

PRAIRIE TRAVELERS



Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2019

Dear friends,

Prairie Sunset Trail users see the trail as a valuable local resource for wellness, natural beauty, and recreation. In keeping with that trust, Prairie Travelers felt compelled to maintain a high degree of visibility within the communities we serve.

We have increased our visibility and outreach over the past few years by posting actively on Facebook, updating our web page (prairiesunsettrail.org), updating our maps at the trailheads, becoming active with local government bodies and participating in community events. We attend city council meetings and open house events, where we have the opportunity to offer input for new projects. We actively partner with local organizations on events, ranging from festivals to clinics teaching children to ride a bike.



In 2019 we:

- Purchased 4 new trailhead signs and 50 additional trail signs (at crossings and as guides) which are being installed along the entire 15 mile trail;
- Opened a crossing for trail users over the Cowskin Creek (with the City of Wichita);
- Actively participated in both Goddard and Wichita's Chamber of Commerce;
- Installed 8 additional benches at each 1/2 mile on the trail extension;
- Started work on the Memorial Brick Park at the Cecile Kellenbarger Memorial Trailhead in Goddard (see insert for information on purchasing a brick);
- Participated in several local festivals and community events;
- Worked with a local Goddard church on a volunteer workday with 50 people;
- Completed drainage work on the west and east side of 135th Street West;
- Started an additional drainage project west of 263rd, with additional limestone to be added;
- Attended Sunflower State Trails Appreciation Day in Topeka;
- Attended KDOT's local consult meetings to ask them to save our bridge over the Big Ditch; and
- Joined with other trail groups in a dialogue to form a statewide Rail Trail Organizational Group in response to a bill in the Kansas legislature.

In This Issue

- Winter 2019 Update
- Fundraising updates
- Spotted on the Trail
- Pawnee Prairie Ribbon Cutting & Pathway to Ride
- Andover-Augusta Rail Trail Initiative updates
- Upcoming meetings/workdays
- **Insert:** Memorial bricks, Volunteer Awards, Membership form, Updates

Prairie Travelers is a volunteer run organization. We need your help to keep this momentum going, and to raise the additional funds necessary to meet our goals this year and next. Donations can be made by check or online (through PayPal) at www.prairiesunsettrail.org.

With gratitude,
The Prairie Travelers Board of Directors

A Windy Wicked Wind 100K

The annual Wicked Wind ride lived up to its name this year! Winds did not deter the 250 riders who joined us for our annual spring fundraiser. This year, the ride included a new gravel route that utilized sections of the Prairie Sunset Trail. The ride also included a family ride around the lake and our traditional lunch, which featured many homemade goodies. This ride is co-sponsored by AARTI (Andover Augusta Rail Trail Initiative) and Prairie Travelers, and the ride raised \$3,500 for each trail.

And a Breezy Walnut Valley Metric

A brisk breeze greeted the 160 riders who rode the Walnut Valley Metric ride on the last Sunday in September. We offered three ride options: 35 or 65 mile road rides, or a 42 mile gravel ride.

This was the second year for the gravel ride and was again very popular. Lunch took place at the historic Liberty Schoolhouse, and gave riders an opportunity to mingle with old and new friends while enjoying homemade baked goods. This year, the ride raised \$4,400 for the Prairie Sunset Trail.



These two events are the biggest fundraisers for our trail work. We are grateful for the 30+ volunteers who make it possible, including our volunteer bakers. Special thanks to Steve Richards at Blendrich Nutrition, Sprouts Farmers Market for the fruit, Jimmy John's for the chips, Paceline Products for the Chamois Butt'r samples, Heartsprings and the MS Society for snacks and supplies, and Bicycle Pedaler, Heartland Bicycle, Apostle Bikeworks for rider support.

Mark your calendars for next year:



- **May 17, 2020:** Oz Wicked Wind 100K (start at Lake Afton)
- **September 27, 2020:** Walnut Valley Metric (start in Winfield)



Spotted on the Prairie Sunset Trail:

- Cross country teams from both Friends University and Kansas Newman University, who love the trail and run on it regularly;
- A couple from Wisconsin, who heard about the trail on www.trailink.com/ and made the trip to Wichita specifically to walk the trail;
- A family from Belgium, who were on the trail to experience Kansas and explore nature; and
- People like you and me!



Don't Use Muddy Trails!

Using muddy trails causes serious, permanent (expensive!) damage. We know you're itching to get outside after rainy days or snow melt, but please find a paved trail to use when it's muddy or wet.

Pawnee Prairie Ribbon Cutting & Pathway to Ride

In April, Prairie Travelers helped Bicycle Pedaler with Goddard's Pathway Church first annual "Pathway to Ride," an event to help children learn to ride without training wheels. Prairie Travelers distributed 50 green kids T-Shirts that said, "Happiness is the Prairie Sunset Trail." A week after the event, we got word that one of the kids who learned to ride his bicycle the weekend before rode the trail with his dad for the first time. A great reminder why these outreach activities are so important!



