

Kansas Trails Council

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Newsletter

Summer 2018

KTC receives statewide grant to expand trail-building capacity in Kansas

Sometimes you can never have too much of a good thing... like trails!

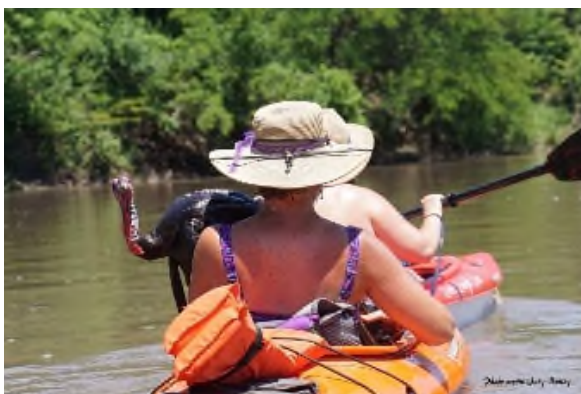
The Kansas Trails Council recently received a grant from the [Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans](#) to help identify and develop more trail champions in the Sunflower State. Working with partner [Thrive Allen County](#), KTC will be hosting focus groups and public meetings in different area, targeting rural counties and regions that currently lack a strong trail-building culture. This exercise to gather data and create new partnerships intends to find out:

- 1) Is there a local interest in natural surface trails in parts of rural Kansas with limited or no trails?
- 2) If so, what does the community need in order to expand their trail-building capacity, from technical knowledge to the mentoring of future trail champions?

National data tell us more and more Americans, especially millennials and younger, love the idea of trails and being outdoors. We suspect some of these undiscovered champions reside in rural Kansas, and we'd love to make their acquaintance and eventually expand the trail-building capacity in our state. To our current members reading this: we welcome any ideas you might have on the next great trail... locations to visit and people to contact. This one year project is just getting started, so we'd love to hear from you. Contact Mike Goodwin at info@kansastrailscouncil.org with any ideas or information.



The grant also includes funds to help build KTC's internal organizational capacity, such as a robust and effective Facebook page and communications platform. The goal is to develop a direct, continuous way for trail volunteers across the state to communicate in real-time about their trail projects. This is not intended to replace this quarterly newsletter or trail reports; but rather, be a bi-directional online platform that brings together all trail volunteers, regardless of geographic location, in one place. This will allow a trail volunteer or user in western Kansas to learn about the status of trails in eastern Kansas following a heavy rain. Or perhaps that trail volunteer needs to borrow a working chainsaw for the next trail workday? There are a myriad of ways such a platform can be useful, reducing the time KTC members spend on the computer, and increasing the amount of time outdoors, on the trail. Again, if you have ideas, contact Mike at info@kansastrailscouncil.org.



The GOKS app is no turkey

Speaking of trails... and rural... the most recent edition of *Kansas Country Living*, a monthly publication for members of rural electric cooperatives in Kansas, featured a fantastic article on the new [Get Outdoors Kansas](#) app. But you don't have to be a member of a coop to "like" the [GOKS Facebook page](#) or download the completely free, no-advertisements app. Check out the GOKS Facebook page right now to learn how to quickly update and refresh the trail feature so you can always stay current with the 5000+ miles (and growing) mapped thus far. Plus, you can find out the story behind this kayaking turkey. Makes you miss summer already!

Clinton Lake – North Shore Trails

Summer maintenance included a spray workday to attack some regrowth and a lopping workday. **Thanks to the Lawrence Trail Hawks who turned out 17 volunteers to lop the entire 23 miles in one morning!** Summer storms brought down a few trees from time to time, but thanks to the reliable reporting from our many trail watchers, we can hike directly to the downed tree without searching forever! This makes our maintenance effort so much easier!

Several running events are planned for the fall including the Hawk 100 – yes, that's 100 miles or four loops of the entire trail. They even run the rocky Red Trail along the shoreline (see photos of my favorite trail at Clinton, at right.)

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)

South Shore Trails at Clinton Lake

Prime trail riding session will soon be upon us, and as always, there is a lot of trail work that needs to be done. The early spring storms, high winds and very dry summer have left numerous large trees across our trails.

Thanks to the numerous riders who have used the trails this summer, there are by-past trails around all the obstacles! That means that we will have our work cut out for us this fall: removing the down trees and repairing all the damage to the trails. Hopefully, we will have a lot of volunteers to help. No workdays are planned at this time but as soon as the cooler weather arrives, we'll look forward to volunteers helping with the hard work. Scheduled work days will be posted on the KTC website and Friends of Rockhaven Park Facebook page.

