

Kansas Trails Council

ESTABLISHED IN 1974

Volume XXXIV, Issue 2

Newsletter

June 2013

Mega Trail News!

The Flint Hills Nature Trail (FHNT) received some major good news this week. The FHNT is going to receive a \$2.4 million investment with the goal of completing the remaining miles of the 117 mile trail within the next year. The funding is a combination of a Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Enhancement grant and a grant from Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT). The FHNT stretches from Osawatomie in the east to Herington in the west. The trail also has connections to the north end of the 51 mile Prairie Spirit Trail near Ottawa and the 40 mile Landon Trail near Vassar (see map below). The FHNT is a component of the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail and is the seventh longest rail trail in the country.

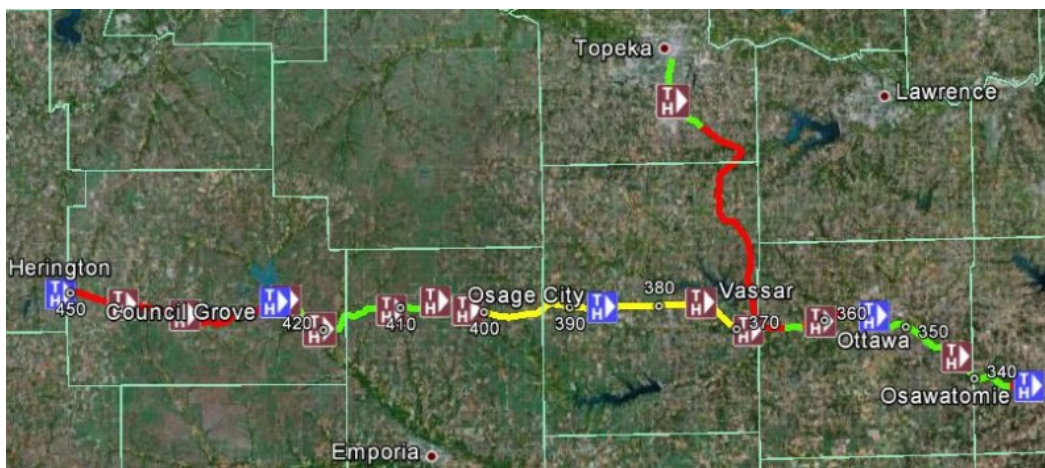
The trail has been under development by the Kanza Rail Trails Conservancy volunteers since 2001. Until this new funding infusion, the trail had been developed largely with private donations. For more information check out their website at: <http://www.kanzatrails.org/index.php/flint-hills-nature-trail-information>

This funding commitment will someday make it possible to connect the FHNT into other rail trails in the surrounding states. This trail system is often referred to as the Quad States Trails, connecting Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska. The Quad States Trail System already extends down from Nebraska near Marysville and the Katy Trail in Missouri is going to be extended to Kansas City. The east



end of the FHNT could be connected to the Katy Trail using a combination of new and existing urban trails in Johnson County. Here is an article describing the Quad States Trail System in more detail: <http://mobikefed.org/2005/07/quad-state-trail-system-mapped-over-700-miles-of-trail-linking-mo-ks-ne-ia.php>

The economic benefits to local communities along the FHNT could parallel the success of the Katy Trail where numerous bed and breakfast inns, wineries, bike shops, gift shops, restaurants and other businesses serve about 400,000 trail visitors each year. Thousands of participants and spectators could be drawn to the FHNT and area communities for events like the Prairie Spirit 100 and 50 Mile Ultra Trail Race held in March this year.



KDOT and KDWPT should be commended for supporting the development of this beautiful trail with its strategic connections to so many Kansas towns and other trails. All this could not have been possible without the dedication of the Kanza Rail Trail Conservancy and its many volunteers and supporters. Way to go from your colleagues at the KTC!

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

We'll be adding some new features at the Skills Loop this summer. An Eagle Scout project will be adding about 120 feet of new skinnies to ride. This will involve lots of post hole digging, concrete, cordless drills and Scout Power! Photos will be available in the next newsletter.

