

The GPTN Newsletter is published quarterly and is distributed to GPTN members and other interested parties.

For more information, contact: Elaine Hammer, 402-477-0242, or www.gptn.org



**Great Plains Trails Network**

5000 North 7th · Lincoln, NE 68521

Return Service Requested

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Lincoln, NE  
Permit No. 433



# Great Plains Trails Network

Summer 2015

Issue 120

## Trekkers Bike in the Sunshine, and Laugh All the Way

by Roger Hirsch

It was near perfect for the 13th annual Trail Trek event. It was the kind of day bikers dream about--sunny, not too hot and gentle prairie breezes.

Heavy spring rains and the May 6-7 flooding forced Trail Trek planners to change the 50-mile trail from the Cortland City Park trek enjoyed by bikers in 2013 and 2014 to an Elmwood/Eagle destination. Organizers crossed their fingers and hoped rains would hold off and leave the remaining trails alone. Thanks to the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, city workers shored up flood-damaged portions of the Bison Trail leading to Pioneers Park just in time for the 16-mile ride.

And it all came together for about 1,100 bikers and volunteers. Encouraged by sunny forecasts, last minute registrations picked up and Trail Trek pushed for a record turnout. Over \$10,000 was raised for the N Street Protected Bikeway project currently under construction. GPTN is the only non-public funding source for the project, and is committed to raising \$340,000.

All treks started at Haymarket Park, including a short route for families with small children at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center, featuring the Lincoln Southeast Cheerleaders, face painting, sign making, and other activities. A 16-miler to Pioneers Park

to feature its new trails was very popular, and may get repeated. A 28-miler through north Lincoln featured Fallbrook and Mahoney Park before returning from Novartis Trailhead along the Mopac.

Thanks to the community of Eagle, cyclists were able to get in that 50-miler and chow down at mid-point without having to return 25 miles to Lincoln in time for lunch. Riders reported that the Mopac Trail – highlighted as the May Trail of the Month by the Rails to Trails Foundation in Washington D.C. – was in great shape. The trail is packed limestone east of 84th Street from the Novartis Trailhead and had not been featured during Trail Trek the past few years. It was a welcome return.

But on June 28th, it was all about biking fun. About 88 volunteers helped at all levels, and were joined by the staffs of major sponsors to make the day enjoyable. This year's major sponsors included The Lincoln Journal Star, The Bike Rack, Cycle Works, Cornhusker Bank, KX96.9, HyVee, 106.3KFRX, Lincoln Surgical Hospital, John Blumer Wells Fargo Advisors, Pepsi, Screen Ink, SouthPoint Pavilion and our very own GPTN.

Trail Trek 2016 will be on June 26th, 2016. Look for sunshine.

### Finishing N St Bike Lane

*Construction of the N St Protected Bike Lane is well underway and should be finished in October 2015. GPTN is still raising funds for this exciting project which will link the Jamaica North trail at 4th and J Street with the Antelope Valley Trail.*

*The connection will offer easy, safe access to downtown businesses and the Haymarket district. Let's continue the Great Places legacy!*



### Make contributions payable to: Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Designated Project: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: GPTN  
5000 North 7th St.  
Lincoln, NE 68521**





# Great Plains Trails Network

since 1988

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

2015

**PRESIDENT** Roger Hirsch  
**VICE PRESIDENT** Dena Noe  
**SECRETARY** Corey Godfrey  
**TREASURER** Damon Hershey

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dale Arp	Karen Griffin
Brett Baker	Jordan Messerer
Gary Bentrup	Dena Noe
David Burd	Ann Ringlein
Jim Carveth	Greg Rosenboom
Ron Case	David Scoby
Parks Coble	Kris Sonderup
Carolyn Collier	Ray Stevens
Steve Dunbar	Beth Thacker
Marynelle Greene	Mary Torell
Elaine Hammer	Bob Torell
Chris Heinrich	Joyce Vannier
Damon Hershey	Jamie Warren
Roger Hirsch	Bill Wehrbein
Corey Godfrey	

### MAILING ADDRESS

5000 NORTH 7th  
LINCOLN NE 68521-4010

[WWW.GPTN.ORG](http://WWW.GPTN.ORG)

Newsletter comments, questions, corrections  
gbentrup68@gmail.com

## CHIEF STANDING BEAR TRAIL

The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, which had its land taken away in the late 1800s, is getting a section back: a 19.5-mile trail segment in Southeast Nebraska. The tribe recently signed an agreement with the Nebraska Trails Foundation (NTF) and the Homestead Conservation and Trail Association to assume ownership of the trail segment, which stretches from just south of Beatrice to the Nebraska-Kansas border.

