

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

Winter 2016

Mr. Smith Heads to Washington... In Hiking Boots!

And it's about time. Over the past few decades, more and more Americans (and tourists) enjoyed the beauty and recreation of the great outdoors, pumping more and more dollars into the "outdoor industry." But just how many dollars? And why does that matter?

For starters, it's no surprise that dollars are a powerful playing tool in politics. And for years, the outdoor industry's contribution to the economy was based on more on guesswork than cold hard facts. That is about to change, thanks to the recent passage of a bipartisan bill, heartily endorsed by the House and Senate and signed by President Obama in December.

The Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016, or REC Act, authorizes the Department of



Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) to assess outdoor recreation's contribution to the nation's gross domestic product, or GDP. **This is being called one of the most significant policy decisions in support of the outdoor industry** in the past decade by industry executives and public land advocates alike. Why?

(Above – a runner on a Kansas trail is just one of the millions of Americans who contribute to the outdoor recreation economy.)

First, the economic value of outdoor recreation will be assessed by the same economists who determine the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The BEA's methodology is the gold standard. Having reliable, non-partisan information will help inform better policy making regarding the value of our country's 640 million acres of public land (as well as millions more at the state, county and municipal levels).

Second, these new data should make it easier for a variety of interests - including land managers, policy makers, lobbyists, and investors - to determine the best and highest value use of the land. Up until now, the economic value of public land was based primarily on its role to provide finite and extractable resources such as minerals, timber and energy sources. This new valuation gives new "talking points power" to the economic role of public land as a place for Americans to recreate outdoors – in other words, as an infinite resource, if managed properly. *(Editor's Note: deciding how outdoor recreation should occur, especially in regards to wildlife protection, will no doubt generate future discussions and debates; e.g., right here in Kansas, the role of development at Clinton Lake. Our job as trail champions is to make sure our voices and concerns are raised in a respectful, informed manner.)*

"Nothing really can replace federal economists recognizing our economy as part of the GDP and that we actually have official statistics to point to," says one industry executive. "That will help us when we go in on lands management decisions in terms of the importance and benefits to the U.S. of preserving places to play."

Lastly, this Act helps to shine a light (or headlamp) on the outdoor industry for the very first time, calling attention to its significance as a potential job creator and revenue booster. The REC Act gives the industry a legitimacy it's never had until this point – in fact, it's still not recognized the federal government's North American Industry Classification System. With solid data on their side, states and communities can now advocate for the importance of public land as a provider of outdoor recreation – not just extractable natural resources. These numbers can help level the playing field in policy-making discussions. *(This is a synopsis from [a detailed article](#) by Brad Rassler in the Outsider Online magazine. Check it out!)*

Two thousand, nine hundred and thirteen miles... but who's counting??

Check out the updated
Trail Map at [GOKS](#)
'Nuff said.



Trail News

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

To all - I hope everyone had a great summer on the trails. The fall made for perfect conditions at Clinton Lake North Shore. It was great for riding and running or whatever else you do on the trail and the weather was beautiful. We had lots of events going on. Thanks to all the user groups that came out to do trail work this past quarter.

Now that winter is here it's time to start thinking about next year's season. One of the things we're working on with area organizations is a trail user summit. We did one in the fall for the River Trail and it was a great success. Stay tuned for more info on that.

There are few areas that we need to pay particular attention to. For instance, the skills loop needs some repair and the red trail also need some more work. I plan to start on those two things while it's still cool. Also Jim Day has a plan to build a new section of trail on Cactus Ridge.

Then of course, there's all the everyday maintenance we have to take care of every year. This year I hope to get a little earlier start on weed control. Also I will be looking for a couple of trail stewards who would like to adopt a section or two. They would be in charge of deadfall removal and general maintenance in those areas of their choosing. Right now we have two people; one that does to the marina road and the other does Cactus Ridge.

Finally I know you've all heard about the Whitewater Park the state wants to install. There is a lot of information floating around on the internet but nothing is confirmed as of yet. Further [information](#) and [editorials](#) have been published in the Lawrence Journal World recently.

