

Kansas Trails Council

ESTABLISHED IN 1974

Volume XXXVII, Issue 3

Newsletter

September 2011

Why Build Trails?

Why do we build trails? Why do our members and volunteers spend over 4,000 hours each year maintaining Kansas trails? These questions can be answered with one word - dedication. But dedication to what exactly? Here are some of the reasons so many people dedicate their free time to building and maintaining trails.

For the kids!

I was working by myself one day correcting a trail drainage problem when I heard an approaching, chattering crowd. High pitched voices and laughter carrying through the trees eventually emerged as a single file of 30 elementary kids on a nature hike with their teacher and a couple of parents. I was struck by their pure excitement about being outdoors, on a trail. To be sure, some were anxious about what might be under the next rock, but most of the kids were just genuinely excited about exploring our natural surroundings by hiking on a trail. The smile on their faces continues to fuel my trail building efforts years later.



Elementary class hiking up Mt. Mitchell

Enjoying nature and the outdoors

As a counterpoint to our increasingly hectic lives, enjoying nature is an important way to relax. Experiencing the scenery, wildlife, native wildflowers and fresh air along our trails is a way to connect to the larger environment in which we live. Trails provide a pathway to better appreciating our environment and understanding our impact on it.

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Built Environment and the Outdoors Summit

The annual BEOS conference is scheduled for October 5 and 6 at the Lawrence Holiday Inn, Holidome, the site of the first meeting five years ago. The conference brings together outdoor enthusiasts, community leaders, health professionals, park managers and trail builders and advocates who have a common interest in the built environment and trails.

A special presentation by Richard Louv, renowned author of eight books about nature, family and the community will be open to the public at 7:30 PM on the first evening of the conference. Featured speakers from across the country will provide insight into successful trail systems and the creation of communities which promote healthy lifestyles. For more information and to register for the conference log onto the summit website at: www.marc.org/gti/beos/

On the first day of the conference, trail sessions include updates on trail funding sources, ADA requirements, and trail building and maintenance best practices. A trail assessment hike at the University of Kansas Field Station and Ecological Reserve site north of Lawrence will explore trail design considerations and trail construction examples.

Health professionals will discuss the importance of outside activity and how the built environment affects the health of communities. Other topics on this year's agenda include:

- Proximity to physical activity by City Size
- Complete Streets walkability report
- Public and private collaboration
- Civic Leadership and the Built Environment
- Advocacy for Environmental Change
- Outdoor Classrooms

We hope you can join us for this exciting conference!



Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

During a storm this summer, 70 mph winds whipped through the park, dropping over 20 trees and thousands of small branches and debris across the trails. Thanks to our many trail watchers and volunteers, we had all the trees removed within a few days.

One small reroute is planned for the blue trail at about Mile 1.3 this fall to move the trail off flat ground so that it will drain better. Fall projects include re-blazing the trails and installing new mile markers.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Clinton Lake – Latham Trail

This fall we plan to add a bridge over a small drainage at about Mile 2.5 to facilitate mowing with the DR mower. We also plan to reset the north bench in concrete. With a little fall lopping we will have the trails in great shape for winter hiking.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Fall River Lake – Badger Creek Trail

Activity at Fall River has been limited this summer by the extended period of extreme heat and a busy summer season in general. Seems that trail time just isn't that much fun in brutal heat and even my commuter ride to work and back has been less than enjoyable at times. Cooler weather is here though and my favorite two months of the year, September and October. The sunlight begins to change the look of things, colors change, cool mornings and the best time of the year to get out and ride bikes on a trail and tear something up.

From reports, the trail at Fall River is in good shape and clear with the exception of a couple trees down that will be removed soon. Plans are in the works to get trailhead signs in place and mileage markers on the trail. Doug Wheeler and Gary Simmons have been busy with the requisition for Carsonite markers and signs. We will be placing those at ¼ mile intervals on the trail along with Corps. approved signs at the trail head. Work will continue on the North Badger Creek Trail through the end of the year beginning in November and continuing through the winter season.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake

We rode the trail last night, 9/23, for the first time in several weeks, conditions are good. In past years we saw heavy growth of poison ivy but have finally gotten it under control with chemicals and the drought in our area. Several large fallen trees will be removed within the next few weeks but they can be hiked over easily for now. With the race season nearing an end, our crews will be maintaining the trail on a more consistent basis. You can verify group rides and workdays, with starting times, on our Facebook page, Ford County Lake Trail.

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Melvern Lake – Eisenhower State Park Crooked Knee Trail

Thanks to generous donations and the hard work of the Eisenhower State Park staff, this trail system has seen great improvements this summer. Materials were donated that were used to improve several muddy crossings on the trail. A new gate was also donated and put in on the west road for emergency use.

