

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

September 2013

TRAIL IN A BOX *Just Add Volunteers!*

If you would like to build a trail but do not have the equipment or expertise the KTC's new Trail in a Box equipment loan program is now available. Here's how it works.

- 1 – Fill out the Trail In A Box Application form on our website (www.kansastrailscouncil.org)
- 2 – Become an Affiliate Member of the KTC
- 3 – We will review your project and contact you to work out the details.

Once your trail project is approved by your land manager and we have approved your application we will loan Trail In A Box to your group and work with you and your volunteers to get started on the trail project. Our trail building experts will demonstrate the safe operation of the tools and equipment and discuss best practices for building public access sustainable natural surface trails. We'll provide the equipment and expertise and you provide the volunteers!

Trail In A Box is a single-axle, enclosed trailer which can be towed by a small pickup or SUV with a GVWR of 3000 lbs. The equipment inside includes hand tools for 25 to 30 volunteers as well as an arsenal of power equipment that should make trail building more fun than work!



Funding for this project was provided by the Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans, a Topeka-based philanthropic organization with the mission to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of Kansans. We would like to thank the Sunflower Foundation for making this project possible. Please visit the KTC website for our contact information and application forms (www.kansastrailscouncil.org).

Trail Building 101 Workshop

The KTC collaborated with the Sunflower Foundation, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation (SCPR) to host a trail building workshop on October 24 in Topeka. Elizabeth Stewart of the Sunflower Foundation guided potential trail grant applicants in writing successful trail grant applications. Shawnee County Parks & Recreation's Bill Riphahn discussed building urban trails. Jeff Bender with KDWPT described basic trail building terms and ADA requirements. KTC's Mike Goodwin presented trail building design and construction "best practices".



Hiking the urban trail around Lake Shawnee

The 56 workshop participants from around the state learned the fundamentals of trail design and construction in class room sessions and a hike on the varied types of trails in Kaw River State Park. The hiking classroom focused on redesign of existing social trails, salvaging fall line trails, bridge construction, and designing and building sustainable trails in difficult terrain.

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

This summer's unusual weather conditions in Northeast Kansas contributed to an explosion of trail pests ranging from chiggers and ticks to an infestation of oak mites. The latter are too small to see but their bite will definitely be felt with intense itching for several days. While insect repellent provides some protection it is not fool proof.

The best strategy to deal with oak mites is reported to be thoroughly scrubbing in the shower within 2 hours of exposure. Oak mites often do not bite for many hours after contact, so time is of the essence. Ticks are completely harmless until they bite. If they do bite, most research indicates that Lyme disease can be avoided by removal within 24 hours.

These pests have not slowed down the running events this fall. We had three race weekends in September including a 50 and 100 mile ultra-marathon.

As soon as we have a good frost and some cooler weather we plan to do some reblazing of the North Shore Trails this fall.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

Eisenhower State Park was fortunate to be one of 16 recipients of KDWP&T grant money that was awarded recently to recreational trails projects. This award will help fund the building of an open-sided shelter house in the West Point Equestrian Camp. Benefit trail rides the past two years have also helped fund ESP equestrian camp and trail projects; last year's trail ride proceeds of \$3,400 will be part of the matching funds required for the shelter house grant. This year's annual ESP Benefit Trail Ride will be October 12-13 and will include a Saturday ride that will head east of the State Park on Corps land toward the Melvern Lake dam. A Special Use Permit was obtained from the Corps for this ride. Sunday morning's ride will be on the ESP Blue Trail. Registration fee for the ride includes a pulled pork dinner Saturday night and hot breakfast Sunday. Saturday night's meal will include door prize drawings and a live auction. The Friends of Eisenhower State Park group donates the meals, so 100% of the proceeds from this ride continue to support improvements to the camp and trails. Contact me at 785-528-4255 or thomasjc68@gmail.com for trail ride registration forms.

