

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

June 2015

Thanks Bob!

I recall last year that Bob Nicholson, lamented the departure of Doug Chambers, long time Wilson trail supporter and friend, as he relocated to Colorado. And now Bob has followed suit and moved to higher ground and all of us at the KTC who know Bob understand how he must have felt at Doug's departure. Bob announced recently that he is moving to Colorado and has resigned from the KTC Board of Directors. Bob joined the KTC about 10 years ago and within a year joined the Board of Directors and adopted the Switchgrass Trails at Wilson State Park.

Over the past 10 years, Bob took a nice little 13-mile trail to a whole new level of experience. His vision and relentless efforts resulted in a 23+ mile trail that has reached Epic status, literally. In 2012, the Switchgrass Trail was named an Epic Trail by the International Mountain Bicycling Association in recognition of Bob's accomplishments. Bob received the award at the IMBA World Summit in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in October 2013.

Bob also served as KTC President for four years, guiding the organization as we rapidly expanded our arsenal of trail equipment. Bob liked to tinker with trail equipment and often rode the zero-turn mower on slopes that would make a mountain goat cringe.

One of his inventions was the Tread Groomer which he dragged behind an ATV to smooth out the tread (right).



The strange looking mower blade (left) was designed to dethatch grass and other plants and loosen the soil when opening up a new trail corridor, rather like a horizontal rototiller attached to the zero-turn mower.

Bob and his volunteers did amazing rock work, creating rock gardens, ledges and armoring sections of trail.



Trail News



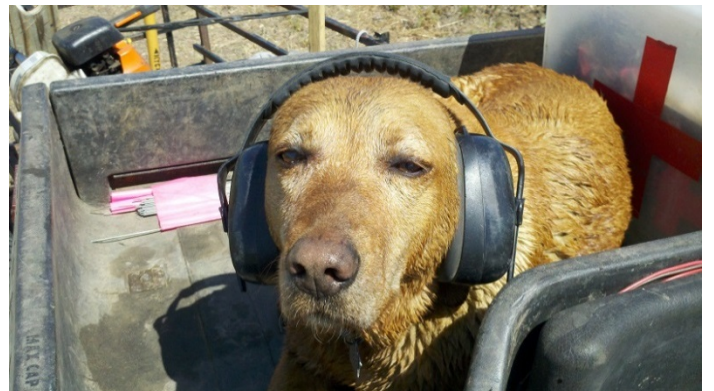
Bob also contributed many incredible photos from the Switchgrass Trails including some amazing sunsets (below).



Bob also worked on the development of other trails in the area, including the Kansas Nature Conservancy's Smokey Valley Ranch trail in Logan County and the Dr. Howard Reynolds Nature Trail near the Sternberg Museum in Hays.



Bob's flowing trail design lends itself to photography, both revealing his artistic creativity (see below).



Lastly, we shall fondly remember Bob's dry sense of humor and wish him the best of luck in Colorado.

By Mike Goodwin, Editor

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Clinton Trail this quarter consists of a lot of trees down a lot of muddy trail and a lot of spraying. To start off with we finished spraying the whole trail including cactus Ridge. We used a total of six volunteers for spraying, and one with a chainsaw. Oh yeah and one driver. We were able to finish the whole trail in two days.

At the same time we had the machine, Mike Goodwin, with the chainsaw clearing trees along the way. This tree had perfect aim and landed on top of the Blue Trail Mile 3 marker without flattening it!



The trail is finally starting to dry out. Hopefully we can now get in there to repair some of the damage that was caused after the running race event. Some sections have been repaired but we have a long ways to go. Stay tuned for further updates on that and scheduled work days to come.

Hope to see everyone on the trail soon doing other things besides working, like riding.

Neil Taylor (medic1@sunflower.com)

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

As was the case with most equestrian trails in Eastern Kansas through the month of June, the Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park have been under water. But, the lake has recently returned to normal level, and the trails are in surprisingly good shape! Volunteer staff has mowed the trails where accessible, and trimming back brush and overgrowth is an ongoing process. Prairie wildflowers are in bloom, the meadows are lush and green, and it's a beautiful time to be out enjoying Kansas public trails.



