

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

Spring 2018

Two New State Parks!

The 2018 Kansas Legislature approved the addition of two new state parks: the Flint Hills Trail and the Little Jerusalem Badlands. The 117-mile Flint Hills Trail is the seventh longest rail-trail in the country which meanders through the panoramic Flint Hills following some of the route of the historic Santa Fe National Historic trail and provides a segment of the American Discovery Trail. The trail is still under construction west of Council Grove but is otherwise open for hiking, biking and equestrian use. The trail was originally developed by the Kanza Rail Trail Conservancy and is now being completed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism.



The Little Jerusalem Badlands, located in Logan County, was acquired two years ago by the Kansas Nature Conservancy and will now be operated by KDWPT as a state park. The 250 acre park's amazing, but fragile, Niobrara chalk limestone formations present challenges for developing trails in order to provide public access in a way that

preserves the unique geologic area. Also, the sandy soil type will require careful trail design and construction in order to be sustainable.



The Kansas Trails Council is fortunate to be working with The Nature Conservancy, KDWPT and the Westar Green Team to develop a trail system that balances these goals.

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Going into spring the trails are clear and just beginning to show seasonal growth. We had a team spraying workday May 14 with 7 people spraying glyphosate from the Corps trailhead to Lands End. Ten miles in three hours....not bad! Thanks Josh, Art, Pam, Ric, Jim, Terry and Chip for the hard work. We will follow with a lopping workday when needed.



In March our trail team built a new boardwalk across a hillside spring area on the Blue Trail west of Mile 7. The State Park supplied two 25-foot utility poles so that we could span the area with no center posts. Adding approach ramps made a 35-foot boardwalk to keep runners, hikers and bikers high and dry.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Clinton Lake – South Shore Trails



The cooler spring weather allowed our small group of dedicated trail riders to continue improving the equestrian trails at Clinton Lake. Several very large trees that had been leaning over the trails for years were finally removed. We also had a mini excavator in again to remove some very large rocks from several sections of the blue trail. A big thank you to Back Country Horsemen of Kansas for donating your time and equipment to make our trails safer!

The new Sunflower Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Kansas held their spring benefit ride at Rockhaven Park on April 13-14. Even though the weather did not cooperate we had a nice turnout of about 30 riders that came out to support our trails and we raised over \$1200 for campground improvements and trail maintenance.

Diana Skinner (Dgskinner85@gmail.com)

Badger Creek Trails at Fall River Lake

The Badger Creek Trails are in really good shape after a long winter draught. The leaves were blown off just before the new year and even with the constant high winds they are still clear of leaves. With the exception of one downed tree (removed last week) there is very little dead fall of any real size found on the trails. Normally you can expect to find everything from small limbs to large branches and sometimes a tree or two but this winter and spring has been an exception. The Red Buds got zapped this year by a late below freezing cold snap but the wild flowers are out in force.



I spent some time last week hunting for Morel Mushrooms, found one lonely specimen. Evidently I don't know where to look but there were other hunters out on the day that I was there. Past years I have talked to people that said they have dug them in the hundreds. Temperatures and timing probably have a lot to do with it and I have a lot to learn about Morels but will try again next year. In a few weeks it will be time to get back out and do battle with some wild Blackberry in a few spots on the trail. Other than that it doesn't seem to need much in the way of maintenance. The trail is fun and a good hike, run or ride.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park

After the late winter, visitors are returning to West Point Equestrian Campground for some beautiful spring riding on the Crooked Knee Trails. Improvements continue to be made to the campground using funds raised at the annual benefit trail rides held each October. Ranger Ted Craig and I recently assembled a round pen for warming up and exercising horses. This is a temporary fixture until a permanent pen is built. Additional plans for this summer include adding two permanent horse pens that will be designated for equestrian campers renting cabins or



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yurts for overnight stays. The Crooked Knee trails have been mowed and are in great shape. Ted and I are also in the process of expanding the trail system by blazing new wooded trails. We are very fortunate at Eisenhower State Park to have such supportive and dedicated park staff!

Jim Thomas (jimcherylthomas@gmail.com)

MacLennan Park – Ken Smith Trails & Kaw River State Park

With the mild winter weather and little precipitation the trails are slowly beginning to show spring growth, two to three weeks later than normal. Wildflowers are popping up along the trail everywhere. We'll begin spot spraying new growth in May followed by light lopping as needed.



We continue to experience mild vandalism in both parks. This sometimes takes the form of rolling large logs or rocks onto the trail or cutting unauthorized trails or attempting to remove mid-trail map signs.

The signs resist this due to the excessive concrete base in which they are mounted. It's hard to pull a sign out with 140 lbs of concrete and 3-foot rebar attached. Still, they seem to try! Wish we could put all that energy to better use!

