



GPTN

GREAT PLAINS TRAILS NETWORK

SUMMER 2023

ISSUE 151

2023 Tour de Lincoln Big Success

BY MARY TORELL

Lincoln cyclists had plenty of ways to celebrate National Bike Month in May, and enjoying the 2023 Tour de Lincoln Bike rides on Lincoln's trails system was one way! GPTN had another successful year for the annual bicycle rides.

As they have done now for 18 years, GPTN sponsored Thursday evening bike rides in May designed to take participants to different quadrants of Lincoln and explore the trails. All rides started and stopped at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center at Union Plaza Park.

Members of GPTN's Board of Directors led each ride, provided mechanical support and made sure there were no riders left

behind. The rides varied in distance from 12 to 16 miles each, and were designed to acquaint the city's cyclists with different trails, conditions and features.

People of all ages and families came out and enjoyed the rides. An elderly gentleman from Omaha came for all of the rides. Lots of positive comments were made about how much cyclists enjoyed the trails and being outside on their bikes. With participation totalling over 150 cyclists, the turnout was great for all the rides. Even threatening weather and few sprinkles didn't discourage riders! Popsicles and fudgesicles were provided at the end of the rides; they were very popular and much appreciated!



Riders enjoy the Southwest ride on a tandem.



Exploring the Northwest ride on fat tires.



The Southeast ride offered a Capital view.



Holmes Lake provided a nice gradual hill.



President's Note

Hello Trail Advocates,

One of my favorite parts of my job is playing tour guide when introducing new students, faculty, and staff to the trail system that we have here in Lincoln. I love hearing the student reactions when I point out the 134 miles of trails and the different destinations that exist on each of the trails. My favorite spot to do this is on the spiral climb to the overlook between Assurity and The Hub Café in Antelope Valley. My sales pitch often goes like this: On this trail you can go to The Zoo and Holmes Lake. If you head in this direction on this trail, you can go to Pioneers Park and visit their Nature Center and see real Bison and Elk. This trail can take you to Beatrice and then 20 miles into Kansas. This trail can take you to Omaha and 80 miles into Iowa (minus that 8-mile gap that we are working currently working on to complete).

When I mention the total miles of trails within the city limit you never think that someone would jump at the opportunity to ride them all in one day. In this newsletter you will read an article by an individual who completed this feat. *(See article on page 7.)*

I know that not all of us are motivated or capable of riding 134 miles of trails in one day, but I do know that there are other special stories out there about how the trails play a part in our everyday life. If you would like to share a picture or a story to our newsletter, please do so via our contact information on our website. I believe these stories are an important part of why we continue to invest in the trails in our community and around Lancaster County.

See you on the trails,
Jordan Messerer



This year's Give to Lincoln event on May 24 was another successful day for trails in our community. Through

the generosity of local trail users, over \$44,000 was raised to build and enhance trails in Lincoln which includes \$2,700 from the \$500,000 match fund provided by Lincoln Community Foundation and generous sponsors, including Presenting Sponsor, West Gate Bank. This year's donations will support trail improvements in Wilderness Park that will enhance the accessibility, usage, enjoyment, and appreciation of this special area. Since Give to Lincoln's inception in 2016, over \$260,000 have been donated to support trails.



Great Plains Trails Network

Since 1988

*dedicated to the goal of developing
a network of commuter and
recreational trails within
Lincoln and Lancaster County*

2023

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A Trail Runs Through It: South Haymarket Park

BY KERRY EAGAN

The Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN) strongly supports the proposed South Haymarket Park. Like the Jane Snyder Trails Center, the park will serve as both a trail head and a final destination for trail users. The park will include construction of the Chris Beutler Trail, which will provide a direct link between the North Jamaica Trail and the N Street Trail. GPTN has already raised \$294,000 for this critical trail link. The City of Lincoln recently unveiled the design concepts for the park. The design includes something for everyone and (since a dog park is included) their dog. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2024, with a completion date near the end of 2025.

However, more planning and fund raising needs to be done before the South Haymarket Park becomes a reality. The price tag for the park is now estimated at \$16 million. So far, the City has received a \$2.1 million grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development to help pay for the park, and the Lincoln Parks Foundation has raised another \$6 million from private donations. The most recent estimates indicate that another \$10 million needs to be raised to complete funding for the park.

