

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

December 2011

Trails For Education

By James Leiker (Education Director, Sternberg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays State University) and Bob Nicholson, KTC President

As one of the latest projects to be undertaken with involvement of the Kansas Trails Council, the Dr. Howard Reynolds Nature Trails at Fort Hays State University's Sternberg Museum of Natural History, represents a creative utilization of funding for new trails. The trail itself was part of a \$54,000, EPA Environmental Education Grant entitled, "Trails to a Greener Future".

Implementation of the project began in late 2010 on 22 acres of the Museum's property west of the Museum parking lot bordered by the I-70 corridor to the north. Physical groundwork began on Kansas Day 2011. Much of the 2-mile trail south of the interstate is readily visible from both lanes as well as the large trailhead sign.



The tract next to the Museum had not been managed since the late 1960's, making this restoration long and tedious. Much of the tract had been overgrown with invasive species such as field bindweed, smooth brome, red cedar, mulberry, and cactus. The endeavor, however, was greatly aided by many local individuals and community groups coming forward to supply labor and donated materials. The project commenced by removing thousands of invasive trees and shrubs, followed over the next few months by burning much of the remaining standing dead plant material, planting 1,000 native trees and shrubs, reseeding 10 acres to native grasses and

wildflowers, building a footbridge spanning Chetolah Creek, carving and constructing a hand-hewn entrance sign and lots of navigational signs, and constructing a 60-seat amphitheater that overlooks Chetolah Pond. Work has begun on a one-of-a-kind trailhead gazebo to feature educational programs, picnic tables, and educational materials for the trail. Nearly all materials were constructed of local native stone and wood, much of it from the property.



The community of Hays, in just nine months time, has taken ownership of the project. Businesses, school groups, citizen groups, and individuals have donated so much in time and resources to leverage this project to a much greater educational resource than originally envisaged. In total, since mid-January 2011, through December 1, 2011, more than 150 volunteers have put in about 950 hours of labor and from January to July 2011, have donated over \$6,500 in supplies. This donation of materials does not include the generous cash donations to the project from Mid-West Energy (\$1,000) and the man himself, Dr. Howard C. Reynolds (\$5000). The local media have provided excellent coverage of the project since the Kansas Day groundwork.

The original grant proposal (which was rejected) dates back to 2008 when the project was first discussed amongst the project team. We reapplied in 2009, and received acceptance in late 2010. Work on the project began by removing hundreds of invasive trees and other undesirable vegetation. The intent was to reconstruct a prairie and stream environment that more nearly resembled the native grassland of the plains prior to the arrival of European immigrants. The EPA was interested in our project because of our emphasis on educating the public of the role that native prairie vegetation can play on sequestering undesirable components in storm water runoff from an urban/suburban landscape. The prairie restoration is a long-term project that will be headed by the Sternberg Museum staff and volunteers and the local chapter of the Optimist Club.

(Continued on Page 2)

Trail News

Trails For Education *(Continued From Page 1)*

The funding via the environmental education grant encompassed four criteria:

- 1) provide a tangible environmental education tool,
- 2) spawn intuitiveness about the natural environment,
- 3) educate about integrating native species, and
- 4) enhance environmental stewardship.

The 22-acre tract of land was part of an acquisition by the State of Kansas, which included a building (that big dome next to I-70) that was subsequently renovated to house the Sternberg Museum. Formerly, the Museum was housed in a building on the main campus on the southwest corner of Hays. With the proximity of undeveloped land next to the Museum it just seemed natural to include an interpretive trail to assist museum patrons and regional citizens in learning about our natural environment IN the natural environment. Trail users are able to explore natural beauty just a stone's throw from urban influences.



The western edge of the property is adjacent to a residential development. Part of the project included developing natural screening by planting shrubs and trees, although most of the neighborhood is already screened by existing vegetation. Naturally, some neighbors were very afraid when they learned that a trail would be built near their property. This is normal, but over time they will eventually learn that neighborhood trails are an asset, rather than a liability.

