

Kansas Trails News

Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy

4/1/2015

Flint Hills Nature Trail Section Construction Underway

Construction on Phase IA of the **Flint Hills Nature Trail** Project from Pomona town going east six miles actually started February 23 which is earlier than originally projected. Here is a news release from Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism:

TOPEKA - The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) has contracted with APAC-Kansas, Shears Division to complete improvements along the **Flint**

"We are very happy that construction started earlier than expected on this key trail section and that it will be completed this summer. The Flint Hills Trail is going to be an outstanding asset for the people of the Sunflower State.

---Scott Allen, President, Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy

Hills Nature Trail. The first phase of construction (Phase I-A) will extend from Colorado Road to Iowa Terrace in Franklin County with construction activities occurring entirely within the current Flint Hills Nature Trail right-of-way. The \$1,194,322 project will include clearing, gravel surfacing, bridge railing, and signing."

Bids for Phase I-B (Ottawa east) will be let later this year. Surveying work is already underway for Phase II which stretches from Quenemo to Council Grove.

KDOT Signing Trans-America Trail in Kansas

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According to the Chanute Tribune (3-10-15), "A plan to put a section of the US Bike Route 76 Trans-America Bicycle Trail in Chanute was unanimously approved by the Chanute City Commission on Monday night. This cross-country bicycle route will come into town from the east on a section of South 21st Street, and go out of town on south Santa Fe. Road signs marking the route will be installed by KDOT as part of this plan."

"Commissioner Martha McCoy mentioned how cyclists using this route often stop for food or other needed goods here in Chanute. In approving the plan, Chanute Mayor Greg Woodyard recalled a cyclist he met last summer at Benchwarmers who was going through Chanute as part of a cross-country ride."

It's possible that the 19-mile Western Sky Trail between Chanute and Fredonia could become part of the bike route after it is developed.

Blue River Rail Trail Now Surfaced from Marysville to Neb. State Line

According to Steve O'Neal of Marysville, as of March 15, the remaining four miles of the **Blue River Rail Trail** from Marysville to the Nebraska State Line (Marietta, KS to State Line) now has an improved roadbed (limestone screenings). However, these last few miles are currently not open for public use because two bridges are needing to be completed, but the surface is now improved. A second covered bridge will be built at Oketa.

This completes the 11.5-mile trail in Kansas!

Nebraska is still working to complete the **Homestead Trail** (which connects with the Blue River Rail Trail) from Beatrice south 23 miles to the Kansas state line. Lynn Lightner with the Nebraska Trails Foundation reports the

foundation is entering into contracts with a trucker to haul 16,000 tons of limestone and a contract to deck and rail bridges for \$80,000. The intent is to finish the bridges prior to placement of limestone.

Once this section is complete, trail users will be able to travel all the way from Marysville to Lincoln, Neb!

The next project for Marshall County Connections is to build a connector trail from the south trailhead to the historic depot which is going to be restored. Hopefully by the time this happens the trail extension from the City's Railbed Rehab to the Depot (1 block) will be complete or coincide.



Prairie Sunset Trail

Prairie Sunset and Redbud Trails to be extended this year

Construction is slated to begin this year to extend the **Prairie Sunset Trail** four miles west from Hoover Rd. to 167th St. in Wichita and to extend the **Redbud Trail** from Meadowlark Road, east of Andover, to Augusta's **Whitewater River**. The city of Augusta plans to develop the trail from the river into town. The City of Andover is building a three-mile section of the trail.



Construction on the Redbud Trail in Andover

A total of \$110,000 in private donations and grants has been pledged for the **Prairie Sunset Trail** and \$90,000 for the **Redbud Trail**. A team of

AmeriCorps volunteers will be preparing the corridors for construction which is slated to begin in late April and continue until mid-July.

The **Prairie Spirit Trail** extension will bring the trail into Wichita and will connect with the **Pawnee Prairie Park**, which will serve as the main trailhead. The path also passes by the **Air Capital Memorial Park** which has single-track paths for mountain bikes.

Once the Redbud Trail is complete, trail users will be able to ride all the way from Augusta to central Wichita!

Koch-Funded Groups: Cut All Federal Funding for Walking, Biking, Transit

A coalition of 50 groups, several funded by the Koch brothers, sent a letter to Congress earlier this year arguing that the way to fix federal transportation funding is

to cut the small portion that goes to walking, biking, and transit. The signatories do not want Congress to even think about raising the gas tax, which has been steadily eaten away by inflation since 1993.



The coalition's membership includes many stalwarts of the Koch network including the powerful Americans for Prosperity.

Transportation Alternatives (formerly TE) funding has provided funding for dozens of mostly urban recreational trails in Kansas over the last two decades. But killing this program won't affect the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. That can only be solved by raising the gas tax.

Kansas River Trail in Lawrence

"A new, improved trail along the Kansas River just west of downtown will be a nice addition for Lawrence residents, as well as visitors to the city.

Work is scheduled to begin soon on the trail, which will run along the south bank of the river and connect **Constant Park** and **Burcham Park**. The trail, which will be about two-thirds of a mile long, also will connect to a trail that serves the new **Sandra Shaw Park**, on the former VFW property near Second and Maine streets.

Some informal trails exist in the area, but the new trail will be highly improved with a combination of concrete and crushed asphalt surfaces that are appropriate for use by both walkers and bicyclists."

--Editorial, *Lawrence Journal-World*, 3-31-15