South Haymarket Park is a once-in-a-



Joining the Mayor for the announcement (L-R) Todd Ogden, Downtown Lincoln Association; Mike Smith, Rabble Mill; Randy Gordon, Lincoln Parks Foundation; Phil Burcher, Lincoln Skatepark Association; Mayor Gaylor Baird, Maggie Stuckey-Ross, Parks and Recreation Director; Trevon Brooks, NE Department of Economic Development and Alec Gorynski, Lincoln Community Foundation.



GPTN Board member, Bill Wehrbein, points out different aspects of the new South Haymarket Park.

generation opportunity for Lincoln. Not only will the park create much needed green space for a burgeoning downtown residential community, it will also serve as an urban destination, enhancing our entire community's economy and quality of life for years to come. While the Parks Foundation will lead fund raising efforts, completion of the project will require the active cooperation of many private and governmental entities. And given the importance of the park in expanding and improving Lincoln's trail system, GPTN will continue to be part of this effort.

Trail Trek Continues to Grow and Expand



Perfect timing with the train to make a street crossing!

BY DENA NOE

Trail Trek 21 headed out from Speedway Village with over 560 riders enjoying beautiful June weather, with a bit of wind mixed in. Riders headed out on their treks of 41, 32, 24 and 11 miles, having a chance to explore Lincoln on two wheels.

New to the event this year was a chance for riders to get their wheels dirty on the natural surface trails in



Happy Trail Trek as the 24-mile group reaches the Old Cheney street crossing about two miles into their ride.

Lincoln. Participants rode over to Van Dorn Park's new single-track trail to get some practice and receive advice from more experienced riders. After taking on some sweet jumps, making tricky turns, and handling the rad berms our riders headed over to Wilderness Park. The riders, volunteers, and members of the Friends of Wilderness Park took a lap around Day Camp and then

through Epworth Park. A big thank you to the Friends of Wilderness Park for hosting us and helping us navigate the beautiful park.

All the riders returned to Speedway Village where they enjoyed lunch, live entertainment, and prize drawings donated by local merchants.

Trail Trek would not be possible without lots of wonderful volunteers.

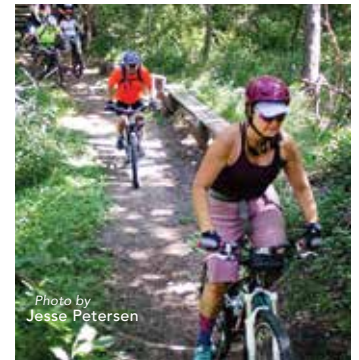


Photo by Jesse Petersen

It's a new adventure for this year's Wilderness Park riders.

We had over 60 volunteers at multiple points along the trails, offering support for safe street crossings, snacks and water at rest stops and guiding the riders along the route. Special thank you to our committee members: Kent Henning, Connie Parrish, Joy Patten, Roy Rivera, Dale Arp, Eli Frank, Jamie Granquist, Mindy Diller, Jon Taylor, Marynelle Greene, Cathy Ebers, and Denise Teahon.

State Legislation Clarifies E-bike Classifications



BY JULIE HARRIS

Bike Walk Nebraska is proud to deliver another change to our state's laws

that improves future policy-making in our state. LB138, amended to include the original language of our bill, LB738, passed on final reading in the Legislature on day 89 of the 90 day session.

Nebraska now has an updated definition of "electric bicycle" in our state statutes and a revised definition of "bicycle," including three and four-wheeled bikes. We are grateful to sponsoring Senator Jane Raybould of Lincoln and her excellent Legislative Aide, Kate Wolfe, for their time, effort, and sponsorship of this bill.

LB738 was introduced to make a simple change to the definition of an electric bicycle in our state statutes. The language in the bill does not include anything regarding enforcement or regulation; it simply updates the definition to reflect the 3-tier classification.

In making this change, Nebraska joins several other states that have also adopted this best practice language in their statutes.

What are the three tiers?



Why does this matter?

In addition to bringing Nebraska statute in line with national best practice, Nebraska now has a nuanced definition to point to for policy decisions. Essentially, this classification ensures we don't throw the baby (industry standard pedal assist bikes) out with the bath water (mini mopeds or aftermarket gas-powered

engines added to bicycle frames) when making policy decisions about bicycling.

Legislative wins are challenging, and we never take them for granted. This is the tool for the most impactful, long-lasting systemic change to happen. For more detailed information about how we got this bill over the finish line, please visit www.bikewalknebraska.org/news-events/newsroom.html



BicycLincoln is a community group that supports and promotes bicycling in the city of Lincoln. Our mission is to provide information and a unified voice for bicycle advocacy in an effort to make cycling in Lincoln more friendly, safe, easy, accepted, and "so that more people bike and bike more often.

