

Kansas Trails Council

ESTABLISHED IN 1974

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Newsletter

March 2009

The KTC is 35 Years Old!

As we begin our 35th year, the KTC continues to maintain, improve and expand trails in Kansas. We currently manage 16 trails, spanning over 200 miles in length.

This year we will add another trail to our system with the Ford County Lake project near Dodge City. The Badger Creek loop at Fall River Lake will add six to eight miles to the six miles of new trail we have built during the past two years in partnership with the Kansas Single Track Society.

Our members and their volunteer crews usually contribute around 4,000 hours annually building and maintaining trails. In 2008 we topped 5,000 hours when Tim Gogolski's trail mega-project at Melvern logged over 1,000 hours developing new trails for the city (see Melvern City trail report).

Many of our members may recall the early days of the KTC when our first trails were being built. If you were involved in those initial trail development efforts, we would like to hear from you. We plan to publish your recollections of the KTC's trail building efforts in our upcoming newsletters throughout the year.

We would also like to recognize the original KTC volunteers who had the foresight, dedication and perseverance to build the first recreational trails in Kansas. If you were there at the KTC's beginning, please send us a paragraph or two describing your earliest memories of trail building and describe the trail project, the location, the tools which were used and the names of the volunteers involved. Old photos of trail building workdays would be appreciated. Digital photo files (jpeg, gif, etc.) are preferred, but original photos which are submitted will be scanned and returned to the contributor. Submissions may be mailed to the KTC at PO Box 695, Topeka, KS 66601-0695 or emailed to goodwinmw@cox.net.

Many of the trails we enjoy today began 35 years ago with those first miles. We hope you will share your memories of the formative years of the KTC so that we can pass them along to the many volunteers who continue today to develop and maintain trails in Kansas.

Mark Your Calendars

The third annual Kansas trail conference is now scheduled for October 1, 2 and 3 in Topeka. The KTC has been working with other conference planning committee members to organize the "2009 Built Environment and The Outdoors Summit."

Conference speakers, panels and participants will address concepts and issues surrounding the creation of healthy communities and the development of trails. Indoor conference sessions will be held at the Capital Plaza Hotel and convention facilities on October 1 and 2. Then, on Saturday, October 3, a trail building workshop will be presented at the Kansas Wildlife & Parks, Region 2 office on Wanamaker Rd. Saturday morning classroom sessions will discuss basic trail building design concepts and construction methods. Afternoon sessions will be held outdoors in the nearby Kaw River State Park. Outdoor sessions will include trail construction demonstrations and trail assessment hikes.

A detailed conference program agenda and registration information will be available by summer.

Roadshow

Last fall, at the Society for Range Management conference in Albuquerque, Bob Nicholson presented a poster depicting the KTC trail project at The Nature Conservancy's Smoky Valley Ranch Preserve in Logan County. The poster showcased the design and construction of the new public hiking trails on the working ranch (see newsletter insert).



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Board Meeting Minutes

1st Quarter Board meeting – Jan. 18, 2009

- The KTC Board met at the El Dorado State Park Office, El Dorado, Kansas. The meeting was called to order at 1:20 PM by Lyle Riedy, President. Introductions followed.

- Board members present were Lyle Riedy, President; Bob Nicholson, Vice President; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Susan Haynes, Secretary; John Haynes; Olivia Huddleston; Doug Palen; Terry Plenert; Chris Kaegi-Stephens; and Jim Thomas. Members not present were Neil Taylor and John Wentling. Guest present was Michael Stubbs of Wabaunsee County, Kansas.

- **Treasurer's Report:** Mike highlighted 2008 end of year reports on income and expenses, Friends of Trail balances, and current investments. Necessary state and federal reports have been filed or are in process as determined by their due date.

- **Membership Report:** Nancy Goodwin, Membership Chair, reported that we now have 108 members.

- **Election of Officers:** After brief discussion with the election committee, Mike moved and Olivia seconded a motion to re-elect the existing slate of officers. Motion passed.

- **Operating Budget:** Mike presented the 2009 budget worksheet. After discussion Olivia moved and Terry seconded the motion to accept the proposed budget. The motion carried.

