

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

September 2010

Elk River Trail & 8 Wonders of Kansas

2010 Outdoors Summit October 19 & 20

The Elk River Hiking Trail was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 1981 and has now been selected as one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas Geography by the Kansas Sampler Foundation. The 15-mile trail is located on the north side of Elk City Lake northwest of Independence, Kansas. The trail winds through limestone canyons and offers scenic views from the bluffs overlooking the lake. A description and photos of the trail can be found at:

www.kansassampler.org/8wonders/geographyresults.php

Many of the KTC's original members designed and built this trail with the help of area volunteers. KTC trail coordinator, Steve Siegele, has the trail ready for fall hiking as the oaks begin to show their colors (see Steve's trail report on page 2).



The fourth annual Built Environment and the Outdoors Summit will be held at the Wichita Marriott Hotel, October 19 and 20. Fran Mainella, former director of the National Park Service and Board member for the Children and Nature Network will be the keynote speaker.

The summit is designed for community health professionals, trail advocates, city and state government leaders or planners, and anyone interested in learning techniques and philosophies to enhance healthy lifestyles through community development, outdoor activity and nutrition. The summit will identify resources and address how to take action to affect environmental policy at the state and local level to promote physical activity for a healthy Kansas. A link to registration information can be found on the KTC website on the Calendar page: www.kansastrailscouncil.org.

The conference agenda includes sessions on building rail trails, basics of single track natural surface and double wide gravel surface urban trail building. An outdoor field session will involve hiking a local Wichita trail and assessing its design and construction features.

Since the first Trail Conference in 2007 in Lawrence, the conference has expanded to bring land managers, decision makers, funding agencies, health professionals, trail advocates and non-profits together to discuss issues surrounding the built environment and trails. We hope you can join us for an exciting conference this year!



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Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Two major projects were completed this summer by Troop 59 Boy Scouts working on their Eagle Awards. Alex Kong's crew built about 65 feet of skinnies in the skills loop to connect the log ride to the lower trail and to traverse the wet areas below the hillside springs in that area. The summer heat made this project a challenge, but it turned out well. Skills riders now have one more feature on which to play!



Alex's Skinnies

Sam Corkins project involved two kinds of armoring of sections of the blue and white trails. Sam's crew installed 14, 200 lb. railroad ties to bridge chronically muddy areas on the white trail. Two ties were bolted together to provide an 18" wide hardened surface. They also placed 55 bags of Quikrete crossways in a shallow trench to provide a hardened surface about 20" wide in a boggy area on the blue trail. The Quikrete was left in the bags until it hardened like stepping stones. Sam's project addressed the worst wet sections of Mile 1 on both trails so that they will better withstand the kinds of rain we had earlier in the summer.



Quikrete & Railroad Tie Armoring

We would like to thank Alex and Sam and all of the Troop 59 scouts, parents and leaders who contribute so much to the Clinton Lake trails. With trail usage exceeding 50,000 visitations annually, these projects will make the trails more sustainable and enjoyable for thousands of hikers, runners and bikers for many years to come. Thanks!

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Elk River Hiking Trail

Fall is a great time to come see the unique bluffs, canyons, and meadows of the 15-mile long Elk River Trail. The mild temperatures allow the hiker time for longer hikes and the chance to see and explore the many rock formations that make this trail a true wonder.



Trail Reports



For a pleasant and fairly easy day hike a good place to start is at the Oak Ridge trailhead which is located approximately 5 miles from the west end of the trail. The trailhead is off of a paved road and there is a good parking area and a trail map. One of the nicest sections of the trail is to take the trail 2 miles to the east from this trailhead. The trail travels mostly along the top of the bluff and crosses some nice streams that will have running water after rains and through the late fall and into spring. There are some nice open areas along the mostly wooded path with fall wildflowers and signs of wildlife. Going a little further than 2 miles will bring you to the midway access road to the trail. This road is very rugged and best accessed with four wheel drive vehicles, so a return hike to Oak Ridge is recommended and the trail puts on a new appearance when walking in the other direction. As the fall colors change and cold weather comes the trail continues to be a wonderful place to be for a short day hike or a long hike or backpack trip. Hiking the entire 15 mile trail is a very enjoyable yet challenging prospect for all hikers in the area. The trail is very well marked with blue blazes, and is very well maintained to make the hike enjoyable.