Check them out at bicyclincoln.org/

GPTN Benefits from the Open Harvest's Seed Program for the Month of July

The Seed Program at Open Harvest Co-Op Grocery is a simple, yet powerful, giving opportunity that allows patrons to "round-up" their grocery bill for local organizations that share a commitment to a healthy community, sustainable food system and strong local economy. We are so grateful to Open Harvest for making the Great Plains Trails Network their Seed Program recipient for the month of July. When you shop at Open Harvest the entire month of July, please ask the cashier at the checkout to round-up to the nearest dollar. All the extra rounding up adds up to a nice donation for GPTN. Help maximize this opportunity by sharing this on social media--let's get the word out to round up for GPTN!

Thank you to Open Harvest for supporting GPTN in such a generous way.



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**Great Plains
Trails Network**

Prairie to Prairie - Run, Bike, Run



An exuberant finish by the first to break the finish tape, Lance Wolken, (of the Lance Wolken/Roy Rivera team) after his journey through the prairie! Photos by Brady Karg/Audubon

BY ANN RINGLEIN

Once again, near perfect weather graced the 2nd Annual Prairie to Prairie. With temps in the 50's at the Pioneers Park start – jackets and excitement were everywhere!

The runners at Pioneers were treated to a flat 5k on the Prairie Corridor Haines Branch Trail, giving them a taste of what the Prairie Corridor will be like.

The gravel bike route stayed the same as last year and the cyclists got a treat to see the wonderful terrain and a simulation of what the Prairie Corridor Trail will be like – complete with lots of hills – once it comes to fruition! The final run leg at Spring Creek Prairie is always challenging, but to a tee the runners always exclaim “the uphill was worth it to see the views from the Ridge!”

Although there is no timing of this event, the first person to cross the line at Spring Creek Prairie was Lance Wolken – from the Roy Rivera/Lance Wolken team. Both of these gentlemen have strong Lincoln Parks and Rec ties, so evidently that gives you running/cycling power!

Once the runner/cyclists were done they were treated to music from The Lightning Bugs, food from Porkcentric and Rutabagas and Code Beer. Sitting on the Prairie and enjoying all these things made for the perfect topper-offer for the morning!

Parks and Rec, the Parks Foundation, Pioneers Park, Spring Creek Prairie, Solidago, Spine and Sports Chiropractic, Lincoln Physical Therapy Associates, Monkey Wrench Cycles, Lincoln Running Co and Liz Lange were all sponsors – so thank you all! There were countless vol-



The fun continues for the participants with activities and music at the after party!

unteers – that we have learned to count on, even though this is just the second year for this event, including three staff members from Rowe Sanctuary that drove in from Grand Island to help! We also thank the county for all their help in making our gravel route safe. Thank you all!

Solidago is the primary fundraising partner for the project. Solidago Conservancy works with public and private partners to expand greenways throughout the urban area, connecting people with open space. We welcome them and look forward to this partnership with Prairie to Prairie.

Prairie to Prairie will return next year and we hope to continue the path we are on with the weather – so be sure to sign up! Seriously – this is the best way to start your summer – two Prairies and a great gravel bike ride!

See you in 2024!



Join the summer
Nacho Ride
every Tuesday

It's a fun ride on the
**East MoPac Trail to
Eagle** and it's open to
everyone.

Start at the 84th Street
trailhead for a
20-mile roundtrip or at
the Walton trailhead for a
14-mile roundtrip.

The ride starts at 5:30 pm
or whenever you're ready
to go. Please wear a helmet
and ride at your own pace.

In Eagle you can enjoy
nachos or other food and
beverages at Bailey's Local
(inside or outside).

For updates on rides check
Nacho Ride Lincoln page
on Facebook.



See if you can spot this fun
piece of art on your
way to Eagle!

Thank you 2023 Trail Trek Sponsors!



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Building "Q" and "P" Street Bike Lanes to Downtown Lincoln!

The City of Lincoln is fortunate to have a large number of community members that choose to bike both for recreation and transportation. The "Q" and "P" Street bike lanes will help bikers with access to downtown Lincoln.

Bike Lanes Purpose

The City of Lincoln Bike Plan's primary purpose is to identify an on-street bike network that builds on the community's extensive trail network while providing accessible and safe bicycle commuting and recreational opportunities.

