

# Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

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## Hot Trails

*Michael Goodwin, KTC Board Member & Editor*

If you have been on a Kansas trail recently, you know that it's **hot!** Really hot, and dry. The unusually mild winter coupled with early warm weather this spring, and the recent 100+ degree temperatures pose a challenge for trail users and trail builders alike. Here are a few tips on how to deal with this weather pattern and still enjoy being on a trail or working on a trail project.

### Tips for Trail Users

Two of the most important things to remember during this season are to: 1) hydrate and 2) stay on the trail. Hydration is obviously important when it is excessively hot and dry, but too often trail users do not plan ahead for proper hydration. Hydration should be thought about before, during and after your trail outing. Being well hydrated before hitting the trail means you don't have to "catch up" at a time when your body is being stressed. Before entering the trail, consider how long you plan to be out and the exertion level you expect. Then factor in the current weather conditions and pack the appropriate amount of water or other hydration liquids. Remember to avoid consuming caffeine or alcohol which can act as diuretics. Continuing to hydrate during a trail outing will replace liquids lost due to exertion. After returning from your trail outing, continue hydrating to be sure that you have replaced sufficiently. One rule of thumb is to drink liquids before you feel thirsty.

Staying on the trail is important for personal safety and for preserving the trail. From a safety standpoint, staying on well-traveled trails minimizes the risk of encountering various hazards. Ticks are the most likely creature which can be best avoided by staying on the trail. Ticks are most often encountered when brushing through tall growth of grasses or bushes. A well maintained trail usually has a wide open corridor with no encroaching plants where ticks can transfer to passersby. Application of a repellent containing DEET adds a further degree of protection from unwanted pests while on the trail.

It is important to know that you can easily avoid contracting lyme disease from a tick bite if:

- the tick is removed **before** biting and
- the tick is removed **within a short time** after biting.

According to the American Lyme Disease Foundation, current research shows that infected ticks do not begin to transmit Lyme disease until 36 to 48 hours after attaching to the host. [<http://www.aldf.com/lyme.shtml>] So after leaving the trail, a quick inspection for the little hitchhikers is the best plan. A closer inspection when at home is a good idea for the first 24 hours. Clothing should be washed and dried for at least 20 minutes to be safe.

Staying on the trail also helps diminish erosion of surrounding areas especially during dry conditions. Taking short-cuts or forging new trails that are not built according to accepted trail building standards can cause erosion that can damage the existing trail and surrounding terrain.

### Tips for Trail Builders

Extremely dry soil conditions often causes rocks to move and trees to be uprooted easily. We often have reports from summertime trail users that rocks that have been dug out of the trail by some miscreant. Usually the loose rocks are simply dislodged from the powder-dry soil when they are stepped on or ridden over. With no moisture to bind the soil, even large rocks will just pop out of the ground when a little pressure is applied. Unfortunately, trail crews can't put the rocks back in place until soil conditions return to normal moisture levels.

Trees are also the victim of dry, hot conditions. With little moisture to bind the soil, trees are especially vulnerable to being toppled by moderate wind storms. Let your trail manager know the location of any fallen trees that you encounter.

Trail maintenance during high heat conditions is dangerous work. Trail managers should constantly monitor the trail crew and encourage adequate hydration. Scheduling trail workdays in the early morning, taking regular breaks and hydrating properly allows projects to be completed safely even in the summer heat. Most Kansas trail managers know that the best time to build new trails is in the cool season from November to April, but sometimes a project must be tackled in the heat of summer. Doing a trail project in the summer makes good planning crucial. Having the right tools for the job and having power equipment in top condition means that volunteer labor will be used most efficiently and safely.

Stay Cool!

# Trail News

## Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

The warm winter and early rains brought the spring growth two to three weeks earlier this year. We are managing seasonal weeds and grasses with herbicides rather than mechanical trimming. The efficiency of herbicides compared to mowing is enormous. One trimming of the 23 mile trail system used to take approximately 100 hours – 4 hours per mile. A second trimming by mid-summer and a touch up trimming in the fall would be required to keep the corridor clear. Spraying herbicides requires one application in the early spring and takes about 25 hours for the entire trail. This efficiency gain saves the energy of our volunteers for other projects and reduces our carbon imprint significantly.

When temperatures return to reasonable levels we have two large projects planned. The arch on the Blue trail at mile 5.25 that is slowly sagging will be dismantled and rebuilt to be more secure. We plan to build a 20 foot bridge over the creek at Mile 1 on the blue trail. This bridge will be built with a steel frame that was donated by Kevin Fredrickson at Eagle Trailer. We have considered building a traditional wooden bridge there for many years, but wooden bridges would very likely float away when the lake backs up in this area after heavy rains. Hopefully the steel frame bridge isn't likely to float away. Thanks Kevin for making this possible!

