

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

June 2014

Twins!

The Trail in a Box project that began last fall was in such demand that we have expanded and added two more trailers to the fleet. Each Trail in a Box is an enclosed trailer with all the basic tools and power equipment needed to build natural surface trails.

Trail in a Box is available to any group who would like to build natural surface, public access trails. The program began in September 2013 with one trailer that bounced between several trail projects in order to keep each of them on track. With the addition of two more trailers, we can now dedicate each to a project for an extended period of time. Several of the current projects are in an initial phase with anticipated additional phases in the Fall.

We would like to thank the following Lawrence businesses for their non-profit discounts and other support: The Home Depot (tools), Eagle Trailer (trailers), Heritage Tractor (Stihl power equipment) and Westheffer (tanks and sprayers). They each have helped stretch our funds further in support of a good cause. We would also like to thank our friends at Abilene Rent-All for their support of the DR Brush mowers.

The expansion of this project has been made possible by funding from the Mosby Lincoln Foundation and 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.

Trail in a Box 1 is currently in Manhattan with Manhattan Trail Works who are building trails in the Flint Hills at Ft. Riley and in the Manhattan and the Tuttle Creek areas. The Ft. Riley location has the potential for development of 25-30 miles of public access hiking and mountain biking trails.

Trail in a Box 2 is presently in Fredonia where volunteers with Cultivate Fredonia are building trails in a city park called South Mound. This short trail system will provide access to a scenic overlook and the nearby high school and city sidewalks.



Trail in a Box 2

Trail in a Box 3 is in Baldwin City where volunteers are building hiking trails along the west side of Douglas Fishing Lake. When Phase 1 is completed, the group will begin to develop hiking trails on the southeast side of the lake this fall and winter.



Trail in a Box 3

If you, or someone you know, would like to build a natural surface trail in your community, please check our website for more information and complete a Trail in a Box application form which can be downloaded here: <http://www.kansastrailsCouncil.org/about/trail-in-a-box/>

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

We've removed trees and limbs that recent storms have dropped. Our early June lopping workday was cancelled due to rain so we'll be rescheduling sometime in the next few weeks. Overall, the trails are in pretty good shape going into summer.

Thanks to everyone for letting the trails dry out before using them. A good rule of thumb for the soils and terrain at Clinton is to wait three days after any significant rain of 1/2 inch or more.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

The Crooked Knee Trail at Eisenhower State Park (Melvern Lake) is in great shape for summer use. The trails are mowed and well marked, and several wet and boggy areas now have improved crossings (as pictured). Many locations on this trail offer stunning views of the lake!



Ticks have been less prevalent on the Crooked Knee Trails than other trails we have ridden this spring, probably due to keeping them mowed. The lake pool level has risen significantly with late spring/early summer rains and is approaching normal for the first time in years. The new shelter house at West Point Camp is nearing completion and will soon have electricity, a water hydrant, picnic tables, grills, and a fire ring.

An individual who enjoys camping and riding at ESP recently donated \$500 to be used for improved footing for the pipe corrals. This offer was contingent on finding a matching donation, and the Friends of Eisenhower State Park contributed the matching \$500. Screenings have been purchased and will soon be in the pens. Find the

time to visit Eisenhower State Park, and be sure to thank park staff for their dedication to park facilities and trails.

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

Not a lot to report from Fall River due to an extended wet spring and early summer conditions.



Red Buds in Bloom

Several sections that suffer from wet conditions have been pretty boggy for several months. Started working to armor a section on the South trail but other priorities have kept me from getting back to continue and solve the issue. This is the period of the most rapid growth and controlling with spray products has definitely been the way to keep up with maintaining a good corridor, more to come.

With the continued rainfall over a large part of the Fall River watershed, the lake is up considerably and close to if not over the paved road to the trails. That generally only lasts for a week or so depending on water levels in the Arkansas River. We hope to get back out in a couple of weeks to get in some work and play.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

June 23, 2014, Ford County Lake Trail has become very overgrown, mostly with poison ivy. The frequent rainfall in this area has been good for most but becomes a huge challenge for trail work. The trail is still easy to identify but will be muddy for quite some time. Most of the local group riders have been road racing but a break in the race

Trail News

schedule will be in the first half of July. We hope to get a work crew together during this time period for some maintenance. When the work is scheduled it 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

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

Perry is all mowed and or sprayed and looking real good headed towards July. All the fallen trees and big stuff from the last round of storms has been cut out, except 1 old dead tree trunk that went down yesterday after I had already cleared the section. I will get to it asap. The trail needs traffic to break and sweep the twigs and small branches dropped from 4 weeks of rainy and windy weather. Areas do need lopping. This month's weather conditions made it like a green house in there and new growth tree branches are trying to re-claim the corridor. But it isn't bad.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

Trail work in the post-late-March period was typical – getting quiet. A basic lop, trim, and blaze in one area of section 1 (mile post 0.6 to 2.1) seemed to be the bulk of the effort. A bit of blazing still needs to be done in surrounding areas. As to staffing, we have a vacancy for a trail watcher 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, just maybe, spraying for lespedeza and grasses in an attempt to keep the trail open during the summer months. Several trail runners have noted the thick lespedeza growth on the trail in summer and early fall.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood Park Trails

Dornwood is looking good. All the single track has been sprayed and trimmed. All the double wide trail is being mowed by the county.

Russ Rupp (russ11@cox.net)

Skyline Park

The basic 2 mile loop has been mowed and lopped and sprayed recently. The new 1 mile corridor in the southeast area of the park is partially rough opened but needs much work in the coming weeks. When it quits raining for a week or so, we'll continue to open the corridor and then work on the tread.



Wildflowers in Bloom

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

The trails have been cleared and ready for summer traffic and recent downfall has been removed. We'll do some lopping this summer as needed. We built a new trailhead kiosk on the west side of the Governor's Residence in April. We're working on a trailhead map showing trails in both parks (MacLennan and Kaw River State Park) and we plan to install mid-trail maps at key intersections to help people navigate the various loops.

Phase 1 of the honeysuckle removal project appears to have gone well. The large tree like honeysuckle was mechanically removed from an area on the west side of the park last fall and winter. This left only small plants and some regrowth from the large plants. This will all be sprayed this fall when everything else goes dormant. We plan to continue moving eastward until all honey suckle is removed over the next several years.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

Randolph State Park

Randolph State Park Trails are in use and the upper trails are looking great as the Camp Host, Homer Yates, has been helping by mowing. Thanks to Homer. The

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Carnahan to Sunset Cove was down to one last bench cut gully when the rains started. The Lake Came up. AND the ticks moved in. However some new trail has been cut marked so later there should be some interesting hiking and horseback riding. If the weeds grow too fast, just find your way from the creek to the causeway built in 2001.

Carnahan

The park area at Carnahan is open and the trails there are fun or do a little exploring below the Corp Markers. It is a great area and is free to the public thanks to Pottawatomie County.

Olivia Huddleston (riverrat@bluevalley.net)

Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail (Wilson Lake)

The main theme for the area in the spring of 2014 was like a great vermouth, extra dry. We had very little precipitation until the 2nd week of June, then we received about 5" in about 10 days. A timely rain is almost always welcome, but it can often be unwanted by trail managers, especially as intense thunderstorms.

The scale of the trail maintenance problem created by rain is at least 2 fold. In the short term, runoff causes erosion in areas that are susceptible, which can be almost any surface except rock or armored. Our soils are of a sandy texture, thus they erode easily. Our trails are designed and constructed to minimize erosion, but complete prevention is almost impossible. Doing dirt work to deal with erosion problems requires many hours every season.



Storms blow down tree branches or sometimes whole trees, which invariably fall right across the trail. Then they need to be moved or sawed and moved. We don't have many trees along the Switchgrass Trail, but sure enough, the most recent storm blew down a big willow directly across the trail. Often smaller trees can be dragged off

with the ATV. But this one was just too big to budge. But it was situated such that if I sawed it strategically, I could make a "log roll". Because the tree was in the EZ Loop, I had to be sure there was an option to go around the log pile.

The 2nd time scale effect from precipitation is that it results in vegetation growth, which means mowing, trimming, and spraying, etc. Mowing and trimming can be a dirty job, but at least if the ground is moist, it is less dusty. So that's a good thing, but moisture also increases the numbers of ticks, chiggers, and mosquitos, which means must use the bug repellent to do trail work. Vegetation control takes more maintenance time than everything else put together. Things are now green and gorgeous in the park and since the rains, the prairie wildflowers and grasses are really doing their thing too.

Doug Chambers, owner of the Golden Belt Bike Shop in Great Bend, hosted the annual Kansas Fat Tire Festival the first weekend of May, with about 85 racers registered. We did a little geographic profile of the racers. 16 different cities were registered. Racer count by City:

- Wichita: 17
 - KC, Mo: 12
 - KC, Ks: 8
 - Salina: 8
 - Great Bend: 7
 - Topeka: 7
- The other 10 cities had either 1 or 2 racers. KS had racers from 10 cities; MO 3, CO 3. Racer count by State,
- KS: 63
 - MO: 15
 - CO: 5

Sara Kay Carrell's fitness adventure group, Wild Within You has hosted several running events already this season, with great attendances and more events to come. This trail is very popular with runners who like a challenging terrain, great facilities, and beautiful scenery.



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The Wichita Eagle featured an article and photography by Outdoor Editor Michael Pearce on the trail on page one of the newspaper on June 21 at

www.kansas.com/2014/06/20/3518852/wilson-state-park-a-good-reason.html

and provided a gallery of 50+ images online at

www.kansas.com/2014/06/20/3518514/wilson-state-park.html

The Mike Corn, Outdoor Editor of the Hays Daily News also did a photo story on the trail which appeared in print on June 22.

hdnews.net/news/local/switchgrassNW062214

The Active Times named Wilson State Park one of the 36 most beautiful state parks in the US.

<http://www.theactivetimes.com/36-stunning-us-state-parks>

Singletracks.com rated Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail the top trail in Kansas, in a feature on the top trail in each state.

<http://ow.ly/wf2o7>

Singletracks.com users also rated the Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail the 44th best mountain bike trail in the world.

www.singletracks.com/mountain-bike/best_trails.php

Bob Nicholson
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Trail in a Box 3 and Douglas Fishing Lake Trail Builders



Long Bracted Spiderwort (Wilson Lake)

Plains Prickly Pear (Wilson Lake)



Supporting Kansas Trails

We would like to thank the Trail Nerds for their recent Friend of the Trail contribution for the Perry Lake Bike Trail.

Would you like to support Kansas trails? Just make a donation to the KTC Friends of the Trail program. 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. Click here to join the KTC and support your favorite trails: <http://www.kansastrailsCouncil.org/join/ktc-membership-sign-up/>