Thanks for your support this season. Look forward to seeing you guys out there for the next season.

Neil Taylor (medic1@sunflower.com)

Clinton Lake – South Shore Trails

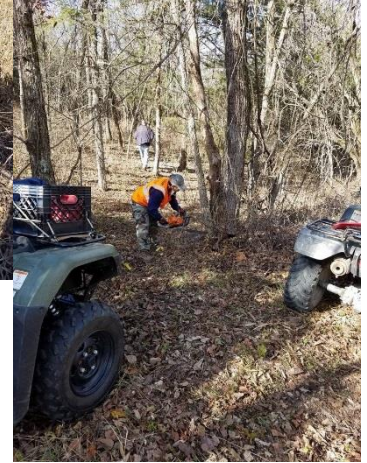
Lots of volunteer activity on the trails this fall!

The Friends of Rockhaven Park Benefit Ride Oct. 1-2 was successful with almost \$2000 being raised for campground improvements and trail maintenance. Over 45 Volunteers have put in over 300 hours clearing 40 miles of trails this fall. As you can see in the photo (*at left*), several portions of the bottom trail were rerouted where dangerous drop-offs had formed due to the rains and high lake levels of the last two years. Thanks to the hard work of so many great volunteers, the trails are in great condition for winter after a beautiful fall.

Fall and winter are some of the best months out on the trails. The leaves have fallen and you can see through the timber



and across the lake. There have been numerous big buck sightings while trail riding and the hunters are out in full force.



It's also the time to remember that we share these trails, not only with horse riders and hikers but also hunters, so it's a good idea to wear orange and be courteous to all who use our wonderful trails.

Diana Skinner (dgskinner85@gmail.com)

Eisenhower State Park – Crooked Knee Trail

We had some beautiful weekends this fall for riding the Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park. The late summer weather and high water levels offered challenges to keeping the trails clear of fallen trees and debris. But, thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers and Friends of Eisenhower State Park, those trails were cleared, mowed, and ready for some great fall riding once things dried up.



The 6th Annual Benefit Trail Ride to raise funds for Eisenhower State Park's Crooked Knee trails and equestrian campgrounds was a huge success! It was a perfect fall weekend with a record turnout of riders and participants. New this year was a Friday afternoon poker ride; 23 riders had a great time riding and exploring areas of Eisenhower State Park not usually accessible to horseback riders. With 91 riders on Saturday, we split up into 3 groups and rode ESP's

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blue trail. Riders returned to camp for a meal and live auction. About 50 riders enjoyed a hot breakfast Sunday morning, then a ride east toward the dam and back, which was allowed with a Special Use Permit. This year's weekend event raised a record \$5,434. Due to the generous support of Friends of ESP, who prepared and served both meals, 100% of funds raised go directly into improvements. Over the last 6 years, this benefit ride has raised over \$26,000!

Jim Thomas (jimcherylthomas@gmail.com)

Fall River Lake Badger Creek Trail

There was a busy Deer Season at Fall River Lake this fall, which meant some trail users found other places to hike and explore. Generally the area sees a small number of hunters but respecting the hunting season is a small price to pay for pretty much unrestricted use of the area throughout the rest of the year. We try to refrain from riding when it is clear that hunters are in the area, and only work on projects that are at or close to the road during bow hunting season. Firearms season only lasts for 10 days so that is a period of no activity on the trails for me.

We are planning work days through the winter to address some erosion problems caused by the big rains of the past year. Rocks are bigger now than they were last winter. Some armoring, maybe a re-route or two. We continue to play around with the idea of connecting the two separate trails together with a single-track route in addition to the paved road that is the only current connection. Here's hoping everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



You can always see something special out on the trails! At left, a somewhat rare phenomenon, the Frost Flower. This formation is created in late fall/early winter by just the right combination of cold and moisture from certain plants.

