



GPTN

GREAT PLAINS TRAILS NETWORK

SPRING 2025

ISSUE 158

Trail Trek 2025 - Come Ride With Us!

As we eagerly anticipate the arrival of summer, GPTN is thrilled to announce registration for Trail Trek 2025 is now open. This year we are moving our start and finish line to Lincoln East High School, providing our riders a chance to explore new trails and parks.

Trail Trek 2025 will be on Sunday, June 22 and feature six different routes which are now available for review at gptn.org. The big adventure this year is bringing our riders out to Wabash, Nebraska. Wabash is the end of the MoPac Trail in Lancaster Co, but soon it will be part of the trail to close the Lincoln/Omaha gap. We want to make sure as many people as possible are up to date on the changes coming to expand our trails system.



We would like everyone to come and join us for a fun ride. We have kept our prices low to make our family friendly ride affordable for all. You can expect great

routes, yummy on trail snacks, entertainment and lunch provided by Hy-Vee and Pepsi. And as is tradition we will have a bike drawing. This year we have a bike from Cycle Works, Trek of Lincoln and an e-bike from Speedy Pete's with a retail value of almost \$5000! The chance to win is worth the price of admission for sure.

Looking forward to seeing all our friends back again and hopefully lots of new friends out on the trails exploring Lincoln on two wheels. Register to ride Trail Trek 2025 today at www.gptn.org.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2025

EAST HIGH SCHOOL | 1000 S 70TH ST

Cost:

\$30 Adult, \$10 Student
5 and under FREE

Packet Pick Up:

June 21 & June 22

Routes:

9, 16, 23, 32, 40, & 48 miles

REGISTER TODAY

Details, Routes, Times

Prizes include bike giveaways

GPTN.ORG



Good times at Trail Trek 2024.



President's Note

Hello Trail Advocates,

Spring has SPRUNG and as the seasons change over the years, so does Great Plains Trails Network & our Board of Directors, along with Elected Officers. I'm absolutely honored to serve as the President for the next couple of years, learning and growing from the mentors and trail champions before me. The amazing teammate support system we have at GPTN, through its board of volunteers and its mentoring engine, emulates the very trails that are our sole mission to help dream, fundraise, build, and connect the community!

Who we are:

The Great Plains Trails Network is a group of citizens who advocate and support network of trails in and around Lancaster County, Nebraska, for jogging, biking, walking, and horseback riding. The network seeks the acquisition, development and wide availability of trails by:

Securing funding from public and private sources

Working cooperatively with government agencies

Providing opportunities for persons to learn more about trails, their value and appropriate use.

Goals for the future

The Great Plains Trails Network strives to:

Support a Master Plan for trails in Lincoln & Lancaster County

Acquire links to connect existing local trails

Plan for external trail connections with Omaha and the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail".

As we move together on this journey, I'm in awe of the countless times we each find ourselves on the trails each year, throughout the city of Lincoln and in Lancaster County. Thousands of stories, experiences, and reasons "why", unique and varied as we are. Adventuring through 2025, I look forward to meeting you out on the trails, experiencing your own "why". Let's go!

Happy 2025, Trails Family
Jamie Granquist



Great Plains Trails Network

Since 1988

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

2024

President: Jamie Granquist

Vice President: Eli Frank

Secretary: Rachelle Hadley

Treasurer: David Gall

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Mailing Address

GPTN
P.O. 82902
Lincoln, NE 68501-2902

www.GPTN.org

Newsletter comments, questions, corrections:
dalegptn@gmail.com

May is National Bike Month

Celebrate with Tour de Lincoln Bike Rides



BY MARY TORELL

Join GPTN as we celebrate National Bike Month in May with our annual Tour de Lincoln bicycle rides.

This marks the 20th year that GPTN has sponsored Thursday evening bicycle rides designed to take participants to different sections of Lincoln. All rides start and end at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center at 228 North 21st Street (21st & Q Streets) Union Plaza Park, beginning at 6:00 pm. Look for Tour de Lincoln (TDL) maps at local bicycle shops, running stores, coffee shops, and Lincoln Parks and Recreation's main office. We also have Spanish TDL maps available!

