

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

Winter 2017

All of Outdoor Kansas... In the Palm of Your Hand!



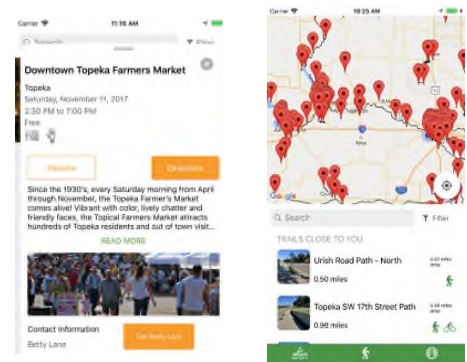
Finding a nearby trail no longer means you have to also find a laptop and internet access. If you've got a smartphone, you've got access to everything the website GetOutdoorsKansas.org has to offer, now as **free** mobile app. Whether you want to find an outdoors event, activity, park, trail or green space – all the same user friendly features on the GOKS website are available now on your iPhone (and coming very soon, the Android version). More than 3,100 miles of Kansas trails can be at your fingertips...even when you're offline. Special bonus: the app will also let you know where YOU are on the trail.



If you haven't done so already, here's the link to download for the iPhone version... [GOKS app for iPhone](#). You can also find this by searching for "GetOutdoorsKS" or "Kansas Trails" in the Apple app store. We'll let you know when the Android version is ready to go (help GOKS connect to you by signing up for the [GOKS email list](#)). When you DO download the app and give it a try, please make sure to review it as well.

THANK YOU...

- Thank you to all the GOKS partners who help contribute content to the website/app, and the volunteers who help to keep many those 3100 miles of trail ready for use!
- Thank you to our funding partners, [Sunflower Foundation](#) and [Westar Green Team](#), who helped make this resource available, **free**, to each and every Kansan.
- Finally, thank YOU for sharing the exciting news with your outdoor and trail lovin' family and friends!



Two New State Parks for the Sunflower State?



The outdoor jewels of the Sunflower State are strong candidates to become the next state parks. Both the Flint Hills Trail, the longest rail-trail in Kansas, and Little Jerusalem, one of the most unique limestone formations in the Midwest, were the topic of debate in Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources committee during the last week of January. Senate Bill 331, a proposal to make both these areas state parks, has moved out of committee for a debate/vote in the Senate. If approved by Senate, the bill would be sent on to the House. More information [here](#), here's a brief overview:

At left – a view of the spectacular rock formations at Little Jerusalem.

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- Thanks to decades of hard work and perseverance by the Kanza Rail-Trail Conservancy, the 117-mile long Flint Hills Trail is already in public use. The FHT runs from Osawatimie to Herington, stretching through five counties and more than a dozen communities. The varied geography provides hikers, cyclists and equestrians a visual treat of river bluffs, woodlands, and of course – wide open prairie.
- Little Jerusalem is a 250-acre Niobrara Chalk limestone formation between Scott City and Oakley. This fragile ecosystem, dating back 85 million years, was purchased by the Nature Conservancy two years ago. The owner wished for this special place to be protected to the utmost degree, but also allow some public access.

Designating the two sites as state parks means responsibility for protection of land, maintenance and access, and safety of visitors would transfer to the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. State park officials estimated the ongoing maintenance costs for the park would be about \$200K a year, plus some substantial one-time costs in the beginning. However, KDWP and trail/park advocates note the incredible value to both the Kansas public as well as the potential for recreational tourism.

Kansas currently has 26 state parks. Despite the wide open spaces and many rural/frontier counties, our state ranks near the bottom of all 50 states in terms of [land actually available for public use](#). If you want to show your support for KDWP assuming long-term responsibility for these two “geographic gems,” contact your local legislators and let them know your thoughts.



The Flint Hills Trail is the seventh-longest rail trail in the county.

Perry Lake Trail Celebrates 40 Years of Fun (and sweat) on March 3



March 2017 at Perry Lake Trail

Four decades of dedicated volunteers! March 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the Perry Lake Trail being named a [National Recreation Trail](#). Thanks to the sweat equity of the Kansas Trails Council and Perry Lake volunteers, countless hikers and mountain bikers have enjoyed the 29-mile trail with its varied backcountry terrain and beautiful lake views.

Come celebrate this Kansas trail treasure in just a couple weeks on Saturday, March 3. [Dirty Girl Adventures](#) is organizing/hosting a variety of activities, ranging from robust hikes to roasting s'mores.

- Choose an organized hike of 8 or 4 miles – or come out and hike

on your own.

