

THE KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL

ESTABLISHED IN 1974 FOR TRAIL ADVOCACY

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Newsletter

January, 2004

A Premier Trail System in the Kansas City Area

By John Haynes

One of the hallmarks of a good trail is its level of usage. The fantastic trail system in Johnson County receives an A+ grade on that criterion. On any given day you will see people of every size, shape, age, and political persuasion! Some will be out for just a Sunday afternoon stroll, while others will have the focused determination of the iron-man-training regime.

At one time, I would have scoffed at the mere thought of a blacktop trail. My thinking was that unless you were going up a 45-degree incline over mountain boulders, you really weren't hiking. Well, blacktop is great for a road bike, baby strollers, walking, running, and skating in about any variety of weather. So when other places are muddy, you can hike, bike or whatever, and remain mud-free.

Johnson County Parks and Recreation has created a network of hiking and biking trails. However, there are two major trails. The first (see the accompanying picture in the next column) is the Mill Creek Streamways Trail. The northern end is at the Kansas River. Heading south it follows Mill Creek through the George Brett Sports Complex to steep, heavily treed areas. This is where you need every low gear you can muster. There is also an equestrian trail that parallels the Streamways Trail. A mountain bike trail system is just to the east of the blacktop trail. It has some parts that are extremely steep, rough, and rated as highly technical. So a person can start on the blacktop trail and then turn off at various access points to get to the mountain bike trail and then reconnect to the blacktop trail on down at Shawnee Mission Park.



From Shawnee Mission Park you cross over a couple of hike/bike bridges and continue south through some simply beautiful country. There are also a number of shelters for picnicking and resting along the way. There are even restrooms along your journey. Eventually you snake your way to Olathe. If you started at the Kansas River access point and traveled to the other end, you would have eighteen miles to your credit.

The majority of the time, I bike on this trail and really enjoy the beauty of the surroundings. There are eye-catching rock shelves along the creek with water running over them that makes me think I am in the Ozarks. Along the way you will see many bluebird houses and it is not unusual to see bluebirds, as well as other indigenous birds, along the trail. When I am on the Mill Creek Streamways Trail, I feel as though I am hundreds of miles from any metropolitan area.

The second major trail is the Indian/Tomahawk Creek Trail located just south of Corporate Woods in Overland Park. The trail heads north and then

curves east and generally parallels I-435. This trail is not as physically demanding as the Streamways Trail. If you like to bike or hike and wish to have the choice of eating along the trail or going just a short distance and eating at a restaurant, you can on this trail. Another neat feature of the Indian/Tomahawk Trail is the multitude of neighborhood parks you bike through. This particular trail is approximately thirteen miles one way, ending at the Missouri state line.

I feel very fortunate to have such well-developed and scenic trails so close to us. I strongly recommend these trails to others. In my opinion, they are a showcase of the metropolitan hiking/biking trails. Detailed maps and information are available from Johnson County Parks and Recreation (913) 831-3355.

Cooking Rock Cornish Game Hens in a Dutch Oven

By Virginia Lefferd

In a 12-inch Dutch Oven, put 1 cup of rice and 2 cups of water. Add some chopped onions and 1 or 2 carrots. Put the cleaned and thawed hens (as many as the Dutch oven will hold) on top of the rice. I had five hens in mine last summer, but it was a tight squeeze given that some hens are larger than others. Season these ingredients with salt and pepper. Place the oven on coals with coals on the lid as well. There will be more water than rice for a while, but the rice will absorb the water. It will take about an hour to cook the hens. If you want the hens to brown, add more coals to the lid a short while before the cooking time is up.

A larger Dutch Oven will hold more hens, but it will require more rice, of course. Two parts water and 1 part rice is a good ratio for any rice added.

I have cooked this twice during this past year. It is very easy to fix and good eating to boot.

From the New KTC President

Thirty years ago the Kansas Trails Council was born. As a result of the hard work and vision of the KTC's founders, some of the finest trails in the country are located here in Kansas. Since 1974, hundreds of dedicated volunteers have selflessly

developed, maintained and improved the trails we all use and enjoy today. It is on their shoulders we stand as we begin this fourth decade of trail stewardship and advocacy.