- **Underground Railroad Trail:** Guest Michael Stubbs explained the background and current mission of local residents of Wabaunsee County and Audubon of Kansas (AOK) to create a memorial prairie park near Wamego, Kansas. The 45 acre hilltop area, named Mt. Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park, has a rich history which includes being part of a trail pioneered in 1842 by Freemont, ties to the Connecticut Kansas Colony (which was determined to see Kansas become a free state), and being part of the Underground Railroad. The group would like to develop a hiking trail within the park to facilitate educational experiences for Kansas youth and hikers. Mr. Stubbs was seeking advice with the trail. KTC will look at the project with the group and together they will decide what role KTC may play in the project.

- **Project Grants:** KTC received approval for the Ford County Lake Trail Project and is a partner with Kansas Single Track Society for the Fall River Lake Trail Project which also received a grant. The Board discussed the need to make sure that adequate funds are available to

facilitate the funding of grant expenses until they can be reimbursed.

- **Trail Coordinators Needs & Wants:** Most needed equipment discussed at the last meeting has been purchased. Chris will order more magnetic signs for vehicles. Bob moved, Olivia seconded and a motion was approved to provide a short term \$1,000 budget for the Fall River Lake Trail Project. Motion passed.

- **Next meeting:** April 19th at Perry Lake
- Jim moved and John seconded a motion to adjourn. Motioned carried and meeting adjourned.

Susan Haynes, Secretary

2009 KTC Board of Directors and Officers

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[Positions 1-6: 2008-2009 term; Positions 7-12: 2009-2010 term]

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

One Eagle Scout project is being planned at Clinton Lake this year involving the reroute of a section in the first mile of the white trail and the construction of a bridge. When this reroute is completed, we'll be resetting all the mile markers on both trails to account for the added mileage.

We recently added a 20 foot long boardwalk at the beginning of the Skills Loop to bridge a chronically wet section of trail below two hillside springs. This year we are planning to add armoring to a section of the blue trail near Mile 1 and build several short reroutes to bypass fall line sections further west on both trails.

In 2008 we had a total of 1,012 volunteer hours maintaining the trails (including the Latham trail) including 417 hours contributed by the Trail Coordinator. Troop 59 Scouts contributed 485 hours of the total. We really appreciate their energy and dedication to the trails.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Dornwood Trail (Topeka)

Dornwood trails are in good condition this winter. Little to no erosion has occurred that needs attention. Only a few soft soil areas, mostly a good hard packed surface. I have been able to clear all the fallen trees and limbs. Also of note, a State record Hickory tree (150 years old) located right by the trails (on the second loop just across the bridge heading east) has fallen and had to be removed by the city park department.

In 2008 we had a total of 90 volunteer hours maintaining the trails including 66 contributed by the trail coordinator.

Tom Travis (tktravis6@yahoo.com)

Elk River Trail (Elk City Lake)

Winter on the Elk River Trail has been very mild with very little snow and only a few weeks of ice in the streams and coves. The unusual winter allowed for some good hiking opportunities although with less of the typical winter scenes. There were even a few shorts and T-shirt temperatures in January and February, and the trail was well used by many groups and individuals. Super Bowl Sunday as is usual was again a popular day for trail outings.

The trail is in very good condition through out its length, thanks to very few storms and heavy snows to cause tree falls. Also, thanks to no high water to bring drift wood on

the trail, as normally will happen later in the year. The low growing vegetation has started to turn green and soon the Red Bud and other blossoms will appear in force making the next few weeks some of the nicest times for long and short hikes on the trail.

Trail maintenance this winter has primarily been trimming back the woody growth from the trail on the first 3-1/2 miles of trail. This has really improved the conditions in this dense growing, but scenic area. Plans for the spring and early summer include re-painting the trail blazes on the last three miles of trail as well as repairing all of the broken and missing mile markers along the entire trail. Summer maintenance will be primarily keeping the high grass areas cut down and drift removal as necessary.

The Corps of Engineer's project to replace the signs at the three trail heads will hopefully be completed by the summer. These new signs will be a great help to the primary goal of this years trail maintenance efforts of attracting new and more return hikers. Another recent improvement is the completion of the new walking bridge over the creek crossing at the very beginning of the trail.