Since there are five Thursdays in May again this year, we have designated May 29th as a rain date to make up for any rides we may have to cancel due to inclement weather.

Members of GPTN's Board of Directors lead each ride, provide mechanical support and make sure there are no riders left behind. The rides vary in distances from 12 to 18 miles each, and are designed to acquaint cyclists with different trails, conditions and features. Refreshments will be available before the start and riders



Every Thursday in May
6:00 pm

NORTHWEST
THURSDAY, MAY 1
12 MILES

NORTHEAST
THURSDAY, MAY 8
18 MILES

SOUTHWEST
THURSDAY, MAY 15
16 MILES

SOUTHEAST
THURSDAY, MAY 22
15 MILES

THURSDAY, MAY 29
RAIN DAY MAKEUP

can enjoy popsicles afterwards. People of all ages and families are invited to come out and enjoy the rides. Several riders have expressed positive comments and how much they enjoyed past rides. Many have never ventured out on trails not near their residence, so they welcome the opportunity to explore new areas.

"As in past rides, we try to feature different trails when possible, during Tour de Lincoln rides," said event chairperson Mary Torell. "We really want to expose bike riders to all quadrants of the city and allow them to discover Lincoln's great trails system. Our network of 180 miles of trails offers something for everyone, and these rides give people an opportunity to see portions of the city and trails they may not have seen or ridden."


There are no registration fees, but participants are required to wear helmets for all GPTN sponsored biking events. There will also be drawings for refreshments from The Hub Café (next to the Jayne Snyder Trails Center).

Weather cancellations will be announced on Facebook and on our web site at GPTN.org. Let's have some fun and get out and ride!




give

TO LINCOLN DAY
MAY 29, 2025



Great Plains
Trails Network

Sponsored by



This year, you can give directly to GPTN for Give to Lincoln Day!

Go to: givetolincoln.com and search for Great Plains Trails Network to make your donation. There are multiple ways to donate including gifts from IRAs and Donor Advised Funds at Lincoln Community Foundation.

Join the summer
Nacho Ride

**Every Tuesday
May to September**

It's a fun ride on the MoPac
East 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 around
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!

LYNN LIGHTNER
(1934-2025)

Happy Trails to You

The Nebraska Trails community lost a great friend and supporter with the passing of Lynn Lightner on January 16, 2025. His contributions to the Lincoln and Lancaster County trails system cannot be overstated. When it came to trails, Lynn was a visionary, advocate, trail boss, and worker bee rolled into one. He was a past board member of the Great Plains Trails Network, and a co-founder and past Treasurer of the Nebraska Trails Foundation.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to our trails was his role in the opening of the Homestead Recreational Trail. As an architectural engineer, he designed, managed and participated in the construction of 12 bridges on the Trail. And after completion of the trail, he served as the Homestead Trail Superintendent for 25 years, making sure the trail was well maintained for all users.



Original members in the Lincoln Track Club will remember the over-sized roll

Lynn played in that organization. He helped create the Track Club in 1975; and later served as President. He was the first Director of the Lincoln Marathon; and also served as race director for numerous other Track Club races. For decades Lynn was the first to arrive at races and the last to leave. Early members will also remember that Lynn offered his house as one of the stops for the Club's infamous Beer Run. In addition to all his hard work, Lynn also knew how to have fun.

Although much more can be said and written about this outstanding life, it's time to say happy trails to you.

**Spring Into Action with
the Lincoln Trail-A-Thon!**

Warmer weather is just around the corner—what better way to enjoy it than by hitting the trails? It's **never too late to join** the 2025 Lincoln Trail-A-Thon and stay active while exploring Lincoln's beautiful trails.

Take on the challenge to ride, run, jog, or walk 92 miles of Lincoln's scenic trails in 2025. Plus, a portion of your entry fee directly supports the Great Plains Trails Network's efforts to expand and enhance local trails.

When you sign up, you'll receive a **cozy beanie**, a handy **rain poncho**, and **wildflower seeds** to brighten your day.