Diana Skinner (Dgskinner85@gmail.com)



Badger Creek Trails at Fall River Lake

The Badger Creek Trails were clear and in good shape at Fall River this summer season. They continued to see use by hikers and mountain bikers even with warmer temperatures. The south trail entry and a short section immediately after needed some trimming and clean up due to a lot of tall weeds that typically grow along the hillside (see photo at left). Also completed, some spraying to control wild Blackberry and other thorny vines in places on the trail. A small amount of Poison Ivy had begun to emerge and spread in isolated places and should be well under control with some spray application. We are looking forward to cooler temperatures and good riding conditions for the fall season

as usual this year. The north trail head is sporting a new picnic table as well and is a nice addition for a place to hang out and cool down after coming in off the trail.

Terry Plenert (PPLENERT@aol.com)

Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park

It's been a long, hot summer that has not been conducive to either trail work or trail riding! We are looking forward to some great fall weather. The Crooked Knee Trails at Eisenhower State Park, Melvern Lake, are in great shape. Park volunteers have been keeping them mowed, where accessible. A couple of new pens will be added to the West Point Equestrian Campground this fall and will be used for equestrians camping in cabins or yurts, or as overflow pens. Panels have also been purchased; those will be available for temporary pens for special events. Funding for these pens and panels has been provided from proceeds from past benefit trail rides.



The 8th Annual ESP Benefit Trail Ride is **October 12-14**. The weekend will include a poker ride, guided trail rides of varied lengths/distances, delicious meals, a live auction, and lots of camaraderie! Once again, Friends of Eisenhower State Park will cater and donate the Saturday evening meal and a hot breakfast Sunday morning. Eisenhower State Park is very lucky to have a truly dedicated park staff and Friends group!

Jim Thomas (thomasjc68@gmail.com)

MacLennan Park – Cedar Crest (Topeka)

Going into summer, the trails were in good condition so summer maintenance has been minimal. When cooler fall weather arrives, we plan to schedule a workday to do some minor tread touchup and lopping.

In early August, local cross country runners hosted the Third Annual *Let's Repay 5K* event to raise funds for trail maintenance. Hunter Turner and Laura Burenheide organized the event and raised **\$1,020** for the KTC. Over 150 runners braved the early morning humidity to run and support the trails at MacLennan Park. Thank you to Hunter and Laura and all the volunteers for making this event successful! We appreciate your support of the trails.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)



Perry Lake Hiking Trail

Unlike last year, this summer was really too hot to do much, if any, volunteer trail work. So that means you will not see any trail photos with this article. But there was progress – equipment and planning come to mind.

Generous contributions by Dirty Girl Adventures from their very successful 40th Anniversary of the Perry Lake hiking trail (*photo from that event, below*) as well as Recreational Trail Grant funds from KDWPT find us in the upcoming maintenance season better equipped than we've been in many years: Two new handheld trimmers (*photo at right*) were added to our existing DR Mower, chain saw, trailer and various hand tools. The trimmers are intended for use throughout the trail but will be initially placed with two trail-watchers for use on their corresponding sections where the DR Mower cannot easily access.



Looking ahead, this coming year will see an increased focus on signage improvements. Trailhead and along-the-trail markings will be improved. This includes replacement of any damaged wood signs that were put in place more than 15 years ago as well as adding directional and wayfinding / destination signs.

Also on tap for autumn and later work is a reroute of Section 1 near Apple Valley Farm.

The reroute has been scouted and will be presented to the Corps and, if approved, will



address (heck, remove!) one of the more problematic stream crossings on the trail. If promptly approved, work will commence this fall/winter.

Oh, I almost forgot . . . we have our usual mowing / clearing of lespedeza, poison ivy, wild rose, and honeysuckle. Waiting for cooler weather and the call of the wild . . . trail, that is.

Dave Brackey (dbrackey@att.net)

Perry Lake Biking Trail

Not much has changed since the last quarters report. Until the recent rain, it was extremely dry on the trail, causing more than usual incidents of loose rocks and dry dead limbs falling on the trail. We did do some intense re-construction of the trail for about half a mile, leaving from the parking lot. Heavy traffic on this section over the years started to wear the tread enough that water was starting to channel down the trail during heavy rain events, causing further erosion of the tread. We re-established the off slope and added rolling grade dips and water bars to prevent future issues. Looking forward, we (meaning trail stewards and park management) are considering hardening the Skyline loop to be an all-weather course by applying a small layer of gravel in spots. This would allow safe trail use during wet conditions. We are also working on plans to reroute some sections to add some flow trail in between particular tough sections of the trail, giving riders some recovery time. This is all pending on work time available in the coming months.