The new bridge also should help encourage hikers to return to the trail for future outings.

Steve Siegele

Eagle Rock Bike Trail (Elk City Lake)

A relatively mild and dry winter has kept the trail in good riding condition since its restoration during last summer and early fall. Anyone, who has ever worked on or maintained a trail of any kind, knows that the work can be hard and time-consuming. Eagle Rock has not been an

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exception to this. As trail coordinator, I spent at least ten hours working on the trail during 2008. Elk City State Park personnel and fellow rider David Schwartz contributed an estimated 75-100 hours of additional time, rebuilding, restoring and improving the trail during 2008.

Rocky Shire (rockbev@cableone.net)

Fall River Lake Trails

Work has started on the Badger Creek Project at Fall River. This project is funded by a Recreational Trails Grant awarded to the Kansas Single Track Society. The KTC is a partner in the project. To-date, six miles of trail are open to the entrance of Badger Creek. We recently spent a cold and snowy March Saturday clearing the first section of new trail into Badger Creek.



Badger Creek Workday

Volunteer hours totaled 277 at Fall River Lake for 2008 including 171 hours contributed by the Trail Coordinator.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

KU Field Station

We are continuing to work on a stacked loop hiking trail at the KU research site northeast of Lawrence. We have completed most of the southern loop leading northward from the McColl Preserve parking area. In April, an Eagle Scout project will complete the northern loop which begins at, and returns to, the new overlook deck (see photo) which was designed and built recently by an architectural design class at KU. The overlook is on a bluff with a panoramic view of the Kaw Valley north of Lawrence.



An ADA concrete trail is being constructed this spring to provide access from the parking lot on the north side of the property to the overlook deck. Additional hiking trail sections are being planned in 2009. Volunteers contributed about 200 hours developing the new trails in 2008.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

MacLennan Park Trails (Topeka)

Construction of the access road between MacLennan Park and Kaw River State Park has been completed. Kaw River State Park is beginning to mark new trail sections with ribbons and flags. The most recent area marked is near the new road on the southeast corner of the property. For those who may not be aware, when you go west from MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest) and cross the new asphalt road, you are in Kaw River State Park.

The MacLennan Park trails have held up well over the winter months but are still very wet at this point. Just as a reminder, please do not use the trails when they are muddy as it causes ruts and damages the trail surface. We look forward to making some improvements this year and continuing to work with Kaw River State Park to expand the trail system.

In 2008 we had a total of 100 volunteer hours maintaining the trails including 50 contributed by the trail coordinator.

Lance Simmer (lance.simmer@gmail.com)

Melvern City Trail

I'm still providing assistance to the City of Melvern with the design and construction of their River Park Trail. We have had several work days through January and February with

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local volunteers assisting with the construction work. An additional mile has been completed with one more mile staked and started. The kiosk is almost done (lacks the metal roof). A trail map (see newsletter insert) and brochure has been completed and printed. There are plans to have a trail celebration on April 25th, 2009.



Students working on trail along wetland area

Volunteers contributed 1,027 hours building these trails in 2008.

Tim Gogolski (gogotaz17@hotmail.com)

Melvern Lake Five Star Mountain Bike Trails

Five Star Bike Trail at Eisenhower Lake

The freezing and thawing this winter has softened the trail tread at the lake making it a little bit of a workout to ride. There are a few areas in need of repair due to some seeps, but overall conditions are great. The planning on the trail addition along the lake heading south from the trail head has been completed with construction planned in May. Volunteers contributed 129 hours in 2008.

Tim Gogolski (gogotaz17@hotmail.com)

Melvern Lake Crooked Knee Equestrian Trails

West Point Equestrian Camp is ready for a fun-filled summer of camping and riding. With the addition of the new shower house last year, we now have a full-facility horse camping area (individual corrals, leveled parking area, picnic tables, fire rings, water, and electric hook up).

Current trail conditions are good. We are still planning some additions and improvements in the future.

I put in about 39 hours last year cleaning and trimming the trails. Other volunteers put in over 18 hours helping. The State Park employees also put in many hours mowing the trails and camping areas for us.

Planned events for this year include:

A MOTRA ride is scheduled for May 3rd.