Trail riding enthusiasts are calling the Eisenhower State Park camp and trails one of the premier locations to ride and camp in Kansas. The trails are recently mowed and in great shape for fall use. The Crooked Knee Trail was the site of a NATRC ride, Wright Flight Benefit Ride, Cindy Branham clinics, and an ACTHA ride over the summer. A special benefit ride will be held October 1-2 with proceeds directly benefiting the West Point Horse Camp with a plan to add more corrals for overnight campers.

Don't forget to thank all the ESP staff for providing such a great horse camp and riding area.

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

The Perry Hiking group must have taken [George Gershwin](#)'s "summertime and the livin' is easy" just too much to heart as it was a very quiet time. However, just in time for this newsletter, one intrepid returnee, Kevin, managed to generally clear section 2 from the Old Military Trailhead to about one mile west. This was a DR mower project . . . and if you remember our last year's DR issues . . . well, our saga continues . . . first, the blade literally broke off while mowing, OK that's a new trick . . . removed blade and attached bladeless cutter . . . then another flat tire. End of day.

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But we must give kudos to the Corps. Per Kevin, two campgrounds, Sabre and Saddle, are in the best shape in ten years. Other than that, just weeds, erosion, and faded blazes. Currently, I'm planning an early mowing to open parts of section 1.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

Perry Bike Trails are in great shape. A couple of back to back wind storms made for some extensive cleanup during September. Fall maintenance will begin soon. There are a few small re-routes scheduled for sometime in the winter as time allows. Also planned is a new marking system to go with the maps if time allows.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Tuttle Creek Trails

The coordinator and trail workers at Randolph State Park and Carnahan Creek Trails are making slow progress, but the flood waters are receding. So, encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the fall weather and spruce up the trails and then use them, wherever they are. Fall and winter can be a great time to take an overall look at what needs to be done and it is surprising how much can be done then.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood Trail

Dornwood is looking good. We have had plenty of hikers and mountain bikers using the trails this summer. Some storms did roll through a few weeks ago that downed several large trees onto the trail. However, thanks to some of the riders of the Tuesday afternoon gang, we made short work of the job. Four motivated people with chain saws covered six miles of trail in two afternoons. Thanks guys!

The variety of trees on Dornwood will, as always, provide a wide array of color this fall. Come out and enjoy.

Russ Rupp (russ11@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest) Trails

We have started a honeysuckle removal project to eliminate this invasive, non-native species. The understory is blanketed so densely with honeysuckle that

there are few other plants that can survive. Most of our efforts are on the lower red trail where we have cleared large areas by digging the plants with the Ditch Witch loader. Some of the plants have trunks that are six inches in diameter and rise to heights of 25 feet. Hopefully, in the next season we'll begin to see a typical Kansas forest understory begin to emerge.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Kaw River State Park Trails (adjacent to MacLennan Park)

Work on the double-wide trails is progressing. The upper trail from the park road to the Region 2 office trailhead is about 2/3 covered in large base rock. The remaining sections will be finished in the next month and the trail will be ready for the top layer of crushed limestone. The new bridges above the pond are completed.

Repair and rerouting of the lower double-wide trail is completed and will be maintained as a natural surface without gravel. This trail was widened from single to double-track to permit the park to access remote sections of the trail with ATV's for emergency response. The existing single-track trail at the west end of the lower trail that some trail users call the "Widow Maker" is seriously eroded because it is a fall line trail. We have started to work on this section by creating rolling grade dips on the lower sections to divert water flow off the trail. The next phase will involve adding rock armoring to the gullies to make this trail sustainable.

This summer the park built a parking lot at the north end of the new park road just before the railroad track crossing. We plan to begin work on new single-track trails this winter.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Wilson State Park – Switchgrass Trail

The 10" plus rain received at the Park in late May and early June left a number of places on the trail with erosion in need of repair. Gradually I am getting those sections back in shape or preparing alternate routes, but several rehab projects remain. Regular summer rains kept the vegetation growing despite the intense heat of July and August. That of course meant more mowing and spraying, but by mid-September we pretty well had the vegetation under control, which will last until about the 3rd week of April 2012.

One of our least desirable plants in the Park is the long spine sandbur. Despite having evolved a few million years before the invention of the rubber tire, this pesky plant

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seems to be perfectly adapted to propagation by bicycle. Fortunately, this one only attaches itself to the tire and does not penetrate. I try to keep them mowed to prevent formation of the burs. Another alternative is to spray with glyphosate, but it is difficult to control collateral damage adjacent to the trail with the use of non-selective herbicides.

A local resident and trail runner, David Snyder, has been volunteering work hours on the trail, which has been a great help to me and of course of benefit to all trail users. Thanks, David.

