

The Kansas Trails Council

Established in 1974

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Newsletter

October, 2003

Editor's Preface: Kansas Trails Council board members, Susan and John Haynes have long shared a love of the outdoors and the trail, wherever and whenever they have found it and found themselves on it. As editor of the newsletter, I have repeatedly encouraged—*nagged* might be a better word for it—Susan to write from her viewpoint or perspective about any one or all of their many trail adventures. She finally agreed to do this for me and for the newsletter and the finished product lived up to my hopes and expectations in every respect. It reaffirms my belief that no matter how much a couple—or any two people, for that matter—enjoy doing something together, differences are bound to exist in their approach to and appreciation of an event, adventure or activity. Read on and enjoy a wife's perspective of shared forays into the great outdoors.

Family Vacation

by Susan Haynes

I have survived the annual family vacation!

It all began at the end of March when my husband exhibited the first signs of spring fever. Far-away gazes and the occasional trail book being left by the recliner, the breakfast table, and the bed characterized this period. At this time there was nothing much for me to do except keep a watchful eye over him.

In mid April after Super Outdoor Weekend—a wonderful KTC sponsored event, which I am sure you all attended—symptoms became more pronounced. “You know, after Super Outdoor, vacation isn't far away!” he exclaimed. *Stacks* of trail books by the recliner, the breakfast table, and the bed characterized this phase. During this phase, I smiled and offered words of encouragement. He does enjoy this so.

With May came abundant sunshine and blue skies. This was too much for my husband. Simple spring fever quickly escalated into a quest for the perfect backpack trail—not too difficult or too long. (My husband is *so* thoughtful.) This time was characterized by intent stares and by topo maps being added to the stacks of trail books by the recliner, the breakfast table

and the bed. During this phase, my concern was awakened about the final trail choice. I began to anticipate clothing and food needs and other items such as sunscreen and bug repellent. I was ever vigilant.

The first of June heralded the two-week countdown. We were now into earnest vacation preparation. This period was characterized by long distance phone calls to ranger stations and assorted backpack gear being tested and arranged alongside the topo maps and stacks of trail books by the recliner, the breakfast table and the bed. (One can never have too many backpack stoves or tents!)

With one week to countdown, preparation was serious. The popup camper was unearthed and readied. Certainly, one has to have a base of operation. The basement and living room were arrayed with various and sundry gear. (Cabela's would have been both pleased and envious.) My husband added books on outdoor medicine and survival to the topo maps and stacks of trail books by the recliner, the breakfast table, and the bed. With this period or phase came my increasing uneasiness of the unknown and fear that I would forget to pack some crucial item.

At last, THE DAY arrived! We had stowed all gear in the van and hitched up the camper the night before. Our three week odyssey to visit relatives and friends, hike and bike, and backpack had begun. My husband's face was alight with child-like enthusiasm, taking joy in the open road and anticipating possible encounters with wildlife on the trail. This time was clearly defined by my relief that we were at last on the road and by my growing apprehension that we would encounter wildlife. (Remember last year's bear?) [John's and Susan's *close encounter of the bear kind* during a backpacking trip last year was mentioned in an earlier newsletter.]

To make this epic story short, we camped, we saw friends and relatives, and we conquered trails while hiking and backpacking. We savored the beauty of the wilderness and took comfort in the fact that our bodies did not protest too much at the rigors, through which

we put them. My husband was truly in his element. If one believed in reincarnation, one would surely think that he had been a mountain man or an explorer in a previous life. He does enjoy this so.

Three weeks later we were HOME. While my husband was reveling in the pictures afforded him by seven rolls of film, I was tackling a mountain of laundry and trying to assimilate all the vacation stuff back into the household. We rediscovered a decided preference for our own bed.

It was a quest, an odyssey, and an epic—if you believe in my retelling of it. I know that again next March or April my husband will dust off the trail books and once again we will eagerly anticipate our next family vacation. I do enjoy it so!