The 3rd annual Wright Flight Benefit Trail Ride, May 24, call 785-232-0579 if you would like to join in.

FREE ENTRANCE TO EISENHOWER STATE PARK June 13, 2009 is National "Get Outdoors Day". Eisenhower State Park will celebrate this event with a trail ride. The Friends of the Park will host the ride at 10:00 am Saturday, June 13, 2009. A cowboy supper and live entertainment will be the evening festivities. Join us for breakfast on Sunday morning from 7:00am – 8:30 am. Explore the trails on your own on Sunday. The trail ride is \$35.00 per adult and \$10.00 per youth under 14 years of age. To register contact Stephanie Watson at 785-828-3242 or oscoed@osageco.org. National "Get Outdoors Day" is a new annual event to encourage healthy, active outdoor fun. Participating partners will offer opportunities for American families to experience traditional and non-traditional types of outdoor activities. Prime goals of the day are reaching first-time visitors to public lands and reconnecting our youth to the great outdoors. Responsible use and outdoor volunteerism will also be highlighted. National "Get Outdoors Day" is an outgrowth of the Get Outdoors USA! campaign, which encourages Americans, especially our youth, to seek out healthy, active outdoor lives and embrace our parks, forests, refuges and other public lands and waters. For more information about this event go to exploreosage.com. Sometime in June the Fort Riley Mounted Color Guard has a ride scheduled.

Jim Thomas (thomasj@kansas.net)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

Perry Bike Trail 2008 trail maintenance season was pretty routine. We did not add new trail. Our focus was concentrated on improving existing trails and doing routine maintenance such as mowing, blowing leaves and storm clean-up. There were 152 volunteer hours by the trail coordinator, 58 hours by other volunteers for a total of 210 hours. This is the fewest hours recorded since the start of the trail system 13 years ago. This year we had only a few "major" wind storms which, combined with using better

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equipment and maintenance practices, has greatly reduced the number of hours needed to keep the trail in top shape.

The 2009, work at Perry Bike Trail has progressed very well. At this time there are no plans to expand the trail but only to improve existing trails by making small re-routes where appropriate to improve a few small erosion prone climbs, turns and some wet areas. The ground conditions this winter made for easy dirt work as the freeze thaw cycle combined with the dry conditions made the dirt very soft. The trail really needs a good hard rain to "set" the tread again. Current conditions are a lot of soft deep dry powder with some wet areas left where the deep freeze is still lifting. Work completed in the early part of 2009 include several short re-routes, about 400 yards of de-berming and bench cutting and several rock armoring locations scattered along the way. And of course there is the usual clearing of downed trees and branches that fall each winter.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

As of early March 2009, the Perry Hiking trail is looking good. Several late winter workdays have cleared and blazed Section 1 from Lakeside to Hoover Creek and Section 3 westward a stretch from Kiowa Road. Section 2 had tree falls removed.

Future plans are of a routine nature – just keeping the trail weed-free and dealing with a few erosion issues. One tougher area is a part of Section 3 near Kiowa that is being squeezed between an eroding creek and a steep hillside with limited R/W – looks like either lots of work or perhaps a creative solution.



On the plus side we had larger than normal turnouts for the recent workdays. Maybe we're tapping a new group of volunteers, or maybe they just needed to get out of the house – it is spring after all (see photo).

For the year of 2008, I had about 40 volunteer hours. Total time of all non-scout hours is about 200 hours. The scouts provided an estimated 500 hours for the Old Military Trail and 94th street bridge replacements and a kiosk installation.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@tb-engr.com)

Tuttle Creek Trails

The Coordinator worked 146 hours and other volunteer hours were 57. There were 17 hours with personal chainsaws, 20 hours with a KTC pole saw, and 29 1/2 hours with both KTC and personal brush cutters. Several of our projects had been taken over by another person and didn't get their hours. Two projected projects were hampered by the water level.

