

THE KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL

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Laying Out the Wes Klusman Trail

By Rick Tucker

In the fall of 1962, a group of scouts, who were members of the Mi Ni Ci No Lodge of the Order of the Arrow, Sekan Council, (neither of which remains in existence) set out on foot from Camp Wilderness on Bee Creek Lake west of Independence in eastern Chautauqua County to blaze and mark the Wes Klusman Trail. Just who Wes Klusman was escapes me, but it had been decided to lay out a trail from Camp Wilderness to the Quivira Scout Ranch north of Sedan, Kansas—a distance of about 13 miles—and name it after him.

I was about 15 years old and I was one of the younger members of the party. I do recall that my job was to carry an external frame pack full of wooden stakes and cans of spray paint. Every half mile or so, a stake was placed in the ground and painted.

As we set out across the hilly savannah of the Chautauqua Hills on that crisp, clear morning our spirits were soaring. We were explorers conquering a virgin land. The terrain consisted of rolling hills with expanses of grass broken up by copses of black jack oaks and rocky bluffs. We saw very few home sites or improvements. I do not recall climbing fences. We only crossed two improved roads that day and they were gravel roads.

The hiking conditions were good and we were all in shape, so we made great time. Before too long we entered a small village tucked away in the hills. The small settlement was called Hale. Checking our maps we realized we were off course by about 7 or 8 degrees. Our navigator had forgotten to take into account the magnetic declination from true north while plotting our course with compass and map. Someone suggested we rename the adventure “To Hale and Back”.

After resting for a while at Hale, we backtracked to a point where we figured we were on a true course for our destination and we continued on. We had lost

precious time however and we were not even halfway yet. As the day wore on the hills got taller and our boots started getting heavier. Fortunately, my frame pack was getting lighter. It clouded over and a cold rain pelted us with icy droplets for a while. I recall vividly to this day how warm and good some bullion cubes dissolved in boiling water tasted after that shower.

Needless to say, our spirits sagged with our energy level, but our resolve to complete the journey remained firm. All that I can remember of the last few hours is the agony. About dark, we hit our destination right on the money. We had arrived at the ranger’s cabin at the Quivira Scout Ranch. Aside from the incredible fatigue that I felt, the other thing that stands out in my mind is the two large timber rattlesnakes that a worker had killed. I remember that many of us were upset because the rattlers had been killed. He had them stretched out along the roadway. Both appeared to be over 6 feet long.

I do not know if anyone ever hiked the Wes Klusman trail again. The idea was to establish the trail for use by scouts and hikers. If anyone has information about subsequent trips on the trail, I would like to have it. Whenever I see the term “bushwhacking” in hiking literature I always think of that day in ’62 in the glorious Chautauqua hills.

My father, George Tucker was on the hike with us that day. We lost him in January of 2001 and that day on the trail is one of the many fond memories I have of him. The area we covered is on page 77 of my DeLorme Kansas Atlas and Gazetteer, for those who might be interested.

History Remembered in the Blue River Valley

By Olivia Huddleston

Almost everyone from Manhattan, Kansas on north to the Nebraska state line has some memories of the Blue River, Fancy Creek and the Black Vermillion river. These were flooded when the Tuttle Creek Dam was built.

As a preschooler I went with the church ladies to the Maridahl Children’s Home and to the Maridahl Church,

which was located a few miles south of the orphan's home across the Blue River from the little town of Cleburne. Some 40 years later I found myself riding on a nearly abandoned road below what was left of a church steeple high on a hill on private property. Upon inquiring, I learned that the steeple was all that was left of the church and I discovered that the children's home was at the end of "my" riding road and that it was buried under much silt and covered with cottonwood trees and weeds.

One day several years later, while I was driving on Highway 16 west of Olsburg, where the Maridahl Cemetery had been moved, I discovered that the church steeple had been moved. It had been placed on native limestone rock and it was in the process of being totally restored. Today it stands tall with informational plaques at the base of it. It is lighted at night and stands as a constant reminder of the trails that the early settlers traveled.

Another time I was riding with the saddle club south of Marysville and we visited a very old cemetery called Shroyer. Apparently there was a town by that name on the bank of the old Blue River (now known for being very muddy) where the pioneers could cross the river safely. I have heard tales of modern day cowboys still using the Shroyer crossing because of the firm river bottom there.

Shroyer is just across the river northwest of Alcove Springs where the infamous Donner Party spent one rugged winter. Alcove Springs is now open to the public for hiking and horseback riding. The monument and grave of Sarah Keys, who perished during that tough winter, stand close to a covered information center just off the parking area. Next to the information center a footpath leads visitors to the spring area where one can still read names and dates carved into the limestone rocks. The spring itself is almost dry due to the changes in the underground water currents. Above the spring one can still walk along the ruts left by early day wagon trains during their travels through this area.

