email: [bevrock@hit.net](mailto:bevrock@hit.net)

**Elk City Lake**, (position open, a coordinator is needed)

### **From The Editor's Desk**

As the new editor of the KTC newsletter I committed to the challenges that come with the job. My job as I see it is to create a readable and enjoyable newsletter that Council members and other interested parties will at least want to peruse before turning it into a coaster for that morning cup of coffee. I suppose that the editor of any publication has a vision of what the finished product should look like and I am not an exception in this respect. Ideally a newsletter such as this one should have a broad-based appeal and it should be of real interest to the membership and readership for which it is intended. I will set this as my goal and I will do my best to accomplish it.

As most of you know the Kansas Trails Council was established many years ago as a non-profit organization with the expressed mission of creating, maintaining and promoting trails in Kansas for hikers, backpackers, horseback riders, canoeists and more recently mountain bikers. With this as our mission the primary purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed and apprised of the work and activities of our membership and the board of directors, which oversees these things. The focus here is and should be on Kansas's trails and on individual experiences related to our trails. However, as a board member and as editor of this publication I see no reason why we can not also feature some trail experiences and stories from wherever they may have occurred. When it is

all said and done the common thread that binds this membership and this group together is a love of the trail wherever and whenever we find ourselves on it.

Finally, on behalf of the board of directors, I wish to express our appreciation for the work that Kellie Stanley did as editor of the newsletter for the past two years. I, for one, am beginning to better understand the challenges inherent in this particular task. Thanks, Kellie, and we wish you the very best for the future.

### **Connecting With the Membership**

The KTC board sets aside a portion of your membership dues for the publication and dispersal of this newsletter. In addition to using the newsletter to keep you informed about the Council and its activities, the board wishes to provide an opportunity to share experiences and stories related to our mutual and common interest, which, of course, is the **trail** whenever, wherever and however we use it. Naturally our main focus is on Kansas's trails but it is not necessarily limited to them. You all have trail related information, experiences and anecdotes that are interesting, informative, funny or significant and we would like for you to share these stories and experiences with the membership as a whole. We encourage you to send us your prospective contributions via regular mail or e-mail and they will be considered for publication in upcoming newsletters. If you have a photo or two pertinent to your submission, feel free to send those as well. If you want the photos back it would be helpful for you to enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

As a part of our increased efforts to keep the lines of communication open between the board and the membership this newsletter includes a brief survey, which we encourage you to fill out and mail back to us. We welcome all ideas and suggestions that you may have to enhance the organization, its work or its activities. We will discuss and consider your ideas and suggestions at a future board meeting.

Submissions for the newsletter and survey forms should be mailed or emailed to:

Rocky Shire  
2521 North 8<sup>th</sup>  
Independence, Kansas 67301

### **On Line Since October, 1999**

**We invite you to visit our web site at:**

**<http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>**

## **Calendar of Events**

### **North American Trail Ride Conference**

#### **Kansas Ride Schedule for 2002**

EKAHA Hill & Dale, June 15-16,  
Jo Kendall, 913-681-2318.

#### **Hills Dale Lake**

Kanopolis Canyons, September 7-8,  
Beth Hurst, 316-794-8346.

#### **Kanopolis Lake**

KS Flint Hills, October 5-6,

Olivia Huddleston, 785-382-6886

#### **Tuttle Creek Lake**

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### **Autumn Wonders Mountain Bike Tour**

October 19th, 2002

Scenic ride through back country roads, hills, prairie trail, and the old Indian camping area known as "Little Egypt."

25 miles rock road

10 miles prairie trail option

5 miles prairie loop option

for intermediate & experienced riders.

Registration is in Alta Vista, KS, City Park at 8 A.M.

Ride begins at 9:00 A.M.

Pre-registration—\$25.00

On site registration—\$35.00

Sponsored by Santa Fe Trail United Methodist Parish

For more information, brochures, or to register.

Contact:

Shirley Edgerton—1-785-499-6387

Box 215, Alta Vista, Kansas

Email: [fsje@aol.com](mailto:fsje@aol.com)

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### **Board of Directors Meeting**

August 18, 2002

At the home of John and Susan Haynes

Mission, Kansas

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### **Facts**

Our current treasurer, Jim Copeland was present at the organizational meeting for the Kansas Trails Council in September of 1974. Jim was elected to the board that year and served on it until 1987. He was reelected to the board in 1998 and he was selected to become the treasurer at that time.

## KTC Membership Form

Sign me up!...I want to join the Kansas Trails Council for 2002.

(Annual membership runs from January 1 through December 31)

(For more information about KTC visit our web site at <http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Family/Corporate: \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_ or Lifetime: \$100.00

Please Mail To:

***The Kansas Trails Council, Inc.***

Jim Copeland, Treasurer

1415 Chelle Ct.

El Dorado, Kansas 67042

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### Questionnaire for the Kansas Trails Council

(The Board values your input and suggestions. We hope that you will share your thoughts and ideas with us.)

Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been a member of KTC?

Do you anticipate renewing your dues for 2003? If not, please tell us why not? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

How do you use Kansas's trails? (Hiking, horseback riding, etc.)

Are you active in a local group or club that shares your trail interests? If so, which one(s)?

What do you like and enjoy about the Kansas Trails Council?

What would you like to see different about the KTC?

Would you be willing to serve as a trail builder, trail coordinator or KTC board member? If yes, which one?

Please return this survey to:

**Olivia Huddleston, President**

16497 SW State Road 254

Benton Kansas 67017



Horseback Riding - Hiking - Backpacking - Mountain Biking - Canoeing - Outdoor Enthusiasts  
<http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>

***The Kansas Trails Council, Inc.***  
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