NTF is donating the trail segment -- about 230 acres of land -- to the tribe. The Homestead Conservation and Trail Association, which supports a network of trails in Gage County, will maintain the trail segment with \$150,000 from the foundation.

The trail segment is a vital link in the Homestead Trail that runs from just south of Lincoln for 59 miles to Marysville, Kansas. Trail segments from Lincoln to Beatrice and in Kansas are already complete.

Some of the trail segment, along the east side of the Blue River near Barneston, follows the route used by Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca Tribe when the tribe was forced to relocate from northeast Nebraska to Oklahoma in 1877.

The journey was a forced removal from the tribe's homeland, and several people died en route, including Standing Bear's daughter, Prairie Flower, who was buried near Milford. Eventually, 26,000 acres in Knox County was returned to the tribe.

"The trail itself is a reminder of a tragic time in our tribe's past, a past that still resonates with us today," Tribal Chairman Larry Wright Jr said. "However, in spite of that past, our tribe is thriving today and looks toward a future that honors our ancestors and provides hope for our youth.

"This trail does exactly that. Our hope when people use this trail is that they will take time to reflect on the tragic history that is tied to it but also think of the beauty that the trail provides in its updated state," he said.

The tribe will officially assume ownership sometime this fall, after decking work on bridges is completed and the trail is surfaced with crushed limestone. Although the Homestead Trail currently ends in downtown Beatrice, city officials there support developing the 2 miles of corridor that will link up with the Chief Standing Bear Trail.

## GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

April to July 2015

Welcome to new members: Mary Andelt, Charles O'Connor, Scott Gronewold, Suzan Manthey, David Jelinek, Chuck Jones, Jessica Madsen, Matt Maw, George Patrick, David Sinkler, Steve & Cathy Smith, Steven Strasburg, William Udell, Jay Wilkinson, Anna Wishart, and Kristin Wrubel.

Thank you to renewing members: Bruce Abernethy, Carolyn Acher, Harry & Shirley Amen, Sandy Amen, Dorothy Anderson, Wade Anderson, Dave Armknecht, Tom Armstrong, Dale & Peggy Arp, Bill Baker, John Bakula, John & Rita Bartzatt, Kris & Jennifer Bellwood Family, Anita Boeselager, Daryl & Kris Bohac, Lacey Bond, Robert Boyce, Chad Brassil, Gale & Becky Breed, Linda Breen, Jack & Lynette Broderick, Marsha Busse, Rose Holz & Eric Buhs, Dan & Becky Caldwell, Douglas Campbell, Jeff Cheuvront, Mark Chapin, Paul Christensen, JoAnn Churley, Max Clegg, Debra Cirksena, Lois Coleman Jim & Judi Cook, Larry Corbett, Jen Davidson, Shirlene Davis, Larry & Terri Day, Judith DeGraff, Barbara DiBernard, Paul Durbin & Barb Calder-Durbin, Pat & Candace Dussault, Dean & Maria Eisenhauer, Deb & Paul Eisloeffel, Cliff Emerson, Richard & Katherine Endacott, David Florell, Michael Ford, George Gammel, Jan Gauger, Bruce Gfeller, Beth & Ron Goble, Vincent Goeres, Amy & Tom Goeschel, Richard & Ursula Goodban, Jan Gradwohl, Mike Griebel, Martha Hager, Chad Hanthorn, Yvonne Heakin, Tim Henkel, Tom & Candy Henning, Steve Hensel, Jacqui Herman, Kay Hesse, Amy Spiegel & Mike Hoffman, elissa Homestead, James Hruska, Glenn & Elaine Johnson, Martha Kaul, Stu Kerns, Terry Klein, Darell, Julie a& Sarah Knight, John Krajewski, Mike Kreikemeier, Kathy Krone, &