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

Dornwood Trails (Topeka)

Dornwood is in pretty good shape. Shawnee County Parks and Rec have started their mowing for the season and they always do a really nice job of keeping the double wide trails mowed. The single track portions of the trail have their usual grass and honeysuckle which will need trimming. The recent heavy rains have left some high water in some of the drain areas but it's not as bad as in previous seasons.

I will be planning a work day to do our spring trimming the last weekend in May or the first weekend in June depending which weekend will work for my volunteers.

As always, if you're in the area, come visit our nice little city trail.

Russ Rupp (rrupp201@gmail.com)

Skyline Park (Topeka)

The park did a controlled burn of the prairie sections this spring and really cleared a lot of small brush. We've sprayed the prairie sections and most of the forested sections and will finish in the next few weeks.

Wildflowers now dot the landscape adding splashes of color to the emerging green of the prairie grasses.



The park continues to make improvements with the addition of new placards explaining the problem of the non-native honeysuckle plants and our efforts to control them. Informative placards have been placed at the main trailhead on Skyline Parkway and at the base of the north summit.

The park is also in the process of adding additional informative placards explaining basic sustainable trail building methods. They also plan to add a shelter at the main trailhead on Skyline Parkway.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

George Latham (Clinton Lake)

The trail was lopped and cleared during the winter months. We plan to spray seasonal growth in the forested sections and mow the prairie section around Mile 2 in the next few weeks.

This trail continues to see high usage due to a nearly full campground at the trailhead on most weekends. This remains one of the few trails with trailside camping sites in Northeast Kansas.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)



Perry Lake Hiking Trail

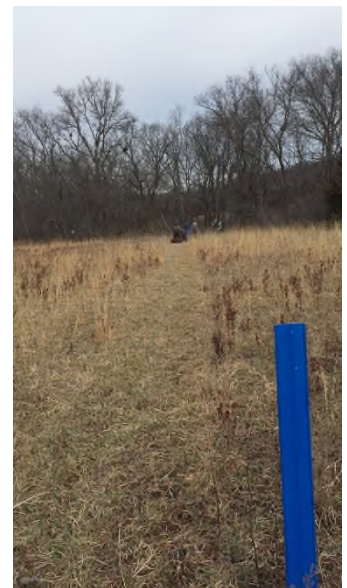
For the spring of 2018 we continued our 2017 idea of having two group workdays. Only this time the first one on February 10th wasn't so pleasant – 15 degrees, solid overcast, and a north wind. Even so, seven workers cleared the paved access road of brush and encroaching trees from the Old Military Trail parking lot to Saddle camp to prepare for the 40th anniversary traffic in March. A nice hot meal afterward hit the spot.

March 3 was not a workday but a perfect weather day to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Perry Lake Trail becoming part of the National Trails System. Any “party” event requires an organizer or two and in this case Denise Selbee-Koch, KTC member and founder of Dirty Girl Adventures, ran the show with two hikes, a hot lunch, and 40th Anniversary clothing. And they brought in over 60 people for the hikes. As part of their awesome effort they raised and contributed \$1,080 to KTC for the Perry Trail – Thank You! The Kansas Trails Council, one of the original trail-building organizations of the trail, brought a “Trail in a Box”, a working display of equipment and tools, and organized binders of the history of the trail: bridges, people, benches.



Our second workday on the trail on March 10 was much more enjoyable -- we enjoyed 40's and 50's. Our team of six volunteers covered one mile of trail (MP8 to MP9) by mowing grasses, lespedeza, and brush, and pounding in blue carsonite stakes to mark the trail in areas where tree blazing is not effective.

At the very end we scouted a possible long re-route for a very troublesome creek crossing on our section 1 – the scouted route looks like it may actually work and the scenic views and rocks along the path were quite attractive. We will follow-up with the Corps and hopefully have this reroute in an upcoming workday.



Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Perry Lake Biking Trail

The trails are in awesome shape heading into the summer months. Dry conditions all winter and spring allowed for almost non-stop trail use. The only negative issue from the excess dry conditions are more rocks being dislodged from the tread requiring some repair by digging in the rocks and or moving soil back onto and around the rocks to secure them back into place.

More promoters are hosting events on the trail this year, including a 6-hour mountain bike race, dirty duathlon and orienteering competitions. We will be busy the next few weeks keeping new growth cut back and trail clear of excessive debris for these events.

Lyle Reidy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Tuttle Creek State Park Trails

The pictures I included are of the road to the Garrison Area. We have been working week-ends for several months to make the roadway to the bottom a bit friendlier. This is one of the access points to the lake on the east side of Tuttle Creek and is leased to the Broken Arrow Church Camp. At the bottom of the hill is the parking lot and access point to some of the hiking trails. With permission from the stakeholder and the Corp of Engineers several of us have been cutting the overgrown trees to make it easier to drive to the parking area which is one access point to the trails. We also pick up trash to spruce up the area.