As we reflect on past accomplishments and future opportunities, it is appropriate to ask where we are going next as an organization. Our state's 1,000 miles of trails include long and short, easy and technical, grass and forest, flat and hilly, urban and rural, paved and dirt, hiking, biking, running and equestrian venues. And there are more opportunities to expand our inventory of trails than ever before. As an example, new trail sections are now being added to the existing trails at Perry Lake and Clinton Lake. We are sponsoring the development of a new trail currently under construction at Eisenhower State Park (Melvern Lake). We are also beginning to plan new trails in the northeast and central part of the state in the coming year.

One reason the KTC is able to maintain existing trails and undertake new trail development projects is the generous bequeath of the late George Latham, an avid trail advocate. To recognize his generosity and in furtherance of his dedication to Kansas trails, the KTC has created the George Latham Legacy Grant program. Under this program, prospective trail stewards may apply for a grant in order to purchase basic trail equipment. In addition to this startup funding, KTC members will provide grant recipients and trail volunteers with the necessary training and assistance to insure that proposed trails are built and maintained according to accepted standards. The Eisenhower State Park Trail is the first GLLG recipient.

The KTC is also fortunate that our members are truly dedicated to our area trails as evidenced by their continued membership, generous contributions and volunteer time. Many of our members can be found working on the trails every weekend because they have discovered that it is richly rewarding to invest their time in creating and maintaining the trails that so many people enjoy. We hope you will consider working on your favorite trail and contributing to the Friends of the Trail program in 2004. Your tax deductible

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From the American Hiking Society
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"Did you know that snowshoeing is a great option when your favorite trail is too deep with snow to hike? Here

are few fun facts about snowshoeing:

- 40.8% of snowshoers are women
- 9.4% of snowshoers are children aged 7-11
- 44.2% of snowshoers are ages 25-44
- There are three times as many overweight adolescents in the U.S. as there were 30 years ago. Snowshoeing is a great way to stay healthy during the winter, because it burns between 400-500 calories per hour."

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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

Friends of the Trail donations are spent directly on the trail of your choice.

As we embark on this exciting New Year, it is appropriate to pause and reflect on what our trails mean in our daily lives. Eons ago, trails were like the highways of today, merely providing a route from one place to another. Today, in our increasingly busy lives, our trails are more than just a route. Our trails are a place to escape, to reflect, to exercise, to enjoy nature, to breathe fresh air, to relax and to renew ourselves. These are the reasons we dedicate ourselves to our trails and the same reasons our founders began the KTC thirty years ago.

If a nearby trail is a part of your life, we hope you will renew your membership in the KTC and tell a friend about our simple mission - to create and maintain trails in Kansas. See you on the trails!

Mike Goodwin
January, 2004



Me and Faraji on the Kaw

By Stephen Garlow

[Author's Note: When I was a kid, two of my favorite books were Me and Caleb and Me and Caleb Again by Franklyn E. Meyer. These are a collection of tales about childhood and the adventures of two boys in a small town at the edge of the Ozarks.]

Where I grew up in Southwest Missouri, a summer float trip on an Ozark stream was a normal activity in the summertime. My first float experiences started when I was seven or eight. I was usually in a johnboat, fishing from sun-up to mid-day for small mouth bass with my Dad and my Uncle Jerry.

As an adolescent and teenager, many carefree summer afternoons were spent floating downstream on patched rubber inner tubes—big ones taken from truck or tractor tires. We started

by jumping from a popular low water bridge and ended our float at a sun-drenched rocky beach a few miles downstream. There was always a rope swing somewhere along the route, for Tarzan-like feats and yells. As a boy scout, I mastered the key canoeing skills (with the merit badge to prove it). One memorable summer a scout friend brought his homemade two-man kayak to our summer campouts along the river.

A few weeks ago *me and Faraji* paddled my Coleman canoe on the FOK (Friends Of the Kaw) float trip from Cedar Creek, near De Soto, to Mill Creek in Shawnee Park (Wilder Road Access). Faraji is my ten-year-old friend that I have been introducing to the joys of outdoor adventures. We have been biking, hiking, camping, fishing and canoeing together for the past year. I have found that sharing my outdoor experiences with a youngster is a great excuse to leave the office and chores behind and to relax and rediscover some of the simple joys of outdoor fun.

