

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

September 2015

9th Annual Built Environment and Outdoors Summit

In less than two weeks trail builders in Kansas will have the unique opportunity to be inspired by Christine Byl, author of *Dirt Works: An Education in the Woods*. Christine is a member of our extended family of trail builders who knows how to use a Pulaski and has been in the trenches just like many of us in the KTC.

Christine is scheduled to deliver the opening keynote address on October 14 at the Overland Park DoubleTree, 10100 College Blvd. in Overland Park. There is still time to register for one day (\$110) or the full conference (\$225). Here is the link for registration:

<http://www.kansasbeos.org/summit-registration.html>

Most of us have visited and enjoyed a National Park at one time or another... but how many times have we stopped to think about what it takes to maintain these gorgeous



American oases? What kind of people build the trails and work to preserve the land while still sharing its beauty with us? Award-winning author and trail designer Christine Byl spent over a decade as a "traildog" (trail laborer) for the National Parks Service, embracing the physically demanding work, the

colorful characters on the crew, and the connection of the human spirit to unfettered wilderness. She shares those experiences in her highly-acclaimed book, **Dirt Work: An Education in the Woods**, shedding light on the stories of the sweat equity inherent in trail building.

Today, Ms. Byl runs a trail contracting business, **Interior Trails**, with her husband in Alaska, and continues to write and speak about the importance of the great outdoors... and the even greater importance of our role within it.

If you have read *Dirt Work*, you'll want to hear Christine in person. If you haven't read the book.....you should!

We hope to see you there!

Trails and Social Media

An Editorial by Michael Goodwin

Social media serves many useful purposes and can be a very efficient, though imperfect, way to keep trail users informed continuously about trail conditions, events and issues. In recent months several events on nearby trails have prompted many trail users to offer a barrage of comments on various social media forums. After one event, within 24 hours there were literally hundreds of posts by concerned trail users. Many posts were well-meaning and logically stated, while others were much less so. One notable absence in the various forums were posts by the principles responsible for the trails or the parks involved. Trail and park managers wisely did not enter the "discussion" because they know that social media posts rarely resolve the underlying issues and often only add fuel to the perceived fire. In some cases, they create the impression of a fire when, in fact, there is none.

Most people who address a trail issue using social media are doing so because of their love of the trails. Unfortunately, they are not always fully informed of the facts surrounding any particular incident and are therefore only offering opinions based on assumptions rather than facts. As a result, a piling on by others creates a storm of frustration and sometimes anger that may be unjustified given the facts.

As a long time trail manager, I would urge well-meaning trail users to communicate directly, one-on-one, with either the trail or park manager about any concerns they might have about a trail. This will allow the managers to address the issue based on the facts of the situation rather than the emotion of the moment. Also, we should recognize that trail managers and trail users do not own the trails we use. City, county, state or Corps agencies usually own the land upon which we have created trails. We enjoy the use of this public land partly because we have demonstrated that we are good stewards of the land. When social media posts reach a feverish pitch, the goodwill we have earned is undermined.

So the next time you are concerned about something happening on your favorite trail.....send us an email or give us a call and we'll do our best to address your concerns.

Note: The views expressed here are those of the editor and may not reflect the views of the Kansas Trails Council or its members

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Earlier this summer we had a lot of rain with a lot of extra damage on the trail. Thankfully that's all cleared up and now the trail's wide-open and after several summer events it is in really good condition. We added a couple new trail watchers to the list and everyone has been a great help.



The running clubs have been doing a lot of work ahead of both of their events. There are some pictures posted here from the Trailhawk's most recent event. Looks like they had a good turnout and the weather was good for them.

This winter it will be time to rebuild the redline. After the high water from all the rain this spring a portion of it was damaged. I plan to rebuild this winter with the help of the Lawrence mountain bike club and anyone else I can beg. Stay tuned I will schedule some work days for this event. As always thanks for everyone's support.

Neil Taylor (medic1@sunflower.com)

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

It's been a challenging summer for trail work in Eastern Kansas. First, the excessive rain, then the extreme heat contributed to jungle-like growing conditions. But an avid group of volunteers have worked together to keep the ESP trails mowed, where accessible, trimmed, and cleared. Consequently, the Crooked Knee Trail is in excellent condition for fall trail riding.



The 5th Annual ESP Benefit Trail Ride is October 10-11, and the entire West Point camping area is reserved for participants. Beautiful riding, delicious meals provided by Friends of ESP, door prizes, and a live auction will continue the tradition of raising funds for West Point and Cowboy Camps and the Crooked Knee Trails. Previous rides have raised over \$15,000 that helped build an open-sided shelter house, add permanent and portable pipe corrals, and run a water line that allowed for two water hydrants in the Cowboy Camp primitive campground.

