

THE KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL

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Newsletter

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Me and Faraji

By Stephen Garlow

[Author's preface: When I was a kid, two of my favorite books were Me and Caleb and Me and Caleb Again, by Franklyn E. Meyer. These were collections of tales about childhood and the adventures of two boys in a small town at the edge of the Ozarks.]

Growing up in the Ozarks of Southwest Missouri, much of the "fun stuff" that I did was in the outdoors. From the age of seven I was often sandwiched between my father and my uncle in a small johnboat as we floated the Elk River, catching our limit of brownies (small mouth bass). This was during the days before length limits and catch-and-release. Canoes were for "city folks." I did not see my first kayak until I was fourteen, when my friend Mark brought a sleek navy blue two-seater and spent part of the summer camping with my family near Noel

What I liked most about Mark's hand-built kayak (canvas stretched taut around a wooden frame) was the quiet way we could approach fat bullfrogs as they sat along the riverbank on summer nights, crooning their love songs. We glided effortlessly downstream or upstream, with one of us in back, paddling. The other would hold a powerful flashlight in one hand, blinding our prey and quickly grabbing it around the backbone with the other hand. The slimy, kicking quarry was quickly stuffed in a gunnysack at our feet. Frog legs and fried potatoes cooked in cast-iron skillets on a Coleman camp stove – what a meal!

Sweet memories like these propel me into the outdoors as often as my busy adult schedule will permit. Recently, I've been taking along a young friend, Faraji. *Me and Faraji* have been hiking, biking, canoeing and camping together during the past year. I enjoy answering his questions and sharing his new discoveries as I introduce him to activities and venues that are familiar to me, but brand new to him.

In December, *me and Faraji* joined in a trail maintenance work day on the Clinton Lake North Shore Trails. Mike Goodwin, trail coordinator and KTC Board Member, equipped us with two sets of long-handled loppers and we lopped until we nearly dropped. We thought our arms were going to fall out of their sockets. But the results were gratifying because we helped to re-open several miles of trail in the far-western area of the Park that had become overgrown through lack of maintenance. We quickly depleted my supply of granola bars and snack crackers while we were on the trail. Later in the afternoon I was both amazed and amused as my nine-year-old friend devoured a Giant Roast Beef Sandwich meal at Arby's.



On the first Saturday in February *me and Faraji* went for a hike on the grounds of Bromelsick Scout Camp, which is directly north of the Clinton Lake North Shore Trails. In the near future Mike Goodwin and I are planning to promote the hiking and biking opportunity on these trails as well as other KTC trails to the Pelathe Council Boy Scout leaders. I had

permission to hike at Bromelsick in order to scout it out and I invited my young buddy. The previous week I hiked alone in this area and had a brief stare-down with a bobcat. I was hoping that *me and Faraji* would also encounter some wildlife.

We were not disappointed. Before we parked my Subaru Outback, we slowed along the roadside and watched five deer as they casually grazed at the edge of a wooded area. Their large ears and the way they calmly looked us over while chewing their breakfast amused Faraji. He correctly observed that they did not seem to be afraid of us because they must see cars a lot.

A few minutes later, we began our hike near the large pond at Bromelsick. I usually point out the signs of wildlife that we encounter on our outings in order to teach my young buddy some woods-lore. We immediately spotted an area of ground littered with goose droppings. I posed a silly question for the young naturalist. If the singular name for this wildlife sign is “goose poop” is the plural name “geese peep?” He thought it was funny.

Thirty minutes later as we strode along a trail through the woods, we spotted an opossum scurrying away from us and we gave chase. He quickly cowered down near a fallen tree and bared his teeth at us in a classic opossum pose—with long snout and small pink nose, open mouth with small fangs and rows of tiny white teeth, narrow pink tongue and beady little black eyes. I explained that he was a young opossum and looked very healthy with relatively clean grayish fur. Faraji noted his tail looked like a rat’s tail. We agreed that it would not be nice to scare the little guy any longer, so we returned to the trail.

Twenty yards down the trail and *me and Faraji* hit the jackpot! First, I noticed a palm-sized piece of deer hair and hide. It looked only a few days old, with a small amount of flesh on the underside of the hide. We looked around and found an area the size of a queen size bed, blanketed with the hairy remains of a deer. There was not a piece of deer flesh larger than a quarter anywhere around, but deer hair was everywhere. Scattered nearby we found three partial leg bones, gnawed clean and with hooves still attached. A quick look around the perimeter of the hair-bed revealed most of the spine and pelvis with a few jagged pieces of rib bone, and the skull, all stripped nearly clean of flesh. We agreed that if we tried to reassemble the deer from the available parts, it would look pretty strange.