Sign up today and get ready to enjoy the trails all season long!

Visit

gptn.org/lincolntrailathon
to learn more.



2025 GPTN ANNUAL MEETING



(L-R) Dan Lee, Henry Bartenbach, Dave Schoenmaker, Clayton Streich, Mary Wolfe and Connor Herbert receive the Trail Boss Award.



Will Inselman presents an update on the MoPac East Gap Connection Project.



Gary Bentrup (L) presents Tedde Taege (R) with a Project Award.

BY MARY TORELL

The 36th Annual Meeting of the Great Plains Trails Network was held Saturday, February 8, 2025 at the Cornhusker Bank Community Center in Lincoln. The theme for this year's Annual Meeting was *Explore the Trails. Find Your Happiness*, which provided a setting for the audience to hear some exciting speakers.

Will Inselman, Resources Coordinator at the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District in Lincoln, was a featured speaker. He actively manages the NRD owned Wildlife Management Areas, Recreation Areas and Trails, and provided an update on the MoPac East Connector Trail. The Lower Platte South NRD has now moved on to the design and engineering phase of the MoPac East Connector Trail following the Cass County Commission and LPSNRD Board's approval of the official route. JEO Consulting Group will lead this next phase of the project. Construction on the trail will hopefully begin in the fall of 2026 after design is completed in early summer 2026.

Allison Speicher, Trails and Natural Resources Coordinator from Lincoln Parks and Recreation, provided a comprehensive update, slides and videos on many exciting trail projects. Her role with Parks and Recreation includes coordinating the maintenance and growth of the City's trails network, helping manage and grow conservation areas and greenways including the saline wetlands, Wilderness Park and the Prairie Corridor. Here are some highlights of her presentation.

Lincoln residents and visitors can look forward to exciting new trail projects that have recently been completed. Speicher announced that a new 10-foot-wide concrete trail known as the Fletcher Landmark Trail, was completed in late

2024. It connects from the existing North 14th Street Trail along the south side of Fletcher Ave, to North 27th Street near North Star High School. This 1.2-mile trail extension brings an additional 1,920 residential units within one mile of the City's commuter/recreational trail network.

Renovation of the Rock Island Bridge over Salt Creek for pedestrian use and development of 0.25 miles of connecting trail through Wilderness Park was completed at the end of 2024. An opening is scheduled in early 2025. The West A Street sidepath project includes construction of an 8-foot-wide concrete trail extending from the western City limits along West A Street to SW 23rd Street. The trail will eventually connect to the SW 40th Street viaduct and West O Street sidepath. Currently under construction, the trail is expected to be open in 2025.

Located within the new South Haymarket Park, the new Chris Beutler Trail will connect the N Street Cycle Track and Pinnacle Arena Trail to the southern end of the park at about 6th and L Streets. The trail will be connected to the Jamaica North Trail at 4th and J Streets with a future project as development in the area continues. The trail will include a trailside rest area in memoriam to Randy Gibson which will include trail maps and signage, a shade shelter, seating, and drinking fountain. This project will provide a safer, more accessible, and enjoyable outdoor experience! This project is also under construction and completion is scheduled for 2025.

The Board of Directors wants to thank everyone who attended our annual meeting as well as everyone's continued support of GPTN. We hope to see you all again at next year's meeting!

GPTN ANNUAL AWARDS

TRAIL BOSS AWARD

Lincoln Bike Kitchen

The **Trail Boss Award** is given to administrators, planners and others who take leadership in implementing trail projects or plans.

The Lincoln Bike Kitchen (LBK) is a community-building organization that advocates for utilitarian bicycling as a vital part of a healthy, equitable and sustainable community – making cycling accessible to everyone – they connect cycling to broader environmental and social issues through outreach and education.

LBK, now located at 308 South 21st Street, and depends on donated bikes and bike parts for them to do the amazing work they do. Over 2,000 bikes were given away in 2024, and each year the number continues to grow. So, from what one man experienced when he hobbled together a bike for his transportation and realized how life-changing it was, to today and over 2,000 bicycles given away annually, the Lincoln Bike Kitchen lives up to its Mission Statement.