The Crooked Knee Trail at Eisenhower is in excellent condition; improvements this summer included work on crossings that used to be muddy and boggy in wet

weather. Trail markers were repainted, and plastic caps were replaced where missing on steel fence post trail markers. The Friends of ESP volunteers keep it mowed, where accessible, and I trim it on a regular basis. It's a beautiful time of year to get out and enjoy the trails at one of our Kansas parks!

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

Seems like a short summer this year. Access to the trail was closed due to high water levels at the lake following the July rains, Badger Creek Road floods at times. Even with rain two and three times a week, the trail stayed clear and in good condition. Just a little more than average side growth that makes for the occasional "face slapper" from saplings growing into the cleared area. Hoping that the rain will hold off this Saturday for an early fall ride and camp. The trail continues to generate good comments from users. This fall and winter will be a time to make a few upgrades and enhancements to the trail, improving some crossings and getting some more bench cut completed.

With the season it is a good idea to be aware of hunters afield. Archery deer season continues through December 31st, Regular Firearm Deer, December 4 - 15. Remember to wear bright clothing when you are entering an area that may see hunting activity. Play safe, get out and get dirty.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

September 26, 2013: The Lake is open to mountain bikes and hiking but closed to all other traffic and camping. High winds have downed several trees so hiking your bike will be needed in several areas of the trail. Traffic on the trail has been very limited late summer but, with the close of the road racing season, traffic will begin to pick up.

Several weekends have been proposed for our autumn work day but not scheduled at this time. You can review updates on our Facebook page, Ford County Lake Trail or, I can be reached at the email address below.

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Trail News

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

Overall, our trail watchers did very little activity out on the trail this summer. One did venture out in June and got a little ticked-off – well, really it was ‘ticked on’. So, we are all waiting for the October period before we get our work back in gear. Mowing and blazing seem to top our lists once again.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

With the approach of fall the trails are in great condition. Other than the typical fallen trees we have had no trail issues this summer. The new section, Daisy Point, has really been a great addition to the trail and shortly we will get back to work on the 2nd phase of this loop. Other planned projects for the winter months are to give some of the north sections an extensive tune up.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Topeka Trails

Skyline Park

We plan to continue developing trails in Skyline Park this fall when the weather cools. Our next trail section will connect the current end of the new trail near the cell tower road to the trailhead on Skyline Drive. Next we plan to begin working on the loops on the south side of the park.

While we wait for cooler trail building weather, next week we will begin work on the dirt bumps and a rock skill feature near the south end of the Phase 1 trail near the cell tower road.

Stay tuned for future progress reports.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Kaw River State Park Trails

The single track trails are in great shape going into fall. We will be working with the park as they continue the honeysuckle removal project this winter. A trailhead kiosk and trail maps are being planned.

KRSP staff has completed laying the limestone screenings on the gravel trail.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

A short section of new trail is planned along the KRSP road to connect the Blue Trail loop to the Red Trail loop and to add a connection to the Kaw River State Park Trails below the pond. This will allow trail users to continue on single track trails along the KRSP road without having to use the road.

We recently worked with Jeff Bender, KRSP park manager, and Ken Smith, MacLennan Park manager, to repair the wide trail on both sides of the bridge. This fall line trail we inherited requires periodic maintenance to control erosion from water flow. We plan to add a gravel layer to the trail sometime this fall.

We are also trying to block off and discourage use of a vertical fall line unauthorized trail down the dirt bluff on the red trail. This bluff is extremely dangerous and has from time to time sloughed off thousands of yards of dirt in land slides after significant rain events. We would appreciate all trail users respecting this effort and remaining on the marked trails for their own safety and to prevent severe erosion of the bluff area. If you aware of anyone using this unauthorized trail we would appreciate learning who it is so that we can contact them.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

I have a student from K-State helping me with the Randolph Trails. Her help is much appreciated. We are in the process of reworking and marking the Randolph State Park Trails. It is a slow project due to her schedule and mine, and the fact the daylight is getting shorter, but we are making progress.