We are fortunate that this small tract's landscape allows the trail to meander through nearly every type of ecosystem in west-central Kansas. From the rolling prairie, wetlands, riparian corridor, and perennial stream, the nature trail was best suited to meet our educational goals of getting people outdoors to enjoy and appreciate a natural setting. Conceived upon the understanding of maintaining a natural feel as one escapes the nearby

traffic and asphalt, the trail was built as a natural surface with anchors around key features on our landscape. The trail route was purposely designed with high tortuosity in order to obtain access to the diversity of animals, wild flowers, grasses, shrubs, trees, and habitats available.

On July 21, 2011, the trail system/outdoor classroom was officially named the Dr. Howard Reynolds Nature Trail in honor of Dr. Howard C. Reynolds, Professor Emeritus of Botany at Fort Hays State University, past curator of the Sternberg's Elam Bartholomew Herbarium, and a charter member of the Hays Optimist Club. Being a charter member of the Hays Optimist Club, and in agreement with the naming right to the Nature Trail, the Optimist Club has committed to a perpetual \$500 cash donation each January for maintenance and supplies, provide labor to maintain and improve the trail, and also each June, hold a field day on the Reynolds Trail for the general public.

Since its grand opening in mid-August 2011, over 2,000 people (that we're aware of) have visited the trail either through field-days, museum events, or just out enjoying a pleasant run or walk through nature. A special thanks to the KTC for their expertise in planning, design, and construction.

2011 Built Environment and Outdoors Summit

About 200 people attended the fifth annual Summit in October at the site of the first conference in Lawrence. One-half of the participants attended the Summit for the first time and many had attended all five of the conferences.

The evening presentation by renowned outdoors author and lecturer, Richard Louv was well attended by conference participants and local outdoors enthusiasts. The conference brought together outdoor enthusiasts, park managers, health professionals and civic leaders with an interest in promoting healthy outdoor activities and facilities.

The outdoors trail session attracted over sixty participants for the guided hike, led by Jeff Bender (Kaw River State Park), Bill Ripahn (Topeka Parks and Recreation) and Mike Goodwin (KTC), on the KU Research Station trails northeast of Lawrence. Hikers on the two-mile hike were able to observe examples of a well designed and constructed single-track natural surface trail, an ADA concrete trail section, effective use of viewpoints and other positive control features, informative signage and a suspension bridge built by the Westar Green Team. The 2012 conference is in the early planning stages with a tentative location in Manhattan in the fall.

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

We finished two new reroutes this fall on the Blue Trail. Reroute 1 moves the trail from a flat area to a side slope for better drainage. This reroute also provides for better views of a pretty creek drainage and crosses upstream at a better location where the bank grades are more gradual.



Reroute 1

Reroute 2 is a contour trail which provides an alternate route to bypass a fall line section of the original trail. Although the Blue Trail is generally designed to be an easier, faster flowing trail for mountain bikers, there are some locations where the trail is difficult or not sustainable. The challenging climb (on the right in the photo) will be left in place for the more experienced riders.



Reroute 2

There are several more short reroutes like this along the blue trail that will be addressed this winter. When the weather is warm enough this winter we will be replacing all the mile markers to reflect the new mileage which has been added in recent years.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Clinton Lake – George Latham Trail

This fall we reset the north bench at about mile 2.9. This bench had been reset once before, but someone decided to take the metal mounting brackets and leave the bench laying on the ground. We used the metal post mounts because this is a very rocky location. This time the post mounts are each set in 80lbs of concrete which should make it more vandal proof.



North Bench

A short foot bridge was added at about mile 2.6 to cross a small drainage. The trail had crossed where the sides were so steep (see line to right of photo) that we could not cross with the DR mower. The new bridge will make it easier for hikers to cross the drainage. We would like to thank KTC Board member, Neil Taylor, for contributing the two 12 foot 6x6 timbers for the bridge supports.



Bridge at Mile 2.6

We also cleared the brush along the trail between the bridge and the north bench so that it will be more open for hikers this winter.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Trail News

Eisenhower State Park (Melvern Lake)

A beautiful October weekend at Eisenhower State Park, Melvern Lake, saw 50 riders saddling up and hitting the trails for the 1st Annual ESP Benefit Trail Ride. The group headed east of the State Park toward the dam on Saturday afternoon riding areas only accessible through a Special Use Permit. Following the 4-hour ride, Friends of Eisenhower State Park and park staff provided hayrack rides to the shelter house and a pulled pork dinner and live auction. Through generous contributions of area merchants, over \$400 worth of door prizes were distributed with every rider taking home a prize.

A 3-hour ride on the ESP trails Sunday morning followed a hot breakfast, again provided by Friends of ESP, and offered riders a special bonus of a bald eagle sighting and several glimpses of migrating pelicans soaring overhead. Thanks to the donation of the meals by the Friends of ESP, 100% of the proceeds of \$2,265 will directly benefit the West Point Equestrian Camp and allow the construction of additional pipe corrals. Thank you to the Eisenhower State Park staff; the Friends of Eisenhower State Park; Osage City merchants Jerry's Thriftway, NAPA Auto Parts, Dollar General, Subway, Pizza Hut, Radio Shack, Casey's, Buzzard's Pizza, Sonic, Dayhoff Elevator, Osage Hardware; Lyndon Veterinary Clinic; EZ Rock Café; Lyndon Building Materials; Carbondale Veterinary Clinic; BETO BP Travel Plaza; BETO Subway; Casey's Corporate Donations; Kansas Horse Council; R Bar B and Roy Frey Western Lifestyles in Topeka for making this event such a huge success. Another special thank you goes to Paul Pingleton for the entertaining auction and for his numerous donations to the West Point Equestrian Camp and Trails. Long Pipe and Steel, Osage City, will be supplying the pipe for the new corrals and will also donate the construction of an ADA mounting platform. ESP offers equestrians excellent camping facilities, and the trails are in the best shape ever!

Jim Thomas (thomasj@kansas.net)

Fall River Lake Trails

The leaves are down and deer season has a temporary hold on work at Fall River. I've managed three work days in late October and November. Installed (much needed) signs at the trail-heads and opened up about one half mile of new trail on the North Badger side.

We expect to have three plus miles of trail in addition to the completed loop of four plus miles on the south hillside of the Badger Creek area. In addition I have plans to link the two trails together with a spur/connector trail, could get



interesting. Slow going in the trees, always more deadfall and saplings to remove. Work will progress through the winter with clearing new trail, getting blazes up on the existing trail, installing a kiosk and hopefully getting mileage markers out on the finished sections. The winter will be too short to get everything done. I plan to get into "Promotion Mode" and have been brainstorming on ideas for promotion to get more trail users out as trails just get better with more use. The online Social Media sites seem to reach the most people and provide the greatest potential to get wheels and feet on the ground.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake

12/10/2011. Although recent rains have slowed the trails use, visitor count had increased the last couple of months. The current condition of the trail is excellent. All of the technical portions of the trail have been reopened. Some areas required rerouting where downed trees were too large to remove.



A group of local riders enjoy night rides Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday beginning at 7pm and Sunday

Trail News

at 2pm. The total distance of the trail is 10 miles. Two laps is the normal distance for weekdays and often longer on Sunday. We have been filming some sections of the trail with a helmet cam. You can view a daytime and a nighttime video on our facebook page, Ford County Lake Trail or on YouTube, search Ford County Lake Trail.

John Wentling
(jwentling@buyggaautos.com)