- Hang out with other KTC volunteers and learn the latest on trail maintenance techniques.
- Other information and resources on hand regarding history of the trail; wildlife protocols and protection; and geocaching.
- Did we mention s'mores? Dirty Girls Adventures will be providing a hearty campfire meal.

Some of the activities and the meal carry a small fee – proceeds will benefit the Perry Lake Trail. Check out the DGA link for information and registration details. But anyone and everyone is welcome to come and hike and hang out for free. The beauty of our public parks and trails is that everyone belongs. See you on March 3!

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

We attacked the honeysuckle in November when other plants went dormant in the Campground 1 area. Unlike other trail sections, all three trails (Red, Blue and White) in this area have a dense growth of honeysuckle for some reason. But we're making progress each year in our effort to eliminate this invasive species.

We repaired the waiver box on the skills loop after it had been vandalized. This time instead of the plastic box, we installed a steel box that should withstand any future attempts.

It seems as though the white tail deer population has expanded in recent years. Now it would be rare to not encounter deer on a ride or hike or just driving through the park. The fall migration of pelicans was amazing this year and the eagles are back once again.

The trail continues to see many running events including one scheduled for January.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Clinton Lake – South Shore Trails

During the cooler weather of the fall and early winter, volunteers have been out clearing the South Shore Equestrian and hiking trails at Clinton. Over 1000 volunteer hours were spent working on our trails this year and almost all of those volunteers were Back Country Horseman of Kansas members. It would be nice to see some of the hikers that use our trails put some hours in to help maintain them. Unfortunately, what I am seeing are trail markings from events left along the trails and illegal campfires built in the middle of the trail.

Thanks to the hard work of our equestrian volunteers, the trails are in great shape. We have re-routed several sections of the bottom trail where the high water from the past couple of years has undercut the bank or actually washed the trail away. We also spent a day throwing all the drift wood off the trail that had accumulated over the years in the one half mile section that actually runs along the edge of the lake. All the down trees have been cleared and, thanks to Back Country Horsemen of Kansas bringing in a mini excavator, several very rocky sections close to the campground have been smoothed out. We are looking forward to them coming back this winter and working on some more of our problem sections.

The annual benefit ride for Rockhaven Park and the South Shore Trails was held the last weekend in September and was a big success. Almost \$2000 was raised for campground improvements and trail maintenance. The Clinton Lake Corps of Engineers was able to get the new trail sign/map installed at the trailhead just before the ride. This was a cooperative effort between the Kansas Trails Council, Back Country Horsemen of Kansas and the Corps of Engineers. It's nice when several entities can work together to accomplish a common goal. So, whether you are a hiker, biker or equestrian please consider putting in some sweat equity hours on the trails you use.

Diana Skinner (Dgskinner85@gmail.com)

Badger Creek Trails at Fall River Lake

Back in December, six hearty souls met at the Badger Creek Trailhead to knock out a bunch of needed work. Four people ran backpack blowers over two trails to clear the leaves. They can be so deep as to make the trail all but disappear in places as well as covering lots of rock and other obstacles that can make a wheel stop or cause a turned ankle when walking. The other two folks knocked out a couple of short re-routes and fixed a nasty, jumbled up mess of rocks at a ravine crossing. We worked on improving the flow through a part of the trail that runs through some big boulders with a lot of technical rocky tread. Let's just say, it is a lot less rocky now with some needed improvements in spots. Some hearty chili provided by volunteers really hit the spot after all that work.

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The Corps of Engineers loaned us one of its Stihl backpack blowers for our work day; it made for good use of our time. The Corps has also offered the use of a picnic table for a gathering spot that is located about 20 yards up the trail from the parking area and kiosk. In preparation for that, we made good use of a small back hoe (provided by a family member of one of the volunteers) to move some large rocks around. The rocks were moved into that area, a relic of an old stone foundation, and set up as a picnic table a few years ago by Mike Goodwin and me - with the aid of the KTC Ditch Witch mini skidsteer. That rock picnic table structure had settled and was starting to get pretty uneven and not really usable. We were able to move the large flagstone top and stone base pieces to the one open side of the old foundation, brace everything up with stone and when in place protect the existing foundation and enclose the open end. That leaves space to install a picnic table and make the space more usable and better than ever. We look forward to having a new table in that space for 2018.

In the coming year, we also plan to improve flow on some of the areas of the trail by armoring and/or re-routing short sections. Also, we are making plans to install mile markers on both of the trails. The Corps has offered Carsonite posts as well as providing us with the mileage numbers for that purpose. There was also the mention of a possible volunteer who expressed an interest in working on the trail versus working as a camp host in exchange for free camping in the Corps campgrounds. Happy 2018 to all!