PROJECT AWARDS

A **project award** is given to individuals, organizations or corporations which made significant contributions in time or resources to a specific project.

Tedde Taege

GPTN board member

For his leadership in guiding GPTN's financial committee and for managing their financial assets. His work ensures that we are managing our donations, in a fiscally responsible manner that maximizes impact we can have for trails.

Marie Gregoire

Nebraska Trails Town Program

The Nebraska Trails Town Program works with rural communities along trails to leverage their unique heritage and features as community and economic development drivers. They help communities embrace their trail as an asset to create healthy opportunities for local citizens and to build thriving businesses that invite trail tourism.

Search your internet browser for:

"2024 Annual Trails Report, Lincoln, NE"



2024 ANNUAL TRAIL REPORT FOR THE CITY OF LINCOLN

Click on the "Annual Trail Report" button and explore the progress of the Lincoln Trails Projects!

See which trail projects were completed last year; which projects will be completed this year and see an overview of what's planned for the future.

You can see each project's timeline and what stage of development that project is in at the moment. It's exciting to see what Lincoln's trails system has planned for the future and discover the new improvements that are already here!

Explore the Progress!



YOU BELONG IN COMMUNITY.

YOU BELONG. JOIN US.

No tryouts! No bench! Join the community having the most fun on mountain bikes! Students entering grades 6-12 in the fall are welcome. No experience necessary. Preseason starts April 1st. Weekly team practices start July 1st.



Begin your registration at www.lancastermtb.com



Lancaster Composite is a part of the Nebraska Interscholastic Cycling League, a state-wide youth development program aimed at building strong minds, bodies, character and communities throughout Nebraska.



Check the LTC Website for the 2025 Calendar and other information. lincolnrun.org



BIKE WALK NEBRASKA

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

Nebraska DEVO | Youth Education Bike Skills Courses

BY JAMIE GRANQUIST

Nebraska DEVO's (short for Development) youth bike skills education program has grown in its 15 year history to serve six unique parks and supports programming in four different communities. Its focus is on educating youth between the ages of 5-18 with safe bike riding. With the help of over 50 highly skilled volunteer coaches, they helped more than 250 students last summer develop biking and community skills. The



Photos courtesy of Will Ramsey

DEVO program brings hundreds of children and families into the cities, parks and countryside, creating outdoor activities to support confident youth. Their proven programming increases cycling safety, skills, and awareness of our natural world through interaction. Nebraska DEVO's holistic approach is designed to model with intention to help kids learn by doing. The program actively partners with other local community service & outreach organizations to provide equity scholarships. This includes collaborative partnerships with the Cities of Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, and Blair on trails advocacy, development, volunteering, stewardship, and maintenance.

Bikes with gears and hand brakes are preferred to get the most out of their DEVO experience. All riders must have the ability to ride their bicycle unassisted in order to register for the program and have completed kindergarten prior to starting their first season. All bikes are required to undergo a safety check prior to the first night of the session. We partner with local bike shops who offer this basic safety check-up and minor adjustment free of charge. Certainly, they appreciate your patronage to their business, so please stop and shop a while!

The Nebraska DEVO program is arranged in a building block style, starting with basic bicycle handling skills and gradually working up to advanced off-road techniques. The progression allows riders to learn the skills they need while gaining confidence on

their bikes in a positive, encouraging environment. Riders are assessed on the first night and grouped according to ability. Riders progress as they achieve the skills to move to the level.

Foundational Drills

At the beginning of each level, skills are introduced, modeled and practiced on grass before use or hitting the trail. Each skill builds on the next, preparing riders to utilize their skills once they put wheels to dirt.

Skill Drills

Once mastered on the grass we use various features to replicate situations where the skill may be used on the trails. From cones to picnic tables and logs, riders have the chance to dig in a little deeper.

Skills Application

The trails provide all the opportunities the kids need to apply and practice the skills they have learned. Riding the trails is favored by all.