History abounds in Kansas. As we are out hiking, riding or bonding with our friends, animals or nature, we should take time to remember the early trails. As members of the Kansas Trails Council, we must feel a certain kinship with the trail users of the past.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT:

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

The Kansas Trails Council's 2003 Super Outdoor Weekend

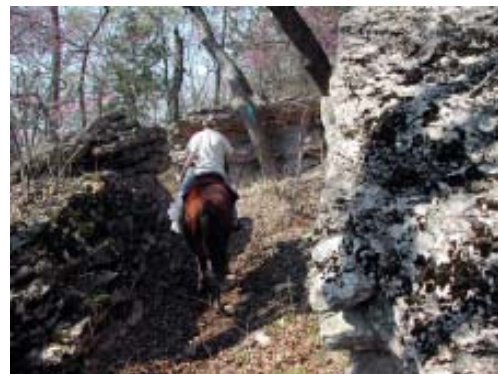
By Virginia Lefferd

The KTC recently held its annual Super Outdoor Weekend on April 12 & 13, 2003. The campout was located at the Outlet Campground below the dam of the Elk City Lake. As early as Friday afternoon, campers and horse people commenced to pick out their favorite campsites for the weekend festivities. Saturday morning about 50 horse riders left at nine o'clock to ride the trails through the timbered hills and valleys along the borders of the lake. The hikers also scattered out to enjoy their favorite haunts. Each person carried the noon meal with him or her since many of them planned to be gone all day enjoying the various trails at Elk City Lake.

Saturday afternoon John and Susan Haynes and Virginia Lefferd drove to Independence and purchased the groceries for the Sunday breakfast. That evening, hikers, equestrians, canoeists and bicyclists converged at the shelter house for the traditional deer burgers and potluck supper. Bud Baker furnished the burgers. Jim Copeland and Katy Plotkin grilled the meat with the assistance of Bud Baker. Following the meal, the KTC board met for the quarterly meeting. The rest of the outdoor enthusiasts used the remainder of the evening to visit with each other at the various campsites.

Sunday morning Harriett Barber, Katy Plotkin, Steve Garlow, Mike Goodwin, Ben Plotkin, Virginia Lefferd and Olivia Huddleston prepared the KTC's 7th annual breakfast for members. With breakfast out of the way, the equestrians and hikers started off for one more trek along the trails before they had to break camp and return to their own part of the world with some good memories.

The Kansas Trails Council and its guests wish thank the Corps of Engineers at Elk City Lake and the Elk City State Park for their cooperation and help in making this yet another enjoyable Super Outdoor Weekend.



(The photo above was taken by Harriett Barber during the Super Outdoor Weekend trail ride on the Elk River Trail.)

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



(KTC President Olivia Huddleston on the Elk River Trail)

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

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The American Hiking Society

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The Kansas Horse Council

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Friends of the Kaw

21st Century Trail Advocacy

Deer Ticks and Lyme Disease—It Is the Season!

[Our readership is made up of outdoor enthusiasts and the great outdoors is where the ticks are, but a little bit of education and an ounce of prevention will eliminate most of the concerns about contracting Lyme disease.]

Lyme disease was named in 1977 when arthritis was observed in a group of children in and around Lyme, Connecticut. They soon discovered that it was an infectious disease probably transmitted by an arthropod. Additional research revealed that Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. These bacteria are transmitted to humans by the bite of infected deer ticks and cause more than 16,000 infections in the United States each year. The majority of the cases reported have been in the northeastern part of the United States, Maryland and Wisconsin.

Whenever possible, avoid entering areas that are likely to be infested with ticks, particularly in spring and summer when larval ticks feed. Ticks prefer a moist, shaded environment, especially areas with leaf litter and low-lying vegetation in wooded, brushy or overgrown grassy areas. Ticks also depend on an abundant deer and rodent population for survival.

Obviously, most of us want to get out now and enjoy the very places that we are encouraged to avoid, so there are some simple suggestions to follow that will minimize the risks associated with deer ticks. The suggestions below come directly from the Centers for Disease Control web site.

Use recommended personal protection measures:

Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks can be spotted more easily and removed before becoming attached. Wearing long-sleeved shirts and tucking pants into socks or boot tops may help keep ticks from reaching your skin. Ticks are usually located close to the ground, so wearing high-topped hiking boots or rubber boots may provide some additional protection from these pests.