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

Trail use seems to be increasing as word of mouth spreads. The people I meet and speak to on the trail or receive feedback after their outing is positive. I continue to see more hiking use by individuals up to entire families both from local residents and folks outside the general area of Fall River Lake. I try to keep a supply of cut walking sticks at the trail head, the kids are all happy as long as they have a stick to carry. The trail is in good shape and reports are that it sheds water well, even after up to a half inch of rain within the previous 24hrs. The trails are generally attracting riders from a radius of up to a two hour drive. Everyone seems to like the mix of trees, rocks, a little technical riding required along with some good recovery sections. Reports from the Camp Host is that lake use and camping are up this summer as well, possibly due to more recreational opportunity in the area of the lake. One down side this late summer season into fall is the Oak Mite problem that has spread to the lake. It has been hard to keep from itching from ankle to knees after a ride from these microscopic pests. I recommend people hit the shower asap after a ride or hike. The best season of the year for trail use is right now through the end of the year so I encourage people to get out, get dirty, get on a trail.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

September 2015, The Ford County Lake trail is 10.5 miles of single track in a variety of settings with a few technical challenges and many short climbs and drops. It runs through grass and into thick trees with log ramps and rocky areas around the lake and across a portion of the dry lake bottom. It includes a mile long circuit of loops and switchbacks over jumps and hills called the "Playground" before leading back to the starting point. The trees have begun to show fall colors and should be in full beauty by

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the middle October. Our fall cleanup will begin in early next month with details posted on the Ford County Lake Trail facebook page. The lake water level has dropped well below the spillway but sportsman and camping activities are still in full swing. The trail head is located on the southwest corner of the lake.

Thanks,

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

After early flooding and the lake levels returned to normal a quick clean up of flood debris got the trails back into shape pretty quick. Everything is good again and getting close to leaf blowing season.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

As usual, it was a fairly quiet summer for the Perry Hiking Trail crew – dodging the heat. Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other ideas. High water of 18' above normal put several low trail areas under water. We're still assessing the debris.



A bit of mowing did begin in mid-September along our lespedeza infested part of section 1. At least that trail section will be open. The possible bridge that was under consideration earlier this year has been delayed due to some unusual construction issues and the long distances the scouts would have to travel – so, perhaps next year.

We're looking forward to cooler weather to begin the trail work in earnest.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood

The rains this spring and summer have kept the lower channels of the Dornwood trail flooded and has washed a bridge on the south end of the trail out of position. Otherwise the trail has been trimmed and maintained. Planning a work day soon to place some high water crossing in the channels. Planning on the usual fall leaf blowing when needed.

Russ Rupp (russ11@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

Lots of trees down recently but the trails are now clear, dry and in pretty good shape. We'll be adding a new mid-trail map on the Kaw River side of the park in the next week or so.

When the weather cools a bit, we'll do some minor tread work to debern the tread and re-establish the normal outslope in a few places. We also plan to do a minor reroute on the blue trail to improve flow and eliminate some minor erosion.

We'll continue working on honeysuckle eradication when temperatures fall and other vegetation goes dormant in early December. We'll be removing large honeysuckle "trees" with chain saws and spraying the smaller plants with glyphosate. This strategy seems to be working and the forest is slowly returning to a more natural state.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Skyline Park

This summer growing season seemed to never end. The last mowing was through 12 foot high sunflowers and 7 foot high big bluestem. Hopefully this will slow down with cooler temperatures this fall. The trail is now freshly mowed.



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We repaired a few short sections of trail near the north summit to re-establish the outslope where compaction had created a berm on the outslope edge. We're planning to start work on a new loop in the southwest corner of the park when temperatures fall a bit.



We're beginning to do the site work for the bike dirt bumps in the middle of the trail system. Still lots of dirt to move but we'll be ready to start shaping the bumps in the next week or so.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

Randolph State Park

Almost all of Randolph State Park has been gone over after the high winds and storms a week ago. Last Sunday two of us cleared all the down trees on the trails. Some scrub trees have grown up which will be taken care off later. Happy to note horses and hikers are using the trails at Randolph. The park is sporting a new double shower/restroom and is all mowed nicely.

Carnahan

The trails at Carnahan Creek Area are on the list in October. We need to cut back some of the summer weeds from all the rain this past spring and summer and double check on trees in that area also. The high water has hindered some maintenance this year and now we have to deal with the driftwood, etc. All coming up.

Have a great fall and enjoy the outdoors.

Olivia Huddleston (kayakkid346@gmail.com)

Trail in a Box Update

The KTC's Trail in a Box program loans a fully stocked tool trailer to organizations who would like to build public access trails. If your group would like to build trails and needs equipment and perhaps a little expert guidance, check out our website at:

<http://www.kansastrailsCouncil.org/about/trail-in-a-box/>

Currently our four Trail in a Box units are building trails in: Iola, Pomona Lake, Ft. Riley & Manhattan and Horsethief Reservoir.

KTC 2nd Quarter Board Meeting Minutes

August 5, 2015

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at Reed's Lakeside Bar and Grill in Topeka, KS.