Steve Siegele (steveshardware@twinmounds.com)

Editors Note: A visit to Elk City Lake would not be complete without hiking the Table Mound Trail on the northeast side of the lake. One trailhead is located on the north end of the lake overlooking the dam. Hiking north from the parking lot, a short trail loop begins on top of the bluff, then drops down to the bottom of the bluff where the trail winds through house-sized boulders (see photo) which form tunnels and canyons and offers scenic views of the lake.



Fall River Lake Trails

With the summer season we've had very little activity at Fall River for this quarter. Basically finished rough brush-cutting and spraying the Badger area extension that we started last winter. Regularly scheduled work days will resume in November, weather permitting. The prairie section of the trail project has proven to be extremely labor intensive to maintain and may need to be re-evaluated as to whether it is a sustainable and useful addition to the KTC trails. Poor soil quality leading to erosion, extremely rocky scree-like tread and rampant wild blackberry growth are the main factors. These problems, combined with very low numbers of users, are making it hard to get

Trail Reports

excited about continuing to battle the growth explosion with each spring and summer growing season.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake

We have been battling huge growth of poison ivy this season and hope to get better control of it again in the spring. For now the leaves are beginning to turn and we should have wonderful riding conditions for the fall and winter.

October 2nd and 3rd has been scheduled for a major workday with several local riders committing to help. With the size of the crew we should be able to have the trail entirely open after the 3rd of October. If you are traveling a long distance to enjoy the trail, please check with me on the conditions.

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Kaw River State Park (Topeka)

Kaw River State Park, Kansas' newest state park, opened September 4 and the KTC's partnership with the park was recognized with our logo prominently placed on the top of the commemorative T-shirts.



Kaw River State Park (KRSP) is a 76 acre forested park located west of MacLennen Park (Cedar Crest) in Topeka. We have been working with park manager, Jeff Bender, and his crew to build a double wide gravel trail that will connect the park office trailhead with the park road adjacent to MacLennen Park. A short video of the park can be found on YouTube at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=cf03objFNdU

After the gravel trail is completed, we will be working with the park to begin redesigning the existing and building new single track hiking and biking trails this winter.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Melvern Lake (Eisenhower State Park)

In spite of the very wet spring and the extremely hot summer that followed, Crooked Knee Equine Trail at Melvern Lake has had considerable use. We have seen the annual Wright Flight benefit trail ride, Cindy Branham clinics, competitive rides (including MODTRA), and two of the new ACTHA rides. Trail maintenance is ongoing to keep the limbs in check, and State Park volunteers deserve a special thanks for keeping the trail system mowed. While trimming the trail myself recently, I met a couple from Nebraska. They were very impressed with the trails and the West Point Equestrian Camp. They even told me they were looking at retiring in the next couple of years and were considering moving to Kansas because it so "rider friendly" with all of its parks and public use areas open to horses!

Jim Thomas (thomasj@kansas.net)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

As the summer nears its end the Perry Bike Trail is in pristine condition. Following a wet spring and stormy summer much time has been spent cleaning up storm damage. The tread is great with no problems to address. Still there seems to be more than the usual number of mature trees falling over blocking the trail. I plan to make some small re-routes this fall and winter if time allows.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

Summer was quiet on the trail -- with only the sounds of grasses and weeds slowly taking over the trail (see photo). However, other tasks were accomplished.