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park

The Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park, Melvern Lake, are a beautiful blend of wooded areas and open prairie. The 11-mile blue trail follows the park boundary, with several miles of lakeshore riding or hiking. The orange trail circles the center area of the park with hills and creek crossings. Both trails provide hilltops with scenic views of Melvern Lake.

A group of volunteers from the Friends of ESP group keep trails mowed where accessible, and all trails are well marked. For equestrians, ESP offers the West Point Campground with 15 camping pads with water and electric hookups. Each campsite has a designated 20x20 pipe corral. An open-sided shelter house is available for group gatherings, and a

shower house is nearby. Cabins and yurts are available close by for rent, and each has a designated pipe corral. Cowboy Camp, the primitive campground, offers lakeside camping. Two pipe corrals, a water hydrant, and several horse tie posts are located in this campground.

Eisenhower State Park is host to a variety of organized trail rides throughout the riding season. *(Photos at left and right, from spring and summer.)*

The annual fall benefit ride, sponsored by Friends of ESP, sees 75-80 riders enjoying a variety of guided rides of varying lengths and speeds. Over the last 7 years, this ride has raised over \$31,500 that has gone directly into trail and campground

improvements. Work this winter will include clearing new trail north of Cowboy Camp through the woods and adding two additional pipe corrals at West Point. **Jim Thomas**

(jjimcherylthomas@gmail.com)



MacLennan Park – Cedar Crest (Topeka)

In Fall 2017, then Governor Brownback honored long-time park manager, Ken Smith, by renaming the trails the Ken Smith Trail System. We have had the privilege of working with Ken over many years on various trail projects and the ongoing maintenance of the trails.



Ken has been park manager for over 30 years and was involved in the original trail development during the Hayden administration. Ken often has given up a Saturday morning to join our volunteer trail team on a project. He is much appreciated and a good friend. This honor is well deserved. We continued spraying honeysuckle last fall on the west side of the park and along the trail corridor to eliminate this invasive non-native species. This winter we plan to remove some of the “tree” size honeysuckle that cannot be effectively sprayed because they are often 25 feet tall.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Dornwood Trails (Topeka)

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 Harland Carothers for his help this fall with the leaf blowing. I have plans for 2018. Hopefully we will add another section of trail to the SE section of the park. I would also like to armor the channel crossings before the spring rains arrive.

Russ Rupp rrupp201@gmail.com



Skyline Park (Topeka)

We’ve had a busy fall building new features for mountain bikers. The boardwalks on the South Summit Trail were lengthened another 30 feet to cover the remaining seepy area (see photo, below).

Some bumps and berms were added on the North Summit Trail to improve drainage and for fun mountain biking. In November we began building the 75 foot long wavy “Caterpillar” and three teeter totters for bikes (see photo on next page).

Videos of the first test run on these features are posted on GetOutdoorsKansas at this link:

<https://www.getoutdoorskansas.org/outdoor-media>

Most of the lumber used for these new structures was provided by the Westar Green Team. Thank you, Green Team for continuing to be an invaluable partner on numerous trail projects!



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This fall we continued spraying to control honeysuckle after everything else went dormant. This significantly reduces spring and summer maintenance as we slowly eradicate this invasive non-native species along the trail corridor in the trees.

With the help of the Shawnee County Parks staff and their skid-steer, we have placed some large two-ton rocks beside the North Summit Trail on the west side for another bike challenge. We'll be working on creating dirt ramps after the first of the year whenever the ground is unfrozen.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)



George Latham Trail

The middle two miles of the 4.25 mile hiking trail was trimmed this fall to get ready for winter. We plan a lopping workday sometime this winter to widen the corridor a bit further. The trail continues to see frequent use with the trailhead camping area full on most weekends when the weather is nice. Hiking in the winter is particularly fun after a snow when the lake is iced over. The lake ice often makes intriguing sounds as it freezes and thaws with changing temperatures. On warmer days in early spring - as you hike between Mile 2 and 3 - listen for low base tones that sound almost like whale song. It's an amazing experience.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Perry Lake Hiking Trail

Just like last year, we had a very productive fall season. How productive? We have cleared over 12 miles of trail mostly with the DR mower! We concentrated our work on October 28 and had eight volunteers that jointly constructed plank walkways over two ditches, and then split into two teams that mowed and lopped nearly two miles of trail, chain-sawed and removed over twenty fallen trees, and found time to paint blazes on trees (and even a few on the painter). Section 1 is now clear from south of 66th street north to Hoover Creek (milepost 2.5 to 4.9).



For the rest of the fall season, several trailwatchers did individual work on the south part of section 1, and by the time you read this will have completed mowing all of section 4! Section 4 now has two nice dayhikes: Slough Creek park (mp 0) to

Ferguson Road, or Ferguson Road to the Audubon area. Each of those endpoints has an easy access parking area allowing for either out-and-back hikes, or end-to-end hikes depending on how far you wish to go.



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We've also met with the new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers trail contact and the new office manager. We've shared ideas on topics ranging from new signs, problem plants (lespedeza, poison ivy, honeysuckle), equipment, people and staffing, and the trail's upcoming 40th anniversary of its designation as a National Recreation Trail – that was when the trail was the original 14 miles which are now sections 1 and 2 of the nearly thirty mile trail.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Perry Lake Biking Trail

As fall winds down we shift into winter mode at the Perry Bike Trail. Long stretch of dry weather has allowed lots of trail usage. This long stretch of dry following an earlier severe down pour that washed a lot of top soil and rocks across the trail has left many sections with loose and dislodged rocks that are slowly being brushed from the trail with normal use and a little TLC during rides. We did some repair of drainage crossings that were impacted by the storm and some tread repair where needed.

All the trails were blown of excess leaf coverage in November. We continue to make small adjustments to current trail with minor reroutes to provide better erosion control, and ride quality. Plans of adding to the existing trail or expanding to another area of the park have been discussed but no action is planned.

Lyle Reidy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Tuttle Creek State Park Trails

End of Year wrap up. We want to thank all the extra HELP we had clearing away flood trash, especially the heavy logs, etc. at the State Park. That particular area on the north seems like our problem child. Looking good now.

Randolph State Park (south) is closed for the winter. But our work is never done. This is the time of the year, if we don't have to wade through heavy snow when we try to go over all the trails and decide which places need more work. This is a really good time to work with power tools as we don't worry about upsetting horses on the trail. So far we have managed to keep most of the trails clear this fall. Don't forget folks, just because the South Side of the Park is closed, the north side is still open for business and it still has water. Trails are good to go. We have picked up an unusually large amount of trash this summer. Please folks, take your old cots and sleeping gear to the dumpster. Remember someone has to take care of such. The Randolph State Park does require a permit. You can acquire such at the trailer of the camp host most of the year or get a yearly sticker when you purchase your drivers license ([Kansas State Parks Passport](#)).

Carnahan Creek Trails - This is a great place to hike or ride your horse or camp. For the most part the trails are well marked, but we are doing some revision on the south half of the trails on the hill. The high water has made some rerouting necessary especially the lower level. This is in progress. We have been over the lower trails that lead from the campground and the north part of the Hill Ground. Only one revision was necessary there. Due to erosion we rerouted a steep rocky downhill. Coming from the north/northeast down the slope you will follow the markings and meet up with the old trail on a new path, which should be much nicer.

There is no access to water at Carnahan, except around the boat ramp on the far south road. The north ramp is long gone and getting to the creek has been difficult due to the high water and vegetation. This area is under Pottawatomie County control and has no access fee. Please bring your own water. **Olivia Huddleston** (kayakkid346@gmail.com)

Switchgrass Trails at Wilson State Park

It has been a quiet quarter for the Switchgrass Trail, but volunteers and I still did manage to get a few items done at Switchgrass!

Back in September 2017, Ron Leiker, a Switchgrass trail rider enthusiast hosted a Stone Post road bike tour. All proceeds from the ride were donated to the Switchgrass trail maintenance funds! Several hearty souls came out to brave the winds and pedaled their way along Highway 232 to view all of the hand carved stone posts between I-70 and Lucas. Thank you all for participating!

Also in September, we had another Switchgrass trail lover come out and donate his time, painting equipment, and sandblasting equipment. In a matter of a few hours, we had the new shipping container sandblasted and painted, inside and out!! (*see photo at right*). A big thank you to James Wacker of Central Kansas Contractors!! Now our new to us equipment storage unit will be better protected from the elements!!



I purchased a few tools to have in the new KTC tool storage unit! We now have our own 500+ piece complete socket set, screwdriver set of multiple sizes, angle grinder, a few other various pieces that are very valuable in equipment maintenance. Thanks to the special holiday pricing and bonus packaging, we got some good deals on the new tools! (*see photo below*).

Next on the work list for the new equipment storage unit is to get electricity into it! The manager of Wilson State Park has volunteered to run their trencher to put in a line from their shop over to the storage unit. I just need to sort out the logistics with their electrical provider on wire, breakers, disconnects and other technical details. We hope to have this project completed by April.