We have a Scout group from Leonardville, KS who have volunteered to help us. I am planning on walking the Randolph State Park to see just what, where, and how much damage the winds have incurred over the winter. Also, we may have help from of the volunteers that helped last year.

The stakeholder on the Carnahan Creek Area has given his OK to change the trail on the south half of the Camp Loops . We will be assessing the area and see what will be the most sustainable keeping the trail above the flood area.

Olivia Huddleston (kayakkid346@gmail.com)



Ford County Lake Trail

Greetings from the Ford County Lake Trail. The ride on April 29th revealed the Lake trail to be in nearly ideal condition. The track is cleared, packed and fast. The poison ivy is only a few inches high so does not pose a threat to post-ride peace and happiness yet. The trail is a 6.9-mile truncated version of it's old 10.2 mile path to glory, but it is fast and has some technical features that challenge all comers to hang on to the bars. We welcome all of our mountain biking friends to come out on Sundays at 2:00 pm for a group ride. We have a few weeks left before the jumanji growth will cause the faithful riders to bid the trail adieu for the season.

Happy trails!

Van Z. Hampton (vzhampton@hotmail.com)

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Switchgrass Trails at Wilson State Park

A mild winter kept the Switchgrass Trail pretty busy! There was very little snow, no moisture, and mild winter temperatures, so there was a lot of riding activity over the winter! Despite the mild winter, spring was very slow to arrive. The first rains did not fall until April 21st. And the first fabulous spring weekend finally came on May 5th!

With late rain fall and late warm temperatures, this delayed the annual spring spraying that is necessary to knock back the cheat grass and other annual weeds. The first weed spraying event occurred on May 13th. There are still several miles of spraying to take care of!

On April 28th and 29th, I was blessed with the help of several volunteers to help cut in new trail for a re-route area!! Mike Goodwin came out from Topeka with equipment and helped me flag in the new section. Then on Sunday April 29th, we all got busy cutting, raking, chopping, and carving!! We might have lost 500' of an iconic rock section of the trail (due to cultural protection), but we gained about 0.30 mile of new awesome views and a new rock garden! (See photo below) Thanks is not enough to express my gratitude for the volunteers that came out to help shape in the new section!

The first wonderful spring weather weekend arrived JUST in time for our spring mountain bike race on the Switchgrass Trail that was held on May 6th. The Switchgrass Mountain Bike Race is hosted by Friend of the Trail enthusiast Mike Michaelis. He orchestrated the entire event as a fundraiser with proceeds going directly into the Switchgrass Trail maintenance funds. The warm weather, low winds, and dry trail spurred LOTS of trail riders/racers to come out in support of the event/trail! We had 60 racers/trail supporters come out to race and give back to the trail! Thank you to all who came and donated that extra bit to our funds!!

As an early reminder, Friend of Trail Ron Leiker plans to host the Stone Post Road Bike Tour again in September of 2018! All proceeds from the ride benefit the Switchgrass Trail funds! This route starts at Kansas Originals (exit 206, Wilson, on I-70) then pedals North along Highway 232 towards Lucas,

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KS. Along the route are several stops to view the hand carved artwork in the limestone fence posts! More information can be located on the Facebook page: The Stone Post Tour or on the Facebook page: Great Plains Trail Riders.

On another note, Ron Leiker has been busy carving out new signs for the trail! Over the last few years, age, weather, sunshine, and rogue mountain bike wheels (on accident! and mower wheels - oops!) have taken their toll on some of the signage along the route. Ron has been busy practicing his freehand routing of new trail signs! Thank you!!!

If anyone has some extra time to spare, there are several small tasks that could be done when you make a trip out to play on the Switchgrass! There are still sections that need tree trimming and tree removal. The old weathered signs need replaced. Maps and letters need replaced at each cut-off. Several areas of trail need sprayed that are backpack sprayer only sections. There are always small jobs that I could use an extra hand with!!

As always, I cannot express my gratitude for all of you that donate your time volunteering, your funds, and your skills to keep the Switchgrass Trail Epic!! Thanks to each and every one of you!!

Happy trails all!

Sara Kay Carrell (wildmountainhoney_sk@yahoo.com)



New Switchgrass Rock Garden

Supporting Kansas Trails in 2018

The KTC is fortunate to have hundreds of dedicated trail supporters who regularly contribute their time and donations to help us build and maintain trails across Kansas. If you know of someone who also loves trails, please let them know about the KTC and how they could help support trails by becoming a member, making a tax deductible donation or volunteering on a nearby trail.

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 App Now In Online Stores!

If you haven't seen it yet, check out the new trails app for Apple and Android phones in the respective online stores. The GetOutdoorsKS mobile app has over 4,000 miles of trails and routes that we have mapped across the state. Now you can find nearby trails or navigate your favorite trail and always know where you are. It even works when you're out of cell range as the blue dot shows your current location. And....it's FREE!

To find the app, you can search either store for "getoutdoorsks" or "Kansas trails" or use one of these links from your phone:

