

Great Plains Trails Network Connector Now open to the public!

On November 6, the 350-foot hiker-biker bridge connecting the Rock Island and Jamaica North Trails was officially opened to the public, adding a key connection to Lincoln's trail system. For the first time, Rock Island Trail users can hop on the Jamaica North Trail without illegally crossing a pair of railroad tracks.

The city had planned a Sunday, November 8 ceremony to celebrate the completion of the bridge but those plans were canceled after Lincoln's COVID-19 risk dial moved to red. The city wanted to recognize the Great Plains Trails Network for their contribution to the project and support for Lincoln's trails since GPTN started in 1988.

The mayor's proclamation naming Sunday Great Plains Trails Network Day still stands, but the city will announce a virtual open house honoring the nonprofit at a later date, said Sara Hartzell, the city parks planner who has pushed the project forward for the past three years.

"They've not only been a huge fundraiser, they've been an advocate for trails, convincing people who might not have been supportive at the beginning that these were important for health, recreation, transportation and economic development." When GPTN started, the city's system consisted of just a few miles of the Boosalis Trail, Hartzell said. "That's what our trail system was, one trail on Highway 2," she said. "Think about how much it's grown since then."

GPTN has since raised about \$5 million for area trails, including more than \$1 million for the new \$2.2 million bridge — which the city has officially named the Great Plains Trails Network Connector. It is through the generosity of our donors that GPTN can support the expansion of Lincoln's award-winning trails system. *Thank you!*

More pictures of the GPTN Connector can be found on pages 6-7.

Chris Beutler Trail

In the future South Haymarket Park, the Chris Beutler Trail will connect the N Street Protected Bikeway to the Jamaica North Trail at J Street. Estimated cost for the trail and easements is \$275,000. GPTN in partnership with NTF is raising funds to support this critical trail connection. Please consider donating to this exciting project. Thanks!



Make contributions payable to: Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name: _____
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City, State, Zip: _____
Designated Project: _____

**Mail to: GPTN
P.O. 82902
Lincoln, NE 68501-2902**





Great Plains Trails Network

since 1988

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

2020

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MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. 82902
LINCOLN NE 68501-2902
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Newsletter comments, questions, corrections
gbentrup68@gmail.com

A Note from the President



2020 is wrapping up, and it was a doozy. Is the glass half empty or half full? There is the obvious; COVID-19. We changed how and what we did in response, but we faced the challenges. Board meetings became Zoom meetings and participation remained the same as in person. We miss seeing everyone, but the board continues to show commitment to trails and GPTN.

We missed the Tour-de-Lincoln and Trail Trek this year. Too many people, volunteers and participants, too much unknown about COVID. At best it would have not been the event we expect, and at worst, it could have been dangerous. We did, however, run a couple new successful, COVID safe events. The Lincoln Trail-A-Thon and the Scavenger Hunt got people out on the trails, introduced many to trails they hadn't seen before, and some became new members.

We also participated in The Hub & Soul event. They had to make significant changes to meet safety requirements but they did it, safely and successfully. Before it was over, GPTN was presented with a check for \$10,000!

The most recent event canceled due to COVID was the bridge dedication. To recognize GPTN's work helping support and build trails since 1988, it was named "The Great Plains Trails Network Connector Bridge". What a tremendous honor! There are many people to recognize, and more than I can even acknowledge in this short column. We will do it properly when we can. Though the celebration was canceled, the bridge itself is open. COVID didn't stop that, and if you've been there you've seen the popularity. If you haven't, I'd encourage you to go. It's impressive.

Also look forward to a couple other things to put on your 2021 calendar. The GPTN Annual Meeting February 20, 2021. You'll receive a proper notification and invitation, but no harm getting it on your calendar now. Via Zoom, we will have representatives from the Rails to Trails Conservancy discuss the Great American Rail-Trail and city staff will provide updates on our local trail work. As things warm up, we are planning the Tour de Lincoln, every Thursday in May and Trail Trek, Sunday June 20, 2021.