Mike Goodwin ([goodwinmw@cox.net](mailto:goodwinmw@cox.net))

## Eisenhower State Park (Melvern Lake)

The Crooked Knee horse trail at Eisenhower State Park, Melvern Lake, remains to be a popular riding and camping destination for equestrians. We see horse trailers heading to the park all the time, even in this intolerable heat. I guess as long as you start early, it is not too bad!

The park staff has been busy re-routing some trail areas and adding more culverts, which continues to improve the trail surface. They are also keeping the trails mowed and easy to follow. Park workers and Friend of ESP Carol Hopkins repainted all of the pipe corrals earlier this summer. My wife and I have trimmed the whole trail system and added more trail markers. We also repainted the yellow and orange trail markers; we had painted the blue markers last year. We have received several compliments on these improvements and hope everyone enjoys riding the Crooked Knee Equine Trails. Don't forget to thank the park staff for their efforts. The staff at Eisenhower State Park continues to be a proactive friend of equestrians.

Jim Thomas ([thomasjc68@gmail.com](mailto:thomasjc68@gmail.com))

## Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

The trails at Badger Creek are in good condition and being used with an increasing frequency. Campers at the lake are finding and using the trail with the help of the new signs and Kiosk. We've staged several weekend group rides on the trails and one overnight campout/ride from the Whitehall Bay Campground. The tread is well established by now and fun to ride and/or hike. I see smiles all around and hear positive comments from trail users.



Terry Plenert ([PPLENERT@aol.com](mailto:PPLENERT@aol.com))

## Ford County Lake

July 2, 2012, the trail is partially closed due to high wind tree damage and multiple areas with poison ivy. Some areas are still available for hiking and mountain biking on the west side of the lake. Most of our maintenance crew has been Road Racing this season with the last races August 4th and 5th. Two work weekends have been scheduled for August 11th and August 18th. A reminder notification, regarding the work schedules, will be posted to our Facebook page Ford County Lake Trail. For additional information regarding the trail, I can be reached at [jwentling@buyggautos.com](mailto:jwentling@buyggautos.com)

John Wentling ([jwentling@buyggautos.com](mailto:jwentling@buyggautos.com))

## Perry Lake Bike Trails

Spring mowing and trimming is still on-going. The early spring required an earlier than normal mowing and trimming schedule, thus some areas needed a second and maybe a third mowing before summer is over. The current heat and dry spell may however slow the re-growth. Tread conditions are very dry allowing more rocks to be dislodged from tread and up slope. The trails are really needing a good soaking. Currently the only trail

# Trail News

work being done is the routine fallen tree and wind damage being removed as required. The new trail markings are working fine with only 1 area where someone took them all down. These have been replaced. There are no scheduled trail additions or re-routes plans until cooler months. This could all change in an instant with a wind storm or other major natural event.

Lyle Riedy ([lriedy@usd345.com](mailto:lriedy@usd345.com))

## Perry Lake Hiking Trails

After the early spring rush of trail work, several sections received additional attention in April. Our section 2 West trailwatchers were out five times to nearly clear their section – only the center “jungle” will wait until fall. A new lespedeza control was tried in a few other areas in late April. The herbicide blend (PastureGuard and Glystar Gold) was used in several areas of heavy lespedeza in sections 1 and 4, with trial applications for grass control in 1 and 4 as well. We’ll be checking on the effectiveness of the lespedeza treatments this summer and may need to retreat prior to flowering.

Dave Brackey ([dbrackey@att.net](mailto:dbrackey@att.net))

## Topeka Trails

### Dornwood Trails

Many things have been happening this spring at Dornwood. Thanks to Mike Goodwin who provided the equipment and materials. We were able to armor a piece of trail that was eroding badly and build a small bridge over a channel that was muddy most of the year.

We have also had a lot of help with trail maintenance this spring. So, the trails are clear and trimmed back and looking good. Thanks to all the mountain bikers for all the trail work you guys put in this spring.



Under Construction

Finished Product

Additionally, a community group called the Friends of Dornwood (FOD) has started an endowment to help maintain and beautify Dornwood. FOD has aligned with Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, the KTC, the Audubon Society as well as other organizations in an effort to rally the community for the betterment of Dornwood. The group has had a few work days and they are currently working to remove the honeysuckle from the front of the nature area. They are a very enthusiastic group and we should see great things come from their efforts. If you haven't visited Dornwood lately, come by and see the changes and enjoy this nice nature area.