This was Faraji's first trip down the Kaw. Everything was new and interesting to him. As we prepared for the launch, he explored the rocky slopes of the access ramp, discovering an old dried-up catfish tail. He patiently waited in our canoe as I assisted the launch efforts of nearly 30 canoes and kayaks. We launched at the end of the *Armada*, and I emphasized to him the paddling instructions from Mike Calwell—"rear steer and front grunt." I could tell that he did not want to believe me when I said he would do all the hard work, while I would just relax and steer by using my paddle as a rudder. As we exited Cedar Creek and merged into the current of the Kaw, he challenged me by pointing out I was paddling more strokes than he was.

I know Faraji enjoyed his day. The smile on his face was a sure sign. But he did voice some disappointment when I answered his question about "rapids." When I picked him up that morning, he asked me if we would canoe over any rapids. I told him it was unlikely. Shortly after we launched, he asked me again about rapids and I told him there weren't any. But at one of our sandbar stops, Mike Calwell told the group that we would navigate through some rapids. Faraji's head quickly swung around and he looked at me,

(Continued on the Next Page)

seeking confirmation or rebuttal. I simply shrugged and told him that they probably would not be anything serious.

We left the beach and pretty soon we floated through a channel where the current appeared to be swifter, some tree stick-ups and river obstructions broke the surface, and the water surface was slightly choppy. About a half-mile downstream from that place, Faraji turned to me and asked, “When are we going to see the rapids?” I tried to explain to him that we had already experienced the rapids and pointed back over my shoulder, but I don’t think he believed me.

At our lunch stop and later, when we stopped for an educational discussion of dredging and river conditions, Faraji combed the sandbar with me. We found a couple of large bones (probably deer or cow) and a very old, small bottle, filled with sand. The neck of the bottle was not threaded for a cap, but was the type that requires a cork. The raised letters on the side of the small bottle said “Listerine.” It now sits on the windowsill above my kitchen sink.

Later, as we both grew weary of paddling, I showed Faraji how to hold the handle of his paddle near the water’s surface and allow the blade part to fall and slap against the water, making a popping sound, like a beaver tail. I made the mistake of showing him how to chop the blade of the paddle in the water and splash another canoeist. Very soon we were both quite wet from a brief splash-battle and this activity was repeated often as the afternoon wore on.

At one point, Faraji slipped off his sandals and hung his legs over the side with his bare feet in the water. This slowed the progress of our boat and I was forced to paddle harder, but I resisted ordering him to stow his feet on board because he was enjoying it too much. Also, I was remembering the joy of doing the same when I was a boy. So I just leaned back, rested and floated for a while. At that point, I realized I needed to follow Faraji’s example, not vice versa. So I slipped off my sandals and plopped my feet over the side!

Cool river water slipping past large, bare feet; between the toes; over the arches; under the heels—life is good. Go float the Kaw!

New Trail Goes On

By Lyle Riedy

Building a new five-mile trail is an ambitious task for any seasoned trail builder. That was the goal in 1996 when the KTC, working with local bikers, began work on the Perry Bike Trail. Six miles of trail were completed that first year. The second year three miles were added with six more the following year. Then we spent the next two years adjusting the existing trail by adding minor re-routes and extensions to correct problem areas and add distance and flow. In 2001 we added another mile that connected the parking lot with Great White, creating a complete sixteen-mile loop that did not require retracing the path. Perry is on its way to being an *EPIC* ride.

Adding yet another five miles to an existing trail may be even more daunting than the original build. Work is already underway to add an additional 5 miles to the system. This new extension is being designed to accommodate beginner and intermediate skill level riders, yet retain the feel and flavor of ride that has made the Perry Bike Trail so popular. When this section of trail is complete, we will have a twenty-plus mile loop that can be ridden in both directions. The technical and cardiovascular difficulty of the trail, coupled with the distance will truly make for an epic ride.