- Board members present were Lyle Riedy, President; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Kevin Otterman; Jim Thomas, Russ Rupp.

Not present: Olivia Huddleston; Cliff Jones; Terry Plenert; Neil Taylor.

- The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM by President Lyle Riedy.

Business

- Open Secretary position: After discussion, Lyle moved that Kevin Otterman fill the vacant Secretary position. Mike seconded and motion carried.

- Approval of Minutes: Edited minutes which included the E-Trade account changes were presented and discussed. Lyle moved and Mike seconded to accept the minutes as presented. Motion passed.

- Treasurer's Report: Mike commented that the Sunflower Grant check (\$9848.23) was received after he had compiled the treasurer's report and was not reflected in the numbers. This last-minute addition changes the Cash Management – Total Reserves to ~\$18k and the Inflows/Outflows – Overall Total is now positive.

The E-Trade and US Bank accounts have been updated with Lyle Riedy and Mike Goodwin both assigned as co-signatories.

- Specific Equipment Purchases:

Wilson – The ATV has mechanical issues, per Sara Kay, the scope of which are still being defined. Once defined a repair estimate will be presented.

Mike suggested that the zero turn mower previously in use at Wilson may not be a safe/suitable solution for Sara Kay to use for regular maintenance. Mike will coordinate a time where the TIAB4 DR Mower can be used by Sara Kay to see if that is more suitable. If so, a mower purchase for Wilson may be requested in the future.

Melvern/Eisenhower – Mike reported that the grant for promotional materials is with Federal Highway

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Administration for approvals. Jim will record volunteer hours to support the necessary in-kind match for grant.

Perry Hike – Trailer latches have been repaired (by Neil Taylor). Mike offered that a promotional rate will be available later this year on Stihl MS250 chainsaws through our vendor (Heritage Tractor). Mike and Kevin discussed the tool storage requirements for the open trailer and the correct storage box size needed, including for chainsaw in its case. Mike added that the tools purchased for Clinton State Park repairs would be available to Perry Hike ahead of planned November maintenance outings.

- GetOutdoorsKansas.org update: Mike reported that the grant for promotional materials is with Federal Highway Administration for approvals.

- Newsletter editor/newsletter: Identified options (from last meeting) for a new newsletter editor did not pan out. Lyle and Russ suggested some further options and will pursue with interested parties. Mike offered that he will assist with any transition.

New Business

- Board Positions: Lyle reported that existing board members were moved up in numerical slots to fill the #6-9 positions. The total board is now nine persons.

Positions #1-5 are up for re-election this year. Those positions are Russ Rupp, Jim Thomas, Olivia Huddleston, Neil Taylor, Cliff Jones. Lyle will be reaching out to each to confirm interest in another term and will issue on-line election ballots shortly.

- KTC email address: The board discussed the desirability to use the organization's domain (kansastrailscouncil.org) as the 'sender' for official communications to membership. Mike informed that an existing 'info@kansastrailscouncil.org' email address already exists. The board collectively discussed what would be

necessary to set up this address within a gmail account so it could be used by Lyle. Mike and Lyle will follow up.

- Clinton Lake – Rock Haven equestrian trail: Jim Thomas formalized the request to KTC (from Diana Skinner) for KTC sponsorship of this trail. The board discussed the need for some policy/guidelines when adopting an existing trail. Russ had some general guidelines in mind and will investigate further. Kevin inquired about the status of any existing MOU or agreements with the Corps for this trail. Jim will work with Diana to identify any existing agreements and the parties involved. Mike Goodwin will approach the Corps to discuss their understanding of any agreements already in place. All parties will report back by next meeting so the board can discuss further and make decisions.

- Membership event: Lyle suggested that a general membership get together would be a good idea. The board discussed organized rides and races, which had been proposed in years past. The challenge with those events centered on insurance costs. The board discussed purely social events as a possibility.

Other Business

- Date, time, location of meetings: The Board discussed the ideal day of week for future Board meetings. For next meeting, the board concluded that Radina's Coffee in Manhattan would be appropriate. Lyle to reach out to Olivia and Terry for recommendation on best time.

- Lyle moved and Kevin seconded that we adjourn. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Kevin Otterman, Secretary

Support Kansas Trails in 2015!

We would like to welcome our many new members who have joined in the past few months and thank our renewing and affiliate members for continuing to support Kansas Trails!

Memberships and donations make it possible to do all the work the KTC and our volunteers do every day of the year. If you would you like to support Kansas trails you can make a donation to the KTC Friends of the Trail program. While our on-line PayPal membership feature is easy to use, if you would rather send a check, please fill out and print the on-line membership form and mail it to: KTC, PO Box 695, Topeka, KS 66601-0695.

Click here to join the KTC and support your favorite trails:
<http://www.kansastrailscouncil.org/join/ktc-membership-sign-up/>



MacLennan Park Fungi

