

THE KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING KANSAS TRAILS SINCE 1974

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Newsletter

September, 2002

Age Is No Handicap

By John Haynes

It is amazing how often you observe people who go from being physically active as a teenager to a sedentary lifestyle, characterized by inactivity, as they grow older.

This past summer I had the opportunity to backpack with an old friend of mine, Wilbur Miller. I should mention that Wilbur has not migrated to the easy chair after reaching voting age. In fact, he has upheld a long-standing exercise regime.

Quite some time ago, I introduced Wilbur to backpacking. He immediately became an active hiker. Whenever we have scheduled a hiking trip, I have never worried about him being out of condition to safely backpack. I have had fleeting thoughts and concerns about myself, however. With Wilbur, intense weightlifting workouts have been the norm. This has included the "killer twenty squats" routine. Coupled with the weights, he also, almost daily, goes for a long walk in the pasture.

Hiking and backpacking, in particular, place serious physical demands on the body and if you really want to safely enjoy your trip, you can not neglect physical conditioning. What we are talking about primarily are the cardiovascular demands. Wilbur's workouts tax both strength and cardiovascular requirements. The big issue here is to not let your age interfere, and if you want to be a life-long hiker, you have to exercise!

Getting back to Wilbur and our backpacking trip, Wilbur had never climbed a 14,000-foot peak. We decided to climb San Luis Peak, southeast of Gunnison, Colorado. I had been hiking and backpacking in Colorado earlier in the summer, so I already had some conditioning and probably some acclimating to the altitude. Wilbur, on the other hand, had been doing his workouts faithfully.

Our strategy was to do three successfully higher camps before attempting the peak. (This sounds like a Mount Everest expedition, doesn't it?) We did this to help

acclimate ourselves. The end result was that we successfully made it to the top. Wilbur really felt pleased at achieving his personal goal of climbing a 14,000-foot peak.

By the way, did I mention that Wilbur is three months shy of being seventy years old?!!



[Wilbur Miller on top of San Luis Peak]

This newsletter is designed and edited by KTC board member, Rocky Shire. Your comments are always welcome.

Members and interested parties are invited to submit stories and articles for consideration for publication in our newsletter. If you have a trail-related experience or a human-interest story such as the one above, we hope that you will share it with us. If you have humorous trail or camping anecdotes or jokes, we will consider those as well.

A Better Bear Story

Editor's note:

[I found the following darkly humorous bit on several different web sites on the Internet last spring after I took over as editor of the newsletter. I was not sure that I would ever find a way to fit this into the newsletter, but John Haynes and Jim Copeland provided the way for me to introduce it during the last board of directors meeting. They were discussing the merits and value of small *bear* bells (*bar* bells would obviously be too heavy!) tied to clothing and backpacks while hiking or backpacking in bear country. Jim said that he had used them for many years and John reported that he had read somewhere that making noise and loud talking are more effective.

Let's see what the Internet has to say about this and then, you may draw your own conclusions.]

In case anyone is considering doing some hiking and/or camping in bear country in the near future, please note the following public service announcement. In Alaska, tourists are encouraged to wear tiny bells on their clothing when hiking in bear country. The bells are *supposed* to warn away most bears. Tourists are also cautioned to watch the ground on the trail, paying particular attention to bear droppings to be alert for the presence of Grizzly bears. One can easily recognize Grizzly droppings because they have tiny bells in them.

Organized Hike at Casner Creek

By Virginia Lefferd

On Saturday, August 31 Gail Harshaw led a hike on the recently opened Casner Creek Hiking and Biking Trail at Fall River State Park. This beautiful one and one-half mile trail is nearly all on open prairie with only about one-fourth mile passing through the timber.

Gail Harshaw, a park employee, pointed out and identified many fall-blooming flowers as well as the other vegetation that was growing wild near the trail. About fifteen people took part in the hike and enjoyed this morning outing. Longtime KTC member, Dolores Baker and I also participated in the hike.

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On the Trail in Oregon

By Rocky Shire

There are easily as many hiking and mountain biking trails, as there are Espresso stands in Oregon. Espresso stands are everywhere, which means that there are opportunities for hiking and/or biking just about anywhere one goes in that state. While I was visiting my brother in Oregon this summer, I was able to hike a remarkable four-mile trail in the mountains along the coast. I also had an opportunity to do some mountain biking on a multi-use trail that begins about a block from the front door of my brother's home in Oakridge, Oregon.