We've had our challenges, and successes. Good people both within GPTN and outside support trails. This year especially, we see the importance to our community. Many people, many years of hard work, ongoing support; I'll say the glass is more than half full.

Greg Rosenboom

GPTN NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

August 16 - Nov. 15, 2020

Standard \$10

David Atkinson, Chris Baum, Anne Beauvive, Lori Blum, James Boeselager, Bob Boyce, Amy Cariotto, Cindy Coon, Marianne Day, Mindy Diller, Karrie Dvorak, Mary Fischer, Mildred Gardner, Lil Gibson, James Green, Priscilla Handy, Jon Hanseling, Beth & Brad Hartman, Deb Horacek, Jodi Kocher, Lynn Marienau, Matt Maw, Alan Meyer, Carrol Mickley, Dave Miller, Terry & Jan Monk, Janet Perkins, Jim & Denise Peter, Monte & Penny Pueppke, Frederick & Margaret Rickers, Patti Robinson, Dean Rohwer, Suzanne Schied, Bill & Sandy Spielman, Bill Swearingen, Bob & Karen Truka, Beth Whitaker, C. Robert Wikel, Jon Zvolanek

Associate \$20

Eric & Carol Ann Anderson, Tom Armstrong, Jim Barger, Kat Baum, Rick Becker, Larry Bond, George & Phyllis Boshae, Larry & Ruth Cada, David Camper, Brian Catlin, Joann Churley, Dick Cumming, Milda Vaitkus & Mike Dosskey, Mick & Jeri Eschenbrenner, Linda & Robert Fuchs, Sue & Scott Gardner, Nancy & John Gerrard, Charles & Carolyn Gregorius, Robert Haack, Pat & Bruce Hammond, Klaus Hartmann, Jean & Craig Hellwege, Kathy Helzer, Veryl Herr, Emily Herrick, Susan Hertzler, Gloria Holbert, Michael W. Hopkins, Arnold Hottovy, Joe Hovorka, Stu Kerns, Donald Knop, Gary Krumland, Bob Kuzelka, Dottie Ladman, Carol Latham, Lynn Lightner, Pamela Lionberger, Pat Lorenze, Jim & Cindy Luedtke, Galen Madsen, Jeff Madsen, Christine Marvin, Bonnie Maschka, Russ & Janine McClintock, Jordan Messerer Family, Dale Minter, Carol & Jon Morgenson, Jered Morris, Dale Murdoch, Thomas Olson, Jr., David Oseka, Bryan & Shaunda Poppe, Shelby Robinson, Susan & Rich Rodenburg, Terry Rush, Cathy & Chris Sayre, Jim Schaffer, Tom & Barb Schepers, Milt & Linda Schmidt, Cindy Shaw, Bob Shriner, Linda Smith, Mary Smith, Paul Smith, Paul Snyder, Susan Spangler, Michelle Svehla, Colleen Svoboda, Don & Sue Sylwester, Kristine Thoms, Bob & Marilyn Wagner, Andrew Watchorn, William Wehrbein, Annie Wetter, Don Wetter, David M. & Shirley Williams, David Wilson, Michael Wylie

Trail Sustainer \$50

Margaret Allington, Lisa K. Anderson, Dave Armknecht, Monica Beck, Gary Benstrup, Pam & Mike Bjerrum, Mike Boeselager, Phil & Barb Bohaty, Eric Buhs, Douglas Campbell, Ron & Karen Case, Jolleen Clymer, Kirk & Joan Dietrich, Kit & Gerald Dimon, Doug Dittman, Bryan "Bo" Dowling, Sheri & Bob Downey, Cathy Ebers, Judy Eicher,