The ribbon cutting was part of District IV's \$1 million investment from the sale of the Hyatt. The funds were allocated towards enhancing horse and bicycle trails and playgrounds at the 400 acre Pawnee Prairie Park. This investment also included improving the bridges over the Cowskin Creek, including the one linking the Prairie Sunset Trail from Seville to Maize Road. This summer, limestone was washed away by the bridge over the Cowskin Creek, and was replaced by the City of Wichita with larger stones that are more difficult to ride on. We have advocated to the City of Wichita to either pave or replace the limestone with something easier to ride on. For more information on the repairs, contact the Wichita Parks and Recreation Department, (316) 268-4361.

AARTI Update

Excitement is building as two potential projects for the Redbud Trail are taking shape.

- First is working being done by the City of Andover to link the trail across 13th Street to the already existing continuation of the Redbud Trail at Prairie Creek.
- Secondly, Sedgwick County is committed to completing the Redbud Trail from Woodlawn to 159th, and has placed the project on their CIP (Capital Improvement Project) list, which would extend the trail to 17 miles.

We continue to hope that the trail will be completed to Augusta soon, and have included that request in the Forward Kansas local consult meetings with Kansas Department of Transportation.

AARTI volunteers are relentless in their monthly workdays, keeping the trail in the best shape possible and helping with several annual fundraisers with Prairie Travelers. Volunteers have also been active in making sure that the trail remains on planning priority lists, and are passionate about community involvement.

AARTI and Prairie Travelers work closely together to promote trails across the metropolitan area. If you would like to donate (tax-deductible, non-profit) or volunteer, updates are posted on our FB or email at:

www.facebook.com/andoveraugusta.railtrailinitiative

aartitrail@gmail.com or mail to AARTI, PO Box 692, Andover, KS 67002



In Memorium

Long time Prairie Travelers supporter, bicyclist, volunteer and friend, **Janice Mowat**, lost her battle with cancer in July and chose her memorial to support of the Prairie Sunset Trail. During the Wicked Wind 100 in May, she worked tirelessly making sandwiches from her wheelchair for all those that came through the line with a huge smile on her face. She will be honored with a bench in her memory along the trail.

Larry Ross passed away in 2017, but was honored this year with a bench dedication on the trail. Larry was a passionate supporter of rail trails in Kansas, and was an integral part of the formation of both Prairie Travelers and the Sunflower Rail Trail Conservancy. Thanks to all who gathered for this special time.

Upcoming events & meetings

Workdays: 2nd Sat. of the month

Meet at IHOP, 515 S Ridge Cir, Wichita
7:30 a.m. for breakfast
8:00 a.m. for work details

Meetings: 2nd Wed. of the month

Meet at 7:00 p.m. at Bite Me BBQ,
132 N St Francis St, just north of
Douglas in the Old Town area

Prairie Travelers Board of Directors:

Larry Hatfield, President

Ruth Holliday, Secretary/Treasurer

Renee Boyd

Larry Debolt

Tony Flax

Matt Freund

Bob Lavelle

John Moore

Kelly Wenz

Larry Zimmerman



We exist because of supporters like you: your donations and your volunteer labor. Please join us in making Kansas trails accessible to everyone. Use the enclosed membership form and envelope for a tax deductible contribution. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Contact Us

Larry Hatfield,

316-253-1807

Ruth Holliday

316-685-4545

Prairie Travelers, Inc.

P.O. Box 781033

Wichita, KS 67278-1033

www.prairiesunsettrail.org

prairietravelers@yahoo.com

The mission of Prairie Travelers is to develop, maintain and promote the Prairie Sunset Trail. Our vision is that the Prairie Sunset Trail connects neighbors and communities; promoting healthy, active lifestyles, stewardship of nature and appreciation of the region's history.



[facebook.com/
prairietravelers](https://facebook.com/prairietravelers)

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Prairie Travelers, Inc.

P.O. Box 781033

Wichita, KS 67278-1033

Memorial Bricks Now Available

Prairie Travelers is working with the City of Goddard to create a Memorial Brick Park surrounding the Cecile Kellenbarger Memorial Statue in the Goddard Linear Park. We have secured a bricklayer and are now accepting purchases of the bricks. We expect to complete the memorial park in the spring of 2020.

The inspiration for the project came from Donna Carrell and Rick Sroufe, who thought it would be a fitting addition to the memorial statue, and a way to honor those who love the trail.

For more information on the project or to reserve a brick, please contact Prairie Travelers at prairietravelers@yahoo.com or fill out the form below and return to Prairie Travelers.