Oakridge is a sleepy, one-stoplight town of about 3000 inhabitants nestled on the western slope of the Cascade Mountains. At one time Oakridge was a booming and bustling logging town. According to the information that I was given, the town lost its boom and bustle because of one small animal—the spotted owl. It was discovered there and environmentalists moved to protect it. The efforts of this group stilled the saws and logging trucks for good in the entire area surrounding the town. The economic impact of this was profound. Most of the buildings in the old business district are boarded up and abandoned. Now, the majority of the town's residents are retired, unemployed or commuting to jobs in Eugene forty miles away.

These days about the only things that disturb the quiet of this peaceful little hamlet in the Cascades are the train whistles echoing through the surrounding mountains and the rumble of diesel engines on the trucks slowing down as they pass through Oakridge on US Highway 58. The social hot spots in Oakridge are the rolling nine-hole golf course and the Moose Lodge.

However, plenty of excitement came to the area while we were visiting. It came in the form of a forest fire that burned out of control for several days just a couple of miles to the west of Oakridge. The air was filled with smoke and the sights and sounds of twin-engine planes dumping fire retardant on the flames and helicopters filling huge water buckets from the Willamette River. Perhaps the ultimate irony came from the fact that the fire occurred directly across the river from regional forest service offices.

I have included this little sidelight for two reasons. One relates to the fact that most of us in KTC are concerned with environmental issues and we share a common concern for all endangered species. This particular town clearly demonstrates the delicate balance that exists between environmental issues and economic priorities. I feel strongly about saving endangered species and preserving the environment, but I, for one, would hate to be placed in the position of having to convince a logger that saving a bird took precedence over preserving a means for him (or

her) to support a family. It is a complicated matter with no easy solutions. Unfortunately, one side or the other must usually suffer the loss.

The other reason that I included this information on Oakridge is that it supports my contention that there are trails all over the state of Oregon. The last place one might expect to find an excellent hiking and biking trail is near a logging town turned retirement community. Yet, it is there and it starts right on the edge of town. It follows Salmon Creek for five miles back into the forest. It begins as a cinder path, which merges into an old and rough forestry road. This in turn becomes a remarkable single-track trail that meanders through the forest and along the creek. Four miles east on the trail, one can easily lose track of the fact that civilization is not far away. The trail passes through an intensely quiet area containing large second-generation spruce and pine trees surrounded by the moss-covered and decaying stumps and trunks of old growth trees. Ivy and large ferns fill in wherever they can. Sunlight struggles through the trees and onto the trail at rare intervals here. A little farther on, the trail comes back to the creek and the roar of rapids and a series of small waterfalls replaces the silence. The trail ends in the primitive Salmon Creek campground.

I have a particular fondness for any trail that provides an opportunity, even for a brief moment, to imagine what the area was like before the inevitable changes invoked and imposed by man and the onslaught of civilization. For a couple of miles this trail provided that opportunity. As a mountain biker this trail was special for another reason. The trail has a noticeable elevation gain throughout the entire five miles. This means that the rider can, if he or she so desires, fly down the trail all the way back to town while negotiating some sharp turns, significant dips and roughs rocky areas. One daunting area is a narrow segment that treks along the very edge of a steep drop off to the large rounded boulders of the stream twenty feet below. At an age when I should know better, I could not resist the temptations and the thrills of this fast downhill ride.

While we were in Oregon, I had another trail experience that requires far less build up. While my wife and I were visiting my brother, my oldest son, Sean, flew out to spend a few days as well. We drove to the coast for a couple of days and managed to find time to work in a hike on a four-mile Pacific Rim trail in the Cummins Wilderness Area. The trailhead for the Cummins trail is located at the visitors' center for Cape Perpetua. It was fairly late in the afternoon when my brother, Robert, Sean and I set out on the trail. The trailhead is located about a quarter of a mile from the ocean, so we had the roar of the surf at our backs as we headed up the trail. *Up* is the operative word on this trail, because the trail involves a relentless uphill trek over the entire four miles. After about a mile of the uphill grind,

my brother made a discretionary U-turn and headed back to the parking lot. Sean and I pressed onward and I had to stop and catch my breath several times before we reached the end of the trail. The trail is not a loop and it ends on a remote forest service road several miles inland. Simply stated, he or she who goes up this trail must come back down it the same way under normal circumstances.