Lyle Reidy (lriedy@usd345.com)

Switchgrass Trails at Wilson State Park

Happy Late Summer to all! Let me tell you that I am glad it is late summer and almost fall! I will be even happier when it is WINTER! The 2018 growing season has been challenging to say the least! Switchgrass Trail has experienced a monsoon season! I am at the lake working on trails just about every weekend, and every time I check the rain gauge there is no less than 2" of rain in it!



The extra rain that has come this summer on the Switchgrass Trail makes staying ahead of the vegetation growth curve a challenge! Thankfully, a few new volunteers have stepped up to the plate and have been a tremendous help to keep Switchgrass from becoming a jungle! At the same time, while we are busy with vegetative control, the dirt work is getting away from us. As you all know, above average moisture also means more erosion control is necessary. So... guess what is on the winter to do list!? Yep, erosion control, along with the normal tree cutting, trail sign replacement, equipment maintenance, tool organizing, refreshing various supplies and general 'shop keeping'.

Along the way over the summer, Switchgrass was able to add a second string trimmer to our arsenal of equipment! This is a nice addition for group work days! I hope to add a second chainsaw soon so we can double our tree cutting on volunteer work days! *(See dedicated volunteers, of the two-legged and four-legged variety, at left.)*



Thankfully, most of our equipment is newer now or reached a milestone in the last year or two that mandated a rebuild. I am happy to report that the worst of my equipment failures so far this summer is an exploding backpack sprayer! No injuries, but I was sure hoping that if I was going to be subjected to a severe chemical dousing, that at least it would have turned me into a superhuman mutant with super speed powers on the mountain bike..... Hah! No such luck yet!

The full round of mowing – third one this season - should be complete Labor Day weekend! We will then have a few volunteer work days to get the full round of string trimming complete. I wish I could say this third round of mowing will be the last... but I am afraid that a fourth round will be in order by mid October. That will be the final mowing and the trail will be 'winterized' and ready for winter fun and spring!

Happy Trails to All!! Keep the rubber side down! And remember - stay up to date on trail activities, trail conditions, winter racing, spring racing fundraisers, fall ride/tour fundraisers, volunteer workdays and so much more on FaceBook: Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail.



Sara Kay Carrell (wildmountainhoney_sk@yahoo.com)

Ford County Lake Trails

The Ford County Lake trail is currently overgrown with poison ivy and is not rideable. The maintenance crew members will be scheduling a reclamation exercise in the near future to make the trail safe for humanity. We expect that to happen in September and will report the status of the project next month. Happy trails!!

Van Z. Hampton (Dodge City) vzhampton@hotmail.com

John Wentling (jwentling@buyggautos.com)

Manhattan Area Trail Action (Trail in a Box)

Trail in a Box MHK has once again been busy this year. In addition to assisting with ongoing maintenance work and the addition of 2.5 miles of beginner/intermediate trail at Fancy Creek state park, the trailer tools and volunteers have been busy doing a deep clearing of vegetation as well as dirt work at the Manhattan River Trails. We are also happy to report new sections of trail have been opened up at the Sunset Zoo Trails located inside of Wildcat Creek Linear Trail Park here in Manhattan. These additions include a new stacked loop that gives trail users the ability to move from the more intense terrain in the eastern part of the park onto a more flat valley area that edges right up to the banks of Wildcat Creek. Late summer and fall plans are to create a new bike-specific entrance near the main staircase entrance on the eastern edge of the park.

Speaking of new entrances (to the Sunset Zoo Trails in Wildcat Creek Linear Trail Park), the city of Manhattan has invested in the professional development of a one-mile natural surface trail, connecting the abutting Jorgensen Park to Wildcat Creek Linear Trail Park. This trail links a major road crossing near the KSU campus through the parks and to our Linear Trail that traverses the city of Manhattan. Jorgensen Park is located just east and north of Wildcat Creek Linear Trail Park. The new trail is a fully bench cut machine built section of trail that moves through both heavily wooded and hilly terrain as well as open flowing grass meadows. Each of the trail entrances is marked by limestone mosaic rock work and each low water crossing has large stone work armoring to help not only keep the trail tread dry by creating a smooth transition in and out of the crossing, plus it adds a nice natural aesthetic to the trail experience. As of the first of August the new Jorgensen Park Trail is open for use and currently has a trail counter monitoring the usage over the next few weeks.



Aaron Apel

Tuttle Creek State Park Trails

I'm afraid the heat over the summer slowed our trail work plans down to a crawl. We are still planning to remove a couple of trees and reroute several places that need work. Considering the lack of rain on most of our trails (before the recent downpours and flooding) - the fact that Tuttle Creek Lake had been backed up was a bit weird. However, said water really didn't affect the trails too much this year.