Russ Rupp ([russ11@cox.net](mailto:russ11@cox.net))

### Kaw River State Park Trails

We added a new trail section this spring to complete a one mile single track loop at KRSP. The new loop starts and ends at the lower trail road crossing. We also repaired several sections of old fall line trail by digging water diversions with the excavator.

We would like to thank the Topeka High School Honors Society group who helped in April with the trail clearing before a fast moving thunderstorm struck. Luckily we all got to shelter before the lightning attacked.

## Trail News



Tread-Plane At Work

Finished Product

The new section was cleared of honeysuckle with the Ditchwitch Grapple then benchcut using the “tread-plane” that Neil Taylor built a couple of years ago. Benchcutting the entire 3/10 mile was done in about 3 hours using the tread-plane. My best guess is that this would have taken about 100 hours of hand digging with pulaskis. The Tread-Plane allows the Ditch Witch to sit on virtually any side slope while digging the trail tread to the standard 3 – 5% outslope.

We have also been removing honeysuckle from the lower trail trailhead area using the Ditch Witch. We’ll be assisting the park in installing culverts and water diversions near the lower trail road crossing in the coming weeks.

Mike Goodwin ([goodwinmw@cox.net](mailto:goodwinmw@cox.net))

### MacLennan Park Trails

We have built several log features along the lower Red trail using the logs we had stockpiled from the railroad’s clearing operation last year. The features include a Log Ramp, Dipsi-dooos, a 30 foot long linear log ride and a stump log ride. For all the mountain bike math lovers, we’re calling this new section “Log-Rhythm.”



Dipsi-dooos



Dirt Bumps

We have also been clearing honeysuckle along the lower Red trail and started building a pump track bump feature. So far this new feature appears to be getting more traffic than the adjacent trail section. We’ll be greatly expanding this area in the coming months.

Mike Goodwin ([goodwinmw@cox.net](mailto:goodwinmw@cox.net))

### **Wilson State Park – Switchgrass Trail**

Quarter two on the Switchgrass trail got off to a great start with a couple of rain events totaling about 5”, thereafter none fell until 2.2” in a single late June storm. Vegetation growth was about 3 weeks ahead of average, meaning earlier than usual spraying, mowing, and trimming.

Conditions for growth have rapidly deteriorated in the latter part of the quarter; the up side of which was somewhat less time spent on vegetation control. With so many blistering, hot days, my time on the trail was reduced, with 235 hours accumulated for this quarter.

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Skag Wildcat Mower

The Scag Wildcat 5' mower just turned over 300 hours. It's now in its 6th year on the job, mowing trail an average of 60 hours/year.

for the past several years. The TBX features a cargo box, making transport of trail construction and maintenance items much more efficient. The funds for this purchase were made possible by a generous donation from a mountain biker and fan of the Switchgrass trail. Trail users for many years to come will benefit. Thank you Mr. & Mrs. A.B.!!

Bob Nicholson  
(bob.44.nicholson@gmail.com)

## Board Members

### Board Positions 1 – 6 (2012 & 2013)

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

On April 9, we burned a portion of the Hell Creek Area of the park which included several sections of the trail. The purpose of the burn, which is a management strategy required by the US Army Corps of Engineers, is to rejuvenate the native prairie grasses and to control invasive species such as eastern redcedar.

I've now placed navigational signs at all intersections on the trail, which reduces the need for new riders to carry maps. With additional trail mileage completed in the 1st quarter, I fabricated milestones 20-22. I updated the Switchgrass trail entry on Singletracks.com, which is a free web site that users post trail descriptions. I replaced all the kiosk art and info posters and continue to add more landmark signage. Watch for The Rock Garden, Stegosaurus Drop, Brokebike Mountain, etc.

The major racing/social event of the year hosted by the Switchgrass Trail was held the first weekend in May with about 150 registrants. As in the past, the 2012 event was organized by Doug Chambers of the Golden Belt Bike Shop and sanctioned by USA Cycling, Inc.



With deteriorating condition and reliability of the Park's 10-year old ATV, I decided it was time to purchase a replacement. After considerable shopping around, I found a used 2007 Artic Cat TBX. This is the same brand and style that I've been using



## Board Meetings

The Board voted to hold on-line, remote meetings when necessary in order to better accommodate everyone's busy spring schedules. The next face to face meeting will be announced in the coming weeks.

**Kansas Trails Council  
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## **Supporting Kansas Trails**

We would like to extend a special thanks to Kyle Stone and William Cutler for their recent Friend of the Trail donations. Your support means we can do more work, building and maintaining more trails than ever!!!

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!