Me and Faraji spent several minutes speculating about how the deer might have died—perhaps at the hands of a late season hunter?). It had died within the past week, because I had hiked this same trail six days earlier and the

(Continued on the next page)

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deer was not there. We also speculated about what kinds of animals would have feasted on the carcass such as the bobcat, the opossum and a crow we heard and saw shortly before we spotted the opossum. Faraji was determined to take the skull home to show his mother, and at first I consented and tied a long string through an empty eye-socket so that he could carry it. He poked a few deer hairs into his pocket, and we agreed that on future hikes we should bring along a zip lock bag for sanitary preservation of our discoveries.

One hour and a few granola bars later, another excellent outdoor adventure was in the bag for *me and Faraji*. As we approached the Subaru, I reconsidered the wisdom of keeping the mangled deer skull as a trophy and we hung it on a fence post instead. We plan to take a look the next time we are in the area and see if it is still there.

[I am certain that many more adventures are ahead for *me and Faraji*. In the meantime, go hike!]



Clinton Lake Trail Mile Markers Installed

By Mike Goodwin

Despite the forecast for intermittent light rain and gray overcast skies on November 3rd, several hearty volunteers set out to install mile markers along the 18+ miles of trails at Clinton Lake. Fortunately, the rain never materialized, so we were able to install seven markers on the Blue Trail and eleven on the White Trail in about five hours.

The markers indicate the mileage from the East Trailhead and are located on the right side of each trail when moving from East to West. We used fiberglass, curved posts which were driven about 18 inches into the ground with a special driver. Considering how rocky the soil is along the trails, we were lucky finding rock-free spots for all but a few of the posts.

As the photo in the next column demonstrates, it takes four volunteers to remove the sticky tape from an installed post—two to pull off the tape, one to supervise while leaning on the driver and one to take the photograph in order to prove that the post was actually installed and that it required four volunteers to do so.

We finished the day with a sense of satisfaction, knowing that no one will ever get lost on the Clinton

Lake trails again—without at least knowing how far they are from the East Trailhead, that is.



Kansas Trails Council Support

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

The Santa Fe Trail Association

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The International Mountain Biking Association

*

The American Hiking Society

*

The Kansas Horse Council

*

Friends of the Kaw

From the Editor's Desk

Who Are We?

Personally, I think that it is a good idea to inform the readership from time to time about the Kansas Trails Council and the Board of Directors for this not-for-profit organization. This is especially beneficial and helpful to new members. Since its inception in 1974, the Kansas Trails Council has dedicated itself to the creation of new trails where none existed before as well as to the ongoing maintenance of those trails. This has involved many thousands of volunteer hours spanning twenty-eight years. The Council has gained the respect and support of outdoor enthusiasts, environmentalists, and State Park and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel for its dedication to environmental and soil conservation issues as well as its dedication and diligent efforts to provide quality trails for all user groups. It is with a sense of pride that we as a group take credit for the building and continual maintenance of more than one hundred miles of trail in Kansas. Kansas State Parks and the Corps of Engineers rarely have the budget or resources to build or maintain trails. Putting it simply, if the Council and its hardworking volunteers had not built and maintained the trails in some areas, none would exist in those areas today in all likelihood. When you take to the trails at Clinton, Perry, Tuttle Creek, Toronto, Elk City and El Dorado Lakes (and elsewhere), we hope that it will be an enjoyable experience for you and we hope that you will appreciate the monumental time and effort that have gone into those trails.

The members of the Board of Directors volunteer their time and efforts not only to trail maintenance, but also to the management of a budget for the purchase of tools and equipment for trail building and maintenance. The board is also responsible for the management of our newsletter and our web site at <http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>. Membership dues are used to support both the newsletter and the web site.

The board members serve as liaisons to State Park and Corps of Engineers management personnel for those areas where the trails are located. The board carefully selects the state and national trail-related organizations to support with membership dues. The board meets quarterly to discuss budget issues, trail matters and concerns, environmental issues and common interests.

Over the years the membership of the Board of Directors for the Kansas Trails Council has been quite diverse. Since the beginning, farmers, college professors,

public school teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, banking officials, secretaries, corporate executives, lawyers, building and technical trades managers or workers have served side by side on the board, sharing a common love of the outdoors and the trail wherever it is found. The board has or has had scout and youth leaders, canoeists, horseback riders, mountain bikers and cyclists, hikers, backpackers, kayakers, marathon and super marathon runners, naturalists, and historians. They all have served as educators and leaders in trail building, soil conservation, and environmental matters.

From time to time positions on the board become vacant. Anyone who might be interested in serving on the board in the future should contact any board member listed elsewhere in this publication.

