

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

December 2012

“Epic” Award

Bob Nicholson, Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail

I attended the International Mountain Bicycling Association’s 6th biennial World Summit, which ran from Oct. 9-13, in Santa Fe, NM. This unique educational forum was a chance to share ideas and learn the latest about sustainable trail design, conservation, bicycle tourism and economic development, trail advocacy and public lands policy. The event offered classes, clinics and workshops, commercial vendors, as well as structured and unstructured professional networking.



IMBA World Summit

The international mountain bike advocacy and educational gathering opened at capacity, with 350 delegates registered for the three-day program plus about 100 additional attending the pre-conference sessions. Attendees included club leaders, trail builders, policy advocates, volunteers, land managers, recreational planners, retailers, destination/tourism partners, bike park caretakers, bicycle industry leaders, ski resort representatives and program directors. Representatives from several nations traveled to Santa Fe, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Israel, Singapore, Spain and Switzerland.

On October 11, the 2012 class of Model Trails were formally announced. Included in the newest EPIC category was the Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail. This honorary designation is applied to only the best of the best challenging back country mountain biking destinations. *[Continued on Page 5]*



Happy Holidays!

As 2012 comes to a close, we would like to wish our members and volunteers Happy Holidays! A lot has changed since the Kansas Trails Council was formed 38 years ago by several dedicated trail advocates. We now manage over 250 miles of trails in Kansas and contribute around 4,000 hours of volunteer time each year. By contrast with the early days of trail building in Kansas our trail coordinators are equipped with a virtual arsenal of trail equipment and tools. One thing that has not changed is the dedication of our members, volunteers and supporters. Through our regular members and our ten affiliate organization members we now reach thousands of trail users across the State. As we approach the new year our members can be proud that the KTC continues the mission of our founders to build and maintain trails in Kansas. We hope you have time to enjoy one of the great trails in Kansas over the holidays.



Goldenrod on Switchgrass Trail



Cottonwood on Switchgrass Trail

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

In October, we rebuilt the sagging, stick arch on the Blue trail at about Mile 5.3 with a group of KU students.



Before



After

The bridge at Mile 1 on the Blue trail is scheduled to be completed this month. We will need to close the short Blue trail connection for a few days and route traffic on the nearby White trail.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

The Badger Creek trail is in good shape and seeing increased use through the summer and into the fall season. Plans are in place to increase the length of the north trail this winter season with an additional loop that is scouted but yet to be flagged. That will come soon, deer season is not the time to be hiking through a public hunting area on the weekends. On a recent visit to the Fall River area, Mike Goodwin towed the KTC Ditch Witch to help with some heavy lifting. We were able to add a feature, a natural stone picnic table from stone gathered nearby. The location is at the North trail head area about 20 yards off



the road at the remains of an old building foundation. The whole project came together really well and will be a good place to have a picnic, view wildlife or just hang out after a ride or hike within a short walk from the road. Another project will be to continue armoring a section of the entry up to the south trail due to loose scree and poor soil content that will begin to erode with increased traffic and rains.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Elk River Trail – Elk City Lake

Greetings from the beautiful and scenic Elk River Trail. Wow! was my gut reaction while hiking this great trail over the weekend. The weather, the scenery, the views, the variety, the ruggedness, the rocks, the bluffs, the streams all combined for a wonderful experience. All 15 miles of the Elk River Trail are in top condition and the best part of it is that many people know it. The trail logs at all the trail heads were filled with two and even three pages of hikers from the fall hiking season. Whether you plan a one day hike, backpacking trip, short hike or nature walk this trail is a good place to go. Every turn, every bend, every hill has something different to see and it makes it hard to turn around and go back.

Fall and winter are perfect times to experience the trail and because of the cool weather it is a great time to think about hiking the entire trail. The 15 miles can be traversed in one day hiking end to end at a pace of about two miles per hour, faster if you dare. The trail is well marked and the path is clear with mile markers in both directions. Trail heads with parking at each end and near the middle of the trail allow good access to the different sections of the trail. The bluffs and rocks along the trail give

Trail News

explorers great off trail places to check out and the trail is never too far from the river or lake allowing hikers a place to sit and watch the water and wildlife.

If you want to get away to a place that is close but seems like it should be far away, or to a place that is well marked and taken care of, but gives you a feel of just tramping through the woods, or a place where the smells, sights and sounds are better than you could imagine, then you need to take time out and visit and hike on the Elk River Trail.