This trail is typical of most of the forest trails on the Oregon coast. The trail passes through the tall Sitka Spruce trees that are indigenous to this part of Oregon. Both sides of the trail are lined with large ferns, vines and, in some places, wild flowers. Some of the vines looked suspiciously like poison ivy and I opted to forego a close examination of them. We quickly left the sounds of the surf and Highway 101 traffic behind. The only sounds that we heard were the drip of precipitation from the trees and ferns, an occasional sigh from a light breeze sifting through the dense vegetation and the faint chirp of a bird high up in the branches. This particular day the coast was socked in with heavy fog and mist and as we reached higher elevations the fog and very fine mist closed in on the trail giving it a lonely sense of remoteness that was both enchanting and disquieting at one and the same time. Here and there along the trail we saw the stumps of huge old growth Sitka Spruce trees that fell victim to early day logging activities. I am sure that some of the stumps measured more than six feet in diameter. In the mist they loomed like dark aging tombstones or monuments to the great old trees that once stood as silent sentinels on the Oregon coast. The old ones stood tall to witness westward expansion in America, but for all their size and grandeur they could do nothing to stop it. I have always possessed great awe and admiration for trees, especially the old stately ones, and I felt a twinge of sadness that I was not around to see these trees before they were toppled—to see these trees that were undoubtedly growing during the infancy of our nation.

It is a hike that I will long remember for the sweat generated in spite of the cool temperatures and fog during the uphill grind. Mostly I will remember the hike because it was made with two that I love very much and it possessed the quintessential element of a feeling detachment for a few hours from our complicated world and all its problems. There was an interesting twist to this particular hike, but I have chosen not to include it here mainly because I fear that this piece may have run on too much as it is for the tastes of most readers of this newsletter.

In closing, Oregon trails possess a different kind of enchantment and lure, but, in my opinion, that does not make them better and more appealing to me than our trails right here in Kansas. Besides, Oregon trails are two thousand miles away. Great hiking and biking trails are a mere six miles from my driveway here in Independence. I think it may be the ubiquitous Espresso stands that I miss

the most since my return. It was somehow comforting to me to know that a tasty caffeine fix was never far away.

[Note: If you are a history buff, you might enjoy visiting: <http://www.ci.yachats.or.us/Yachats%20History.html>]

Cape Perpetua and the nearby city of Yachats have a rich historical past, which includes military significance during World War II on our western shores.

Unauthorized Trail Work or Maintenance

By Lyle Riedy

Several times over the past few years I have had to deal with rogue trail builders altering the Perry Bike Trail. I want and need volunteers to help with the trail, but all work should be done under the direction of the coordinator. Types of unauthorized work going on are these: (1) the cutting of trees, some of which are cut off three or four feet above the ground. We “think” this is being done by deer hunters who are trying to create a clear line of fire. Some of these trees are several feet away from the trail. Not only is this illegal, but also it is poor technique and it reflects poorly on the regular trail workers; (2) people cutting personal access trails from their homes to the trail. This confuses riders when they come to these unmarked intersections, and often the riders will dead end in someone’s back yard. The end result of this is that the bikers get a bad rap for trespassing; (3) altering trail tread. Most disturbing to me is when someone tries to make the trail easier to ride by digging out rocks, roots, and removing logs from the trail tread. Often these features are in place to direct the flow of both traffic and water in a particular direction. I have posted some signs at specific locations to get the “volunteer” on the right track. Frequently, when such items are removed from the trail, a hole or rut is left behind and this turns into a mud issue or unwanted trail widening. This also takes the challenge out of the trail and thereby defeats the intended purpose of the trail being built the way it is, where it is. I suspect that low-skilled riders that think a bike trail is supposed to be a smooth bike path are doing this. There are bike paths in the area as well as other trails that are less challenging where beginning riders should ride instead of altering the trails that are designed for serious and advanced level riders. If you encounter unauthorized work being done on the trail, please report it to the trail coordinator. If we can harness the efforts of these people and use them on authorized work, we can accomplish very positive things for the trail.

Visit the Kansas Trails Council on line at:
<http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>

Highlights of the August, 2002 Board Meeting

- The board met on Sunday, August 18, 2002 at the home of John and Susan Haynes in Shawnee. The meeting followed a noon luncheon.
- Susan Haynes and Michael Goodwin were accepted and welcomed as new board members replacing departing board members Phil Morris and Mike Hough. [The board expresses its appreciation for the work and efforts of Mike and Phil during their tenure.]
- Jim Copeland reported that the Kansas Landscape Arboretum has a program for individuals and organization to donate a memorial tree to the Arboretum. The board took no action on this.
- A KTC fall festival or gathering to be held at Perry Lake was discussed and, eventually, because of a variety of issues, the board decided to table the matter and possibly try to plan it again for next year.
- The board agreed that the time has come to find and hire someone to prepare and publish a brief history of the Kansas Trails Council from its beginnings in 1974 to the present.
- The board decided not to act on a request made by two Kansas State University students for financial assistance to do extensive GPS mapping of Kansas's trails.
- In response to a request by a KTC member, the board plans to develop a database of information about Kansas's trails. Mike Goodwin volunteered to work on this rather time-consuming task and prepare a database that will be made available to the membership and the public at some point in the future.
- The next meeting is scheduled to take place on November 10 at the home of Lyle Riedy in Topeka.