Nebraska DEVO helped build and continues volunteering in order to maintain the natural surface trails throughout our local communities. They also adopted all of Van Dorn Park and a section of Wilderness Park through the Adopt-a-Park/Trail Program with the City of Lincoln. We are honored to support



and utilize the local area natural surface facilities with collaborations with land managers, municipalities, local advocates, and volunteer organizations who advocate and build trails for our community. Activating the youth & our community through bikes, outdoor stewardship, volunteering, and togetherness.

Nebraska DEVO is proudly powered by 100% volunteer efforts. We have a talented group of experienced mountain bike riders graciously donating their time to coach our youth. Trained in First Aid, CPR, coach/child interaction and mountain biking skills, we depend on the volunteer efforts of about 50 coaches every year in Omaha, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Blair. The minimum age to coach is 18 years old and all coaches complete mandatory

BEGINS JUNE 2

Monday Evenings

6:30 - 8:00

8 Week Sessions

(Monday after session ends is a Rain Make Up Date)

Cost: \$125

Sibling discounts and scholarships available

Registration opens April 1st

More info:

NebraskaDEVO.org

background checks. We gladly accept student volunteer assistants, ages 16-18, with parental consent.

If you would like to help our program succeed, please consider helping out in one of the following ways:

Volunteer: If you would like to get involved as a coach or in another volunteer capacity, AWESOME! (it truly takes a village!). We'd love to have you!

Sponsor: If you're an organization or business and would like to invest in the Nebraska DEVO program as a sponsor with equipment, training, professional services, or financial considerations, please reach out to us so we can connect in the best ways to support the unique communities we serve.

Donate: Donations help us pay for insurance, First Aid/CPR training for coaches, skills training for coaches, outreach efforts to underserved communities, along with equipment like bikes/helmets and discounted student registrations.

Please reach out to info@nebraskadevo.com and THANK YOU for your support!



To learn more our website is: NebraskaDEVO.org

Event CALENDAR

MAY

- 1 Northwest Tour de Lincoln 12 miles
- 8 Northeast Tour de Lincoln 18 miles
- 15 Southwest Tour de Lincoln 16 miles
- 22 Southeast Tour de Lincoln 15 miles
- 29 Rainy Day Makeup Tour de Lincoln
- 29 Give to Lincoln Day!

JUNE

- 22 Trail Trek
- 27 Hub & Soul 6 - 9 pm

WHAT'S OUT THERE

WE WANT TO KEEP YOU INFORMED ABOUT BIKING, TRACK AND TRAIL EVENTS.

It's hard to keep up with all the trail events happening in our area. That's where we need your help. If you know of a trail event that you haven't seen in our newsletter, please let us know.

Send us an email with event details, including website or contact info. When space allows we will get appropriate events listed in our newsletter (remember it's published quarterly).

We want our members to be able to take advantage of all the events on our fantastic trails system!

Send email to: dalegptn@gmail.com

New GPTN Board Members



JOE DAUER

Employed at UNL

Serving on the GPTN board is important to me because I want to find community with people who share

a similar passion for using the Lincoln trails for recreating and transport and to promote trails as arteries of transport in the city.

Favorite trail: You can find me biking and running on the MoPac trail pretty much every day.



BRYAN SECK

Employed as the Executive Director of Lincoln Literacy

Serving on the GPTN board is important to me as I use the trails

5-6 times a week, year-round. I feel a responsibility to give back on what I've been given over the last 13 years since moving here from NYC. I look forward to building sustainability, connecting trails, and increasing awareness of the amazing trail resources across SE Nebraska.

Favorite trail: My favorite trails are starting at the Jamaica North Trailhead & heading towards Roca, starting at Walton and heading towards Eagle.



ALLY WILLIAMS

Employed at Beech Acres Parenting Center

Serving on the GPTN board is important to me because, as a recent

Lincoln transplant and remote employee, biking has been such a welcome social outlet and way to get to know the city. I'm thrilled to be involved with an organization that also loves the trails and advocates for expanding them and making them more accessible to everyone.

Favorite trail: I really love the MoPac! I've done the Nacho Ride a few times, and hope to do it more this year.



DAN LEE

Employed at Fiserv as a Project Manager. Also serves on the board of the Lincoln Bike Kitchen.