Summary of the August, 2003 KTC Board Meeting

Submitted by Virginia Lefferd—Board Secretary

The Board of Directors for the KTC met Sunday, August 24, 2003 in the Randolph State Park at Tuttle Creek Lake for its quarterly board meeting. The meeting was preceded by a picnic lunch for the board members and guests.

- Board members present were: Olivia Huddleston, president and Virginia Lefferd, secretary along with Harriett Barber, Mike Goodwin, Steve Garlow, John Haynes and Susan Haynes. Guests were Trish Cleveland and Bud Baker.
- The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M. by Olivia Huddleston. The April minutes were approved, as was the treasurer’s report.
- The memorial plaques for Richard Douthit and Dorothy Moore were displayed. They will be mounted at an appropriate location on specific KTC trails. These two dedicated countless hours over the years to KTC, its cause and its trails.
- Trish Cleveland of Wamego was selected as a new board member to fill a vacancy on the board.
- A discussion of the KTC mission statement and trail coordinators was held.
- A trail building workshop was discussed. It was decided that KTC would sponsor a workshop in 2004. The details will be announced later.

- The board approved the purchase of a chain saw for the Perry Lake Trails and a gas-powered trimmer for the Tuttle Creek Lake Trails.
- It was announced that Friends of Kaw would promote the Lewis & Clark Anniversary in Kansas City.
- Olivia Huddleston was presented a plaque and a gift of boots, a compass and a T-shirt from the American Hiking Society in recognition of her work on and for the trails in Kansas.
- The results of the recent election of board members were announced. All of those on the ballot retained their position on the board. Forty-nine ballots were cast in the election.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

*****Anyone wishing more information about KTC and its activities may contact any board member listed elsewhere in this newsletter.



In the photo above, Virginia Lefferd presents KTC president, Olivia Huddleston with the plaque from the American Hiking Society, designating and honoring her as the trail volunteer of the year for the state of Kansas.



No one deserves this award more than Olivia. She devotes hundreds of hours each year to the trails at Tuttle Creek and to KTC. **Congratulations, Olivia!**

KTC The Board of Directors

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

We Invite you to Visit our Website at:

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



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

*

Friends of the Kaw

Wilderness Vacation

By Olivia Huddleston

We finally did it!

After an oil change, a new fan belt, new trailer tires, Coggins tests and health papers for our horses and twenty phone calls trying to find certified weed free hay (which we never found), we were ready to go. My friend, Sherie Taylor and I headed for 22,000-acre Fort Robinson State Park and the Soldier Creek Wilderness in far northwest Nebraska. We had reserved horse stalls for the first evening, but our rig was too long for the first pull through camping area.

The next morning we saddled up and started looking for a trailhead. We finally flagged down someone in a pickup, someone who appeared to know what he or she (in this case, *she*) was doing and asked where to go. With a waive of her hand and the words “through a gate”, we were introduced to *riding wherever we wanted*. We climbed the bluffs high above the Fort and if one looked closely, he or she might see the ghosts of the Cavalry riding through the passes with the ghosts of Indians looking down from the bluffs above. During this ride we encountered buffalo and longhorn cattle. Water was scarce, but the scenery was great.

Fort Robinson was established as a post-Civil War Indian Agency protective post. Later it served as a remount station for the Cavalry, then as a field artillery testing station, and later still as an Olympic equestrian training ground. The Fort also served as a horse-breeding farm for the military and later on, the area trained dogs for military service. Before it was turned into a state park in the 1950s, Fort Robinson was a German Prisoner of War Camp. The Fort also has a history museum as well as a natural history museum. There are signs, indicating where the POW Camp and the Red Cloud Indian Station once existed.