Trail Sustainer \$50

Tim Einspahr, Martha & John Eischeid, Laurel Erickson & Larry Zink, Gene & Colleen Eubanks, Andrea & Jason Faas, Larry & Peg Fletcher, Marti Franti, Lynne Fritz, Jan Gauger, Bill Genuchi, Matt & Laura Gersib, Gary Gilmour, Jan Gradwohl, Jamie Granquist, Marynelle Greene, Christine Grosh & David Pitts, Martin Hager, Robert Haller, Jim Hawkins, Butch & Dobey Haws, Terry Hiatt, Gary Hill, David Jelinek, Dan & Judith Keller, Scott & Debby Kerr, Lois Kriger, Deb Lockhorn, Elisha Macking, Jay Marshall, Robert McCollough, Carla McCullough, Jane & Jack McVay, Steve & Patsy Meyer, Nebraska Sports Council, Gregory & Brande Payne, Richard L. Peters, Dan & Cathy Pudenz, Carol Rogers & F. Edwin Harvey, Larry & Pat Ruth, Dan & Marge Schlitt, Ronald Schwab, Barbara & Steve Seglin, Scott & Marla Shaw, Jim Shonka, LeRoy W. Sievers & Joyce Furvey-Sievers, Chris & Vicki Sommerich, Brad & Jackie Southwick, Amy Spiegel & Mike Hoffman, Nancy & Dennis Stara, Faye Stevens, Timothy & Carol Stivrins, Brett & Jill Stohs, Ray & Katie Taddeucci, Margene Timm, Teri Tomasek, Bill & Rose Marie Utley, Ken Vice, Dusty & Stacey Walsh, Lesley Weir, Lynn Willey, Douglas Willman, Liz Zeff, Carol & Rick Zubrod

Trail Patron \$100

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Trail Benefactor \$250

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BICYCLING COLN™

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 <http://bicyclincoln.org/>



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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<https://www.bikewalknebraska.org/>

Making Connections 2021 GPTN Annual Meeting

By Mary Torell

The Great Plains Trails Network Annual Meeting will be held virtually on Saturday, February 20, 2021 at 1:00 pm. We are celebrating our new Great Plains Trails Network Connector bridge and making the connections of two fantastic trail systems! The meeting will be held virtually because of the Coronavirus, and details will be provided closer to the date.

We are excited to have two representatives from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) in Washington, D.C. Marianne Fowler, Senior Strategist for Policy Advocacy, and her colleague Kevin Belanger, Trail Planner, will give presentations about the Great American Rail-Trail through Nebraska and across the country. Since 1986, RTC has worked to bring the power of trails to more communities across the country, serving as the national voice for the rail-trail movement. In addition, Sara Hartzell, Park Planner for Lincoln Parks and Recreation, will give a comprehensive report on current projects, and what's next for the trails system in the future.

Marianne Fowler has been with the Rails to Conservancy since 1988, and her pivotal roles in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Transportation Equity

Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act-Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) reauthorizations, have established her reputation as a veritable legend of the rail-trail movement and one of the true game-changers in the history of American bike/ped policy.

Before joining the RTC team in 2016, Kevin Belanger spent many years in the active-transportation world—first for the Student Conservation Association, building trails in Arkansas (which instilled in Kevin a major appreciation for the impact trails can have on personal and community growth), and then as the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for a suburb in Maryland.

Lincoln's trails system now consists of 135 miles of paved trails, which connect to rural routes that add another 100 miles between northern Kansas and the Omaha area. And additional miles of dirt and mowed trails in wilderness and natural areas.

Following the presentations, GPTN's annual awards and election of the 2021 Board of Directors will take place.



We will be providing the Zoom link to the Annual Meeting by various sources to our members as the day nears. We hope you are able to join us.

For more information about the Great Plains Trails Network or the annual meeting, contact Greg Rosenboom, President of GPTN at 402-659-5909, or visit our website at www.gptn.org.

Cycling aficionados Bella and Emory Miller wanted to show their appreciation for trails by donating \$54.46 from their summer lemonade stand. Kudos to these GPTN trail supporters!