Besides an occasional tree dropped by thunderstorms, the trails are open and clear. Ticks are more abundant than in any recent year. Repellant is helpful, but not foolproof so please check for the little hitchhikers when returning from a ride, hike or run. The wild flowers are also more abundant this year. The view from Bunker Hill on the north sided of Clinton State Park reveals the lake panorama as well as a variety of wildflowers.



Wildflowers On Bunker Hill (Clinton State Park)

We plan to do some shoreline trail repair work in July with a group of local volunteer kids. Last year when lake levels were high, one trail section sustained significant erosion. Now that the lake is exceptionally low, down about 6 feet, we can gather rocks and add riprap to the edge of the trail to protect it for the inevitable future return of high water.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

I have been busy at Fall River Lake this early spring adding a new loop to the north trail at Badger Creek. This new section works out to just at 1 1/4 mile of additional trail, has some nice features and several physical and technical sections to add balance between the north and south trails. With late winter moisture and regular spring rains the growth that was nearly a month behind a normal season pretty much exploded and caught up. I have been able to get ahead somewhat with two days of spraying to control regrowth in the established tread. The new section needed a little more attention to establish the corridor and

tread, two passes needed to open it to a full 4 ft. width there. Getting good feed-back from some of the local lake residents who have begun hiking and exploring the trails. The new signs for directions and marking of the trailheads are bringing more foot traffic and trail users. With the more frequent rainfall, a number of short sections of trail have been staying fairly boggy and muddy. With warmer weather and going into a summer season, those sections will be dry and are generally only a springtime occurrence.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

June 10, 2013, The Lake is still closed due to the drought conditions with the lake bed completely dry. The Ford County Commissioners have placed signs at all entrances allowing hiking and biking only and we have had moderate activity on the trail. The local volunteer crews have been planning a summer clean up and mow toward the end of June. We will be posting the times and dates when the weekend work will take place to our Facebook page Ford County Lake Trail. For additional information regarding the trail, I can be reached at jwentling@buyggautos.com

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

Trail work in the post-late-March period was reduced in level from previous years. A basic lop and trim in two areas of Section 1 by a four person crew comprised the lion's share of the effort. A bit of blazing still needs to be done in those areas.

On the paperwork side of the trail we accomplished a bit more. First, our "watcher-in-training," noted in the previous report, has taken over the Thunder Ridge trail to assist the USACE and has agreed to coordinate the trail's website. Second, a new trail watcher has joined us to lead the work on section 4W.

Proposed hiking trail tasks for this summer or later include: relocating a short piece of section 2 around the new disc golf course, and spraying for lespedeza and grasses.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Trail News

Perry Lake Bike Trails

Perry is looking good after initial spring cleanup. Poison ivy is the big player this year. Conditions seem to favor the pesky little plant. Since spring we have completed 2 considerable reroutes. 1st is the big S turn double switchback going up Skyline to the East about 1/4 mile in. It is now a much bigger S turn double switchback. Moved both turns out much farther to improve the flow, sightline and most importantly avoid the erosion problem. The 2nd is the drop down to the bridge on Wild West.



We also have an issue with a slump area about 1 acre that is breaking and sliding down slope towards the lake. Since last summer the crack that developed right dead center of the tread has dropped nearly 6 foot and moved over 10 feet or more. Obviously a reroute is in order to avoid the situation. Here are a couple of more photos of the slump area along Logan's Run.



It took another major shift. The area is about the size of a football field that has dropped and slid towards the lake. The crack goes all the way down the level of the shore. Note the pin flag above my bike. That is the tread from last fall. The hole in the trail is part of the crack where it crosses and runs along the trail. Cannot see the bottom of the hole. We are scrambling to figure how to reroute the section. Until that is done it will be ribboned and signed with danger signs.

You can view day to day updates on the trail at our Facebook page "Trail bones".

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood Park

Dornwood is looking good. We have had several groups helping with the trail work this spring. The Shawnee Parks crew has done a great job keeping the double track mowed and the Friends of Dornwood have had their monthly trail work. The fight to rid the park of honeysuckle is ongoing and will continue. We still have hope. The KTC volunteers have helped me on several occasions to trim, lop and spray. All of our efforts are paying off.