These have been sighted on the Badger Creek Trails.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Ford County Lake Trail – Dodge City

Ford County Lake trail riders all send New Year greetings to our trail riding friends!! Our old trail stewards, John Wentling, Gary Ehrlich, Jeff Monical, Bill Clinesmith and me, have the trail in its best condition ever. There are a few technical drops, log jumps and climbs, but the 10 miles of single track is clear and fast and ready for all riders.

We had a dozen riders last month thanks to our friends from Garden City and Greensburg coming to join us for a lap full of spills and thrills and great fun.



Our trail will be the venue for a "Blanket Race" on January 22nd at 2:00 pm. Blanket Races are intended to be fun, easygoing, and affordable off-season races.

Learn more about how they work on this [Kansas Cyclist link](#). Please come and join us.

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

Perry Lake Bike Trails

2016 was a pretty un-eventful year... other than having to repair and clean up high water damage twice? After the lake level dropped enough to re-open flooded areas, clean up went fast with only a small rebuilding of damaged trails where the shoreline collapsed and washed away. Other parts of the trail received the usual tree removal, mowing and spraying.

For 2017 we plan to re-mark all the trails and freshen up signage. There is always the potential to add some new trail and/or re-route sections to either avoid a developing problem or just to make an interesting change to the course. We do have hopes on opening up the north end parking area, making it bigger, and maybe re-opening one of the abandoned campgrounds on the northern part of the trail.

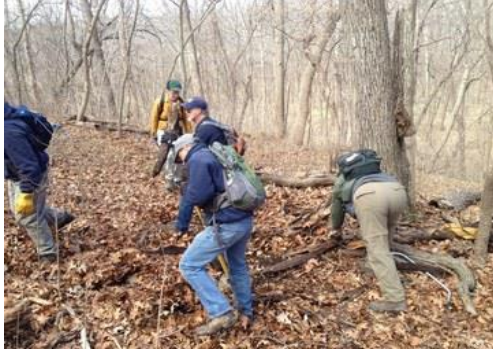
Lyle Riedy (riedy@usd345.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trails

Lots of activity this fall along the Perry Lake Hiking Trail. Our main workday of November 12 had twelve volunteers which included the Corps' representative. This was the highest turnout in recent years. Combined with the extra equipment the Corp's rep brought, we were a very effective two teams! One did the chainsaw and heavy brush clearing on 1.5 miles of section 3, while the other did the mow, lop, and blaze from Hoover Creek westward toward Apple Valley Road.

(Photo on next page shows volunteers working hard - . Thank you volunteers!)

Trail News



Other individual visits by increasingly active trailwatchers:

- Cleared section 2-East (4 miles in four days!) – a newly retired person is really stepping up as trailwatcher.
- Noted several tree falls at a small landslide that took part of the trail into a creek near Apple Valley Road on section 1. A short reroute was flagged.
- Chainsaw work on section 2-West.
- Exploration of possible reroutes on section 4-West for increased scenic views and lake access.
- More proposed visits to section 3 for chainsaw and brush cutting.

Why is all of this happening now? First, the trailwatchers had a meeting with our [US Army Corps of Engineers representative](#), Reese Nelson, in late October to plan the work areas and learn about the Corp's increasing participation in enhancing the trail as part of their operations. Second, Nelson has the means to tackle tasks, such as spraying, burning and brushhog mowing – tasks sometimes beyond our volunteer capabilities.



Third, a new and active group has joined as trailwatcher – [Dirty Girl Adventures](#). The photo shows the group (which open to anyone – **including males!**) at the Perry Lake trails for a New Year's Day hike.

And that does focus on the people side of our work. Increased Corps' participation, more active trailwatchers (even if retired), another new young group of the Dirty Girls -- these are all shaking up the old model. But that is good.

Also good, in another way, is to note that longtime trailwatcher and trail builder John Haynes is stepping back from his section 4-East duties to concentrate on other backpack and family adventures. I wish him well on his new journey.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Topeka Trails

MacLennan Park (Cedar Crest)

This fall we added a fresh layer of limestone screenings to the gravel trail in two locations. This also required renewing the grade reversals and adjacent drainage ditch on this fall line trail that we inherited.