The new extension picks up where the existing trail crosses a road in the now abandoned Grasshopper Point Campground and continues north over several hills and deep drainages before looping back along the edge of a twenty foot cliff overlooking the lake. In addition to the single-track trail, there are approximately two miles of abandoned roads that connect the three group campgrounds in Grasshopper Point that riders can use for a break from the technical single track or for a short cut to other sections of the trail. One of these roads leads to the shore where a boat ramp once existed, providing access to ride along the lake’s shore as far as riders want to venture. Each of the three camps has a nice paved parking lot and an amphitheater with a central fire ring. Presently, camping here is not allowed, but there is always a chance this could change.

The terrain in this area is, for the most part, new growth timber, which in northeast Kansas means thick thorny brush. There is some old growth in the drainages and a large amount of juniper trees. One 1/4-mile stretch of trail will follow a ridge lined with the old junipers, creating a tunnel effect. One advantage of the juniper trees is that their needles have an herbicide property to them, which will help minimize some of the mowing and trimming in the warm seasons. Another section of trail will climb and then wander around the top of a grassy hill covered with many young junipers.

Work days on the Perry Bike Trail extension are scheduled for every Saturday from 9:00 AM until around noon through the winter until it is finished. Work will also be done on weekdays during the holiday season as volunteers have some time off from work. We hope to have the trail cleared and roughly rideable by the first of January. On February 21st skilled trail builders from the entire region are scheduled to help with bench cutting and other critical aspects of the tread. We plan to have a chili lunch after working on the trail and then a group ride, if the weather is favorable. This would be a great opportunity to work with expert trail builders and pick up some valuable trail-building tips, as well as helping expand one of the best trails in the Midwest.

Highlights of the November, 2003 KTC Board Meeting

The KTC board met November 9, 2003 at Camp Hammond located near Topeka, Kansas. Guests were Dale Swaygart (Park Manager at Eisenhower State Park) and Ed Detrude with the Kansas Department of Wildlife.

- Treasurer's report and investments were discussed with dividend comparisons of some of the funds. The question was asked if we would want to invest into an income generating fund or keep some in Capital Appreciating (non-income generating). A committee was formed of Treasurer Jim Copeland, John Haynes and Mike Goodwin to research this and come up with an investment plan. This was approved by the board.

- The Earn Your Dirt Program, was presented by Ken Miner, asking for yearly funding and support of \$1500-\$3,000. Steve Garlow suggested possible consideration in the 2004 budget and this was deferred to committee for discussion.

This same committee will also research and discuss standards for new trails or added trails and the possible use of interest from the "George Latham" grant. Also discussed was the proposed multi-loop hike and bike trail at Eisenhower State Park, where help in the loan of tools and assistance in laying out the trail has been requested. A motion was made to provide \$1000.00, administered by the committee mentioned above for the new trail at Eisenhower State Park. The board voted 5 for, 3 against, and 1 abstaining. The motion carried.

- A motion to adopt the Mission Statement and Statement of Purpose for the Kansas Trails Council carried. There was discussion of the KTC's 2003/2004 Plan and other potential projects.
- Ken Miner proposed acceptance of the "George Latham Trails Legacy Grant" with a discussion in concept and with details to be finalized by the Trail and Budget committee.
- New Business.... Election of Officers

Nominated for President: Mike Goodwin, Nominated for Vice-President: Lyle Riedy, Nominated for Treasurer: Jim Copeland, Nominated for Secretary: Trish Cleveland. The nominations carried.

- Clinton Lake and George Latham trails were discussed. Also, at the Perry Lake Bike Trail work has started on a 5 mile extension with the hope to have it completed by March 1st. At Tuttle Creek, the hope is to combine Randolph and Carnahan at some time in the future.

The date and location of the next board meeting were set for January 18, 2004 at 12:30 PM at Eisenhower State Park in the shop building.

[From the Minutes of the Meeting-Submitted by Trish Cleveland, KTC Board Secretary]

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 _____

Email Address _____

Amounts

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

From the Board of Directors

*****If you have an email address, please be sure to include it when you send in your membership form. The board is always looking for better ways to serve the membership and we believe that having your email address will help us do that during the coming year.**



Lyle Riedy supplied this picture from the Perry Bike Trail. A five-mile extension is currently in progress, which will extend the mountain bike trail to just over 20 miles

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

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