Serving on the GPTN board is

important to me because, as a cyclist, I want to do more than just ride on the trails. I like contributing to my community.

Favorite trail: Because I ride as a commuter and for recreation, I enjoy all our trails. I like the Alvo roadside path from Fallbrook to 14th Street.



SCOTT SPEICHER

Employed at Clark & Enersen

Serving on the GPTN board is important to me because as a community member and trail user, I view

the trail network as a great amenity to the city and my quality of life. It is important to me to give back to our trails system with the hope that it will serve the same purpose to others and future generations.

Favorite trail: My favorite trail is the Rock Island Trail. I use it for commuting.



MADELINE WISEMAN

Employed at UNL

Serving on the GPTN board is important because of my deep appreciation and passion

for the trails in and around Lancaster County. Over the years, I have experienced the trails' impact on our community, from the well-being benefits of outdoor activities to the joy of exploring nature and connecting with others.

Favorite trail: My favorite activity on the trails is commuting to work. I also love the trails that immerse me in nature. My two favorite trails are MoPac East and Billy Wolff.



HUBANDSOUL.COM

Hub & Soul

JUNE 27 | JULY 25 | AUG 22 | SEPT 26

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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LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NRD



Keep adventuring on the LPSNRD trails!

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HOMESTEAD**

lpsnrd.org/trails



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BICYCLING LINCOLN™

BicyLincoln 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/

Support Lincoln's Trails

By donating to the
Great Plains Trails Network
through the:



**GIVE
NEBRASKA**

www.givenebraska.org/

Standard \$10

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Trail Sustainer \$50

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Trail Patron \$100

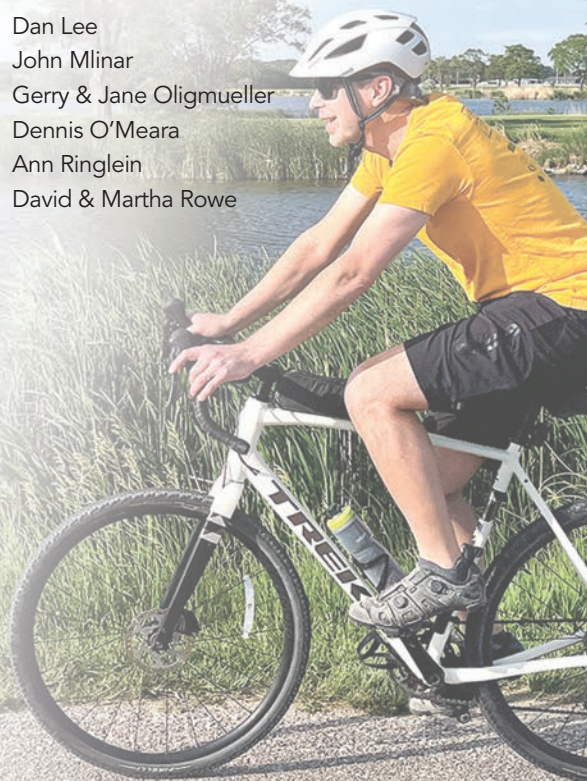
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Trevor White
Steve Zabel
Steve Zechmann

Trail Benefactor \$250

Gale & Becky Breed
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Tyler Mainquist
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Go to: gptn.org
click on "**Memberships**" and
join the GPTN team!





Great Plains Trails Network

P.O. Box 82902 • Lincoln, NE 68501-2902

The [GPTN Newsletter](#) is published quarterly and is distributed to GPTN members and other interested parties.

For more information:
www.gptn.org



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Details on page 3



We Need Your Support!

MoPac Connect Trail

Route D for the MoPac East Connector Trail has been recently approved by the LPSNRD and Cass County Board of Commissioners and the project will now move into the design phase. While the State of Nebraska has allocated funds for the trail, additional funds will be necessary to construct the trail. Please consider donating and stay tuned for more information as the design work moves forward. *Thanks!*



Photo by Jason Buss

Make contributions payable to:

Great Plains Trails Network

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Designated Project: _____

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