The bike plan recommends installing buffered bike lanes along "P" and "Q" streets. Buffered bike lanes are created by painting buffer zones between the bike lane and the adjacent travel lane.

In March of 2022, the City shared two alternative designs with community members and collected their feedback. The preferred alternative was determined to retain existing parking and reduce the number of through lanes by one to provide safe and adequate space for the new buffered bike lanes.

Project Location

The proposed project will construct approximately 1.2 miles of buffered bicycle lanes



"P" Street Buffer Bike Lane Concept Design from AVP to 21st Street

between 17th Street and 25th Street east of downtown Lincoln. This project provides key connections to existing on-street bike routes and direct connections to the Billy Wolff Trail. The project also provides key connections to downtown and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Scope of Work

The buffered bicycle lanes will include a minimum, 5-foot-wide painted bike lane with an up to 3-foot-wide painted cross hatch buffer on each side. Traffic operations may be further supported with modified traffic signs and protected bike phase signals at Antelope Valley Parkway.

The speed limit will also be reduced from 35mph to 30mph.

Next Steps

Currently the project is in the final stages of design. As soon as final designs are completed LTU and Urban Development will publicly bid the construction plans to secure a contractor to implement the proposed bike lanes.

The full concept design can be found at: www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/LTU/LTU-Projects/Projects/Q-P-Bike-Lanes

For more information on this project, go to Lincoln.ne.gov (search: Q and P Street Bike Lane)

All the GPTN Trails in One Day

BY AUDREY KRIMM



There is a Great Plains Trails Network map hanging on the wall of my living room. It started as a joke, a poor graduate student using whatever I could find to decorate my apartment.

But four moves later, the map has become not just a staple of my interior design, but a visual testament to what has made Lincoln feel like home to me.

I moved to Lincoln in June of 2020, right in the middle of the pandemic. Buildings were closed, social gatherings weren't happening. My only option: go outside. I found joy in running and walking and soon charted comfortable loops on the trails around my house. I didn't wander far, but grew familiar with the turtles along Billy Wolff, knew which direction would take me downhill on Dietrich, and while we never talked, I waved hi to the same elderly man as our paths crossed at 6:38 am every morning on the MoPac.

Fast-forward to early 2022. A few months prior, I had accepted a full-time job at UNL, changing Lincoln from a temporary stop for graduate school to a place where I was committed to laying roots. I was starting to bike more around the same time, and one morning in early February as I looked up at the map on my wall, an idea was born. What if I biked every trail in the city of Lincoln?

It turned into a quest for me. I would get home from work, study the map for a few minutes, snap a picture of the section I was doing, and hop on my bike. A few of the trails I already knew well, but each week a new section of the city was unlocked. When I got home, I would take an orange marker and trace the trails I had ridden. It felt like the coolest puzzle I had ever done.

By early summer, I was most of the way there. My mental map of Lincoln had taken shape, and I could tell you how to ride pretty much anywhere. I knew it was 17.4 miles round trip to the end of the Murdock trail and back. The "MoPac-84th

Street- Dietrich loop" and "Northwest Lincoln loop" were both 15 miles, but you could make the second one longer if you rode down Superior Street at the end. Wanted something shorter? Try the "Jamaica North-Salt Creek Levee" loop.

Most of my map rides had been solo endeavors. But when I saw a friend drawing on her GPTN map, a new, bold idea was born: riding all of Lincoln's trails in a single day. She had already planned most of the route, so with a few of my suggestions (you want to ride East down Superior...), she finished a roughly 135-mile course to connect all the trails. And early one sweltering June morning, we got on our bikes and started to ride.



Audrey and her friend Abby ready themselves for the many miles ahead.

Our "Tour de Lincoln" felt like a capstone to this 6-month project I had taken on. It was by far the longest ride either of us had ever done (made possible by the many public water fountains we could cool off with). But more importantly, it cemented for me that bike trails are not just physically woven into this city- they are intertwined with my memories and the life I've created here.

Because for me, Lincoln feels like racing along the MoPac in a thunderstorm after Tuesday night nachos.

Or the first warm day of spring, weaving between hundreds of people with the same idea along Rock Island.

Or community events at Trago Park and Cycle Works.

Or coaching kids through DEVO and seeing their joy after completing their first lap at Van Dorn Park.

Or doing laps at the Star City BMX track before going to work.

Or competing in Gravel Worlds alongside hundreds of people from across the world who came to Nebraska just to bike.