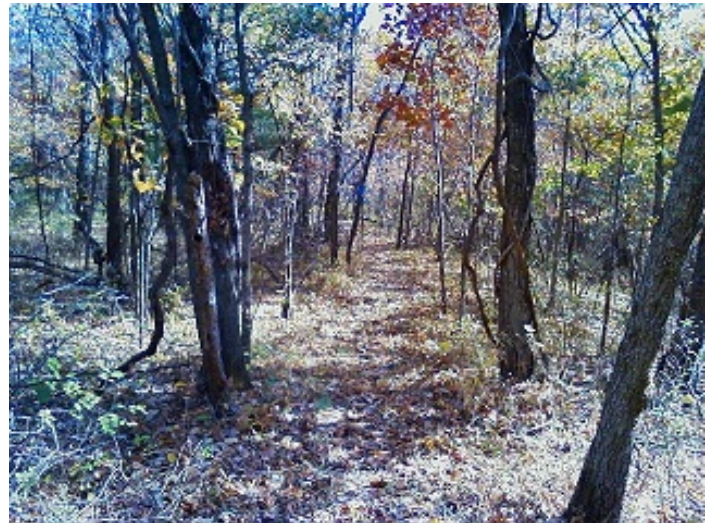
Mt. Mitchell (South of Wamego)

We finished bench cutting the new trail section on the southern loop this fall. The park is building a limestone rock retaining wall on the north side of the expanded east trailhead parking lot. With the completed southern trail section the trail is now a complete loop.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

The cooler temperatures of fall, if one considers 80 degrees cool, allowed a robust assault on the thick weeds of summer. Finding myself between jobs, the extra weekday free time allowed me get to Perry five times this fall – three times with a Kansas City Outdoor Club volunteer during the week, once with John Haynes (another trail watcher), and once with the big Sierra Club group. And all the effort was worth it. Section 4 between Ferguson Road and section 1 was blazed, lopped and mowed – the two miles should be fully open until next summer's weeds. Section 1 was mowed for 1.6 miles through thick lespedeza from Lakeside to MP 2, and in a weak imitation of Paul Bunyan we removed two hanging trees. (Those mowings could not have been completed without the use of the USACE's large DR mower. Thanks!) The big Sierra group was invaluable in the blaze and lop routine on section 2-east, helping complete the 2.8 miles in an east-to-west one-way walk in about six hours. Section 2-west had its field crossings remarked for clarity. Overall, the 29-mile trail should be in the best shape it's been in for quite a while. Now we just need to keep it that way next year.



Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

The trail is "winterized" and ready for cold weather riding. Conditions have been great all fall for riding. The recent rains will close the trails for a while but the expected cold should freeze it solid making for good riding again.

As of end of December, the new trail marking project is well underway. Two or three more outings should complete the project. This project involves attaching new color tabs around the trail to (1) provide even more assistance with navigation (2) stop the un-authorized trail marking that popped up this summer. Also some of the older signs will be freshened up as needed.

Trail News

Another project on the radar is to establish a new parking lot/trail head on the north end of the trail. The facility already exists in the form of the old Grasshopper Point Camp area, which was abandoned by the Corps many years ago. This location is already a popular trailhead for the locals but is not currently supported with any signage or a kiosk. We are currently looking for funding to construct a simple kiosk to attach appropriate informational signage and maps.

Other usual trail maintenance outings and some possible small re-routes are ongoing depending on weather and ground conditions and, of course, volunteer support.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood Trails

Dornwood has seen a fair share of traffic this fall. Several hikers and mountain bikers visit the trail on a regular basis. The regular Tuesday ride has had as many fourteen riders show with about 7-8 average every week.

Thanks to some help from Mike Goodwin, we were able to add six additional drop-ins into one of the channels in the second loop. As long as the channel doesn't wash out it should continue to provide some thrilling mountain bike experiences.

Westar has cleared a path of trees beneath the power lines in the park. It looks a little bare in spots but the natural foliage should return soon. There are still plans for an Eagle Scout to resurface the main bridge with timber milled from the downed trees of the Westar clearing. Should be nice and sturdy when completed as well as a good use of resources.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped this summer and fall. Your continued support has made Dornwood the little jewel that it is.

Russ Rupp (russ11@cox.net)

Kaw River State Park Trails

We are continuing to repair the existing single track trails which had eroded significantly over time. The fall line trail known as the "Widow Maker" on the west end of the park has been recovered after much dirt work with the excavator (see photos). Numerous rolling grade dips and drains were added to shed water every few feet. The upper existing trail will be repaired this winter and tied into the lower trail to complete the loop.



This...



Turned this....



