

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

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“Hiking through History” Concept Can Bring New Trail Partners

When you think about trails and people who love trails, do you always think of single track dirt trails with mountain bikes whizzing by? Or perhaps a dedicated volunteer lopping down branches and stopping to spy a bird or wildlife, miles away from civilization? While such nature trails and the people who love, use and care for them are a key category, the concept of “trails” is becoming more universal and inclusive. New ways of seeing the potential of trails and thus potential population of users increases the overall goal of getting people outdoors and moving.

Here’s a great example of how this is happening in NE Kansas, although the ultimate goal is to bring the concept across the entire state. Henry Fortunato, founder of Sunflower Republic, LLC, and a humanities fellow at the University of Kansas Hall Center, has spearheaded two projects [two projects](#) celebrating the unique history of place and space by using a trail as a focal point. The goal, he says “is to exercise your body and exercise your mind.”



On National Trails Day (June 4), Fortunato (*featured above*) unveiled four sets of new outdoor panels featuring original historical narratives about the history of Indian Creek Trail, Overland Park and Johnson County. Fortunato noted that suburbs can often be overlooked as Anywhere, USA, but his panels demonstrate that almost anywhere has a fascinating history. The painstaking detective work by Fortunato’s team is illustrated through trail panels with compelling narratives and photographs. In other words, says Fortunato, “A walk through Anywhere, USA can become a Hike through History – and this will no doubt motivate more people to get outside and move.”

The nearly dozen panels for 10+ mile Indian Creek Trails in Kansas City are scheduled to be completed and installed by this fall.

A [similar project](#) is underway in Lawrence, where a display of panels celebrating the vibrant and varied history of the Burroughs Trail is now on display at the public library. Visitors are encouraged to learn more about the 1.7 mile rail-trail corridor, then hike or bike the few blocks east to the trail and relive history. Fortunato, who is currently seeking funding to construct and install the actual trail panels, said the project is the culmination of nearly 60 partners, all invested in some way. “These types of projects can expand the world of trail users and supporters,” says Fortunato. “

To that end, think about the trails and potential trails where you live. What is the story behind the trail? The history? Environmental information? Relations to culture or arts? Not every prospective trail lover will be an ultra marathoner or mountain biker, and some might even be city dwellers. But the more we expand our circle of trail supporters, the more we secure the future of our trails.

Update! Kansas Covered Bridges

In our Q1 KTC newsletter, we mentioned the picturesque covered bridge on the Blue River Trail near Marysville. This quarter we want to highlight the equally lovely Cecile Kellenbarger Memorial Covered Bridge near Garden Plain built by John Moore and the [Prairie Travelers Rail-Trail Conservancy](#). Cecile Kellenbarger was a longtime secretary and visionary for the Prairie Travelers. What better way to honor her memory – and that of so many trail volunteers - than hiking or biking the 15+ mile Prairie Sunset Trail and stopping to reflect at the bridge.



Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Looks like the trail is off to a great start this year. There's multiple events planned including multiple long distance runs and a mountain bike race. There's also a regularly scheduled hike on Sunday morning that is posted on the Kansas State Park website.

We've had multiple workdays so far this year. We have completed a lot of projects. These projects include spraying for weeds, whopping deadfall tree removal and more. We have reestablished the trail markings in blue white and red and have almost completed that work. We completed two small reroutes where the trail began to come together and one reroute where there was a waterhole continuously. We had to do some skills loop repair. Very minor and at this point, I don't really have any major reroutes or construction projects planned for the summer due to the weather. Hopefully we can get back to some of that in the fall

Currently we have at least 19 trees down. Mike Goodwin, Terry Ryan, and I have already removed at least 25 fallen trees. Seems like an awful lot for this time of year.

Best part is we are mostly dry and the trail is in great shape. So hope to see you out there. Thanks to everyone that came out and helped so far this year.

Neil Taylor (medic1@sunflower.com)



The Clinton Trails get a lot of action from trail runners during the summer months!

