

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

March 2013

Kansas Outdoors

We may not have mountain summits or ocean beaches, but we have a rich supply of outdoor landscapes to enjoy in Kansas. The 2013 Edition of the Kansas Outdoors Guide published by Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism highlights many great places in Kansas to "Take A Hike". "We are fortunate in Kansas to have trails that explore the Ozark-like oak forests in the southeast, the prairie grasses of the Flint Hills, the loamy soils and lush vegetation of river side trails and the bluffs overlooking our many lakes", KTCs Mike Goodwin is quoted in the 2013 guide. With scenery like this....who needs mountains or oceans?



Clear Winter Days



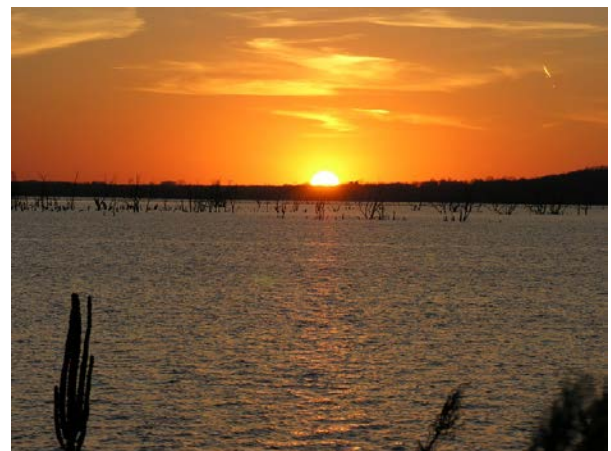
Spring Burn



Soft Snow



Spring Color



Summer Sunset

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

We completed the bridge on the blue trail at Mile 1 in early January. This was truly a collaborative effort. Kevin Fredrickson at Eagle Trailer donated the bridge structure made out of galvanized I-beams. Pam & Ric Wilkens and Neil Taylor provided the skilled labor for building the bridge abutment on a rare January day above freezing. The abutment materials were salvaged from a pile of old concrete sidewalk pieces from the State Park that Neil cut into 10" wide strips. The Westar Green Team provided the lumber for the bridge decking from recycled utility poles.



Thanks everyone for your contribution to this project!

Much thanks to our regular trail watchers at Clinton. Your eyes and reports make our job much easier. Keep the downed tree reports coming!

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Crooked Knee Trail (Eisenhower State Park)

As the weather warms up, I will be riding the Crooked Knee Trail at Eisenhower State Park to begin spring cleanup and maintenance. Late this winter, we had two heavy, wet snows within a four-day period that totaled 24 inches and caused a lot of tree damage. The wooded areas of the trail will need broken limbs and branches cleared. Trail markers will also be repaired and repainted. The State Park crew has put in a new bridge at the water crossing nearest to camp, which improves this section of the blue/orange trail. I look forward to another busy riding season at Eisenhower State Park!

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

Some new trail in the works at Fall River. An additional loop to extend the north trail into an unused part of the same area of USACE property that the trail runs through. Without going into a lot of detail, I have an addition that should measure at least a mile, could be longer but kind of hard to say. Some pretty nice terrain with some big rocks and a couple of smaller ravine crossings. The project has progressed pretty well, gotten a lot done since the first of the year. Brushcutter run over the complete loop, blower cleared all of the loop at least once, some parts multiple times. Lots of limbs lopped and cut back to pretty much open it up. Very close to being ready to ride/hike. A few rocks to move/remove. Some lopping trimming and moving deadfall out of the way. Hit it with a blower and it's pretty much done. Like all brand new trail it is soft, lumpy and bumpy but interesting enough to be worth the effort.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

Due to the drought and the abundance of dry timber, the Ford County Commissioners closed Ford County Lake to camping and normal drive through traffic. We attended the County Commission meeting and were able to keep the hiking/biking trails open. This temporary closing has enhanced our opportunities to extend the trail into other areas of the lake property and, an additional benefit, improvement from the lack of trash.

The condition of the trail is very good with all areas of the trail open. Some of us are now switching over to road bikes and beginning our racing season but we will maintain the trail for full use throughout the year. Weekly rides are Sunday afternoon at 2pm and everyone is encouraged to check our Facebook page for trail conditions and scheduled time changes. Our Facebook page is Ford County Lake Trail. For additional information regarding the trail, I can be reached at jwentling@buyggautos.com



John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Trail News

Perry Lake Bike Trails

Since winter finally arrived and trails became unfit to ride we have been making improvements to the trail. We finished clearing a 200 yard extension / re-route on Carlyle, 100 yard re-route on Twins, a 100 yard series of switchbacks on top of Logan's. Mike Goodwin brought the Ditch Witch over and cleaned up the north trailhead to make a better parking area and cleared a bunch of brush from one of the camp roads.

We are currently working on a new 2-mile section of trail, "Daisy Point", on the peninsula below Mad Mile. This section will be a trail very similar to the Lawrence river trail. Pretty flat and flowing. This section will follow roughly the high water line around the peninsula providing great shoreline access for trail users. For years people have been riding/bush whacking around this area when water recedes but we now will have a real trail constructed above the water line. We have completed the first 1-mile loop and will add the final phase later.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

The early part of 2013 saw the completion of the 600-foot Section 3 reroute and the abandonment of the old trail. I might add we did it on short notice on a 60-degree Saturday in January before the weather turned on Sunday. Timing can be everything.

We had a trailwatcher's meeting at the Corps' Project Office on March 9 which was led by Bunnie Watkins of the Corps and attended by four of the seven watchers, one "watcher-in-training" and an equestrian representative. The hiking group learned a lot about the horse side of the trails – it's amazing what one can learn by just listening.