Into this

We completed a new connector single track trail from the gravel trail to the top of Widow Maker this fall. The new trail section begins near the bridge on the gravel trail and descends through some interesting rock formations and a series of switch backs. Our experienced trail crew tackled the extensive bench cutting with gusto, completing the quarter mile section in just two Saturday mornings.

Trail News



New trail section

The Park continues to work on the double-wide gravel trail. The base layer of large rock is now completed and the limestone screenings will be added and compacted to make a sustainable surface.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Wilson State Park – Switchgrass Trail

Oct-Nov-Dec, 2011

Fall is my favorite season for doing trail work – long warm days, no ticks, no chiggers! This fall I extended the EZ Loop (aka, novice loop) by ½ mile within the existing loop. In late November, I submitted a proposal to the Wilson State Park Manager requesting to extend the EZ loop into the far southwestern part of the park, an area previously without trail. The proposal was approved in early December and design work is well under way. It will be somewhat over 2 miles bringing the EZ loop to a total of about 5 miles. It will be integrated into the Switchgrass system as well, extending the total mileage in the park to about 25. In contrast to about 99% of the existing trail, the new section will have very moderate to flat terrain and lots of trees, both coniferous and deciduous. It will be fast and flowing with riders weaving in and out of the trees along the trail.

This is a lowland area with a severe invasion of eastern red cedar. All parks in Kansas administered by the ACOE and KDWPT have a policy that is not friendly to invasive species such as the eastern red cedar (technically the Virginia juniper), but as is the case in many areas, these plant's explosive invasion has overwhelmed the capacity of land managers to deal with them in a manner such as they would prefer. Birds are the main means of seed dispersion, thus you'll find the densest stands under large cottonwood trees. Given enough time, red cedar woodlands will completely replace the grasslands and other areas that are now being invaded. Prescribed fire is the most practicable means of reversing the invasion and a surefire (pun intended) means of preventing it.

Let's talk a bit about trees and trails. For purposes of designing a trail, trees present an opportunity. I'm going to say that most of the trails in the US have been built on landscapes where there are trees. They can be used as anchor points around which the trail can be wrapped to increase the interest of the user. Bushy conifers, such as the red cedar, provide dense visual screening that allows for compact trail routing, giving users the impression of having covered a larger area of land for the amount of distance traveled. Tall trees provide welcome shade on sunny days and boy can red cedars cut the wind. Wind can be blowing 50 mph out in the open areas of the trail, but down in cedar lane it is always calm. Of course, red cedar were planted in rural windbreaks all over the plains, which unfortunately is the source of their current invasion. In some states red cedar has been proposed as a noxious weed.



Bob Nicholson (rnicholson@fhsu.edu)

KTC Business

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2011

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at Kite's restaurant in Junction City.
- Board members present were Bob Nicholson, President; Susan Haynes, Secretary; John Haynes; Olivia Huddleston; Doug Palen; Terry Plenert; Lyle Riedy; and Jim Thomas. Not present: Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Chris Kaegi-Stephens; Neil Taylor; and John Wentling.
- The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM by President Bob Nicholson.
- Minutes: Doug moved and Olivia seconded to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Motion passed.
- Treasurer's Report: Bob led the discussion of the details of the treasurer's report provided by Mike. John H. moved and Jim seconded that we approve the treasurer's report as presented and discussed. Motion approved.

Continuing Business

- Equipment: The Board discussed the need for use of bigger power equipment at various locations. It was noted that the big power equipment that KTC has is to be shared by all locations. The need for an accurate inventory was also brought up. Jim moved and Olivia seconded a motion to have an inventory made of KTC equipment at various locations, to be accessible to trail coordinators and the Board. The motion carried.

There was further discussion on the harmful effects of using gas containing ethanol in small engines.

- Equipment assessment: Bob led discussion on the need for an assessment document, a mechanism to fund or provide for large equipment purchases on an ongoing basis. Grants have largely funded such items in the past. The Board agreed that the trail coordinators should be contacted for power equipment requests and at the same time determine what equipment coordinators currently have (model, age, condition, date of purchase). Requests will be evaluated at the first quarter meeting. Terry brought up the immediate need for a chain saw in his area. Doug moved and Olivia seconded that the Board allocate up to \$250 for Terry to purchase a chain saw.