Clinton Lake – South Shore Trails

The South Shore Trails at Clinton Lake are in fair condition after all the spring rains. There are some blockages from down trees that will remain until cooler weather arrives. The lower trail is still under water in spots and will remain so until the Corps is able to get the lake elevation level down. All the rains have also boosted the under growth and there are multiple muddy sections on the trails that will most likely be around for at least another month. Look out for poison ivy, it's everywhere, and there is no shortage of ticks! Welcome to Kansas.

Diana Skinner (dgskinner85@gmail.com)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

The trail is in really good condition with the exception of some low hanging branches in spots as well as a little tree growth encroaching from the sides here and there. Several high wind storms make for some dead fall but no trees of any size to move at this time... all this is in spite of very little maintenance time spent over the last summer and winter seasons. The entire trail was sprayed last July after the high water spring and early summer and will only need a little spot spraying this year. That work to come over the summer as this spring was pretty busy. Rumor has it that the Trail Steward/Coordinator (pick your preferred title) announced his retirement from full time employment this summer. Expectations are running high that the entire trail will be buffed end to end with possibly a re-route here and there! With more trail time there may be a little more trail added before next year. As always, no lack of wildlife out there with a recent sighting of a bobcat who fairly nonchalantly walked across the trail in front of a rider, continued up a hill, and then sat down and watched while he was being filmed. I've seen several before in the Flint Hills area but not on this trail.



Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Editor's Note: those aren't actually the bobcats sighted on the trail, but who can resist such a cute photo???

Trail News

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

The Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park, Melvern Lake, are freshly trimmed and mowed where accessible with the mower. The trails have come back in good shape after the late spring flooding, and an alternate route was mowed on higher ground to restrict impact on the wet areas. The prairie portions of the trail system are a carpet of wildflowers right now and always changing (see photos by Gabrielle Bastion Hamler)! The 6th Annual Eisenhower State Park Trail Ride is scheduled for October 7-9. Proceeds from this annual ride have totaled over \$20,500 and have funded many improvements at ESP equestrian campgrounds and trails.

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)



Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

Greetings fellow trail riders,
This is the latest on the Ford County Lake Trail. I apologize for the lack of photographs. We have had an exceptionally wet spring and as a consequence, a portion of our trail was rendered un-rideable. The grassy areas and rocky portions are in great shape thanks to Gary Erlich and Jeff Monicle spraying herbicide on the trail early in the Spring. Nevertheless, there were some lines we formerly rode on the lake shore which now require snorkel attachments. We have been able to go around those with no problems. Also, the trail through the tall trees has developed a poison ivy hazard and riders who are susceptible to that evil weed should take caution. We plan to continue our eradication efforts later this year.

There is still about 8 miles of trail that is in good condition and we invite more riders to come and keep it worked in. Best wishes to all, and may your chains always run on the big ring.

Van Z. Hampton
John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Perry Lake Bike Trails

This spring has been a repeat of last year. Unusually high lake levels that stayed high for over a month. Not quite as high as last year but still covered parts of the trail. Lake is now back to normal and work has started to repair and cleanup flood debris. Daisy Point is open again, but foot traffic only until more driftwood is removed. We plan to have it done by the end of June. An early June thunderstorm left fallen branches and small debris throughout the trail and several large trees blocking the trail along the south shore of the trail. This has all been cleared and trails are ready for normal use.

There are several sporting events scheduled for the end of June through mid July. The wet, cool spring conditions really accelerated the regrowth of trimmed trails so a lot of repeat lopping is in order.

Lyle Riedy (lriedy@usd345.com)



The mountain biking events for the Sunflower State games will be Sunday, July 23, at the Lake Perry bike trails. For more information: <http://www.sunflowergames.com/index.php/sports/mountain-biking>

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

After our March 19 workday (reported in the spring KTC newsletter), the hiking trail team has taken a breather. Several fallen trees were removed on section 2 west of the Old Military Trailhead. A few others on section 3 are awaiting cooler weather due to their distant locations. Rehabilitation of the Old Quarry Road bridge is being reviewed as handrails

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and tread need replacing – this could be a trailwatcher or scout activity.