In October and November, I set a couple workdays for tree trimming and string trimming along designated parts of the trail. Having a couple volunteers on each tree trimming day sped up the process of cutting and dragging! There are still some sections to work on, so be ready for some more volunteer work days before the growing season begins! After a little break for the holidays and a break to recharge my trail maintenance spirit, it is time to hope for nice weather on the weekends so I can get back out on the Switchgrass trail to take care of the winter trail work projects list!! Happy trails all!



Sara Kay Carrell (wildmountainhoney_sk@yahoo.com)

Ford County Lake Trail

We are happy to report the Ford County Lake Trail has been restored to its first class trail condition. John Wentling finished raking and grooming the trail and it is comparable to the express lane on a super highway. At present it is a 7 mile loop, through a combination of terrain, topography and technical features that makes it one of the best trails in Kansas. This opinion has been validated by every rider who has been on the trail recently. The trail head takes the riders through a few turns among trees and then gets the heart rate elevated with a mile of loops, drops and turns through a pasture that leads into a stand of trees for a picturesque and easy to navigate trail through a wooded area that reminds one of riding to Grandmother's house for Christmas.

The trail continues with drops that give the technical riders a chance to show their enviable skills, and lets the novice riders realize they can survive some really scary stuff if they just keep the pedals turning. Even the wooded areas are clear and the corners are packed in for some true railing turns at speeds that will cause your Garmin to flash the warning: "Heart rate is too high, slow down". But you won't slow down, and you will smile (and gasp) all the way through the last mile and a half of drops and climbs that is affectionately christened "Billy's Playground" in honor of our inimitable pedal mashing, chain stretching, tire spinning, and air catching friend, Bill Clinesmith.

We ride every Sunday afternoon at 2:00 pm and we welcome all of our single track loving friends to come and join us for an adventure truly worth riding home about.

Van Z. Hampton (vzhampton@hotmail.com)

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Supporting Kansas Trails in 2018

2018 Membership Reminder

KTC Individual, Family & Affiliate memberships expire December 31 of each calendar year (no annual dues for Life members). If renewing your membership dropped off your to-do list during the holidays, here's a friendly reminder to please consider supporting trails in 2018 and renew now. Trails need constant maintenance, and maintenance equipment gets worn down. Your contributions help us keep the equipment and trails in good condition!

Is there someone special in your life whom you wish to honor with the enduring gift of trails? Whether this special person is a hiker, biker, birder, nature lover or simply enjoys the opportunity to unplug and reconnect 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 payment feature. It's now updated to reflect giving "the gift of trails" to someone special. You can also dedicate funds to a specific trail. Check it all 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.**

And finally, don't forget – you can help support Kansas trails every time you use your [Dillons grocery card](#).

Trails Anniversary

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act which has provided for the development and protection of over 100,000 miles of trails covering all 50 states, Washington DC and Puerto Rico. As we reflect on this national treasure, the Kansas Trails Council is proud to be a part of this effort by developing and maintaining trails in Kansas since 1974.

The new year is also the 40th anniversary of the dedication of the KTC's Perry Hiking Trail, the first designated National Recreational Trail in Kansas. Plans are being developed for a celebration of the trail development in March of 2018. See the Perry Hiking Trails article above for more details.

Kansas has a rich variety of trails ranging from quarter-mile city park trails to the 118-mile Flint Hills Nature Trail that is under development and the 57-mile Prairie Spirit Trail and adjoining Southwind Rail Trail. While modest compared to more prominent National Recreational trails like the Appalachian (2,180 miles) and the Pacific Crest (2,650 miles) trails, these flagship Kansas trails connect with nature and many communities as they meander through our scenic Kansas landscape. Kansans can be proud of the over 3,100 miles of trails scattered across the state.

The KTC is a founding partner (with the Kansas Wildscape Foundation) of GetOutdoorsKansas where we have mapped virtually every trail in the state over the past three years. Now you can find a nearby trail on-line anywhere in the state at: www.getoutdoorskansas.org/trails/ Our iPhone mobile app lets people find nearby trails using their phone and the Android version is scheduled for completion soon.

While the Kansas trail mileage is impressive for our size of state and geography, the true measure of the value of our trails is how they impact the lives of our friends and neighbors and enable us to observe and appreciate nature. As uber-hiker Jackie McDonnell puts it in the January 2018 edition of AAA World magazine, "the parks and the trails allow us to satisfy a deep need within ourselves. That's kind of what our country was built on – exploration and checking out what's around the next bend, whether that's across the Rockies or just around the next corner of the trail. You see kids, and they're always running ahead to see what's there. I think that's something in our mind that we all still have. We just have to tap into it."

We hope you find a great trail to hike, run or ride in 2018 and celebrate being outdoors in Kansas. See you on the trail!



Winter Scene – Eldorado State Park