Trail Reports

The COE has just distributed a brand new color glossy brochure of the hiking trail, and it's fantastic. If you'd like a copy, contact Bunnie at the COE office. The Ferguson Road bridge over Big Slough Creek is being repaired -- so it's closed until mid-winter. That creates about a 20 mile detour to reach our trail -- just another reason to visit Oskaloosa -- but there are places to eat there! And there is planning for improved markers in meadows and a mass mowing on September 18.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@tb-engr.com)

Tuttle Creek Trails

We are in the last weeks before the 2010 Flint Hills Competitive Trail Ride. The public as well as private trail is ready for its final touches. This summer has been a battle between the trail builders and the high water. The water level is almost back to normal pool and things are looking up. This annual event is held every first full week-end of October at the Randolph State Park on the equestrian trail network. Sanctioned by the North American Trail Ride Conference we bring aboard a Vet Judge and a Horsemanship Judge and there are ribbons and trophies for 14 divisions. Competitors are judged on horsemanship, and the horse itself.

Trail maintenance has also begun on the Carnahan Trail which is also a favorite for hikers as well as horses. There will be week-end work days if anyone is interested in helping call 785-382-6886 and leave a message. As long as you aren't a telemarketer, I'll call you back.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood Trail

Dornwood is looking good. We have had a lot mountain bikers and hikers using the trails over the last few months. The main trails are well groomed and the frequent use this summer indicates that people are taking advantage of this nice nature trail.

Russ Rupp (russ11@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest) Trails

The trails are in great shape going into fall. We'll probably wait until November to do a final lopping before winter. As the trails in the adjacent Kaw River State Park are

developed, we will be integrating the MacLennan Park trails and potentially adding new sections of single track to connect to KRSP trails.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Wilson State Park Trails

Our trail register continues to show increased numbers of users, although I know for certain that not all users are signing in. Our location only 5 miles off Interstate-70, reveals a mix of tourists and locals. We've become known in the Topeka/Lawrence/KC area as a worthy destination for mountain biking. Also at the trail head, our cash donation box continues to show that users are willing to contribute. I've thought of installing an electronic counter to better account for trail use, but they are quite expensive. Another alternative might be a game camera.

Two new short sections were recently brought online in the Hell Creek loop. The total trail mileage of singletrack is right at 18 miles. Riding the whole trail including the EZ loop is a bit over 19.

Summer rain was mostly adequate, including a couple of very large storms, one of which recently dumped 3.3" inches. We constantly worry about erosion issues and build according to typical precipitation events. But in Kansas, "typical" means expect anything and everything. So we have to prepare for the big event, which might occur only once every few years.

Summer vegetation growth was prolific, which kept me busy mowing, chopping, trimming, and spraying. I try to ride the trail 2-3 times per week and now carry with me a hand sprayer in my bike's bottle cage, a pair of hand shears, and a folding saw. I carry a map with me and mark points and prioritize where attention is needed. Priorities often change weekly, especially during the growing season.

Facebook continues to be our best venue for trail publicity, photos, and connectivity. Just go to facebook.com and search for Switchgrass Trail.

Bob Nicholson (rnicholson@fhsu.edu)

Board Meeting Minutes

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at Martinelli's in Salina, Kansas August 22

- Board members present were Bob Nicholson, President; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Susan Haynes, Secretary; John Haynes; Olivia Huddleston; Lyle Riedy; Jim Thomas; and John Wentling. Not present: Doug Palen; Terry Plenert; Chris Kaegi-Stephens; and Neil Taylor.

- The meeting was called to order at 1:11 PM by President Bob Nicholson.

- Minutes/Treasurer's Report: Olivia moved and Jim seconded that the minutes of the last meeting and the emailed Treasurer's Report be approved. Motion passed. Mike also reported that a stock redemption made monies available and suggested that it be reinvested in preferred stock. John H. moved and Olivia seconded that we authorize Mike to invest it in preferred stock. Motion passed.

- Ford County report: John W. said that poison ivy growth has almost stopped trail use; the usual remedies have had little effect on it. A work week is planned for September to mow and trim. This, with additional spraying in the spring, should help open up the trail. There was discussion regarding finding a suitable mower to be funded by remaining grant money.

- Horse Thief Reservoir: John W. related that there is concern with the discovery of rattlesnakes in the area.

- Elk River Trail: Jim would like to see the Elk River Trail open to equestrian use. Currently it is open only by special arrangement, as it is designated as a hiking trail. Approximately 30-40% of the trail would need to be alternately rerouted to accommodate equestrian usage. There was discussion about the particulars, including the trail's designation as a "National Recreation Trail." In a motion by Jim and seconded by Olivia it was stated that it's the position of the KTC that use decisions are to be made by (are the province of) the land manager. The motion passed, with two abstaining.