Board meetings have taken place in a variety of locations including homes of board members and State Park offices. The April board meeting is held at the Corps shelter house at Elk City Lake in conjunction with the Super Outdoor Weekend. Perhaps no location for a board meeting has been more unique and appropriate than the parking area of the George Latham Trail at Clinton Lake. The meeting took place on a cool sunny afternoon in mid January of 2001, following a half day of trail maintenance on the George Latham trail by KTC board members. During the meeting board members sat around a campfire.



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

A New Frontier

By Lyle Riedy

Mountain biking owes its start to those first people who ventured off road on their bikes, exploring trails and passes in the mountains. Kansas has very little natural terrain to explore. We do have small pockets of land where we have developed trails to ride, but there is little opportunity to truly explore new terrain.

The dry summer of 2002 provided at least one new frontier to explore. The water level of Lake Perry has continually dropped, exposing bedrock formations that have been under water for nearly 30 years. The water currents have stripped away any soil that once covered the land, leaving a miles-long, 100-yard wide, unexplored and untamed corridor to explore. Using existing access points along with a couple of new spurs to the shore from the bike trail, riders are getting a rare opportunity to explore new challenges as well as to sight-see along the bluffs and cliffs overlooking the lake. Various types of terrain can be found. There are areas of mudflats, pea gravel, layers of flat shingle like rocks and large table-sized fault sandstone. There are also large boulder fields, smooth solid bedrock similar to the slick rock of Moab, large sharp jagged rock and just plain old rocks. I mean this is about riding on rocks.

Several old stone buildings' foundations and other farm structures previously covered by the lake are once again on dry land. Exploring the old remains, one can find unique souvenirs. Some of these are pieces of hardware from old farm equipment while others are things like pieces of old dishes, bottles and metal fasteners. As the saying goes, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." It seems that every rider who journeys along the "new frontier" finds some *mojo* to take with him or her.

Ironically, I found very little (modern) trash. Apparently today's plastic debris is washed up and deposited at the high water level. The expected glass bottles and aluminum cans are rare. I can only guess that cans and intact bottles get moved around with the currents and are carried into the deeper waters of the river channel.

As spring approaches the water level is still way below normal. Take a break from the normal riding routine and give riding the shore a try. This new frontier will probably be gone with the spring rains and may not reveal itself for many more years.

[Lyle took the picture in the next column last summer, while exploring this *new frontier* with friends.]



Winter Clothing for Horse and Rider

By Olivia Huddleston

Winter riding is the ultimate challenge. Many times we forget the horse when it comes to keeping warm during the chilly months. Horses have a need for winter clothing also, especially when they stop moving.

There are rump rugs, made of Polartec and/or Gore-Tex fabrics for warmth or breathable waterproofing. These either fit under the saddle or attach or fasten to the back of the saddle. Most can be rolled up and secured to allow air circulation and storage if the weather warms up. This type of rug is very helpful during competition. While moving, the extra layer is not necessary, but upon entering a P & R check, a lunch break, or a mandatory hold over, it might be the difference in being allowed to proceed or pulled from the competition. There are "full" covers that wrap completely around the body of the horse and fasten in the front, encasing the rider's lower half. These look interesting in pictures, but might make a fast dismount difficult.

The rider has many options for keeping warm in the winter. Layering with clothing made of wicking material is the most recognized and common. Some of the breathable waterproof sets are quite expensive, but prove to be a true investment if you do a lot of riding. Foldable over-pants that keep you dry are especially handy if they have full-length side zippers. Lots of pockets in the jacket are great for keys, gloves, headbands, handkerchiefs and, last but not least, food. Small packets of dried fruit, jerky or power bars help to keep energy levels up during winter riding. Also, do not forget the water bottle. Wind blocking soft fleece gloves will fit in pockets easier than bulky ski gloves. A lined waterproof hat that fastens with Velcro can be adjusted while wearing gloves.

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For the cold feet there are several options. First, wear heavy warm socks of your choice. Your boots must be wide enough to wiggle your toes or your feet will be colder. If you must drive to your ride area, you might think of putting on dry socks before you ride. Damp socks are cold and stay cold. Men have more options than women in insulated boots. The idea of “cowboy” boots being a must may not hold true in winter. Boots that come from hunting stores are usually well insulated. Some companies make stirrup covers. These fasten to the front of the stirrups—either English or western—with straps or ties. They are usually lined with sheepskin or fleece with a leather or plastic outside. They do a remarkable job of blocking wind and keeping toes warm.

The main trick to winter riding is being prepared. Always stay hydrated and have fun. Spring is coming.

