

THE KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING KANSAS TRAILS SINCE 1974

Volume XXVIII No. 3

Newsletter

December, 2002

BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

Clinton Lake Photo Run

By Michael Goodwin

White tail deer are common around many Kansas lakes. At Clinton Lake they most often can be seen with tails flared like white flags as they bound away from hikers, runners or bikers. Not so on this September day.

I had been running for about 30 minutes on the Blue Trail at Clinton Lake when I descended into a shallow, rocky ravine near the water. Trail running requires continuous concentration on the next ten feet of trail in order to avoid face plants, twisted ankles or worse. As I focused on the oncoming rocks, in my peripheral vision I noticed something moving through the nearby trees on my right.

Stopping immediately, I stood frozen to the trail, catching my breath, heart pounding. As I slowly turned my head, I could now see a small brown fawn also frozen in place about 20 feet away. We both were unsure what to do next. So we just stood there curiously looking at each other, waiting for some sign that we should move or do something.

She was barely 3 feet tall! Where was her mother? The doe must be somewhere nearby, but I could not see her through the dense foliage. It seemed odd that this little one would be all alone and it obviously was not the source of the movement I had detected since it was not moving a muscle. Then, looking up the ravine past the fawn I noticed movement again among the trees above the trail. There was another fawn about 50 feet away from my little friend. And standing nearby was the doe. She seemed anxious that one of her

babies had not fled with her as I had approached the ravine. Torn between her instinct to flee and the urge to protect her young, she simply stood there watching me, waiting.

After what seemed like many minutes, I finally remembered the camera hanging from my shoulder. Scenes like this one are the very reason I had recently started taking my camera with me on trail runs. Apparently, the fawn had been patiently waiting for me to come to my senses and begin the photo session. After three photos and the associated clicks of the shutter, the fawn slowly turned and walked up the ravine to her waiting mother and brother.

Exhilarated, I walked slowly along the trail until I was out of their sight and resumed my run. Taking care not to frighten creatures you find on the trail



will pay dividends when you discover them again in the future.

At the next trail intersection, I decided to switch over to the White Trail to return to the trailhead where I had started. The White Trail roughly parallels the Blue Trail, but it is further from the lakeshore and wanders higher into the ravines. The two trails at Clinton Lake State Park begin together at the East Trailhead parking lot south of the Corps of Engineer's office. They then separate after about 1/10th mile and trace different paths along the shoreline. The Blue Trail is over 7 miles long while the White Trail is over 11 miles long. Periodically, the two trails cross over or are connected by a trail blazed in blue and white. White-over-blue blazes signify a connector trail from the White Trail to the Blue Trail and vice versa. Round trip routes can be developed by taking the Blue or White trail out to a connector trail and then returning by the other trail to the beginning point. The White Trail is more challenging than the Blue Trail because of numerous rocks, roots and ascents.

About twenty minutes after my encounter with the deer family, I had fallen back into a rhythmic pace. As I neared a left-hand curve in the trail, two tiny white flags went up as two fawns dashed off to the right across the upper section of the same ravine where we had met before. Again I stopped, remaining motionless for several minutes. Where was the doe?

White tail deer seem to have the perfect camouflage for these woods with coats of gray and brown that blend easily with the bark and soil of the background. Only their movement and their white tails make them occasionally stand out. It was movement that drew my eyes to the doe on the left side of the trail. She had not dashed off with her youngsters perhaps for the same reason that the little fawn had watched me earlier at the bottom of the ravine. Was she just curious?