In the late winter I re-opened couple of old trail sections and they are groomed and looking nice. I would like to thank all those who have continued to help keep this a great nature trail (see photo)

Russ Rupp
(russ11@cox.net)

Skyline Park

The first phase of the new trail is completed and open for use. We plan to expand into the southern half of the park

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this fall when the weather cools. This summer we plan to start working on the dirt berms on the south end of the existing trail. This should make a nice jump park for mountain bikers.

We finished some erosion remediation this week on a social fall line trail to the summit. Hopefully we can now encourage hikers to use the new contour trail and allow the restored area to revegetate.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Kaw River State Park Trails

The park crew has almost completed adding limestone screenings to the gravel trail. So far the wide gravel trail has held up well to erosion with only a few spots needing attention. This is a classic example of a sustainable trail built through difficult terrain and grades. So far it is holding up well.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

We are planning to add a new trail section on the west side of the park this fall. The section would connect the blue trail to the Kaw River State Park gravel trail and continue to the north to connect to the Red trail. This will provide a trail path to avoid using the park road to connect to the KRSP trails.

This new trail section will also be part of the KRSP honeysuckle eradication project. Our plan is to remove all honeysuckle from the area near the new trail sections.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

One Saturday Afternoon in May a small group of 6 met at Randolph State Park. With chain saws and brush cutters and hand tools we reworked three separate places on the equestrian/hiking trails. These were places we had projected to complete this year and to finish all three in one day says lots about the work crew that showed up. Beyond these places only minor maintenance will be necessary on the main trail. All spring Tuttle Creek lake was around 13 feet below normal pool and now it is about 13 feet above normal. So again we will be moving driftwood in the Randolph L-LL Trail.

The Carnahan Camp Loops are ready for use. The high water will again hamper some of our projects. However, we were all glad for the moisture. Perhaps just not quite so much at one time. The green looks good and it finally feeling like summer.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Wilson State Park – Switchgrass Trail

Wilson State Park Manger, Willis Ohl asked me to design reroutes on sections of the Park's Dakota Trail. It is a hiking/nature trail with either a 1 or 2 mile option. I have



the new sections scouted and marked. Work crews from Ellsworth Correctional will assist with the trail construction.

In mid-April, a rider sent a text with a photograph showing that part of the trail was missing. Sure enough, when I located it, about 10 ft of trail was no longer there. A large section of cliff about the size of a small car, had dropped away. Apparently undercut by lake erosion, the fallen rock was aided by a fissure parallel to the shoreline. Fortunately, it only took me about an hour to reroute. Some have wondered about the probability of being on the rock when it fell – with reference to any future occurrences. I liken it to trails with trees that occasionally fall across the trail requiring rerouting or removal.

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Rider and frequent trail supporter, Steve Errebo, built 4 benches from logs and dropped them off at the trail head. All but one have been deployed in strategic locations. The location for the 4th has been selected and will be put out there soon for weary riders.

On April 19, a crew from KAKE, a Wichita television station was at the trail. They were hired by the Russell County Convention and Visitors Bureau to record video for an ad purchased by the Russell CVB. Their intent was to promote the trail as one of the top recreational opportunities in the region and recruit tourists to Russell County. Four of us volunteered to perform for the camera. I don't think Hollywood will be calling anytime soon!

I began the spring vegetation management by spraying some of the trail. Because of the cooler than average spring, there was a prolific growth of cool season grasses. The least desirable of these is downy brome, an exotic short lived annual that grows, dies, and dries quickly, leaving an incendiary layer of fuel on the ground. A few areas have a robust cover of smooth brome, an exotic perennial used primarily for revegetation of disturbed areas such as road ditches and water ways and planted for hay production. Those areas needed early mowing as the abundant growth lopped over the tread.

The first weekend of May was the annual Kansas Fat Tire Festival, hosted by Doug Chambers, proprietor of the Golden Belt Bicycle Shop in Great Bend. Weather was cool, dry, and windy for day one, but day two was superb with about 100 on hand to compete with their fellow mountain bicyclists.