We continued the honeysuckle removal project throughout the trail system as well as in the test area along the park road. The Kaw River State Park crew has been working on the project on the west side of the park road with similar success. We have also been chainsawing honeysuckle "trees" since it is hard to spray them when they're 25 feet tall. It's beginning to look like a normal forest without the honeysuckle undergrowth.

Our first snow of the season wasn't a big one but provided the opportunity for a snow hike. Tracks in the fresh inch of powder revealed tracks of rabbits, deer, bobcats, raccoons and various birds. This adds new meaning to the term "multi-use" trail!

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Skyline Park

On two consecutive weekends in October, we built two boardwalks over a section of trail that is chronically muddy due to nearby springs. All together, the boardwalks span about 180 feet with curves and ups and downs for fun hiking, running or biking.

These improvements were made possible by the generous contribution of lumber from [Westar's Green Team](#) and the invaluable assistance of Green Team Leader, Ben Postlethait,



Above is Boardwalk 2; below you can see the hardworking crew relaxing on the newly built Boardwalk 1.

Trail News

We continued spraying honeysuckle along the trail and now have a 20 to 30 foot wide corridor that is free of this invasive plant. We also removed some of the larger honeysuckle on the Sunset Loop with chainsaws.



Thanks to the support of Azura Credit Union and Shawnee County Parks, we installed trail directional signage this fall at every major intersection – thirteen in total. Hopefully this will help newcomers to the trail find their way around.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@cox.net)

Dornwood Trails

Dornwood is groomed and ready for winter. The leaves are blown off the trail and the trail is marked. The trail is in good shape. I would like to thank Andy Phillips. Andy has done a lot of work at Dornwood this fall. He armored in some of the channels and blew off leaves this fall.

I have plans for 2017. Hopefully we will add another section of trail to the SE section of the park.

Russ Ropp (russ11@cox.net)

Tuttle Creek Trails

We finally made it through the worst of the down trees at Randolph State Park just before the cold set in. We took all the help we could get and climbing those hills with a chain saw and a backpack of gas and oil was a labor of love. We appreciate the help.

Brave riders have been traversing the trails with blockage but it's good to go. As winter sets in, the gate that blocks Randolph South is closed, but in nice weather we invite you to park on the north side of Highway 16. There is one water hydrant on that side and it is once again ON for the winter. Plenty of parking, just need a state parks pass (parking ticket). Remember you can get [this pass when you renew your license tags each year](#). It cost less than two movie tickets (\$15.50) and then you're ready to enjoy all the trails at all the state parks all year long.

Carnahan Creek Camp area is open year around, but the roads may not be plowed of deep snow. Bring your own drinking water for yourself and your equine or canine companion. It is a great place for winter exercise as a lot of the trails there are out of the wind. And don't forget the view from the top of the big hill. It can be spectacular after a snow.



(No snow yet, but a spectacular sunrise photo from this fall)

Our plans for 2017 are to continue maintaining the trails. One new such change is in the works at Randolph South where erosion and rolling rocks were becoming a hazard. These are trails for all so come enjoy.

Olivia Huddleston (kayakkid346@gmail.com)

KTC 4th Quarter Board Meeting Minutes

KANSAS TRAILS COUNCIL
Board of Directors ONLINE Meeting
December 11, 2016

Call to order

- The KTC Board met online, via Skype call.
- Board members present were Lyle Riedy, President; Olivia Huddleston, Vice-President; Kevin Otterman, Secretary; Mike Goodwin, Treasurer, and Jim Thomas. A quorum was NOT achieved.
- Meeting called to order at 1:13pm by Lyle.
- Without a quorum, items were discussed, motions were offered, but NO voting was done. Motions were distributed after the meeting to the online forum/group email to collect responses.