Trails Are Not Canceled By Cara Bentrup

Tucked amidst thousands of photos on my cellphone; resting quietly in the thousands of moments left on Lincoln's trails, are images captured of budding leaves, steamy summer neon green, the recent transition to autumn's ochre. To start this year there were images of me plodding through heavy wet snow; out on my first run in quite a few years, naive as so many of us were with regard to what was in store. Mopac Trail knew my thoughts then, she holds on to them as I write this breezy Sunday afternoon.

We all had plans for 2020. A new decade. New goals. New projects, routines and aspirations; until March concluded, fear arose, home transitioned into work, school and so much more. New plans arose, those with a focus on navigating a different community. Routines changed. Cars stayed in the garage. Bikes were nowhere to be found; people spent more time outside, all the while trails remained unchanged. My one mile turnaround has not moved in almost 10 years.

Living in a continuous flux, not knowing what each day might bring leaves one grateful for the steadfast nature of what lingers at a constant. Moving forward through the seasons; watching the world transform around us, and whispering our deepest notions into the steeple of trees lining Rock Island Trail. Their branches hold decades of laughter, quiet time in nature, and accomplishments in pushing ourselves to be better in finding joy.

The trails will never be canceled; forever waiting, ever so patiently, until we write on the dotted yellow lines of their abundant pages.

Hub & Soul Music Series

Thanks to the Hub & Soul Music Series for another awesome year! The Series raised \$10,000 in donations for GPTN which are being dedicated to the Chris Beutler Trail.

With COVID19, Hub & Soul served another purpose this year—giving people the feeling of “normalcy” and ability to get out, and connect with their community and others, even through their masks.

Perhaps this comment sums it up: *"It is an awesome experience. I was telling (a friend), this is my city, I was born and raised here, I love this city and the can't think of any place else I want to live! Events like tonight give one a chance to take and enjoy the flavors of the city! I look forward to taking part in many more."* — Rick D., patron and volunteer



Lincoln Track Club Membership Application

The Lincoln Track Club, Inc. was established in 1975 by an eager group of track enthusiasts. Although our title contains the reference to track, we have become a distance oriented club. Our membership includes some of the nation's finest road racers as well as a great number of fun runners.

In essence, our club is a nonprofit community service organization, established to promote running throughout this area and provide educational assistance for its runners. Our quarterly newsletter has become an informational running publication for local runners. The LTC is a member club of both the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) and USA Track and Field.

The Lincoln Track Club is not just about running. It's also about volunteering. This is the one ingredient that makes LTC work. The whole organization is made up of volunteers and we can always use more.

Please consider joining one of Nebraska's finest volunteer-run organizations. LTC members receive entry forms for all LTC races, FastTimes (our newsletter, which is e-mailed quarterly), an invitation to our annual meeting, and a discount of an entry fee for a single LTC road race. All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).

2020 LTC Calendar

Check LTC Website
for Current Status



To join the Lincoln Track Club: www.lincolnrun.org





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Lincoln Wins Fifth National Bike Challenge Championship

For the fifth time in nine years, Lincoln is a National Bike Challenge champion. Presented by the League of American Bicyclists and Love to Ride non-profit group, the Challenge is a nationwide event in which tens of thousands of cyclists compete to ride the most miles from May 1 through September 30 every year. This year, 1,568 Lincoln riders pedaled more than all other cities in the nation, logging 453,529 miles.

"Lincoln once again shows the nation what a bike friendly and engaged town it is," said Jamie Granquist, BicycLincoln Board of Directors member. "Riders of all ages and abilities worked together as a city-wide team to make this fifth national championship happen, even during a pandemic, showing the resiliency of the Lincoln community."

Lincoln was the overall national champion in 2013, 2016, 2017, and 2019. Lincoln's National Championship victories surpass all other communities in the nation, beating cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, Portland, and Philadelphia. Lincoln cyclists also won this year's month-long, business-oriented CycleSeptember challenge with 80,501 miles, pedaling more than all other cities in the nation.