Then, it was on to Soldier Creek Wilderness, which was once a part of Fort Robinson and is now under the National Forest Service. We forded the river to the parking area on Forest Service land and rode in the wilderness area, which was marked with posts (here and there), with slanted tops. In 1989 a severe forest fire started in Fort Robinson State Park and burned 48,000 acres including Soldier Creek and private land. Reforestation has started, but the view from every direction would be much different if the forest were still standing. Our campsite had vault toilets and a hand water pump. The corrals were large and adequate. We camped alone and there were no telephones, no TVs,

no computers and no people. We also learned later that after a hard rain the river ford might become impassable and we were on the far side.

The last stop on our vacation was the Pine Ridge National Forest. Again, we had corrals for the horses and water for stock was pumped with power supplied by a huge solar panel. The water was pumped into large storage tanks. There was also a well with a hand pump. Here, we once again rode some steep narrow trails and wide-open meadows and we camped alone. The wind was noteworthy. It would blow hard for a while and then it would be completely still.

The weather all week was cooler than in Kansas, but it was still quite warm. We chose to ride in the mornings and evenings. They had adequate moisture this year, so there was green grass. The wildlife we saw was much like that at home.

It was finally time to come back home to reality, but now that we know what to take and what to leave at home, we are planning next year’s trip.

New Board Member

At the August meeting, the KTC board was pleased to welcome Trish Cleveland to the board. Trish and her husband recently relocated to Wamego, Kansas from Spirit Lake, Iowa. Trish retired from the Army National Guard in 1994 after 22 years of service and/or active duty in the National Guard. Her specialty was in computer repair. Trish is a horseback rider and has been very active in the North American Trail Rides Conference. She has competed in NATRC rides on numerous occasions. Her husband collects antique cars and they occasionally tour with these cars.

From the Editor’s Desk

Next year the Kansas Trails Council will celebrate its 30th anniversary. Since its beginnings, KTC has dedicated itself to trail building, trail maintenance and trail-related environmental issues.

The popular catch phrases among those, who build and promote new trails these days are *trail advocacy* and *proper trail-building techniques*. These are not new to the Kansas Trails Council. The Trails Council was organized in 1974 for the expressed purpose of trail advocacy. Over the next few years the organization gained the respect, trust and confidence of State Park and the Army Corps of Engineers officials for its

(Continued on Page 6)

Editor's Note: In the last issue of the newsletter, KTC honored and remembered two tireless and dedicated KTC, trail and outdoor advocates, Dorothy Moore and Mobe Rucker. In that newsletter, I incorrectly attributed the article about Mobe Rucker to John Haynes. John passed the article along to me and I made the incorrect assumption that he had written it. The article was actually written by Bunnie Watkins, who is with the Army Corps of Engineers at Perry Lake. Bunnie was very gracious in accepting my apology for the mistake, but I think that the best way to handle this is to reprint the article with her byline. She was Mobe's friend and associate and this article needs to be presented and read again with that in mind.



[Richard "Mobe" Rucker]

In Memory of Richard "Mobe" Rucker

By Bunnie Watkins

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.

September Trail Ride

By Bud Baker

Shorty and Maxine Thorne led the annual September trail ride at Elk City Lake on Sunday, September 7. The weather was perfect for 34 riders of all ages to enjoy a scenic ride from Elk City, Kansas to the Elk River Trail along the north side of Elk City Lake. The ride finished with ice-cold watermelon at the Outlet Shelter below the dam.

Thanks go to the Corps of Engineers and the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks for permission for the ride, to the Thornes for leading the ride, and to Bud and

Dolores Baker and Virginia Lefferd for serving the watermelon.

From the Editor's Desk

(continued from page 4)

dedication to proper layout and construction of trails to protect the ecosystem and guard against erosion. On numerous occasions, KTC board members, with experience in trail building, have served as advisors to other groups and individuals in proper layout and construction of new trails. The board has always made it a point to have at least two board members involved in the advisory process.

As cases in point, I am including some of my personal experiences with KTC and trail building. In 1996 when I approached the Elk City State Park Manager, Randy Curtis about building a mountain bike trail at the State Park, he was receptive to the idea, but he would not allow me to proceed without first consulting with members of the Trails Council. Permission was granted only after members of the Trails Council had visited the proposed site for the trail and made their recommendations. Mr. Curtis' trust and respect for the work and efforts of KTC were obvious to me from the beginning.