Fact

One of the world's largest known Sitka Spruce trees is protected and located just off Highway 101 near Canon Beach, Oregon. It is 16 feet in diameter, it stands 215 feet high and it is estimated to be 700 years old.

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

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

KTC is involved in an ongoing effort to inform the public about our work and our organization. If or when you are finished with this newsletter, please share it with a friend or relative in order that they may learn more about us also.

Sticks To Trekking Poles

By Jim Copeland

For centuries hikers and walkers have used some form of stick or cane to assist them while walking. Often it was just a fallen tree branch with a handle whittled into it. For years I have used a sumac stick that frequently has a natural ninety-degree root that forms a comfortable handle. Nowadays, the most popular walking sticks are lightweight, telescoping super-tough alloy poles with soft molded grips. These are called trekking poles. These high-tech poles offer numerous advantages, which include safer stream crossings, better support on dicey trails and knee protection.

Now, there is scientific proof that trekking poles are highly beneficial tools to use while hiking. Scientists at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Wisconsin as well as at the Steadman-Hawkins Sports Medicine Foundation in Colorado found that poles provide the following benefits:

1. Poles reduce the risk of injury and tendonitis in knees, calves, thighs and even hips. They found that trekking poles also allow hikers to keep a more normal stride and a faster pace with less effort.
2. Up to 4.4 percent of the force that reverberates through one's body with each step is absorbed by the poles. After a long day and thousands of steps, that extra support adds up. Almost all brands of poles have some sort of shock system. The shocks are designed to absorb impact and reduce stress on the one's joints.
3. By using the pole there is less fatigue. Their studies revealed that when properly used, the poles reduced the workload for lower-body muscles and joints by transferring some of the load from the legs to the arms.

Some of the suggestions that the researchers made for proper pole use were:

1. When walking on flat terrain, you should hold the pole so that the arms are bent about ninety degrees. Most poles are adjustable so that you can adjust the length of the poles to allow for this angle. You should use the opposite arm and leg to help keep you in balance. The right leg goes forward when you plant your left pole, and vice versa. When you are going up hill shorten the pole and downhill lengthen the pole in order to maintain a comfortable grip and an upright posture.
2. Researchers discovered that using wrist straps and keeping a light grip on the handles were helpful

3. While on hilly terrain you, undoubtedly, will spend some of your time traversing. This can cause a bit of a problem if you have two poles that are the same height. Your uphill hand will be at shoulder height and your weight will be off balance. To compensate, you should shorten just your uphill pole to a height that is appropriate for the angle of the hill you are traversing.



The researchers all agreed with what many hikers and backpackers already know—four legs are better than two on uneven terrain.

Web sites featuring trekking poles:

<http://www.trekpoles.com>

<http://www.freshtracksmaps.com/index.htm>

New Board Members

Susan Haynes, wife of longtime board member, John Haynes joins the board bringing new ideas and a fresh perspective with her. Susan has been an active KTC member for many years. She is a hiker and a backpacker. She and John reside and work in Shawnee, Kansas.

Michael Goodwin is the other new board member. He has been a KTC member for a number of years and recently took over the duties of trail coordinator at Clinton Lake. Mike is a runner, hiker and kayaker residing in Topeka where he has lived since 1970. He runs marathons and ultra-marathons and is a member of the Kansas Ultra-Runners Society. He also enjoys scuba diving, downhill skiing, landscaping, reading and photography.

The board appreciates their willingness to serve on the board and volunteer their time and efforts to the Council and to the trails in Kansas.

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, trail coordinator or board member, please contact any board member listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

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

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, KTC President

2926 Highway 9

Vermillion, Kansas 66544

The Kansas Trails Council is celebrating its 28th anniversary this month. The Council was organized in September of 1974 for the expressed purpose of building and maintaining trails on public lands in Kansas.



Kansas's trails are interesting and diverse.

This picture was taken recently on the Overlook Trail at Elk City Lake.

For more about Kansas's trails and the Kansas Trails Council visit us on line at:
<http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>

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

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