Love to Ride is an online platform that encourages cycling through local promotion and growing community connection opportunities. To learn more, visit lovetoride.net.



Trail Updates

South Beltway construction and utility relocation: The Jamaica North Trail will remain open during construction, but temporary and periodic closures will be required in the area one-half mile south of Saltillo Road. Obey closure barricades when they are in place. This is a multi-year project.

Tierra/Williamsburg Trail corridor: Beginning Tuesday, October 27, portions of the Tierra-Williamsburg and Southpointe trails between Tierra Park and SouthPointe Pavilions will be closed intermittently for repairs to the trail and adjacent drainage channel. The closures will continue through mid-December.

Salt Creek Levee Trail: Beginning Monday, November 16, the Salt Creek Levee Trail between 14th Street and Cornhusker Highway will be closed during repairs on the Oak Creek channel. The work is expected to be completed in mid-February 2021.

From 14th Street, the detour is to travel north on the sidewalk along the 14th Street to Cornhusker Hwy., turn east onto Yolande Avenue, north on 20th Street, east on Cornhusker Hwy., and rejoin the trail at on the east side of Salt Creek. Travelers may also follow the 27th Street Trail south from Fairfield Street, over the viaduct and join the Dietrich Trail at Fair Street.

Beal Slough Trail from 56th to 70th St: Design work continues on the Beal Slough Trail. This project is shown in the NDOT schedule for construction in 2021/22.

CAN YOU CATCH THIS GUY?

Wouldn't it be fun to try?

Homestead Trail
Oak Creek Trail
MoPac East Trail



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By Dena Noe

The GPTN Scavenger Hunt kicked off September 20 and wrapped up October 31. The hunt had 81 participants and about half the participants completed and turned in their answers to the clues. We had 25 different objects to discover on 25 miles of trails. The hunt used the Billy Wolff, Rock Island, Williamsburg/Tierra, Boosalis, 84th Street and MoPac Trails.

The idea of creating a treasure hunt on the trails came out of a Trail Trek committee meeting after it was clear that we would have to cancel Trail Trek 2020. It was a hard decision for the crew, but we didn't want it to end there, so we created the GPTN Scavenger Hunt. Since the event was a success, the committee is looking to create a new route and clues in the fall of 2021.

A big thank you to the Trail Trek committee for their work on the hunt. Thank you to The Bike Rack for donating three \$50 gift cards for our winners Fred Seckman, Kim Pickering and Matt Maw. Some comments from the participants included:

**Fun! Hope you do more of these in the future!*

**Fun activity - great for exercising the mind and the body.*

**I love Lincoln's trails system and never fail to discover something new as I ride, but this was a fun way to learn more about a few of the routes that I don't use as often. Our trails are one of the highlights of living in Lincoln!*



GPTN is honored to be one of the 2021 recipients of Open Harvest's SEED Program. Open Harvest Coop Grocery located at 1618 South St is dedicated to supporting local organizations in Lincoln.

As Open Harvest states "A big part of being a food co-op is actively pursuing our mission to create a vibrant community, upholding our cooperative values, and building strong partnerships to better serve our customers. That's why we are so excited to continue our new Seed Program into 2021, which allows customers to **round-up** their grocery bill for local organizations that share a commitment to a healthy community, sustainable food system, and strong local economy."

During a specified month, each organization will be featured and all round-up contributions during that month will be given directly to the recipient organization at the end of each month. This year's SEED recipients include:

- Sustainable Agriculture Society
- Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach
- Malone Center
- Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center
- The Bay
- Montessori School for Young Children
- **Great Plains Trails Network**
- Food Fort
- Sunday Farmers Market at College View
- We Can Do This (F Street Community Center)

Specific donation periods will be announced soon. Check out Open Harvest's website at <https://openharvest.coop/>

GPTN Connector

“Make no small plans. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.”

Daniel Burnham — architect and urban planner (1846-1912)