It has been nice to see people using the new parking pads with electricity and water hookups as well as horses on the trails. The new camp host has the entire area mowed and looking inviting. I hope to see riders using the trails well into the winter. The North Side of Randolph will stay open all winter and there is water available all year around.

Olivia Huddleston (opieh@bluevalley.net)

Trail News

Dirt Work - by Christine Byl

We don't often (if ever) do a book review in the newsletter, but when a book comes along that touches the hearts of trail builders it deserves attention. Christine Byl's *Dirt Work* is such a book. Christine is the niece of KTC member and avid trail watcher at MacLennan Park, Dan Byl. Dan mentioned this book to me recently and I was intrigued by the title and the serendipitous connection to our trails. So I downloaded it to my tablet, began reading and could not stop.

Christine's journey began in Glacier National Park when she signed on as a "trail dog" on the back country trail crews. Her masterful story-telling and first hand encounters with the same tools we use is inspiring and entertaining. For those who use trails rather than build them she provides a rare, genuine insight into the dedication and expertise of professional trail builders across the country. For those of us who swing a Pulaski regularly, she is a comrade who gets why we do this. Here is a sample of her philosophical perspective in one of my favorite passages.

"I trust dirty fingernails. I am drawn to people with that half moon, the sliver of filth that indicates kinetic expertise. Perhaps they do fieldwork – ratty truck, weathered tools. Are they teachers, the ones who kneel next to kids examining earthworms in mud? Potters, naturalists, firefighters, farmers: dirt is a secret code, dusty knuckles the special knock of a fraternal order. I trust this small sign because it implies a tangible relationship. To get dirt under your fingernails, you have to touch the world."

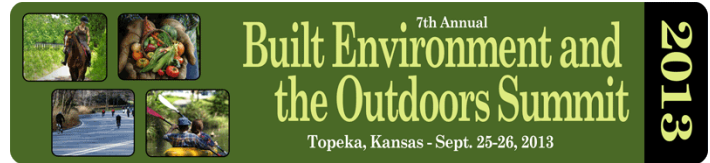
Christine and her husband now live near Denali in Healy Alaska where she writes and builds trails. For more information you can follow her on Facebook or her website: www.christinebyl.com

Book Review by Mike Goodwin

Board of Directors Changes

The Board would like to thank Chris Kaegi Stephens for her dedication and service to the KTC after serving on the Board for many years. Chris resigned her position this spring to devote more time to her family. Her KTC Board family will miss her.

Russ Rupp was appointed to the Board to serve out the remainder of Chris' term. Russ is a mountain biker who lives in Topeka and has managed the KTC Dornwood Trail for many years. We would like to thank Russ for agreeing to take on these new responsibilities.



The 7th Annual Summit was attended by about 140 participants representing cities, towns, parks and outdoor and healthy living advocates from across the state. Two sessions show cased success stories from our neighbors - Missouri and Colorado. Missouri's Katy Trail Manager, Dawn Fredrickson discussed their recent creation of an extensive trails information database, successful coalition building and the positive economic and social impact of trails. Missouri was voted the Best Trails State in 2013 by American Trails. Mike Snyder, Superintendent of Trails Planning and Development in Columbia Missouri described their continuing efforts to expand trails throughout the city and presented some unique solutions to various trail problems.

Susan Alden Weingardt with the US Forest Service, described their coalition building efforts and creation of the website GetOutdoorsColorado.org. The website provides a way for coalition partners to post outdoor events and programs throughout the state.

Board Members

Board Positions 1 – 6 (2012 & 2013)

- 1 – Russ Rupp - Topeka
- 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

Board Meetings

The Board now holds on-line, remote meetings when necessary in order to better accommodate everyone's busy schedules. The next face to face meeting will be announced in the coming weeks. Please watch our website calendar for details.

Trail News



Trail News

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

Supporting Kansas Trails

We would like to thank the Lawrence Trailhawks for their Friends of the Trail contribution and their regular trail watching at Clinton Lake North Shore 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.



Sunflowers Along the Clinton Lake Red Trail