- Election Results: The secretary received and counted the ballots of the election. All members were reelected by a majority.

- Outdoor Summit: Mike and Bob will be representing KTC at the Outdoor Summit on October 19 & 20 in Wichita. The project is supported by the Kansas Health Foundation, KDWP, Corps of Engineers, and KTC. Its purpose is to promote activities to build the health of Kansans.

- Website, Facebook: Mike led discussion on upgrading the KTC website, making it more dynamic, the use of links to Facebook, and possibly a new webmaster.

- Next meeting: Time and place to be announced.

- John H. moved and Olivia seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Susan Haynes, Secretary

Board Members

Board Positions 1 – 6 (2010 & 2011)

1 - Chris Kaegi-Stephens - Valley Center

2 - Jim Thomas - Lyndon

3- Doug Palen - Glen Elder

4 - Olivia Huddleston - Vermillion

5 - Neil Taylor - Lawrence

6 - Susan Haynes, Secretary - Shawnee

Board Positions 7 – 12 (2009 & 2010)

7 - John Wentling - Dodge City

8 - John Haynes - Shawnee

9 - Lyle Riedy, Vice President - Topeka

10 - Michael Goodwin, Treasurer - Topeka

11 - Bob Nicholson, President - Hays

12 - Terry Plenert - Wichita

KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2010

I would like to: Join Renew my Membership in the Kansas Trails Council for Calendar Year 2010

Name _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

NOTE: It is the KTC's policy that the above information will only be used internally by the KTC and will not be distributed to any other entity. In the interest of conserving resources (time, postage, copying, etc.) and being more environmentally friendly, the KTC newsletter is primarily distributed by email. If you prefer to receive the newsletter by regular U.S. mail, please check the box on the right and your name will be added to the newsletter mailing list.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

AMOUNT

Lifetime Membership: (One-time payment, no annual dues)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100.00	
Annual Dues: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Trails Supporter	\$101 - \$249
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Trails Patron	\$250 - \$499
<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> KTC Sponsor	\$500+
(groups, clubs, etc.)			\$ _____

Optional "Friend of the Trail" Contribution (any amount is appreciated) \$ _____

Please designate the trail(s) you would like to support with your Friend of the Trail donation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clinton Lake - George Latham Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinton Lake - North Shore Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Elk City Lake - Eagle Rock Bike Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Elk City Lake - Elk River Hiking Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Elk City Lake - Table Mound Hiking Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> El Dorado Lake Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Fall River Lake Trails
<input type="checkbox"/> Ford County State Lake Trails
<input type="checkbox"/> Melvern Lake - Ike's Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Perry Lake Bike Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Perry Lake Hiking Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuttle Creek - Carnahan Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuttle Creek - Randolph Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Topeka - Dornwood Park Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Topeka - MacLennan Park Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Toronto Lake Trails
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson Lake State Park Trails
<input type="checkbox"/> Melvern Lake - Crooked Knee Horse Trail |
|---|---|

(Annual Dues + Friend of the Trail Contribution) **Total Amount Enclosed** \$ _____

KTC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Friends of the Trail donations are used directly to maintain the selected trail(s) and are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Please mail to: Kansas Trails Council ■ PO Box 695 ■ Topeka, KS 66601-0695
 Website: www.kansastrailscouncil.org

12/2009

Kansas Trails Council
PO Box 695
Topeka, KS 66601-0695

Supporting Kansas Trails

We would like to welcome the following new members: Mary McDevitt and Jerry Meier. We are also pleased to welcome a new affiliate member: the Jeremy Snowden Agency.

We hope you will join us in developing and maintaining trails in Kansas by becoming a member of the KTC. If you have a favorite trail you would like to support, we hope you will consider making a donation to the KTC Friends of the Trail program. Your tax deductible contribution will be used solely to support the trail(s) you select. The KTC is a non-profit, 501c3 organization. We appreciate your continued support of Kansas Trails!