Just recently, I found myself on the other side of the advisory process when board member, Jim Copeland and I made a couple of visits to the trail and recreation project in progress just north of Parsons. This past spring, Jim and I visited the site again to help them lay out the multi use trail that will be a part of the recreation area.

While the Council has a long and rich tradition in trail advocacy and trail building, the board of directors is not content with relying on past achievements. We have some excellent board members, who are actively involved in the latest trends in trail advocacy and trail building. Some of them have recently attended and/or sponsored trail-building workshops. The board is currently making plans to sponsor a trail-building workshop of its own in the coming year.

A brief history of the Trails Council is currently in production and it is intended to preserve the proud achievements and traditions of the organization. At the same time, the current board of directors is working hard to make the changes and transitions necessary to ensure that KTC will remain a vital force in Kansas for trail advocacy in the future.



Trail Running

Trail runners and ultra or long distance runners have been using our trails for some time now and KTC has finally recognized them as a user group within our organization. KTC members Eric Steele of Wichita and Michael Goodwin (who is a board member and coordinator for the trails at Clinton Lake) of Topeka are active proponents of trail running.

Eric Steele founded the Kansas Ultrarunners' Society and established the 25K and 50K Flatrock Run on the fifteen-mile Elk River Trail along Elk City Lake nine years ago. Only those who have hiked a significant segment of the Elk River Trail can fully appreciate the rigors of this event. Veterans of this event have come to refer to the trail as *the rock* and their watchwords are *if you look up, you are going down*.

The Elk River Trail could easily be designated as KTC's flagship hiking trail and it is nationally recognized. Most of the trail is classified as a rugged and difficult hiking trail. To the average person, the trail could be classified as **impossible** as a running trail, but trail runners and ultra runners conquer the trail every fall during the Ultrarunners' annual event and they complete the thirty-mile run with amazing times. This year's 50K winner, Paul Schoenlaub of St. Joseph, Missouri completed the run in 4 hours and 57 minutes. He is one of only four people, who have completed the 50K run in less than five hours during the nine-year history of the event.

The following is an excerpt from Steele's report on this year's event held on September 27. If you would like to read more about this year's run and ultra running, you will find these in the Stories and Articles section of our web site.

[From Eric Steele]

"Thirty-eight runners from nine states (CO, IL, KS, MO, NE, NM, OK, TN, TX) toed the line for the Ninth Annual Flat Rock 50K, while twenty-two runners from four states (IL, KS, MO, OK,) lined up for the 25K. After a previous day of eighty-plus degree temperatures and high humidity, race day would start out cool and remain so all day with the high only reaching the low 70's and a nice cool breeze blowing continuously. Many Flat Rock Veterans returned this year to get another "dose of the Rock", which has undoubtedly become a late September ritual to them and an ever growing number of individuals, for we attracted plenty of Flat Rock Neophytes, as well."

Note: Steele and the Kansas Ultrarunners' Society have volunteered more than 1200 hours of clean up and maintenance on the fifteen-mile Elk River Trail over the last nine years. The truth is that they have taken over most of the maintenance of this important KTC trail for the sake of a one-day event each year.

KTC Membership Form

Sign me up!...I want to join the Kansas Trails Council for 2004
(Annual membership runs from January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004)
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 Kansas Trails Council's Super Outdoor Weekend provides an opportunity for great food, good trail-related stories, new and memorable trail experiences and good fellowship with those who love the trail and the great outdoors. On the left, KTC board member, Steve Garlow demonstrates that the duties of a board member may include frying bacon for the breakfast served at the Corps shelter house on Sunday morning. On the right, KTC members come back for seconds during the potluck supper for all participants on Saturday evening.

(Photos by Harriett Barber)

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

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