Proposed hiking trail tasks for this spring include: making the most of our rescheduled March 30 workday (Easter bunny costumes may be in order); relocating a short piece of Section 2 around the new disc golf course; spraying for lespedeza and grasses; updating the hiking website "perrylaketrail.net" and covering the Thunder Ridge Nature Trail; and, we will continue to look for a trailwatcher to replace another vacancy.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Topeka Trails

Skyline Park (Burnett's Mound)

This was a tough winter to build new trail in Northeast Kansas. Ordinarily we prefer to build trails in the winter because we can survey the terrain better without foliage. The record snows this year changed all that, but we're back on track working on Phase 1 of the new trails. Our volunteer bench cutting crew worked their way to the summit on March 16. Thanks to the Westar Green team for their work in the park and helping to build this new trail.



Weather permitting, we plan to complete the Phase 1 loop of 1.75 miles this spring. Watch the KTC calendar for upcoming workdays.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Kaw River State Park Trails

The park's trail crew continues to lay down limestone screenings on the gravel trail. The trail from the Northwest trailhead near the KDWPT Region 2 office is about 75% finished.

The park is planning to launch a project to begin removing honeysuckle from several test areas. Removal of this invasive plant will take time but will hopefully restore the forest to a more natural state in the coming months.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

It is spring and we are going over the Randolph State Park removing deadfall and loose rocks. There will be new self pay stations soon and the park crew has put up new park signs. Things are looking good for spring. We have one place in mind that will be changed to straighten the trail and minimize erosion.

Trail News

Next step, the Carnahan Camp Ground. This draws a lot of vehicle traffic and a lot of unwanted yard art, so we are picking up lots of trash that has been left the past winter. The campground trails are open for use year around. The Carnahan to Garrison trail is closed until we get more help to rebuild in different places.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Wilson State Park – Switchgrass Trail

On Saturday, March 9th, for my first time, I attended the Annual Wilson Lake Association meeting in Wilson. I gave a short presentation on the Switchgrass Trail and reported on the IMBA Epic designation. Among other items discussed by the Association was the 50th anniversary of Lake Wilson next year. That sounds about right because when I was in high school, I recall visiting the dam site during late construction! The Association Board President, local personnel from the US Army Corps of Engineers and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism made presentations.

January and most of February were quite open and I was able to do quite a bit of trail maintenance. The main job was using my trail groomer, home-fabricated from roughly 20 repurposed mower blades. This has proven to work best as soon as possible after the ground thaws. Unfortunately, that happened only once this year, which is just another byproduct of climate change.



I recall when I was young, that the soil might be frozen for weeks during the deepest part of winter. Nowadays we're lucky if it happens at all. The freeze-thaw cycle is very beneficial to the soil ecosystem, increasing aeration and infiltration and decreasing compaction and soil-borne pests.

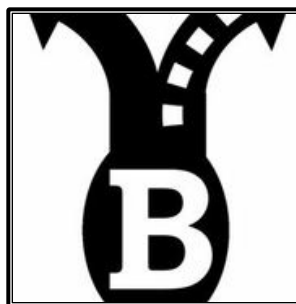
Each winter I spend many hours composing and revising trail drawings for use both on and off trail. I've been creating two separate depictions, one constructed by using GPS tracks, and the other is a simplified sketch. Drawings based on GPS tracks can have an onerous amount of detail because of the tortuousness of most mountain bike trails; a handout of such for this trail is impractical. A 12"x18" color print depicting tracks is posted on the trailhead kiosk; sketches are available as b/w handouts.

(Technically a "map" must have a scale and portray the latitude and longitude, otherwise it is just a drawing). Please excuse my pedantry!!

The main trail features 3 primary stacked loops, with a number of sub-loops. One of the navigational features inherent in my overall design has been a preference of clockwise riding, especially for first time riders. I designed each of the 11 forks on the current trail to allow the rider only two choices:



turn right to cut off, left to go on. Any cutoff will always commence a shorter route back to the trailhead.



This year, to complement this simple fork design, I'm posting additional signage at each fork. I saw this idea deployed on the Santa Fe mountain bike trails last year on more complicated trail forks. Each fork will have a sign with a single letter (A-K). It will also have a trails sign, on which routes and forks are sketched and keyed.

By referring to any trail sketch, first time riders will be able to navigate and choose the duration of ride they prefer. Taking no cutoffs, the entire ride will be 22.5 miles; the novice ride 5.6 miles. Of course only the cutoff at fork "K" will lead directly to the trailhead with no subsequent options for shortening a ride. Options for less distance on the main trail are numerous, with 3 distance options on the novice trail. Also there are milestones at each mile interval (1-22) for those not using cutoffs.

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

KTC Membership

The KTC now has 104 members with 10 new members including one new affiliate member since the beginning of the new year. If you know someone who enjoys trails as much as we do, we hope you will encourage them to join the KTC. More members supporting Kansas trails means that we can build and maintain more trails!

Kansas Trails Council
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Supporting Kansas Trails

We're off to a great start in the first quarter of 2013 with many new members. Our new on-line membership feature makes it even easier to support Kansas Trails through membership and Friends of the Trail contributions. Check it out at: www.kansastrailscouncil.org

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Jonathan Conard (Sterling)
- Brittany Crabtree (Topeka)
- Mickey Delfelder (Topeka)
- Paul Dennis (Baldwin City)
- Adam Gatewood (Topeka)
- Colin Howat (Lawrence)
- Chris Janssen (Topeka)
- Adam Jones (Kansas City)
- Robert Kirkwood (Topeka)
- Russell County Convention & Visitors Bureau



Winter on Wilson Lake Switchgrass Trails

Thanks to Phil Roudebush, Ed Lincoln and Kevin Fredrickson for their continuing trail support contributions!

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.