We are working to re-clear the Carnahan Trail, starting at Sunset Cove as it was accessible. In the early part of 2008 we spent much of our time at Randolph State Park clearing down trees from the Dec. 2007 ice storm. Our projected work for 2009 is the continued clearing of the Carnahan Trail and again making sure the Randolph Trail is clear. I have met with Steve French at Randolph and we have discussed the replacing of the culvert in the north loop of Randolph North and the new fill to be placed to hold it. That will allow easier and safer continued access to the north 2 miles as well as easier maintenance. The plans are for the rest of the electrical hook ups and parking pads for Randolph South, along with some new corrals or hitching posts. The Flint Hills Trail Assn. will assist when we are able.

Now that the water level will allow, the first project is to cross Carnahan Creek and rework the "Causeway" and the next gully. A lot of driftwood needs to be cut out and some reworking of the tread and blocking erosion in the second area mentioned. All volunteer help is appreciated. I can be reached at by phone at 785-382-6886.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Wilson State Park Trails

At two-thirds through the 2009 first quarter (that would be 1/6-yr if my math is correct), the trail at Wilson has been somewhat more active than usual, given excellent riding conditions and lots of nice weather. The local bike club

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held two blanket races during January, with excellent turnouts at both events, especially Jan 25th, with 22 racers at 22 degrees.

I added 2/3 mile of new trail in the Golden Belt loop, which is quite usable but needs some buffing. It replaces a fall line section of about 50 yards. We'll miss that short fast descent, but the trade off is a much longer segment, with lots of interesting features, some fast sections, and a new stable trailbed. The total mileage for the main loops is exactly 15. There is another 0.8 that is part of the beginner loop.

I've been making stone mile markers and will finish by the end of the quarter. These are from broken pieces of limestone fence posts, which are abundant in the park. Each marker is roughly 1'x1'x1'. I used a 6" stencil set for the numerals and am planning to mark the trail at 1-mile intervals.



New Mile Markers

It takes 1-1.5 hours per piece, using hand tools. A power tool would be nice, but I enjoy the hammer and chisel and I can listen to my books on tape while chiseling away! Most locations will be secure enough to just set these things on the ground. Some locations near the water are likely prospects for vandals. Any ideas?

I made approximately 40 trips to Wilson in 2008, roughly 4,000 mi. Some were overnight trips, but mostly day trips; estimating about 350 hours. I feel very fortunate to have this "job" for my main retirement activity. Volunteer labor was about 250 hours in 2008, all in two weekend events in March and November.

This quarter will end with another major project to build an extension to the Hell Creek Loop, March 28-29. This is a

spot we've had our eye on for quite some time. It will require a lot of work and hope we can use some power equipment.



Trail Crew

The group of bikers in the picture above were all volunteers at the Fall Trail Work weekend. This picture is now on the cover of the Wilson Lake Association's annual promotional tabloid. I submitted a picture of us doing trail work, but apparently trail work seemed less interesting! Go figure. The paper also includes an article that I wrote about the trail, which I do every year.

I want to change the name of the trail from Switchgrass to Hell Creek. I haven't looked into this much, but know that KDWP has to approve. I think the appellation Hell Creek is much more marketable, despite the recent attention on switchgrass as a source for cellulosic ethanol.

Which sounds more adventuresome to you: riding the Hell Creek Trail or riding the Switchgrass Trail? Thoughts?



Sunset at Wilson Lake

Bob Nicholson (rnicholson@fhsu.edu)

Kansas Trails Council
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Second Quarter 2009 KTC Board Meeting

The next KTC Board of Directors meeting will be held on April 19 at 1:00 PM at the Clinton Lake Corps park office. Check the Meetings page on the KTC website (www.kansastrailscouncil.org) for directions. All KTC members are welcome, and encouraged, to attend the meeting. Bring a friend and find out what is happening on nearby trails!

New Members

We would like to welcome new KTC members: Ron Alexander, Brian Ast, Marisa Morgan Dallman, Darrell Schmitz and Michael Stubbs. We appreciate your support of Kansas trails!

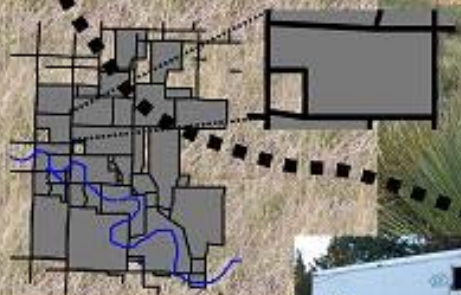
If you have a favorite trail you would like to support we hope you will consider donating to the KTC Friends of the Trail program. Your tax deductible contribution will be used solely to support the trail(s) you select. In the current economic situation, the KTC needs your support more than ever! The KTC is a non-profit, 501c3 organization.

