

Kansas Trails Council

ESTABLISHED IN 1974

Volume XXXVIII, Issue 2

Newsletter

April 2016

New Trail Excursions for Spring!

Winter for 2016 has been fairly mild; still, there's nothing like that feeling of that first "real" spring weekend when warm weather and budding trees make the call of the trail even more irresistible. This spring as you revisit all your favorite Kansas trails, make note of a few new ones.

Just south of Iola along the banks of Elm Creek in Allen County are the [Lehigh Portland Trails](#), a hiking and biking trail system close to completion on the site of a former cement plant and quarry. This system will include



approximately 2 miles of wide gravel trails (similar to a rail-trail corridor) and 10+ miles of natural-surface trails perfect for both easy and highly technical trail running and mountain biking. The trails are being built by the hard-

working volunteers with [Thrive Allen County](#), who have spent the last two winters cutting, piling, burning, raking, leveling and so forth, often using the tools from one of KTC's **Trail in a Box**. The trails are already attracting riders from all over Kansas and Missouri and have received a "five-star" rating on the popular mountain bike website [Singletracks.com](#). Although many of the trails are done and already in heavy use, keep checking the website or social media accounts for a "grand opening" date sometime in mid to late spring.

Another trail worth checking out starts in Kansas... but lets you run, hike or bike all the way to Lincoln, NE, a total of almost 90 miles of car-free trails. The trails starts out in



Marysville as the [Blue River Trail](#), rail-banked and maintained by Marshall County Connections. This 11.5 mile stretch to NE contains the only covered bridge on a trail in Kansas.

Once in the Cornhuskers State, almost 20 miles of trail becomes the Chief Standing Bear Trail, named for a Ponca leader. The trail segment and its name are significant, as it represents the return of land to the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, which in turn is making the land available for public use and enjoyment as a rail-banked corridor. The Nebraska Trails Foundation and Homestead Conservation and Trail Association donated the trail to the tribe last summer (read more at [Ponca Tribe Steps In to Complete Missing Trail Link](#)), along with a generous donation to help maintain the trail, and the segment was completed by the end of 2015. We encourage you to visit any or all parts of this multi-state trail, which represents the shared efforts, hard work and altruism of so many different stakeholders.

Finally, this KDWPT trail isn't a new one, but still one worth noting due to its recent birthday. The 50+ mile [Prairie Spirit Trail](#), running from Ottawa to Iola (and then south to Humboldt as the Southwind Trail), celebrated two decades of providing outdoor recreation and beautiful scenery. More than 100 people packed the trail's 20th birthday party, hosted by the [Friends of the PST](#), enjoying a buffet dinner, silent auctions and special presentations by Trail Manager Trent McCown and Park Ranger Jim Manning.



These are just three trails; so many more in Kansas to see and explore this spring! The GetOutdoorsKansas trail team has now mapped 2491 miles of the potential (for now) 3000 miles in the Sunflower State. Check out the map ([getoutdoorskansas.org/trails](#)) to see if your favorite trail is there... if not, sign up on the website to become a trail partner.

No matter which trail you choose to explore, remember to respect the land, your fellow trail mates (two or four-legged), and your own limits. Practice common sense and safety. Watch for poison ivy. And most of all – have fun!

Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Just wanted to let you know the last quarter was a good one. We had several volunteer events, including but not limited to trail workdays, family fun days and trail hiking. All in all we had decent weather and the trailers have been in excellent shape. We have a lot of work coming up because as all you know, the weeds are growing and summer is almost here.

First, I wanted to tell you about our upcoming trail events. We have several workdays in the next two months planned. We also have several running and racing events as well as cycling and extreme events. So far everything has been approved. I've seen plans for rain courses and/or plans for cancellation. Hopefully the weather will play good with us this year and will get to do all of our fun events.

As for trail maintenance days. I will send the list out to volunteers as soon as I have it ready. I hope to get in at least two lopping days and maybe two mowing days soon.

Meanwhile I've already had my first tick this year so be careful and have fun.

Special thanks to all that came out to our recent trail workday. The turnout was great; the progress was even better. Thanks again - see you on the trail.

Neil Taylor (medic1@sunflower.com)

Clinton Lake – South Shore Trails

Work has continued on the South Shore horse trails at Clinton Lake. Back Country Horsemen of Kansas sponsored two work days this winter. The Feb 6 workday established a nice break area just off E535 road at the west end of the central trails and also cleared two miles of trail. The March 24 workday concentrated on getting new footings. The horse pens at Rockhaven Park, just in time for the April 1 opening of the campground.