At the January, 2003 board meeting, the board selected and welcomed two new board members to fill existing vacancies on the board. They are:

Stephen Garlow

Steve has been a fan of nature and the outdoors since childhood. For him family vacations were usually centered around fishing and camping trips on the Elk River, Indian Creek and Big Sugar Creek in Southwest Missouri. After law school, some friends introduced him to backpacking. He has enjoyed week-long backcountry trips into the Wasatch Mountains of Utah; inside the Grand Canyon; in Rocky Mountain National Park; in the Maroon Bells/Snowmass area; and in the Big Blue Wilderness of Southwest Colorado. He frequently takes day-hikes in northeast Kansas. He began canoeing on the Kaw three years ago. Two years ago he purchased a CANNONDALE F500 Mountain Bike and began exploring many of the local single-track trails.

He and his wife, Janet have three children He is an attorney, in private practice in Lawrence, Kansas with the firm Riling, Burkhead & Nitcher Chtd. His practice emphasis is on business law and business regulation as well as contracting and pharmaceutical law.

He is also currently serving on the Board of Directors of Friends of the Kaw, Inc.

Ken Miner

Ken is a founder and a Board Member of Earth Riders Trails Association (ERTA), a not-for-profit corporation designed to assist land managers develop environmentally sound single-track trails on their land for little or no cost to the land managers. In addition, Ken is the founder of the Midwest Mountain Bike Patrol, a Midwest Regional branch of the National Mountain Bike Patrol. In March of 2002, Ken became the Kansas

State Representative for the International Mountain Bicycling Association.

Super Outdoor Weekend is April 11-13,2003

KTC's Friends of the Trails

The Kansas Trails Council is beginning a new program that will enable trail users to better connect with other local trail users and to contribute directly to the maintenance of their favorite trail. In 2003, KTC members may choose to contribute \$10 or more to one of the six trails (Clinton Lake, Elk City Lake, El Dorado Lake, Perry Lake, or Tuttle Creek Lake) maintained by the KTC and become a “Friend of the Trail”.

All contributions to the Friends of the Trail program will be used directly for the maintenance and improvement of the selected trail. These contributions will be used to maintain mowing and trimming equipment and purchase supplies like trail blaze paint and trail markers. KTC's Friends of the Trail will also:

- Receive regular updates on trail conditions through email from the trail coordinator
- Stay in touch with other Friends of the Trail through an email network
- Have the assistance of the trail coordinator in organizing group trail outings
- Have direct access to trail coordinators to learn more about local wildlife and flora
- Be able to participate in special trail events such as group rides, hikes or runs.

Some questions to ask yourself: Which is your favorite trail? Do you use it more than once a month? Would you like to help keep it in top condition? Would you like to learn more about the trail? If so, isn't it worth \$10 to become a Friend of the Trail?



Did you forget to pay your dues for 2003? If so, why not use the membership form in this letter and re-new your membership today?

KTC's Super Outdoor Weekend at Elk City Lake is just a few weeks from now on April 11-13. Reserve that weekend to come and join in the activities which include mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, paddling and camping. For more details visit our web site.

KTC Membership Form

Sign me up!...I want to join the Kansas Trails Council for 2003
(Annual membership runs from January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003)
For more information about the KTC visit our website at <http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>

Name _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dues: (Circle one): Individual - \$10 Family/Corporate - \$25 Lifetime - \$100 _____

Check one or more Trails *

Friend of the Clinton Lake Trail \$10 _____ Other _____

Friend of El Dorado Lake Trail \$10 _____ Other _____

Friend of the Elk City Lake Trail \$10 _____ Other _____

Friend of the Perry Lake Trail \$10 _____ Other _____

Friend of the Tuttle Creek Trail \$10 _____ Other _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Please Mail To:

The Kansas Trails Council, Inc.
Jim Copeland, Treasurer
1415 Chelle Court
El Dorado, Kansas 67042

- Friends of the Trail contributions are used directly to maintain the selected trail. If you would like to receive email announcements from the trail coordinator for the selected trail, please provide your email address: _____

Volunteer

The KTC and the trails that this organization has built over the last twenty-eight years exist only because of volunteer efforts and thousands of hours donated. We need your help to maintain our trails. Donating even a few hours a year to trail maintenance will make a difference. If you are willing to work on the trails or serve as a trail watcher or trail coordinator, please contact any board member listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

***The KTC trail coordinators reported almost **2200** hours of trail maintenance on our trails in 2002 alone. These hours were donated by a relatively small number of people who are the unsung (and usually unknown) heroes of many of the trails that you frequent. If you see them working on the trail, be sure to thank them or better yet, give them a hand.

(Without regular maintenance these trails would soon cease to exist for all of us.)



Sean and Eric Shire discovered a great mountain bike trail in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. There was just one problem! The resident beavers had built dams on several segments of the trail and water had backed up behind the dams. There was no way around these, so it was necessary to get off the bikes and carry them to the other side of the beaver's handiwork. (Photo by Rocky Shire)

Horseback Riding - Hiking - Backpacking - Mountain Biking - Canoeing - Outdoor Enthusiasts

The Kansas Trails Council, Inc.

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