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2008, a membership form can be found on the KTC website at: www.kansastrailscouncil.org. We appreciate your continued support of Kansas Trails!



A New Public Use Hiking Trail at Smoky Valley Ranch

Robert A. Nicholson and Michael W. Goodwin



TECHNIQUES

Trail corridor construction was accomplished primarily by mowing of the trail, at a 6' width. Tread surface is created by spraying a 16"-wide tread in the 6' trail corridor. Sprayer is an ATV-mounted unit with a single nozzle mounted on the trailer hitch.

Trail design is such that erosion of the trail surface will be minimal to none. Sustainability criteria established by the IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) were utilized to route the trail. Livestock will use some sections of the hiking trail, which will cause more impact than hiking users. Development of water course crossings were avoided to the degree possible.

The trailhead features a large informational kiosk

BACKGROUND

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) requested assistance from the Kansas Trails Council (KTC) to construct a public-use hiking trail on the privately-owned, 16,000-acre, Smoky Valley Ranch Preserve (SVRP) in Logan County, Kansas; about 20 miles south-southwest of Oakley and Interstate-70. Most of the ranch is leased annually for cattle and bison grazing. SVRP is among very few privately-owned properties in Kansas to construct a public-access hiking trail.

KTC is a non-profit 501c3 corporation dedicated to promoting the development and enjoyment of Kansas trails. All volunteers, we specialize in the construction and maintenance of natural surface trails - hiking, biking, and equestrian. KTC provides expertise and equipment for local volunteer organizations to implement trails for public use.

We designed and constructed two stacked loop public use trails, totaling 6 miles - a 1-mile loop and a 5-mile loop with a common trailhead in a single pasture of about 2,000 acres. We used only best practices of conservation and sustainable surface construction on existing soil/substrate. Esthetics of landscape design and access to points of interest were also incorporated.

A parking area off the county road has

been provided for trail users. All trails are shared by cattle and signage must be resistant to livestock access.

Public access to the trail is unlimited, but by foot traffic only. Users are not allowed off the trail. All trails have interpretive and navigational signage. Interpretative signs feature a variety of topics including Native American history, pioneer and ranching history, geology, wildlife, ecology, and plant life.

OBJECTIVES

Design and construction of this trail provides for controlled public use, access and education on SVRP.

Goals:

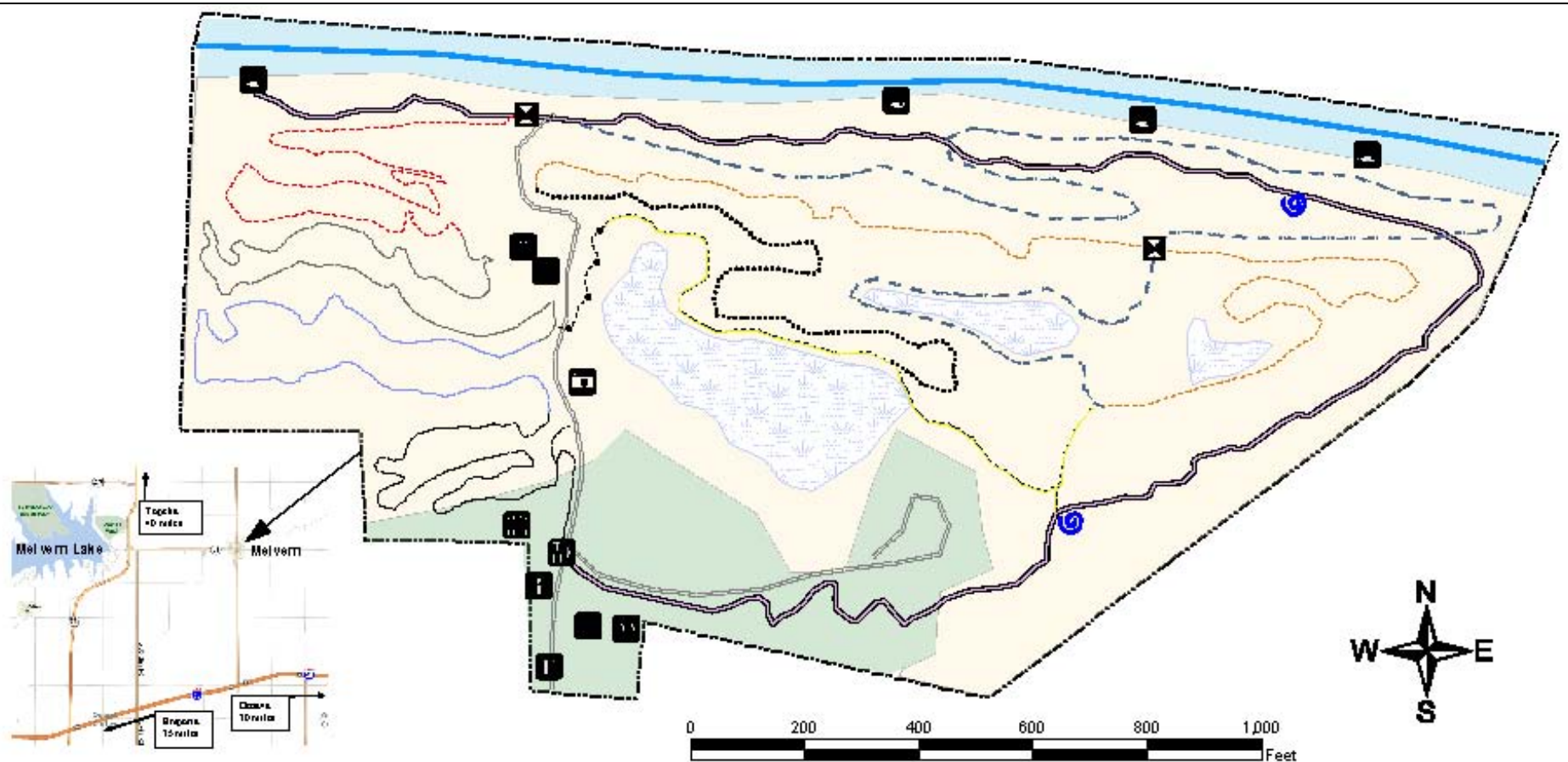
1. foster a positive community image of TNC and SVRP;
2. improve relationships with area landowners and community members for broader ecological conservation;
3. foster understanding of shortgrass prairie ecological values and issues; and protect SVR's ecological, historical and archeological assets.

As a venue for education and recreation made available by the Nature Conservancy, the public trail will draw hikers from within Logan County as

well as several hundred square miles of surrounding area. The trails will also be popular with nature lovers, especially bird watchers. Proximity to Interstate-70 (25 mi) makes it feasible for this trail to be a destination, thus providing economic benefit to the community.

The area designated for public trails system development will allow visitors access to scenic vistas, historical features, and key ecological and geological attributes of SVRP, including wetland and riparian areas, high prairie bluffs, chalk bluffs and pedestals, prairie dog burrows, native sand sage and shortgrass prairies.





Melvorn Riverfront Park and Trails

Symbol Key

- | | |
|----------|---------------|
| Bathroom | Overlook |
| Biking | Parking |
| Bridge | Picnic Area |
| Fishing | Ruins |
| Hiking | Shelter House |
| Kiosk | Trailhead |

Area Boundary Key

- | |
|---------------|
| Grass Area |
| River Area |
| Wetland Area |
| Wooded Area |
| Park Boundary |

Trail & Line Key

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bald Eagle, 0.3 Miles | Wahoo, 0.3 Miles |
| Thunderbird, 0.3 Miles | Spirit, 0.3 Miles |
| Arrowhead, 0.3 miles | Go-Go Point, 0.1 Miles |
| Mokahoko, 0.4 Miles | RiverTrail (Improved), 0.8 Miles |
| Moccasin, 0.8 Miles | Road, |
| Rocky Ridge, 0.5 Miles | Marais des Cygnes River |