On the action side, the USACE team did the first mow and spray of lespedeza sections near 66th and Lakeside, with the second operation planned in the next month or so. This is a trial to see if this approach will provide better control of the lespedeza.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Topeka Trails

Dornwood

Dornwood has been hit by the usual spring weather. There are some down trees, the trails need trimming and we still have water in the channels leaving some portions of the trail inaccessible. I am planning a work day on the near future to clear and trim. Hopefully time and dry weather will help the water problem.

Russ Rupp
(russ11@cox.net)

Skyline Park

The late spring rains followed by high early June temperatures generated amazing growth in prairie grasses and flowers.



Some sections are five feet tall on the side of the trail but the trail is open! Our trail volunteers have been regularly checking trail conditions and organizing work crews this spring. Kasey Clark will lead a lopping crew the last week of June in the southeast forest loops. Ben Postlethwait organized a trash pickup crew to clean up the new Sunset Loop in late spring. The brushy growth on the north summit has been cut back significantly. Future plans for the park include adding new trail markers and a parking area at the main trailhead.

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest) & Kaw River State Park

Spring storms brought down many trees in a short time which kept us busy for a while. Thanks to Dan Byl for the regular trail condition reports! The continued honeysuckle removal project has reduced the seasonal lopping to a very minor effort. We plan to add a new layer of limestone screenings to the gravel trail when we have access. Access will be restricted for a while as the 6th Street repaving project continues this summer.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Tuttle Creek Trails

Carnahan Creek

With all the spring rains we again had flood water at Tuttle Creek Lake. The large flat parking area at Carnahan Creek Campground was completely covered with water - it was high enough for paddling. We had numerous people in many different colored kayaks enjoying the water sport. Since the flood water has started to recede, we have seen many more canoes and kayaks and paddleboards in the various coves at Tuttle. The horse and hiking trails above the parking area at Carnahan were good to go.

Randolph State Park

The only portion of the trails affected is the north 2 mile loop (that we had just been revamping), but the new part wasn't impacted by the flood water. However, it is a turnaround trip at this point, going out and coming back the same route.

The main portion of the Randolph Trails are well above the 1136+ elevation of 1993 so the park and trails are in use. With the new shower/restroom building and a new shelter house, the park looks inviting. There are 20 electric

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hookups with some shared water hydrants. There are two wash stations for horses and ample parking for horse trailers or campers who do not need parking pads. We have lots of shade and there are open fire pits around the campground.



Bring your bug and tick spray and come enjoy our great outdoors.

Olivia Huddleston
Tuttle Creek Trails

KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL Board of Directors Meeting May 15, 2016

Call to order

- The KTC Board met at Radius Brewing Co in Emporia, KS.
- Board members present were Lyle Riedy, President; Olivia Huddleston, Vice-President; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer; Jim Thomas; Terry Plenert and Kevin Otterman, Secretary. Not present were Cliff Jones, Neil Taylor and Russ Rupp.
- The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM by President Lyle Riedy.

Business

- **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the previous meeting were discussed. Olivia moved and Jim seconded to accept the minutes as presented. Motion passed.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Mike presented the current financial status and discussed cash balances. Mike indicated we are a little under budget in cash, but should be okay with additional investment funds incoming.

In Cash Management Mike indicated that the GOKS Grant of \$5k, which covers some printing costs on behalf of GOKS, is still a few months out. This provides time for the cash balances to further improve.

FOT accounts were zeroed at beginning of the year for all locations. While several currently show a negative balance this isn't a problem up to -\$250, per Mike.

• **TIAB / Equipment:** Mike reported the current locations of 4 TIAB trailers as follows:

1. Atchison – Jackson Park, with 2 miles currently built and about three more to go
2. Manhattan – where about 6 miles of trail is currently being developed and maintained on post at Ft. Riley
3. Iola – in use by Thrive Allen County team
4. Horsethief Reservoir near Jetmore

About \$730 left on TIAB operations grant

Mike presented an option to transfer the ownership of the Iola TIAB trailer and equipment to the Thrive Allen County team for their ongoing development and maintenance use. Such a move would reduce ongoing TIAB operations costs for KTC. As proposed, the trailer and equipment could be donated to Thrive Allen County and borrowed back by KTC as needed.