I was invited by the Russell Co. CVB to address an event on May 7, in Russell's historic Dream Theatre promoting National Travel and Tourism Week.



One of the more prominent anchor points on the trail is an old communications tower. Short by most standards, this tower has stood out of service for many years. I'd always thought it would be nice to add a little something to the tower and came up with wind sock. I discussed this with one of the local residents, bicycling entrepreneur, and occasional trail user Randy Schlitter. He offered to furnish the wind sock, and I put it up. It can be seen from many if not most all locations on the trail.

The IMBA Epic designation and consequent awareness has allowed I-70 travelers a place to stop and get in a great ride (or hike or run).

By the time June rolled around, I had mowed /trimmed/sprayed almost all of the 25 miles of trail. Rainfall is well behind average, which will help slow the vegetation, but does not look good for the lake level. For the past 12 months, the lake's net loss of elevation was over 4 feet.

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

KTC News

Board of Directors Meeting

April 14, 2013

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at Coach's Restaurant in Junction City, KS.
- Board members present were Bob Nicholson, President; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Susan Haynes, Secretary; John Haynes; Olivia Huddleston; Doug Palen; Terry Plenert; and Neil Taylor. Not present: Lyle Riedy, Vice President; Chris Kaegi-Stephens; Jim Thomas; and John Wentling.
- The meeting was called to order at 12:58 PM by President Bob Nicholson.
- Minutes: Doug moved and Olivia seconded to accept the minutes of the last meeting. Motion approved.
- Treasurer's Report: Mike discussed details of the report with the Board. The cash balance is higher at this time due to the FOT funds, which need to remain liquid. After discussion, John moved and Olivia seconded that KTC become a member of KRPA. Motion passed. Doug moved and Neil seconded to accept the treasurer's report. Motion passed.
- Membership: The Board received updated membership info from Nancy Goodwin, Membership Secretary.

Business

- Election of Officers: After discussion, the Board resolved to hold election of officers by email if a FTF meeting is not possible. Preparations will begin in November for election of officers for the following year. Doug moved and Mike seconded to re-elect the present officers for 2013. Board members up for election this year are Chris Kaegi-Stephens, Doug Palen, Neil Taylor, Jim Thomas, Olivia Huddleston, and Susan Haynes.
- \$250 Trail Coordinator Fund: The Board advised that Mike continue to keep track of FOT and coordinator funds as he has been. Mike clarified that the \$250 allocated for each trail coordinator is in addition to the FOT funds and is available after the FOT funds are spent.
- Wilson Trail: With the national recognition given to the trail at Wilson, it was suggested that perhaps Kansas Magazine would be interested in including this info in a future edition. John H. will contact the magazine.
- Perry website: A question was raised as to the possibility of KTC providing funds for an established, private website for the Perry Trail. After much discussion, Neil moved and Olivia seconded that KTC not fund any website other than the KTC website. Motion carried 7 to 1.
- Perry Trail Watcher: Bob Wilshire is no longer able to be a trail watcher at Perry. There is a possible replacement.
- Perry Area Equipment Trailer: Attendees at a recent trail watcher meeting with the Corps expressed interest in becoming more familiar with the KTC equipment trailer. John H. will contact Lyle about a time to get together, possibly an upcoming work day.
- Letter of Support: The Kickapoo Nation (north of Topeka) has consulted Mike regarding a new trail they hope to fund through a Sunflower Foundation grant. Mike discussed with the Board the possibility of writing a letter of support for their proposed trail. John H. moved and Neil seconded that KTC write a letter of support. Motion approved.
- I-70 Signage: Doug reported that work is continuing on obtaining signage on I-70 that will recognize the Epic designation of the Switchgrass Trail at Wilson.
- Next meeting: To be announced.
- The meeting adjourned at 2:09 PM, as moved by John H. and seconded by Mike.

**Kansas Trails Council
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Supporting Kansas Trails

Welcome to our two new KTC members: Sara Kay Carrell and Lori Norwood. We would like to thank you for your support!

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.



Konza Prairie