Steve Siegele (steveshardware@twinmounds.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

The drought conditions in Southwest Kansas have taken its toll on the trail with severe dust when riding in medium to large groups. Other than the dust the trail is in fantastic condition. We have opened a new area in the northwest part of the lake to gain access to restrooms and a shelter. Several new people have joined our core group of riders and we've expanded our night riding schedule to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 6:30pm and Sunday at 2pm to accommodate more riders. We will be hosting a "Blanket Series" race in early February. Additional information on the race and changes to the weekly riding schedule are posted to our Facebook page, Ford County Lake Trail. You can also reach me at jwentling@buygautos.com.

John Wentling (jwentling@buygautos.com)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

Excessively dry conditions continue into the winter months making for great riding and trail maintenance conditions. We have been busy taking care of large dislodged rocks and repairing the resulting "pot holes" left in the tread that could lead to future erosion. Several small re-route and adjustments to the corridor have been completed. There are several larger re-routes planned that would add some distance but more importantly provide some recovery time in some of the more difficult climbing sections.

On a longer time line we are planning on adding an additional 2-mile loop on and around Gilligan's Island. This is the peninsula jutting out from the far southeast end of the trail system. This build would be a level just above high water mark around the peninsula providing direct access to some natural beach areas, a small but popular cove where boaters frequently picnic, and some unique rock formations along the shore. This build would involve mostly limb and brush removal and little or no dirt work. Initial access to the new section of trail will come from the

far end of Mad Mile creating a lollipop type trail. An additional access point could be added linking mid-way around Great White adding another mile section of shore line trail and creating a complete loop trail.

Another winter project is to clear and cleanup the old camp roads in the Grasshopper Point area. These are considered paved trails. Because of the steepness and quality of the surface they do not meet ADA requirements but wheel chairs could travel them. This cleanup would also provide more parking spaces at the north trailhead.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

The fall of 2012 brought a few changes to the Perry Lake hiking trail. First, we did the usual lop and clear in portions of Sections 2-east and 4, along with a reroute in Section 3.

The reroute moved the trail from an eroding creek crossing and further from private property, but still required installing stone steps at the new creek crossing – a future bridge is a possibility. The final connection and blazing of the new trail, and closing of the old trail will be completed in early 2013.



Second, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprised us all by arranging for a mowing contractor to mow about twelve miles of trail and clear over sixty fallen trees from the entire trail! This was very welcome news since our spring spraying of the lespedeza had little effect – late August would have been a good second spray time, but getting volunteers at that time was not in the cards. There's always next year.

Trail News



And third, in the electronic world, thanks to Kevin Otterman, Section 1 is now available on Google maps, and the entire trail can be navigated in arcgis using iphone or android smartphones. Now if I were only smart enough to use one.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood Trails

Dornwood nature trail is in great condition. The trail is clean and well grooved. The efforts to remove the honeysuckle from the front of the property have improved the look of the trailhead greatly. Thanks to the Shawnee County Parks and the Friends Of Dornwood for all the work toward revitalizing the park. Our continued effort to remove the honeysuckle is an ongoing battle and far from over. However, any work towards that goal is always an improvement.

My immediate plan for the upcoming winter work is to re-open a trail on the northwest end of the trail system. Some root removal and general trimming will be required as well as rebuilding a small bridge. The current dry weather has been ideal for trail building and I plan to take advantage of it. As always, if in the area, give this great nature trail a visit.

Russ Rupp (russ11@cox.net)

Skyline Park (Burnett's Mound)

The KTC is working with Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to design and build the new trail system at Skyline Park. The main trailhead is located on Skyline

Parkway southwest of the Gage Blvd and I-470 interchange. The first trail workday was held on December 15th with sixteen volunteers including a contingent from Westar's Green Team.



The crew lopped and cleared the first one-half mile of trail corridor then toured the rest of the Phase 1 trail route. It's pretty normal when clearing trail corridor in urban parks that there will be some trash to pick up. The next morning, one piece of trash had been placed appropriately at the new trail corridor entrance. (See photo.)



Guess we're open for business!

Phase 1 of the trail plan will complete a 1.75 mile loop that begins in the trees near the main trailhead, then climbs the north summit and returns through the prairie to the trailhead. At the north summit, the city of Topeka unfolds in a panoramic view that extends for miles. Westar's Green Team has been working with area volunteers over the past year to restore the southern sections of the park to native prairie. The first half-mile through the trees is dotted with large mossy rocks.