Applying insect repellents containing DEET to clothes and exposed skin and applying permethrin—which kills ticks on contact—to clothes can also reduce the risk of tick attachment. DEET can be used safely on children and adults but it should be applied according to EPA guidelines to reduce the possibility of a toxic reaction.

Perform a tick check and remove attached ticks:

The transmission of the bacteria that causes Lyme disease from an infected tick is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment. Therefore, daily checks for ticks and promptly removing any attached tick that you find will help prevent infection. Embedded ticks

should be removed using fine-tipped tweezers. One should **not** use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products in an effort to detach the tick. Grasp the tick firmly and as closely to the skin as possible.

With a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from the skin. The tick's mouthparts may remain in the skin, but that is not a cause for alarm. The bacteria that cause Lyme disease are contained in the tick's mid region where the salivary glands are located. Once you have removed the tick, cleanse the area with an antiseptic.

Symptoms of Lyme Disease:

Lyme disease most often manifests itself with a characteristic "bull's-eye" rash, accompanied by nonspecific symptoms such as fever, malaise, fatigue, headache, muscle aches and joint aches. The incubation period from being infected to the onset of rash is typically 7 to 14 days but may be as short as 3 days and as long as 30 day.

Lyme Disease is treated with antibiotics and antibiotics are usually effective, especially if applied during the early stages of the disease.

(The above information was gathered from the Centers for Disease Control's web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/lyme/index.htm>) (For specific information about deer ticks visit:<http://www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/ticks/iscap/>)



The Kansas Trails Council wishes to remember and honor two special people who passed away during the last year. These two remarkable individuals contributed much to KTC and especially to the cause of Kansas's trails and outdoor activities. Longtime friends and fellow KTC members, Jane Betros and John Haynes remember Dorothy Moore and Richard "Mobe" Rucker:

Dorothy Moore

Remembered by Jane Betros

This name will be unfamiliar to newer KTC members, but this strong-willed and talented woman was an avid outdoorswoman and the mother of five children. She was directly responsible for the formation of Possum Trot Orienteering Club. [Editor's note: She was also one of the founders of the Kansas Trails Council, served as one of the early presidents of this

organization and spent many long hours involved in trail development and building some of KTC's trails.]

Before organizing the orienteering club, she had earned a private pilot's license and reported local meteorological information to the weather bureau. She was also involved in the Johnson County Outdoor Society. This was a volunteer-run organization sponsored by the Johnson County Park & Recreation District under its Recreational Director, Sia Sadri. Dorothy Moore, who was an experienced backpacker and canoeist and Jay Crockett, whose interest was chiefly in mountain climbing, joined Sia in developing the organization in 1970.

Dorothy was particularly interested in organizing backpacking trips to the Missouri Ozarks. It became obvious that there was a need among most of the JCOS participants to understand topographic maps and how to use a compass to follow a route in back country areas. Dorothy taught classes for both JCPRD and the Johnson County Community College. The classes consisted of two indoor evening sessions involving how to get started safely in backpacking and experience in following a compass bearing. Each session was followed by an outdoor Saturday practice session at Shawnee Mission Park.

Dorothy continued to be active in PTOC by participating in meets and teaching workshops. She helped to found yet another volunteer group, the Kansas Trails Council, which has developed, built, and maintained several multi-use trails in Kansas. All this was while she was working on an education degree. She pretty much disappeared from the local orienteering scene although she maintained her connections with JCOS and KTC for many years, continuing to backpack, including a month-long solo trek in Alaska at age 65.

The early lessons that we learned from Dorothy included backcountry etiquette ("leave no footprints") and community involvement. These have been carried forward by succeeding PTOC leadership.

In Memory of Richard "Mobe" Rucker

By John Haynes

Everyone has someone who has been influential in his or her life, someone that is kind, motivating, helpful and knowledgeable. Richard "Mobe" Rucker was that person to many of us. He was a good friend to all he touched. He inspired us in subtle ways to learn more about our natural world. His mind was full of answers, but his time ran out before we could ask all of the

questions. Mobe passed away on August 8, 2002 in Centennial, Wyoming, doing what he liked to do best—hiking, birding and being with his family. He was born in 1952 in Madison, Tennessee and is survived by his wife, Roseanne Smith and two daughters, Genevieve and Sarah.

His legacy is the wildlife habitat improvements, which he made while working as a Park Ranger for the past 24 years at Perry Lake. He was the compiler for the Perry Christmas Bird Count during all twenty-four years and he participated in many breeding bird surveys, birdathons and the Lawrence Christmas Bird Count. He organized and led the Jayhawk Audubon Society's roadside cleanup in the early 1990's as part of the Kansas Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway program along the two-mile stretch of Highway 40 west of Lawrence. This stretch included the former Elkins Prairie. He volunteered at numerous Audubon activities, including birdseed sales. He also served on the Jayhawk Audubon Society's Board of Directors.