Friends of Rockhaven Horse Park are still hard at work relocating parts of the bottom, orange trail where the recent high lake water has eroded the trail. All the trail blockages

have been removed but with the recent high winds, there are probably more trees down. Our work is never done! The Eagles have returned to their nest and we anticipate eaglet sightings soon.

Diana Skinner (dgskinner85@gmail.com)

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

The Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park, Melvern Lake, are in good shape and already seeing regular use with the early spring weather. With the few light rains we've received, things are leafing out and greening up! The orange and blue trail markers need to be repainted, and I will be getting out there with my spray paint when I get a warm, calm day. Trimming back new growth will also be ongoing as warm weather continues. A water line has been run to the primitive Cowboy Camp with a new hydrant put in – this was funded with proceeds from last fall's ESP Benefit Trail Ride. A donor is also putting in two large pipe corrals at Cowboy Camp. Several organized rides are already on the 2016 calendar!

Jim Thomas (thomasic68@gmail.com)



Eisenhower: Renovations to several boggy areas and creek crossings are holding up well and prevent damage to the trail.

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

No build or maintenance activity at Badger Creek this quarter. Several high wind events contributed to a lot of leaf cover moving around, and in a couple of spots, completely obscuring the trail tread. Also several large dead trees fell due to the wind and were blocking the trail; they have been rolled off. It's been several weeks since I checked out the trails so I hope that no other trees are down and need to be moved. The next quarter will see the big spring growth spurt, so some spraying and trimming will be on the agenda. Looking forward to all of the foliage and color coming back after the gray of the winter season. Spring bird migration will bring a lot of color as well. Here's to the Spring and Summer seasons.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Trail News

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

We had a good winter at the Ford County Lake Trail. We have 10.6 miles of groomed single track trail (with a few areas that allow passing) looping around the Ford County (State) Fishing Lake located about 6 miles Northeast of Dodge City. The trail is laid out through a series of different types of terrain including winding and climbing grass areas, narrow passes through trees, log jumps, rock drops and a one mile winding loop in a collection of drops and hills we call the "playground". We have a group of 4 to 6 riders who ride at least once per week and the trail is now in the best condition within the past 10 years (packed and fast). A special thanks to John Wentling who keeps us connected to the KTC and organizes trail maintenance. In its present condition our local Cat 1 Mountain Bike rider (Bill Clinesmith) completes the circuit in 45 minutes. The remainder of us old guys have been in the 1:05 range. We welcome anyone to come and post faster times. We welcome ANYONE who wants to ride as it is always more enjoyable with more riders. John Wentling posts occasional photos and videos on our Ford County Lake Trail Facebook page so check us out. Best wishes to all our bicycling friends. Van Z. Hampton (Dodge City)

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

The Perry Bike Trails turned 20 years old this year. It seems like yesterday we were only talking about building a mountain bike trail at Perry Lake. In that first year using loppers and handsaws, we cleared the first sections of trail that totaled approximately 4.5 miles. During the next 2 years we began using power tools to make the job much easier we steadily increased the amount of trail up to 12.5 miles.

Phase 2 of the trails started in 1999 when we focused on re-routing around some persistent wet spots and adding distance to the existing sections of trail. Next we began another concentrated effort to add 3 new trail sections that totaled another 5 miles. The trail now exceeded the 20-mile mark, which just sounds good in print. In 2012 we gave Keith Lewis, a long time volunteer, the opportunity to add, "trail designer" to his resume. He designed and led construction of "Daisy Point". This 2-mile loop that roughly follows the high water mark around a scenic peninsula has become a favorite destination point for almost every hiker and biker visiting the trail. A real gem.

Currently the trail has approximately 23 miles of single track and 2 miles of double track as well as about 3 miles of exposed shore line that can be hiked or ridden during normal or low lake levels. Originally designed to be a mountain bike specific trail, it has become very popular with trail runners. It is estimated that hiking, walking and running make up nearly half of the current trail users. Moving forward, we continue to modify the existing trails to accommodate changing trends in trail use.

Currently we are doing quite a bit of "dental work" to the trail. This is a term I use to describe the type of maintenance to keep the steep bench cut sections of the trail in shape. Similar to de-berming the off-slope side of the trail, we re-bench the high side of the trail to improve the useable tread. This also describes the removal of loose rock dislodged from the freeze thaw cycle, removal of some troublesome rock, and filling the cavities left behind. Soon we will move into trimming and mowing season.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

Prior to the trail work season, at a meeting with the Corps in February we reviewed various Corps improvements around the lake that had some impacts to the trail, including some new gates at "ag" leases. The team has been working with the Corps to take trail user needs into consideration as these improvements are being made. We discussed Lespedeza control in four high priority areas via spraying. We also talked about adjacent landowners and access points -- the volunteer crew is seeking a couple access points to aid maintenance near Apple Valley Farm and at the mid-point of Section 3.



As the work season began, trail clearing and downed tree removals occurred on the first half mile of Section 1, the west half mile of

Section 4, and Section 2 from the OMT trailhead to mile marker 12. A large walnut tree near OMT required two trips to remove. A big thanks to KTC for the chainsaw... it actually took two saws and two trips to finally get this passageway cleared! And the Corps accomplished phase 1 of their several step lespedeza control process on our top priority section. The main workday was held on a chilly March 19 with Kansas City Outdoor Club and Sierra Club members, Section 2 trailwatcher and a meetup volunteer. We mowed, lopped, and blazed Section 4 from 82nd Street southward to near MM23.3; placed markers along the roadway portion of section 3; and did a quick reblaze of the trail in the Longview park area. Remaining tasks include installing missing mile markers and replacing damaged ones.



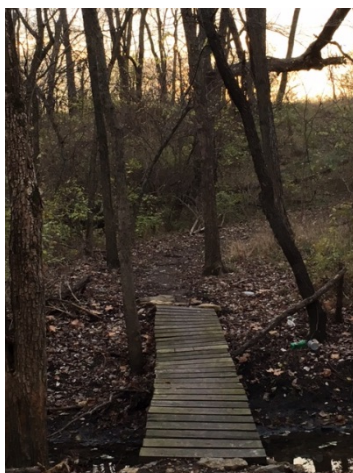
Dave Brackett (dbrackett@att.net)

Trail News

Topeka Trails

Dornwood

Dornwood is groomed and ready for spring. The leaves are blown off the trail and the trail is marked. Due to the recent rains. Some of the channels are holding water and are temporarily closed. Other than that the trail is in good shape.



I would like to thank Andy Phillips, Keith Lewis and Gary Farrant for all their help last fall. Andy armored in some of the channels that were holding water. Keith as always blew leaves from most all the trail and Gary brought his Milwaukee down to help Andy and me reposition the bridge that had been moved by the high water. Thanks and great job guys.

Russ Rupp
(russ11@cox.net)

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

Winter maintenance has been easy with the unusual weather. As spring growth begins we'll be watching to see how the late fall honeysuckle spraying effort has turned out. The entire trail was sprayed in addition to the test area along the new park road. This spring we plan to add a layer of limestone screenings to much of the gravel trail in the trees. We'll also be doing some minor work on the rolling grade dips to remove silt that has built up.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

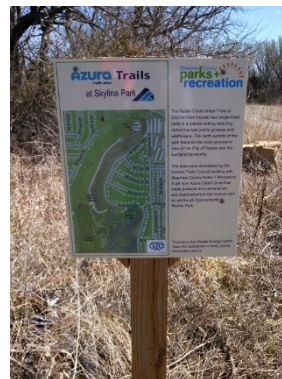
Skyline Park

We're almost finished building the final one-mile Sunset Loop in the southwest section of the park. This section will be a fitness challenge for running and biking with many small ascents along the north-south sections and the long ascents on the west to east sections.

The north segment in the prairie crosses the old fall social trail that has been there for many years. We attempt to block the old trail encourage using the new section that follows the contours and maintains the proper grades for sustainability.

As soon as we finish the Sunset Loop, we plan to continue shaping and adding dirt to the new pump track area. Also, watch for new signage in the coming months thanks to Azura Credit Union.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)



line
will
to

Tuttle Creek Trails

Randolph State Park



This photo shows our next project. The amount of driftwood and flood debris tells us it is time to revamp as much of the trail on the LL Loup as possible and move it close to the Corp Line to save future work. We started on this on March 16.

Carnahan Camp Loops

The entire 5 miles of this trail has been completely redone and is in use. Good to see people out on the trails and enjoying the early spring.

Olivia Huddleston (kayakkid346@gmail.com)

Trail News

Wilson Lake – Switchgrass Trail

Winter has not been as long and as cold as it could be! Looks like Switchgrass trail will be blazing with mountain bike riders soon!

Switchgrass trail received a fair amount of rain and snow over the winter. Despite updates to stay off the trail when I know the trail is wet or snowy, we still have a few riders out there determined to get a single track fix. There will be a few spots to smooth out from ruts left behind.

During the really cold spells when even I did not want to brave the cold, I was able to get a few items made for the trail equipment that I hope will make some trail work easier and more efficient! Still have to field test it all, but it all looks like it will work!



Josh Hobbs made a toolbox on the front of the ATV that will hold a whole assortment of tools, shovel, Pulaski, and even the string trimmer! No more fussing and fighting where to hook the tarp straps around tool handles!

For the mower, the guys at work and I welded together an attachment and basket that mounts on the mower rear end to hold the string trimmer. I am excited to find out if this attachment holds strong and doesn't get high centered! If it works, it will be less trips back to places to string trim some areas!



The DR trimmer has a pocket pack now. This will lighten the load in my backpack. I can put the hand saw, pruners, extra water, snacks, tools, the small hand pump sprayer, and more in all in the pockets attached to the DR trimmer.

The big mower is all serviced and ready its first round of mowing! The sprayer unit has been checked for leaks, cracks, and freeze damage. I must have done a good job winterizing it as all is working great!! The ATV got a much needed round of TLC. All summer long, it had cracking and popping noises in the rear end. As summer progressed, it became more evident that the CV joints were going to need replaced. When the repair shop guys cracked into the ATV, they were amazed how the axle/joints even stayed held together.

Now that the weather is getting warmer for my fingers, it's time to load the shovels and attack the sediment build up in the water diversion areas! Need to be ready for spring rains! With all the oil, filters, blades, belts, tires and other assorted equipment repair items, I am reminded of the ever more importance of private donations from members and supporters!! These donations to KTC and Friends of the Trail keep our equipment running smooth for years of service to keep our trails alive!!

Sara Kay Carrell (wildmountainhoney_sk@yahoo.com)

Trail in a Box Reminder!

The KTC's Trail in a Box program loans a fully stocked tool trailer to organizations who would like to build public access trails. 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/>

Currently our four Trail in a Box units are building trails in Iola, Atchison, Fort Riley/Manhattan and Horsethief Reservoir. And make sure you check out the latest "use" for TIAB on the next page...

Trail Grant Funding Available

Just a reminder of the different funding sources available in our state for trail and park related projects. All grant opportunities are different, so be sure and read the grant criteria carefully and always reach out to the program officer or contact with questions.

Sunflower Trails (Sunflower Foundation): Time is running out for these grants; the deadline is May 2. However, these grants tend to come out annually, so it's worth checking out the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) so you can think ahead for any trail projects for 2017, for either your personal favorite trail or a potential trail in your community. In particular, Sunflower would like to partner with more **schools** to build trails of all kinds on school property. No surprise that many studies are now demonstrating improvements in student learning and behavior associated with being physically active and being outdoors – trails can help make that happen! Please spread the word. Learn more on its website at [Sunflower Trails Funding Opportunities](http://SunflowerTrailsFundingOpportunities.org) and then contact Lindsey Fincham at lfincham@sunflowerfoundation.org.

Recreational Trail Grants (Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism) accepts applications for its Recreational Trail Grants program until August 1. For more information, visit its website [Recreational Trail Grants](http://RecreationalTrailGrants.org) and then contact Kathy Pritchett at kathy.pritchett@ksoutdoors.com.

Trail News

Support Kansas Trails in 2016!

2016 Membership Reminder

KTC Individual, Family & Affiliate memberships expire December 31 of each calendar year. If you haven't already renewed for 2016, please consider continuing to support KTC and renew your membership today. 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/>



Teaching the next generation of trail builders!

Talk about the ultimate show and tell...trail builder and advocate Aaron Apel of Manhattan took KTC's Trail in a Box to a local elementary school to show off the trailer and then teach a kid-friendly course on trail-building techniques. What a great idea to instill a love and respect for trails at an early age.