Lincoln's trails network offers many choices of trails to follow.

Or organizing morning coffee rides with UNL students and watching them foster their own bike culture.

I've built community on these trails. Been exhausted. Had hard conversations. Forged love and friendships. They allowed me to first explore Lincoln and are what has kept me here three years later. And they have my constant gratitude.

Happy riding!



Audrey enjoys a cool water splashdown during her long day's ride!

To see the loop we did, go to: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/43122939>

Event CALENDAR

JULY

28 Hub & Soul

AUGUST

25 Hub & Soul

SEPTEMBER

24 Streets Alive!

29 Hub & Soul

OCTOBER

7 Market-to-Market

Streets Alive! 2023

Streets Alive! is scheduled for **Sunday, September 24**, from **1 – 4:30 pm**, hosted by the University Place Neighborhood.

The Streets Alive! outdoor festival is mobile, moving to a different neighborhood every two years. The event showcases the host neighborhood with a nearly 2-mile traffic free festival route which often includes parks, walking and biking trails, community gardens, and other areas of interest. Streets Alive! makes health, wellness, and fitness resources easily accessible to the host neighborhood and the thousands of visitors from across the city who attend each year.

Check out Partnership for Healthy Lincoln for more information:

www.healthylincoln.org/



Check the LTC Website for the 2023 Calendar and other information.

www.lincolnrun.org



SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2023

Rails, Trails & Ales: Goldenride BikeFest.

A cycling adventure for everyone.

Goldenride, Bike Walk Nebraska's signature fundraising event, takes cyclists of all skill levels on a two-day cycling adventure from Lincoln to Beatrice and back again.

Honestly, It's For Everyone

The two-day, fully supported event takes riders along a 44-mile route on the Homestead and Jamaica North Trails and features live music, games, activities, craft beer, delicious food, and lifetime memories.

If you've been looking for an opportunity to ride longer distances, get more familiar with the trail system, or tap into the lively Nebraska cycling community, this ride is for you. It is a low-stress, supported, and enjoyable ride.

Visit bikegoldenride.com for more details.

FRIDAYS
JUL 28
 JOSH HOYER
 THE SOUL REVIEW
AUG 25
 EMILY BASS
 KRIS LAGER BAND
SEPT 29
 BRAD COLERICK &
 SAM PACKARD
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Take the Trail-A-Thon Challenge



Lincoln Trail-A-Thon is a fun challenge to **GIVE** back, **EXPLORE** new trails and **CONQUER** a common goal. While Trail-A-Thon is a self-directed, family friendly event, once you complete all 92 miles you will feel like you have conquered the challenge, and you won't be alone. We will do it together. All proceeds go to building trails in Lincoln. Visit gptn.org/lincolntrailathon to learn more.

When you register you'll receive a Lincoln Trail-A-Thon pair of socks. After you complete half the routes, you'll receive a second pair of socks. Note: kids will receive a bike bell and bike reflector when they register.



Congratulations to

Barb Bohaty, Phil Bohaty and Richard Hekl for completing all 92 miles of trails in Lincoln already!!!



Ride. Share.

That's what the Great Plains Bike Club is all about. We actively promote bicycling with rides for all levels of riders in and around Southeastern Nebraska.

Weekly rides with a leader | Show 'n go rides
Ice cream & coffee shop rides | Moon-lit rides
Hammering training rides | Trail rides

We sponsor the Spring Fling ride in April and Heatstroke 100 in August. We also promote bicycling safety through community-sponsored events. For more information and an on-line application to join the club, go to greatplainsbikeclub.org.



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Monday - Friday	10 AM - 6 PM
Saturday:	10 AM - 5 PM
Sunday:	12 PM - 5 PM



Bike Walk Nebraska cultivates and supports safe and accessible active transportation across our state by leading sound policy and advocating for best practices. We work across sectors in partnership with elected officials, municipalities, and organizations to ensure that biking and walking - whether for transportation or recreation - works for all Nebraskans.

Become a member at:
www.bikewalknebraska.org



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NRD



Keep adventuring on
the LPSNRD trails!

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OAK CREEK
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lpsnrd.org/trails



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For more information:

www.gptn.org

We Need Your Support!

Wilderness Park

GPTN is working with Lincoln Parks Foundation and Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department to help raise \$2.1 million to provide basic improvements that will enhance the accessibility, usage, enjoyment, and appreciation of Wilderness Park.

Thanks!



Make contributions payable to:

Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Designated Project: _____

Mail to:

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