Business

- **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the previous meeting were uploaded to group forum site on November 14, 2016. Olivia moved and Jim seconded to accept the minutes as presented. Voting deferred to online forum/group email. UPDATE: Voting via online forum/group email approved motion on December 15, 2016.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Detailed discussions regarding the Treasurer's Report did not occur since we did not have a quorum. However, Trail in a Box (TIAB), Get Outdoors Kansas (GOKS) and Wilson Lake equipment were discussed as detailed below.

Trail News

• **TIAB / Equipment:** Mike's TIAB report included mention of moving two trailers from current locations to sites in Lawrence and Marysville. Kevin inquired as to whether an inventory check was done before trailers were moved from site to site. Lyle indicated that each trailer includes check in/out logs so an ongoing inventory is being maintained throughout the time the trailer is in use.

Old Business

• **Getoutdoorskansas (GOKS):** Lyle discussed the funding regarding GOKS website, with the assumption that the site is self-funded via grants and not coming from KTC funds. KTC is a sponsor of the GOKS effort and, along with being a non-profit, is able to secure grants to help support this ongoing effort and be a conduit for such funds.

• **Wilson Lake equipment:** The condition of trailer and mower at Wilson Lake was discussed. Current action plan is to replace mower via grant (from KDWP), if/when it is approved. Cost assumption for a new ZTR mower is approximately \$13k.

The trailer is no longer in good condition and hasn't been moved in some time. Mike suggested that a storage container may be a more suitable solution. Mike also suggested, in his report, that insurance coverage on the trailer could be dropped. Board members discussed this scenario, but the cost of replacement was unknown and whether or not it would be funded by grant was also unknown.

Kevin suggested that the board should seek pictures of the trailer to confirm condition, and to evaluate before making any

decisions on insurance or replacement. Lyle indicated that he was planning a trip to Wilson in coming weeks and would take pictures at that time.

New Business

• With the departure of Cliff Jones from the board, Diane Skinner (Clinton South Shore equine trails) was discussed by the board. Diane is active with equine trails and provides some balance to the various user groups represented. Lyle indicated she is also a kayaker.

Kevin moved to fill the position vacated by Cliff with Diane Skinner for the remainder of the current term. Olivia seconded. Voting deferred to online forum/group email. UPDATE: Voting via online forum/group email approved motion on December 15, 2016.

Other Business

• **Date, time, location of meetings:** The next board meeting date for Q1 2016 will occur in late January. Meeting dates of Jan 8 or Jan 11 were offered for larger board consideration, with a meeting location in Topeka. The Landing Bar & Grille was suggested. A quiet room was requested in case anyone needs to dial in. Kevin will set up a dial-in/online meeting using Microsoft Lync/Skype as a backup in case someone cannot attend live. UPDATE: The next board meeting, as of December 17, is now set for January 11th, 6:30pm, at The Landing in Topeka.

Kevin Otterman, Secretary 2016

Give the Gift of Trails for 2017!

2017 Membership Reminder

KTC Individual, Family & Affiliate memberships expire December 31 of each calendar year. If renewing dropped off your to-do list during the holidays, here's a friendly reminder to please consider supporting trails in 2017 and renew now. Trails need constant maintenance, and maintenance equipment gets worn down. Kansas Trails Council is looking at some very expensive equipment repair in the near future. Your contributions help us keep the trails in good condition!

Also: some surveys say up to 2/3 of Americans "re-gift" during and directly after the holidays. If you wish to honor someone special in your life with a gift for 2017 - and don't wish to turn over that Harry and David fruit basket - please consider the enduring gift of trails. Whether this special person is a hiker, biker, birder, nature lover or simply enjoys the opportunity to disconnect in a beautiful place... **a gift in their name to the KTC (or better yet, an annual or lifetime membership) will help ensure our KTC trails remain safe, sustainable, accessible and open to all!**

The KTC website has an on-line, easy-to-use PayPal membership feature. It's now updated to reflect giving "the gift of trails" to someone special. Check it out at: <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.**