There were competitive trail running events held in the Park in July and again in September, the last two of a series that began back in April. Although designed and built by mountain bikers to be a mountain bike trail, the Switchgrass is becoming a favorite of trail runners, both local and state wide. Trails designed strictly for hiking can have sections that are too steep, rough, narrow, or otherwise impassible with a bicycle, such as having extremely sharp turns. Our runners seem to like the grades and flow of the trail as much as the bicyclists do. I made my first attempts to deploy the trail camera. So far I'm not exactly happy with the results and need to work on finding just the right location. More on this next quarter.



Fall is a great time on the trail and it will see lots of trail users in the Park until the snow flies. Unfortunately the restrooms in the Park are not frost free and normally are closed by mid-October. This year because of budget cuts, the Park closed the restroom in at the trail head September 1st. We hope this austere policy will change in the future, but given the current political situation it doesn't seem likely.

Bob Nicholson (rnicholson@fhsu.edu)

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 (2011 & 2012)

- 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



2011 4th Quarter Board Meeting

The fourth quarter KTC Board meeting is scheduled for November 6 from 12:00 to 3:00 at a location yet to be determined. Please check the website "Meetings" page for further information: www.kstrailsCouncil.org

Address Change?

Please let us know if your address or other contact information has changed so that future newsletters will find their way to your doorstep or computer. This is especially important for Life Members because we do not receive annual membership forms from them.

Board Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2011

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at the home of Doug Palen. (Thanks, Doug, for your hospitality and fine lunch!)

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

- The meeting was called to order at 1:18 PM by President Bob Nicholson.

- Bob shared info with the Board about a special camera he has used to tally trail usage, etc.

- Minutes: Mike moved and Olivia seconded to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Motion passed.

- Treasurer's Report: Mike presented the treasurer's report for Board review and discussion. Some preferred stock shares have been redeemed and Mike suggested that we reinvest in stock that is not as likely to be redeemed. Doug moved and John H. seconded to accept the treasurer's report. Motion approved.

Old Business

- Brochure: The Board discussed having a new brochure designed that would not be year-specific and that would also include a membership form. Bob will check into the specifics.

New Business

- New sign material: Bob showed the Board a special paper that he has used for trail signs. The paper doesn't fade or tear easily. A color laser printer is used for printing on this paper.

- KRPA: The Board discussed becoming a member of KRPA (Kansas Recreation and Parks Association). John H. moved and Olivia seconded that KTC obtain a one year membership to KRPA and then reevaluate it at the end of one year. Motion passed.

- ATVs: There was discussion about the merits of using ATVs for trail building and maintenance. Bob and Doug had opportunity to use them on their respective trails and found them to be invaluable. A committee of Doug, Lyle, and Mike was appointed for research and development. The committee will have a progress report by the first quarter meeting.

- KTC Website: The Board would like to update the website to make it more timely, user-friendly, and easier to maintain. Chris will look for a website designer and Mike will investigate financing.

- BOD Election Results: Ballots were tallied and Board positions 1-6 were elected by a majority vote.

- Next meeting: The 4th Quarter Board meeting will be on November 6, 2011. Bob will check on the Oxford Mill as a possible place to meet.

- John W. moved and Olivia seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:04 PM.

Susan Haynes, Secretary

Why Build Trails? (Continued from Page 1)

Creative satisfaction

Everyone has creative yearnings and some have a real talent for drawing, painting, writing, singing or other artistic expression. The rest of us are trail builders. We talk a lot about the science and engineering of building a sustainable trail that will endure for decades. But there is also a creative, artistic side to trail building. It begins by gazing or bushwhacking through the forest or prairie and envisioning the trail that could be built. Weaving a new trail through interesting rock formations or breathtaking viewpoints is truly an artistic expression which results in a unique, rewarding experience for future trail users. The creative satisfaction achieved by guiding trail users through the canvas of nature is as rewarding as any other artistic endeavor.

Exercise and stress relief

In this sedentary era of internet, video games and cable television, physical activity is often missing from our daily or weekly entertainment activities. As obesity has increased in our society in recent decades, it is increasingly important to get people moving for their own health. Hiking, running or biking on trails is an approach to exercise that combines calorie burning with fresh air and nature. Trail building is still largely accomplished with physical labor. One of the best ways to burn off stress is to spend a couple of hours swinging a Pulaski!

It's fun!

Remember when you were a kid, playing outdoors after school? That's what trail building is like for us older kids. Pure fun!

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

Supporting Kansas Trails

We would like to welcome new KTC members Tyler Hower and the Daniel Byl family. We also would like to thank them and Eric Vidoni for their generous Friends of the Trail donations.

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!



Spring Flowers on Mt. Mitchell