New Business

- Liability: Bob led discussion on the issue of liability as it relates to trail building and maintenance. KTC's current

policy will be reviewed to determine if any changes are needed.

- Next meeting: To be determined at a later date.
- Lyle moved and John H. seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM.

Susan Haynes, Secretary

Board Members

Board Positions 1 – 6 (2010 & 2011)

- 1 - Chris Kaegi-Stephens - Valley Center
- 2 - Jim Thomas - Lyndon
- 3- Doug Palen - Glen Elder
- 4 - Olivia Huddleston - Vermillion
- 5 - Neil Taylor - Lawrence
- 6 - Susan Haynes, Secretary - Shawnee

Board Positions 7 – 12 (2011 & 2012)

- 7 - John Wentling - Dodge City
- 8 - John Haynes - Shawnee
- 9 - Lyle Riedy, Vice President - Topeka
- 10 - Michael Goodwin, Treasurer - Topeka
- 11 - Bob Nicholson, President - Hays
- 12 - Terry Plenert - Wichita



Time to Renew Your Membership For 2012

It's hard to believe that another year has gone by and it's time to renew your KTC membership. We hope you will take a moment and complete the attached membership/renewal form. Life members who would like to obtain a new membership card, please contact Nancy Goodwin at njgoodwin@cox.net. Tell your friends about the KTC!

KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2012

I would like to: Join ☐ Renew my Membership in ☐ the Kansas Trails Council for Calendar Year 2012

Name _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

NOTE: It is the KTC's policy that the above information will only be used internally by the KTC and will not be distributed to any other entity.

In the interest of conserving resources (time, postage, copying, etc.) and being more environmentally friendly, the KTC newsletter is primarily distributed by email. If you prefer to receive the newsletter by regular U.S. mail, please check the box on the right and your name will be added to the newsletter mailing list. ☐

MEMBERSHIP DUES

AMOUNT

Lifetime Membership: (One-time payment, no annual dues) ☐ \$100.00

Annual Dues:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Trails Supporter	\$101 - \$249	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Trails Patron	\$250 - \$499	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> KTC Sponsor	\$500+	\$ _____
	(groups, clubs, etc.)				

Optional "Friend of the Trail" Contribution (any amount is appreciated) \$ _____

Please designate the trail(s) you would like to support with your Friend of the Trail donation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clinton Lake - George Latham Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Perry Lake Bike Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clinton Lake - North Shore Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Perry Lake Hiking Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elk City Lake - Eagle Rock Bike Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuttle Creek - Carnahan Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elk City Lake - Elk River Hiking Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuttle Creek - Randolph Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elk City Lake - Table Mound Hiking Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Topeka - Dornwood Park Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El Dorado Lake Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Topeka - MacLennan Park Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fall River Lake Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Toronto Lake Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ford County State Lake Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilson Lake State Park Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Melvern Lake - Ike's Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Melvern Lake - Crooked Knee Horse Trail |

(Annual Dues + Friend of the Trail Contribution) **Total Amount Enclosed** \$ _____

KTC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Friends of the Trail donations are used directly to maintain the selected trail(s) and are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Please mail to: Kansas Trails Council ■ PO Box 695 ■ Topeka, KS 66601-0695

12/2011

**Kansas Trails Council
PO Box 695
Topeka, KS 66601-0695**

Supporting Kansas Trails

We would like to extend a special thanks to Andrew and Edi Burnet for their generous donation to the Wilson Lake Switchgrass Trail. Your support will help sustain and improve this trail for thousands of future riders!

If you have a favorite trail you would like to support, we hope you will consider making a donation to the KTC Friends of the Trail program. Your tax deductible contribution will be used solely to support the trail(s) you select. The KTC is a non-profit, 501c3 organization.

We hope you will take a moment to join, or renew your membership in, the KTC. We appreciate your continued support of Kansas Trails!



Switchgrass Trail – Bikes and Kayaks