Trail News



Mossy Rocks

Future phases of the project will focus on developing trails on the south side of the park, adding a dirt bump track and built skills features. Check the KTC website calendar for upcoming trail workday announcements.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Deer Creek Trail

Shawnee County is in the process of completing the Deer Creek Trail on the east side of Topeka. This concrete trail is now completed from the east end of the Shunga Trail to about 10th Street along Carnahan Road. In the final phase, the trail will continue southward, connecting to the Dornwood Park and Lake Shawnee trails. The trails around Lake Shawnee will eventually be connected to the Landon Trail by a connector along SE 45th Street.

Kaw River State Park Trails

The park staff have been working non-stop laying the limestone screenings on the gravel trail. This should be completed in the next month or so.



Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

Horseback riders, hikers, campers, and mountain bike riders as well as ORV drivers have all enjoyed the finished camping pads at Randolph State Park South. They have electric hookups and water hydrants available (sometimes you have to share one) and another dump station. The last 10 parking spots were finished earlier this summer making a total of 20. The Fancy Creek Mountain Bike Trail has primitive camping as well as the ORV area just across Highway 16 to the South, and many of those trail users cross the mile long Randolph Bridge to enjoy the new camping facilities.

Randolph South has a new camp host this summer and he has both sides of Randolph State Park looking great. I like the American Flag and the Kansas Flag flying next to their camper.

The trails are being used and we are in the process of doing our fall "check-up" and removing all downed trees, limbs and rocks that have appeared this summer. This particular area has had more rain than further north, so things are still green. However, with the shortened daylight, the valleys look like bowls of Fruit Loops. The views are fantastic.

The Carnahan Camp Trails have also been used. This area is still primitive camping and no people water. Actually with the lack of rain, the lake is low even for critter water. There is one shelter house on the south part of Carnahan Camp which has a lot of use and is one of our many trash collection areas.

I hope everyone is enjoying this great fall weather. If you enjoy any of the Kansas Trail Council's trails call someone up and tell them and come out and volunteer. Remember all our trails are maintained by volunteers.

The Friends of Tuttle Creek Lake held a Dutch Oven Cook Out on Oct. 20 at the River Pond Area. It was great fun. This is also a good volunteer group that can always use members.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Wilson State Park – Switchgrass Trail

[Continued from Page 1]

On October 11, along with Calgary resident Peter Myers, I conducted a session entitled Recruiting and Keeping Great Volunteers. My presentation was entitled AMP it up: Motivating the Unpaid Trail Steward.

Trail News

It was an outstanding conference and I learned a great deal about the sport and industry and had a chance to rub elbows with many, many individuals with the same passion for trails. I even got to ride some of the local trails and try out some new equipment!

On October 28, Doug Chambers, owner of the Golden Belt Bicycle Shop, in Great Bend, sponsored an "EPIC" Celebration and ride at the Park. There were 64 in attendance to ride, enjoy fellowship, and a great catered cook out.

November

I flagged and added 0.45 miles of new trail connecting the novice (EZ) loop to the Golden Belt loop. The technical level is novice, but all riders will enjoy this tortuous path through a dense stand of eastern redcedar. With almost 24 miles of trail, it is important that riders have plenty of options for different routes and distances.

I also re-routed another section of the EZ loop of about 0.2 miles and built a new bridge in the Marina Loop.



On Nov 25, the Central Kansas Mountain Bike Club sponsored a blanket race, utilizing a 9-mile loop. There were 29 racers and 4 volunteers. Thanks to everyone who came out!



December

In early December I utilized the KTC's SK-650 Ditch Witch Skid Steer to create some bermed turns, move lots of rocks, and renovate worn trail.



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

Built Environment and the Outdoors Summit Manhattan – Oct. 24-26, 2012

Around 150 outdoor enthusiasts, park managers, Federal, State and Local officials and health professionals attended the 6th Annual BEOS in Manhattan. Kansas Governor, Sam Brownback, welcomed conference participants and answered questions about his vision for trails in Kansas.

KTC's Mike Goodwin teamed up with Bill Riphahn (Shawnee County Parks) and Jeff Bender (KDWPT) to guide a pre-conference outdoor field session on basic trail building concepts. About 35 people hiked the trails at Konza Prairie to discuss trail design and construction issues. The group flagged in a series of switch backs to practice their clinometer work on the side of Tower Hill.



Mike and Bill continued with a more formal discussion of trail building basics during the first day of the conference. Bill focused on urban trail building issues and concepts while Mike addressed the fundamentals of single track natural surface trail design and construction. The session was attended by around 60 conference participants.