As I remained still, she walked around on my left, pausing to peer at me from between the trees while I began to take photos. Her dark eyes and nose contrasted the white markings around her mouth. Then, with flared tail, she abruptly ran across the trail from left to right about twenty feet ahead. I thought that she was going to join her family and that the encounter was over. But she inexplicably stopped,

(Continued on the next page)

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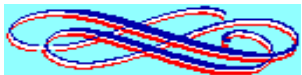
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looked at me, then reversed directions and bounded back to my left again. Over the next fifteen minutes she patiently walked around on my left at a safe distance of about twenty feet allowing me to leisurely shoot the rest of my film. Twice, she stomped her right front hoof as if to scare me away or at least to indicate that she was not intimidated by my presence. Finally, out of what appeared to be more boredom than anything else, the doe quietly turned, walked up the slope away from me and disappeared into the trees. I stood there for some time as the stillness of the forest enveloped me and my mind replayed the rare close encounter.

As I continued my run back to the trailhead, the next ten feet of trail once again absorbed my attention. I pondered whether the doe and her family had noticed my movement along the trail. Did they wonder why I had stopped to watch them and make strange clicking sounds with that thing hanging from my shoulder? Was it just curiosity?



Cross Timbers State Park Dedication
By Virginia Lefferd

The Grand Opening and State Park dedication for Cross Timbers was held at Toronto Lake on September 28, 2002. This is the newest State Park in Kansas and features ancient Post Oak and Blackjack Oak trees. These trees date back to the early 1700's. The newly named Cross Timbers State Park is on the northern edge of the remains of a forest that once stretched three hundred and fifty miles through Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas.

Dolores Baker and Virginia Lefferd were volunteer KTC members for the occasion. Gail Harshaw, another KTC member was also there as a State Park employee. Dolores instructed the Girl Scouts in the art of trail blazing, while Virginia helped with the start of a butterfly garden for the sake of butterflies in the years to come. Gail Harshaw was in charge of activities and helped to keep all of the exhibits running smoothly. The exhibits consisted of a butterfly collection and other

nature items. There were guided tours of the new Cross Timbers Trail.

There was one tragedy that occurred during the day's activities. A kestrel, which was on display in one of the exhibits managed to escape from its cage and it was immediately grabbed by an alert hawk that was cruising the area looking for breakfast.

Speeches were made and all of the volunteers received certificates for their efforts in making the day both educational and enjoyable for the nature lovers that attended the dedication. At noon the State Park employees celebrated the occasion by serving hamburgers, salad, chips, power bars and drinks to the many guest that visited the Park that day.



Trail Maintenance
By Dolores Baker

Designing and constructing a new trail is always exciting. However, maintenance of that trail is always less so. Still, there is a certain satisfaction in clearing away the heavy spring growth or the deadfall from a storm or the debris from a flood.

After the Kansas Trails Council was formed in 1974, the construction of new trails was the reason for and objective of many great outings by KTC members and volunteers. But, as time went on, it became apparent that keeping the trails cleared was just as important as building them.

A memorandum by Richard Douthit in 1981 brought this to the attention of the Board of Directors. It said, in part, "Our method of demonstrating the need for trails in Kansas has been stunningly effective—make the trails and watch people throng to use them... Now the problem of trail maintenance appears in CAPITAL LETTERS." In a memo in 1982, Douthit writes that there were reports of hikers getting lost on the trail after the lush summer growth set on.

Over the years Richard appeared before many organizations telling the KTC story and looking for volunteers to keep the trails in good condition. Groups that responded included Sierra Club, Topeka Prairie Packers, Johnson County Outdoor Club, and many different Boy Scout Troops. Mountain High, an outdoor store in Wichita, signed up individuals who have spent many hours working on various trails. The Kansas Ultrarunners Society has maintained the Elk River Trail since 1995, putting in hundreds of hours trimming, sawing and removing debris.

Mother Nature soon reclaims a trail, which is not maintained. Any person wishing to help maintain trails in Kansas can find a place to help by contacting a KTC board member or the manager of a State Park or the Corps of Engineers.

Editor's notes:

The late Richard Douthit was one of the pioneers in KTC. He was a professor at Emporia State University and he loved the great outdoors. He devoted countless hours to KTC, trail building and filling a need for trails in Kansas for more than twenty years.

{KTC HAS BEEN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRAILS FOR TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS. WE INVITE YOU TO COME OUT AND ENJOY OUR TRAILS OFTEN DURING THE COMING YEAR.}

[From the Editor's Desk]

Mincing Words

In the last issue of the newsletter, I contributed an article about my experiences on the trail in Oregon. I mentioned Oregon's ubiquitous espresso stands and drew a comparison between the number of trails and the number of espresso stands. I sent a copy of the newsletter to my oldest son, Sean, since he was involved in those trail experiences. A few weeks later as we were leaving a coffee shop in Columbus, Ohio, Sean said, "Oh, by the way, Dad, did you know that you misspelled *espresso*? You spelled it *expresso* with an "x". I was aghast and appalled. I had been caught and called out by my own son!

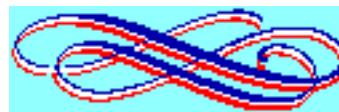
When I returned home and had time to do so, I researched the word to see if I could determine how I

could have made such an egregious error. It suddenly occurred to me that I *had* double-checked the spelling of the word, before I sent the newsletter to press. Webster's New World Dictionary indicates that the word can be spelled either way and in truth, I was relying on the way that I had seen the word spelled in the past and not necessarily the way that it is spelled most of the time or at the stands in Oregon.

I then went on line and typed in the words, *expresso coffee* (with an "x"). I got 49,000 possible hits for sites related to this topic. Of course, I did not check out all 49,000 sites, but I did visit several of them and was surprised to discover that many of them spell the word *both* ways. I visited one site dealing with the history of coffee. The author devoted a lengthy discussion to *espresso* and the accepted English corruption *expresso*. Some indignity was expressed over the fact that the alternate spelling was allowed to stick and make its way into common usage and into the dictionary.

Aside from taking a little license as newsletter editor and having fun with this, I have exonerated myself, mollified the purists that would never condone another spelling for their beloved *espresso* and served to educate the readership on this topic. Also, I am using this as an opportunity to mention one more detail related to my hiking experiences in Oregon. I forgot to mention in that article that there is an espresso stand at the trailhead of a coastal trail that leads down to the sea and the Devil's Caldron. Apparently, Oregonians have had the foresight to think of everything.

Final thought: There were almost five thousand words to edit in the last issue of the newsletter and the thought occurs to me that as a contributor to that issue, I may well have had a fool for an editor—or vice versa.



New Trail and Recreational Park at Parsons

The Kansas Trails Council has been invited to serve in an advisory capacity for the construction of a new trail, which will become a part of a recreational area now in the planning stages at Parsons. Board members, Jim Copeland and Rocky Shire recently visited the site and visited with the developers of the park. Shire and Copeland will mark the trail route some time after the first of the year. More information on this project will be provided in the next issue of the newsletter.

Visit: <http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails>

Highlights of the November, 2002 KTC Board Meeting

The Board of Directors for KTC met at the home of Lyle & Cathy Riedy in Topeka on November 11, 2002

- Guests present were Mr. and Mrs. Mike Mingenback, Clark Coan and Kitty Douthit.
- Mike Mingenback discussed the financial situation for the Kansas Horseman's Foundation and requested a loan from the KTC to help pay the back taxes owed by the foundation on land that will eventually be a part of the rails to trails project being developed by the Kansas Horseman's Foundation. The board voted to loan the necessary amount on contract.
- Kitty Douthit agreed to write a history of the Kansas Trails Council. Kitty has been active in the Kansas Trails Council for many years and served as newsletter editor during part of that time. Her husband, the late Richard Douthit was one of the founding fathers of KTC and he worked long and hard to help the Council to realize its goals and aspirations. The history will be made available to the public on request as soon as it is completed and published.
- The board voted to install memorial plaques on KTC trails in the future to recognize the significant accomplishments and contributions of certain individuals when warranted.
- Rocky Shire, current newsletter editor, encouraged board members to keep up the good work in supplying articles and material for upcoming newsletters. He stressed that articles from any KTC member are welcome for consideration for the newsletter.
- Mike Goodwin and Lyle Riedy reported that they had attended a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan meeting in Olathe this fall.
- Mike Goodwin presented a plan for a Friends of the Trail program. The board discussed the plan and voted to adopt the plan as Mike presented it. The program is explained and initiated for 2003 elsewhere in this newsletter.
- The board set the 2003 KTC Super Outdoor Weekend for April 12 and April 13, 2003 at Elk City Lake.
- The next board meeting will be January 19, 2003 in Emporia at the home of Kitty Douthit. (An alternate date in case of bad weather was set for January 26.)

The Best Bear Story

In the last couple of issues, we have included anecdotes related to bears on the trail and close encounters of the bear kind, but none of them top the one that Roger Bryson shared at a recent board meeting. Roger has been active in KTC for a long time and served on the board of directors in various capacities until recently when he withdrew because of health considerations. Roger's outdoor recreation interests include canoeing, fly-fishing, backpacking and hiking. He has also been involved in Boy Scouts and Boy Scout leadership for many years.

His bear experience took place at the Porcupine Trail Camp on the Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimmaron, New Mexico during the summer of 1968. It seems that Roger retired to his tent for the night only to be awakened a short time later by the unmistakable sounds of a bear approaching his tent. The bear decided to lie down and rest for a while against the tent right next to Roger's sleeping bag. The only thing that separated Roger from this unwanted and unexpected bedmate was the thin canvas wall of the tent. The bear rested there for what, I am sure, seemed like hours to Roger. Roger said that he had trouble sleeping while the bear remained next to him. He did not say why he could not sleep, but an easy assumption is that the bear's snoring kept him awake. The bear finally got up and lumbered off into the night leaving Roger with an experience that he would never forget.

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Recognition Long Overdue

Eric Steele of Wichita established the Flat Rock 25K and 50K endurance runs on the fifteen-mile Elk River Trail at Elk City Lake in 1995. Eric has long been a moving force in the Kansas Ultrarunners' Society, which sponsors this race. Beginning in 1995 and every year to the present, Eric has brought in a group of volunteers from KUS to perform end to end maintenance on the fifteen-mile trail before the Flat Rock event. Eric and the Ultrarunners have logged 1,136 hours of trail maintenance on the Elk River Trail since 1995. This year the trail required less maintenance than usual before the run and they still reported 116 hours of work in anticipation of the 2002 event. The truth is that they have performed the bulk of the maintenance work on KTC's nationally recognized hiking trail at Elk City Lake for the last seven years.

In recent years one of the greatest concerns facing the Board of Directors and the various trails coordinators has been finding adequate volunteer help to maintain the trails that KTC has built since 1974. Maintenance is an ongoing job and without it the trails would soon be reclaimed by Mother Nature. In view of this, KTC wants to recognize and thank the Kansas Ultrarunners' Society for their hard work and continued efforts to keep the Elk River Hiking Trail in excellent condition. We extend our kudos for their efforts.

If you are unfamiliar with this group and the things that they do, we would encourage you to visit: <http://www.ultrarunners.info/>. As runners, these people tend to do the impossible. The Corps sign at the trailhead of the Elk River Hiking Trail estimates a time of about 11 hours to hike the trail from end to end and describes the trail as rugged with a high degree of difficulty. A number of participants in the annual Flat Rock event have run from one end to the other and back again in less than 6 hours. The motto for Flat Rock has long been: "If you look up, you are going down."

---KTC---

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?



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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently reported that the water level at Lake Perry was six feet below normal due to a lack of rainfall. This has made for some unusual and challenging mountain biking opportunities on the shores of Lake Perry near the Perry Mountain Bike Trail. KTC board member, Lyle Riedy took this picture a couple of months ago while riding at Perry with friends.

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

The Kansas Trails Council, Inc.

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