The annual ESP Benefit Trail Ride is scheduled for October 10-11 and will include Saturday evening BBQ and Sunday morning breakfast provided by Friends of ESP. 100% of the proceeds from this ride are used to make improvements to the equestrian camps and the Crooked Knee Trails. Over the last four years, over \$15,000 has been raised and has been used to purchase additional pens, screenings for pens, and for a matching grant that funded building the shelter house at West Point Equestrian Camp.

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

Trail News

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

Like most of the lakes in the area Fall River Lake leve is up, WAY UP. The COE Whitehall Bay Campground has been closed for weeks with the lower campsite shelters completely under water. The lower bath/shower house had water up to the roof line as well. Needless to say, the road to the Badger trails went underwater and is a highway now for the boaters who want to put in. With the current discharge rate from the lake the trails should be accessible by July 4th weekend. I have been able to get to the North trail for a couple of days of spraying to control growth by using the Whitehall detour route. The road will likely have a considerable amount of drift to be cleared before motor traffic can use it though. So for right now the best thing to do is wait, or get out your kayaks. Happy (water) Trails.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

July 2015, The Ford County Lake trail is 10.5 miles of single track in a variety of settings with a few technical challenges and many short climbs and drops. It runs through grass and into thick trees (yes trees) with log ramps and rocky areas around the lake and across a portion of the dry lake bottom. It includes a mile long circuit of loops and switchbacks over jumps and hills called the "Playground" before leading back to the starting point. The trail is currently overgrown with several areas of poison ivy. It has been ridden recently but ivy block, long pants and shirt sleeves are recommended. The lake has filled to maximum capacity and recently was still flowing over the spillway. The trail head is located on the southwest corner of the lake.

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

A month of rainy weather and rising lake levels restricted trail use and spring maintenance at the Perry Bike Trail. Lake level reached 19 feet above normal pool and stayed for several weeks. At the time of this report level is still 13 feet above normal pool. This has left areas of the trail under several feet of water. The condition of the trail after water returns to normal is hard to predict. Where water has receded there has been a large amount of driftwood and debris deposited on the trail. We can see a lot of cleanup work ahead of us.

There is also a hillside that is slumping off towards the lake. The section of trail running through this area will

need to be re-routed. This is a very steep hillside with little room to work so it will take some creative trail design and extensive building to fix.



Other than the flooded areas and slump the entire trail has been mowed, trimmed, sprayed and is in great shape. We still continue to deal with numerous untimely falling trees, or large branches blocking trails. Some are storm damage, while others are entire trees that's roots were damaged from disease.

In between the rains there have been several trail runs that have kept the tread compacted and trail use numbers up. Runners were challenged with slippery conditions in May because of rain during the race. The race promoter worked closely with me in advance to prepare a worst-case scenario mud course, which was used and worked out fine. In June the runners beat the heat and the rain and enjoyed near perfect conditions for the June night

Trail News

time¹/₂ marathon. Sunflower St. Games mtn bike race is scheduled for July 26. Trail should be in great shape for it.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

A special 'thanks' went out to Cabelas KC at the beginning of May for their generous support. The new DR mower has been put to use several times this spring on Sections 3 and 4. A couple pictures are attached and are the same ones we shared with Cabelas in our 'thank you' message.

Before spring growth was in full swing: Section 1 had a 2-mile loop and blaze touchup north from the Slough Creek Trailhead. Section 3 was further cleared near Kiowa Road, knocking down additional brushy undergrowth.



Section 4 was cleared near Ferguson Road -- from the boat ramp trailhead east along the Big Slough Creek arm. This was to keep the corridor open for hikers and for shoreline fisherman that frequent this area. Section 4 was also cleared near its western end and had an eroding creek crossing examined for relocation.

Our first meeting to review a possible bridge to replace the creek crossing noted in our spring KTC summary was held with Scouts and Westar in attendance. High lake levels had reached the crossing location -- lots of bugs and standing water.

The lake level has reached the trail in several other areas as well. Between now and this fall we'll be making assessments of trail conditions in the low-lying areas to

see how much debris cleanup is necessary. Affected areas will mostly be along Sections 1 and 2.

For the future, details are still being worked out with the COE, but later 2015 should be the inaugural year for volunteers/COE staff to capture more detailed trail traffic counts. A better understanding of volumes, where at and seasonal patterns could be of great benefit in future years to help us prioritize our efforts.

Dave Brackey
(dbrackey@att.net)



Topeka Trails

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

Thanks to a lopping workday this spring organized by Kasey Clark, crews from the Topeka Community Cycle Project and the Bonner Program at Washburn University cut back the early spring growth. The continuous rains in May and June prohibited trail work, but resulted in damage to some sections of the Red Trail as trail users continued to use the trail. We'll be working on repairing the lower Red trail sections in July.

The rains have had some effect on wildlife as well. We're noticing more snakes on the trails than in the past, including some species I have not seen before. As I was leaving the park recently I spotted this baby Kansas Glossy snake as it was crossing the park road. Cute little guy!



Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Trail News

Skyline Park

The trails are mowed and lopped, but the rains have continued to spur rapid growth of the prairie sections. We plan to begin work on the dirt bumps this summer when everything dries out enough.

This fall we'll begin work on the southwest section of the park, adding about one more mile of trail.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

Randolph State Park

The water level at Tuttle Creek Lake is unusually high this summer. Therefore, the north two mile loop (the L-LL Loop) is closed. The rest of Randolph State Park is open for hiking and equestrian use.

Carnahan

The Carnahan Camp Ground is completely under water (the large flat area near the creek). The portion of the trails on the hills are available. Trail work on this area will be resumed later. Trailer parking may be limited.

Olivia Huddleston (kayakkid346@gmail.com)

Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail (Wilson Lake)

Sara Kay Carrell has agreed to take over as trail coordinator.

Trail in a Box Update

The KTC's Trail in a Box program loans a fully stocked tool trailer to organizations who would like to build public access trails. We have just outfitted the fourth Trail in a Box which will deploy soon.

If your group would like to build trails and needs equipment and perhaps a little expert guidance, check out our website at: <http://www.kansastrailscouncil.org/about/trail-in-a-box/>



Bylaws Changes

The Board approved updating the KTC's bylaws at the last board meeting. The revised bylaws have been sent to the membership for approval and the balloting closes July 15. Here is a summary of the proposed changes.

- 1) Reduction of board size from 12 to nine
- 2) Refinement in the target user groups represented by KTC and some logical groupings to capture the various types
- 3) Updated language regarding board member representation of the various user groups referenced in #2 above
- 4) Merging the Election Committee and Nominating Committee into a single entity
- 5) Updated language to allow for electronic communications in addition to mailings
- 6) Reflected the need for more than one person (treasurer) on the banking and investment accounts
- 7) Corrected typos found throughout the document



Crooked Knee Equestrian Trail – Eisenhower State Park

Support Kansas Trails in 2015!

We would like to welcome our many new members who have joined in the past few months and thank our renewing and affiliate members for continuing to support Kansas Trails!

Memberships and donations make it possible to do all the work the KTC and our volunteers do every day of the year. If you would you like to support Kansas trails you can make a donation to the KTC Friends of the Trail program. 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/>

Newsletter Editor

The KTC Board is looking for a newsletter editor to prepare the quarterly newsletter which has been in circulation for the past 36 years. This is a volunteer position and much of the content is supplied by our trail coordinators. Mike Goodwin, our editor for the past 12 years, will work closely with the new editor during the transition. If you are interested or know a KTC member who might be interested, please contact us at: info@kansastrailscouncil.org.