The trails at Randolph State Park are open. The camp host will be glad to answer questions. You are on your own at Carnahan Campground. There is a lot of riding in a small area and most feel free to explore. We make a point of gathering trash (and there is always plenty of it) so remember to spread the word – **please no littering!**

Wishing for a nice pleasant fall where we can regroup and gets lots done.

Olivia Huddleston (kayakkid346@gmail.com)



Skyline Park (Topeka)

Summer maintenance involved mowing prairie sections every two to three weeks and lopping the tree sections occasionally. The park continues to add amenities like the new parking area near the gate and signage. New placards in several locations explain the ongoing battle to remove the invasive honeysuckle (*see below*).



The park is planning to install several additional placards to explain 1) why and how we build sustainable trails and 2) why we do not build fall line trails going straight up a slope.

The photo below shows a fall line social trail created by people hiking up to the north summit. These trails are difficult to remove because they are so visible and provide the shortest path to the top.

One solution is to add “armoring” - rock paving with periodic water bar controls. We’re planning a volunteer workday in September to armor this section and eliminate future erosion.

Watch for “before” and “after” photos in the next newsletter.

Mike Goodwin (goodwinmw@gmail.com)



New Kansas-Based Trail Building Company

A great sign that Kansas really is becoming a trail-loving state...

[Native Trail Solutions](#) (NTS) is a startup construction company that specializes in the development of naturally occurring recreational facilities; through a variety of purpose-built natural surface trails (i.e. equine, running, bike, hiking, etc.). The primary field of expertise is the consultation, design and construction of soft/natural surface mountain bike and hiking trails. The company offers a comprehensive list of services, aiming to address the needs of trail

users and land managers (e.g., municipalities, state parks, military installations, not-for-profits, residential developers, and private landowners). The core vision of Native Trail Solutions is to provide a quality of place through immersive trail experience that allows users intimacy with their natural environment. Check out their website and learn more!

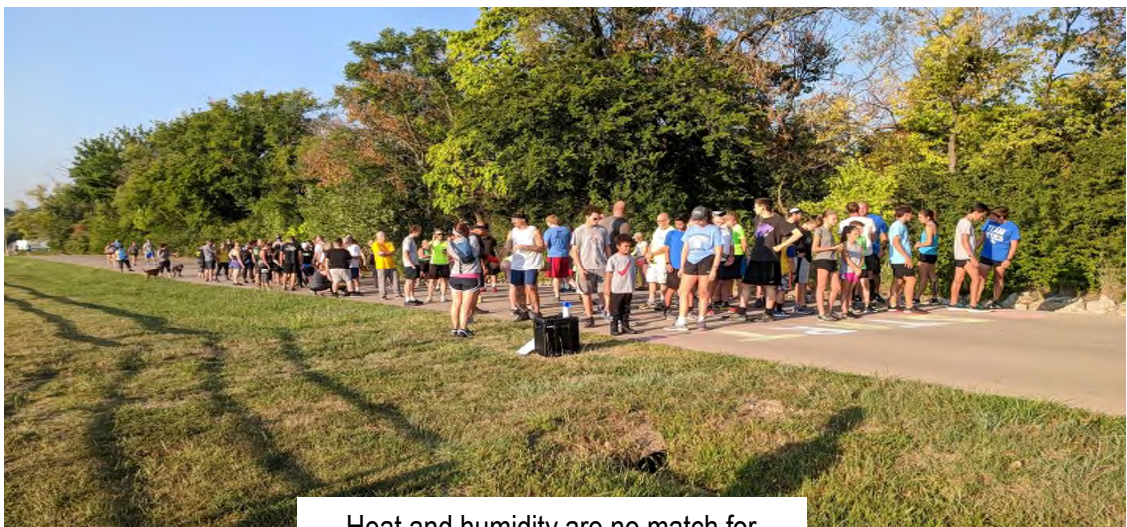
NATIVE
TRAIL
SOLUTIONS



Get Ready to Rush the Rails

Back for its second year – and this time, on the Flint Hills Trail as a newly designated state park! The Rush the Rails event on October 6 will once again showcase the beautiful, varied geography of Kansas as the trail stretches from Osawatomie to Council Grove. The all-day event includes multiple options of riding and running (or walking), with distances varying from family-friendly and leisurely to hard-core athlete. Or just come for the party and food at the finish line!

Please consider participating or volunteering at this event as a way to show how much we value our public trails in Kansas. NOTE: you might meet some interesting people – last year, one runner came all the way from Norway.



Heat and humidity are no match for these brave trail runners & hikers at the **Let's Repay 5K!**