Mike took action items to (1) run the idea by Sunflower Foundation first as the donation source for this trailer/equipment, and (2) then reach out to the Thrive Allen County team to assess interest in the proposal.

Kevin asked if Thrive Allen County has a maintenance plan in place to justify the ongoing use of the equipment and ensure it would be put to good use. Mike indicated that the Thrive team has ongoing maintenance organized and plans to build more trails in the area.

Jim proposed an alternate solution where Thrive Allen County would cover the operational and maintenance costs of trailer and equipment, and KTC would retain ownership. Mike quantified annual insurance costs for the trailers at approximately \$35/trailer, or about 1.5-2% of value.

The board discussed the current trailer inventory and whether some items might be distributed elsewhere. Further action depends upon needs defined by Thrive Allen County and any maintenance plan.

Mike defined the existing Lehigh Portland Trail project status as approximately 6 miles of multi-use (mtb/hike/running) trail. A ribbon cutting ceremony for this trail is being planned for the third week of June.

Old Business

• **MOUs:** Mike took an action item to distribute standardized MOUs to the board. Several KTC sponsored sites have volunteer agreements in place but not MOUs. Where they exist with the COE they don't have an expiration. But, the Doornwood/Skyline trail MOUs expire every five years, per Mike.

Trail News

New Business

• Kevin presented trail standards feedback from equestrian, mountain biking, hiking, trail running and paddle sports organizations around the country. In prior meetings the board had discussed which trail standards should coordinators be directed to. Findings from the feedback pointed to some well-known references from SCA, IMBA and USFS. Jim suggested that it be compiled into a "Design, Building and Maintenance Recommendations" list that could also appear on the KTC website.

Lyle also discussed the needs for standardized signage and maps. Kevin mentioned the various signage in place between COE, MARC and Johnson County as examples of how different they are between sites. The board also discussed the need for location markers – mile markers or 0.2 mile markers – along the trail.

Lyle mentioned putting trails on Google. Kevin has placed several on Google, such as for Perry Lake Hiking Trail and took action item to follow up with Lyle with instructions and tips to do this.

• Mike reported that the [getoutdoorskansas](http://getoutdoorskansas.org) website now has 2,530 miles of mapped trails available. The target for GOKS is to have 3k by end of year.

• Lyle led a discussion regarding upcoming board seats. Seats 1-5 were described as up for re-election and included Russ, Jim, Cliff, Olivia and Neal. If re-elected, they would serve the 2017-18 term; the others (6-9) are currently 2016-17 term. Mike motioned and Olivia seconded that existing directors be placed on ballot for re-election. Motion passed.

• Mike reminded the board of the need for an additional meeting to stay on quarterly schedule, with another meeting for Q2 yet to occur. The board agreed to an online meeting to satisfy the requirement for this meeting.

• Kevin presented an agreement between COE and numerous parties, including KTC, for trail enhancements at the Delaware Marsh area of Perry Lake. This agreement calls for some volunteer services in the initial design and development of the project from KTC (Kevin), but not ongoing maintenance. Lyle motioned and Olivia seconded. Agreement passed.

• The board reviewed decals that Olivia had for KTC. Lyle took action item to look at the original graphics. The board suggested that a "maintained by" addition to the decals would make them useful for placement at trailhead locations and other similar uses.

Other Business

• **Date, time, location of meetings:** The Board set the next meeting for end of June as an electronic-only meeting.

• Lyle moved and Olivia seconded that we adjourn. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM.

Kevin Otterman, Secretary

On the Road Again...

If you're planning any road trips in KS this summer and want to check out trails and parks along the way... make sure to visit GOKS. This is a fantastic resource for all things outdoors in Kansas. And if you want people to come visit your trail, make sure and sign up as a partner. It's free!



Support Kansas Trails in 2016!

Hard to believe we're halfway through 2016! If renewing your membership to KTC fell off your radar earlier this year, please take 2 minutes now to remedy the situation. Click here to renew and support your favorite trails: <http://www.kansastrailsCouncil.org/join/ktc-membership-sign-up/>

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.