MEMORIAL BRICK ORDER FORM

Donor Information

Name

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE and ZIPCODE

PHONE

EMAIL ADDRESS

TOTAL DONATION

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:
PRAIRIE TRAVELERS
 P.O. BOX 781033
 WICHITA, KS 67278

DO NOT FILL IN SHADED AREA WHEN ORDERING LOGO. ONLY ONE LOGO PER BRICK.
 LOGO SELECTED
 We are not responsible to correct spelling

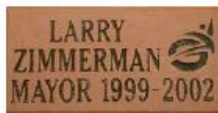
4" X 8" Brick \$100 Donation or with Logo \$125.00 (Maximum 3 lines 12 characters per line)

8" x 8" Brick \$250 Donation or with Logo \$280.00 (Maximum 8 lines 12 characters per line)

BRICK EXAMPLES



4X8 BRICK



8x8 BRICK



Advocacy Updates

WAMPO Proposed Project Review

The Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) has invited the public to help update their next long-range metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), which sets the vision and strategy for all regional transportation decision making for the next 20 years. It also included a Wichita Transit Bicycle Master Plan Update. The time to express our desire for a connection between the Prairie Sunset Trail and the Redbud Trail is now! Responses will be collected through end of business on Wednesday, December 4, and you can access it online: www.publicinput.com/5208/

Forward Kansas



A series of regional meetings in 2019 gave Kansans the opportunity to help shape the future of the state's next long-range transportation plan, including a Bike/Ped Program. The initiative is called "FORWARD Kansas." These meetings will guide investments from 2020 to 2045.

KDOT's Secretary of Transportation, Julie Lorenz, and her staff have been coordinating the

meetings with the goal of getting programs in the active stage of completion with a two-year system of evaluation and progression rather than a 10 year wait.

Several of our Prairie Travelers and AARTI representatives have attended sessions in the Wichita area and shared our needs in writing. Our concerns are: retaining the bridge over the Big Ditch by the Prairie Sunset Trail, and, on the east side, the construction of the bridge over Kellogg and the Whitewater River to complete the Redbud Trail to Augusta.

Their willingness to come with open minds and sort out priorities has been very encouraging. While the local consult meetings are ending this month, you can still contact Mike Moriarty, KDOT Chief of Transportation Planning, at Michael.Moriarty@ks.gov with additional questions or concerns.

Prairie Travelers Outstanding Service Awards

In every nonprofit there are key individuals who work hard behind the scenes. Prairie Travelers is no exception and has been blessed with many of these dedicated volunteers, including Cecile Kellenbarger, who tirelessly worked to make sure the Prairie Sunset Trail became a reality before losing her battle with cancer in 2011.

This year, we want to recognize a few of these individuals – people who have gone above and beyond to make the Prairie Sunset Trail a reality.

Trailblazer Award



Kelly Wenz, owner of “**Eco Outdoor Management**,” is one of many contractors for the City of Wichita’s Maintenance of by-ways and parkways. He has brought to Prairie Travelers a wealth of energy and knowledge that has given our trail manager, Bob Lavelle, a boost as he now has help during his many hours on the trail! Kelly has helped us with grading the trail where the city maintenance crews couldn’t keep up with the mowing on their seven mile extension, as well as countless hours of cutting limbs, trimming and filling in ruts. Kelly also has equipment that has allowed us to improve our maintenance ability. He will be joining our Board of Directors this winter.

Trailblazer Award

Larry DeBolt has been an **ardent and tireless volunteer** and current board member since 2015, when John Moore recruited several “Geezers” to work on the trestle bridge and the Prairie Sunset Trail extension that year. Larry is always willing to give a helping hand when needed for workdays and/or special events. He brings a positive disposition and a good work ethic and we feel fortunate to have him on board.



With Special Thanks

Congratulations and thank you to our Boy Scout volunteers! Two Eagle Scout candidates from Boy Scout Troop #727, Caleb Parry & Mike Edington, are building 7 benches on the Prairie Sunset Trail at approximately the half mile point from 167th St W to Hoover Rd. This makes it our 4th and 5th Eagle Scout Project on the Prairie Sunset Trail.

Prairie Travelers Membership Form

****Please consider an end of the year tax deductible contribution to Prairie Travelers****

Just imagine a network of interconnecting trails in Kansas available to anyone for walking, bicycling, and jogging. You would discover a world of wide-open skies, rolling prairie, wildflowers, forests, and wildlife. Envision traveling from town to town, exploring Kansas' natural and historical heritage. With your help, this and more can be realized.

Check dues level below:

- New Renewal
- \$25 Pathfinder (student or limited income)
- \$50 Wanderer
- \$100 Trail Explorer
- \$250 Trailblazer
- \$500 Life Saver

Other gift \$ _____



This gift is in honor of _____

(Please include address if you want notification of gift sent.)



Donations can now be accepted online through PayPal!

Visit www.prairiesunsettrail.org and click on the "Donate" button.

Remember: Please note t-shirt size with donation of \$100 or more.

T-SHIRT SIZE: Unisex Women's
 XS SM MD LG XL XXL

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail: _____

_____ ***Please include me on communications related to the Andover-Augusta Rail Trail Initiative***

YES! I would like to help Prairie Travelers in the development of rail trails in Kansas. Please send me more information on _____



Make checks payable and send to:

Prairie Travelers, Inc.
P.O. Box 781033
Wichita, KS 67278-1033

***Prairie Travelers is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization.
All contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.***