Most of us in the Kansas Trails Council, while it was under the direction of Richard Douthit, remember Mobe for his never-ending involvement in the Perry Trail, which is located at Perry Lake in Jefferson County. The Kansas Trails Council led by Richard Douthit originally constructed the trail in 1976. Mobe became Park Ranger at Perry Lake in 1978 and he immediately took a liking to the trail. In an article published in the Lawrence Journal World on October 29, 1985, Richard Douthit wrote: "Mobe was more involved than anybody around. He was the first ranger who got out and really worked with us shoulder to shoulder. He's done a lot of maintenance on his own time." At that time Richard Douthit, John Haynes and Mobe Rucker felt that there was a need to extend the trail, bringing it to its current thirty-mile loop distance.

Since 1978 Mobe had been the instrumental force in organizing the Kansas Trails Council volunteers at Perry Lake. He would organize annual trail volunteers' meetings at the lake. Those of us who had his famous chili will miss it and all of us who knew him will miss him greatly. At the time of his death, the family suggested memorials to the Jayhawk Audubon Society, St. John's Catholic Church or the Rucker Children's Memorial Scholarship Fund. Those would probably still be accepted at the Warren-McElwain Mortuary.



(From the editor's desk)

Practicing What We Preach

The Kansas Trails Council has always been concerned with proper trail building techniques to protect the ecological system and guard against erosion. One of KTC's stated purposes is to educate trail builders and trail users on correct trail building and trail maintenance techniques. Clinton Lake trail coordinator, Mike Goodwin supplied this information concerning his volunteer crew's work on the *blue trail* west of Lands End at Clinton Lake during a February workday. It clearly illustrates that there is more to trail building than just beating a path through the woods. It also illustrates that trails are the result of hard **volunteer** work.]

Building a Knick

By Mike Goodwin

The photos show a "knick" that we created. A knick is a small area in the trail which has greater out slope relative to the adjoining trail tread so that water flowing down the trail will divert downhill and off the trail when it hits the knick. (Water running down the trail itself is an invitation to ongoing erosion.) In the first photo you can see that the McLeod handle is tilted slightly toward the downhill side of the trail. This confirms that the tread has the appropriate slope to divert water flow off the trail. The width of the knick should be about ten feet. This width makes the knick almost unnoticeable to riders or hikers because the grade change is so gradual.

As the tread compacts over time, a berm (or little ridge) is sometimes created on the down-slope side of the tread. As water flows down the slope and across the trail it is stopped by the berm. The second photo shows the crew shaving off the berm so that water will continue sheeting down the slope and across the trail without stopping on the trail. This should allow the trail to dry faster since it will no longer trap water.



Leave No Trace

[Regardless of how one uses the trail, the basic tenets of the policy of *leaving no trace* should be followed. As editor of this newsletter, I believe that even informed trail users could benefit from an occasional reminder of exactly what those principles are. In the next couple of issues I will list the basic principles as they have been outlined by the American Hiking Society. Although they are presented specifically for hikers and backpackers they can be modified for and applied by all user groups.] The principles are:

- Plan and prepare ahead of time. Know the terrain and possible weather conditions that you may encounter. Minimize impact on the trail by keeping groups small and avoiding high use times on the trail if at all possible. Repackage food to minimize waste. Walk (or ride) single file and avoid shortcuts. This will limit damage to the trail and the associated ecosystem.
- Travel and/or camp on durable surfaces. As much as possible confine all activities to resilient terrain. Sand, gravel, rock, snow or dry grass surfaces are more durable and more capable of withstanding heavy usage. Use existing campsites. Keep them small and out of sight of the trail to minimize the visual impact for other users. Avoid areas that are beginning to be impacted and walk (or ride) through mud/puddles to avoid widening the trail.

(more in the next issue)

Did you forget to pay your dues for 2003? We invite you to use the membership form included in this newsletter and send them in today.

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 KTC trail coordinators reported almost **2200** hours of trail maintenance on our trails in 2002 alone. These hours were donated by a relatively small number of people who are the unsung (and usually unknown) heroes of many of the trails that you frequent. If you see them working on the trail, be sure to thank them or better yet, give them a hand.

(Without regular maintenance these trails would soon cease to exist for all of us.)



[The Elk River Hiking Trail offers special challenges to horseback riders during KTC's Super Outdoor Weekend, when the Corps of Engineers opens the trail to horseback riders and cyclists.] (Photo by Harriett Barber)

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

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