KTC Business

Board Meeting Minutes – Dec. 2, 2012

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at KDWPT Wilson Area Office.
- Board members present were Bob Nicholson, President; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Susan Haynes, Secretary; John Haynes; Olivia Huddleston; Doug Palen; Lyle Riedy, Vice-President; and John Wentling. Not present: Terry Plenert; Chris Kaegi-Stephens; Neil Taylor; and Jim Thomas .
- The meeting was called to order at 1:03 PM by President Bob Nicholson.
- Minutes: John moved and Olivia seconded to accept the minutes of the last meeting. Motion approved.
- Treasurer's Report: Mike highlighted details of the report with the Board. Doug moved and Olivia seconded to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Motion passed.

Business

• Online actions:

March, 2012 - Dornwood AFE: The request for a sprayer kit for Dornwood was approved.

June, 2012 - Website Redesign: After much discussion and evaluation by the Board, Mike moved and Jim seconded that we select Weaver for the website redesign. Motion passed.

June, 2012 - AFE: Bob requested the purchase of an ATV to be funded by an FOT gift received for Wilson. John moved and Susan seconded a motion that the Board approve Bob's request for purchase of the ATV, as described on the AFE. Motion passed.

July, 2012 - Ditchwitch Repair: Mike advised the Board of the need to replace the treads on the Ditchwitch. Mike moved and John H. seconded to replace the treads. The repair was approved.

August, 2012 - Letter of Support: John W. Moved and Mike seconded to authorize Bob N. to draft a letter stating support by the KTC - BOD to be submitted to Mark Eller, Director of Communications, International Mountain Biking Association. (Re: The Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail nomination for Epic status) Motion approved.

August, 2012 - Election results: Ballots that were returned for the election of Board members were counted. All Board members, positions 7-12, were re-elected by a majority vote.

October, 2012 - Approval request: The Board approved Mike's request to reinvest cash from investments that were recently redeemed.

November, 2012 - RTP Grant Application: Mike moved and Terry seconded to support the grant application by the Kanza Rails-Trails Conservancy for the Landon Nature Trail Project. Motion passed.

- Letter of Support Request: Jim Thomas brought to the attention of the KTC Board (via email) information regarding the Kansas Equine Education and Promotion initiative (K.E.E.P.) that will be considered by the Kansas Legislature in 2013. After discussion, Olivia moved and Lyle seconded that KTC send a letter of support for the K.E.E.P. Initiative. Motion passed.

- Equipment: Lyle found a used Quad that would fit the needs at Perry. After discussion Olivia moved and John H. seconded that we allow funds for Lyle to buy the ATV. Motion passed.

- Equipment Location: The traveling equipment trailer that was formerly housed at Eisenhower State Park was moved to Perry for use there. In discussion the Board reaffirmed the policy that KTC equipment trailers may be moved for use wherever needed. Doug moved and Olivia seconded that we identify Trailer #1 as the Perry trailer. Motion approved.

- KTC Stickers: The Board discussed the need for labeling equipment and work vehicles. Olivia moved and Doug seconded that we prepare generic KTC stickers for work/maintenance vehicles. The motion passed. Bob will follow up.

- Membership: The Board discussed membership numbers and possible recruitment venues.

- New Trails: Mike led discussion of the trails at Kaw River State Park and Burnett's Mound Park. Mike moved and Lyle seconded that we include Kaw River State Park and Burnett's Mound as KTC trails. Motion passed unanimously.

- Website: Mike presented the details of website usage and progress of the redesign.

- I-70 Signage: Doug reported to the Board that work is progressing on obtaining signage on I-70 that will recognize the Epic designation of the Switchgrass Trail at Wilson. The Board congratulated Bob for his tireless work on the Epic designation project. This is a great honor as there is only one other trail in the plains area with this designation.

- Next meeting: To be announced.

- The meeting adjourned at 3:11 PM, as moved by Olivia and seconded by John H.

Susan Haynes, Secretary

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

Supporting Kansas Trails

As the new year approaches, we hope you will JOIN or RENEW your membership in the KTC. Our new on-line membership feature makes it even easier to support Kansas Trails. Check it out at: www.kansastrailsCouncil.org

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Wayne Parsons (Independence)
- Christina Stephens (Council Grove)
- Elizabeth Stewart (Lawrence)

Thanks to the Burnets for their generous contribution to the Switchgrass trails! Would you like to support your favorite trail? Just make 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.

While our on-line PayPal membership feature is easy to use, if you would rather send a check, please fill out and print the on-line membership form and mail it to KTC, PO Box 695, Topeka, KS 66601-0695.



Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail – Wilson Lake