Doug & Dianne Kuppig, Diane Laffin, Scott Leigh, Max & Pat Linder, Richard Littrell, Lower Platte North NRD, Bonnie Maschka, Michelle Manning, Ken & Irene May, David & Brenda McCann, Russ & Janine McClintock, Dallas McGee, Darrell McChchy, Laurie McKenzie, Jane & Jack McVay, Steve & Patsy Meyer, Dale Minter, Bill & Jeanette Moser, Francis Moul, Mark Mundorff, Mike Murphy, Nebraska Sports Council, David Niven, Jim & Patty Neid, D.W.Niemann, Gerry Oligmueller, John Oswald, Ellen Paparozzi & Walt Stroup, Don & Joanne Pepperl, Robert Pewthers, Donald Preister, Cody & Julie Ramel, Cathy & Mike Rasmussen, Robert Raymond, Gerry & Karen Rehm, Judy Garlock & Tex Richters, Jennifer Lyons & Bob Robinson, Lynn Roper, Raymond & Bonnie Roth, David Rutz, Ruth Rodden, Richard Ruby, Kris & Mary Rutford, Nick & Sherry Savener, Jay Schluckebier, Lester Schoen, Ron L. Schroeder, Screen Ink, Cliff, Christie, Kaile & Hannah Schroff, Susan Scott, Coleen Seng, Cathy Seybold, Ariana Brocious & Karl Shaddock, Dottie & Bob Shapiro, Albert Sherman, Suzanne Schied, Jerry & Patty Shorney, Bob Shriner, Paul & Jo Siebert, LeRoy Sievers, Richard & Sue Spangler, Bob & MaryAnn Stallings, Dan & Lynn Steinkruger, Martha Stoddard, Robert Stoddard, Clayton Streich, Stephen & Laurie Stromberg, John & Gloria Strobe, Corey & Jeanette Stull, Ronald & Camilla Svoboda, Dave Swartz, Don & Sue Sylwester, Bryan & Lisa Sypal, Marilyn Tabor, Sherry Taylor, Michelle Thompson, Kris Thoms, Tom & Sharon Vandennack, Denise Walter, Tracy & Jamie Warren, Terry & Mary Werner, Bill Wehrbein, Luke Wilke, Amy Windle, Cindy Woltdt, Larry Worth, Steve Zabel, Gary Zellweger, Greg Zimmer, & Christine Zygielbaum.

*Thank you from the 2015 GPTN Board of Directors. Your memberships are crucial to GPTN's efforts.*



Back row (L-R) Jordan Messerer, Corey Godfrey, Roger Hirsch, Steve Dunbar, Karen Griffin, Greg Rosenboom, Bill Wehrbein.

Middle row (L-R) David Scoby, Parks Coble, Marynelle Greene, Mary Torell, Gary Bentrup, Dale Arp, Beth Thacker.

Front row (L-R) Joyce Vannier, Carolyn Collier, Elaine Hammer, Ron Case, Dena Noe.

Not Pictured: David Burd, Jim Carveth, Chris Heinrich, Kris Sonderup, Ann Ringlein, Brett Baker, Damon Hershey, Bob Torell, Jamie Warren, Ray Stevens, Jr.

# 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, a one dollar (\$1.00) discount off the entry fee of each LTC road race. All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).

## 2015 LTC Calendar

3/28	State Farm (10M/5K/1M)
4/11	Novartis (10K/2M)
5/2	Mayor's Run (1M)
5/3	Marathon/Half-Marathon
6/6	Havelock (10K/3K)
7/12	Lincoln Mile
7/19	Uplifting Athletes Run (5K/1M)
8/8	Thunder/KFOR (5K/1M)
9/13	Buffalo (5M)
10/25	Governors (15K/5K/1M)
12/6	Holiday Run (5K)

To join the Lincoln Track Club: <http://www.lincolnrun.org/>



## Support Lincoln Trails

By donating to the  
Nebraska Trails Foundation  
through the:



**Community  
Services Fund  
of Nebraska**

[www.communityservicesfund.org/](http://www.communityservicesfund.org/)

A special thanks to the Cooper Foundation which awarded a \$10,000 grant to the Nebraska Trails Foundation and GPTN to support implementation of the N St. Protected Bikeway.

Since 1934 the Cooper Foundation has invested its capital in support of people through education, human services, the arts, the humanities, and the environment. Their mission is to support strong, sustainable organizations, innovative ideas and ventures of significant promise. The Foundation makes grants to non-profit organizations located and working in Nebraska, primarily located in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

GPTN, through the Nebraska Trails Foundation, raised over \$18,000 through the **Give to Lincoln Day**. Thanks to the Jayne Snyder Memorial Fund which provided a 1 to 1 match for donations. All donations will be used to support trail projects in Lincoln. Thank you to our donors!

## NATIONAL BIKE CHALLENGE

by *Damon Hershey*

The 4th National Bike Challenge just passed the halfway point and it is time for a midway update! So far Lincoln is in a strong 2nd place with 1,886 registered riders, just behind Madison, WI, but ahead of Appleton, WI. Lincoln, with the help of 8th placed Omaha, has ridden Nebraska to 2nd place for states. And our Local Challenge, which includes all of Lancaster County, is in 4th. Lincoln, as of writing this, has registered 397,089 miles riding bikes. 68% of those miles for recreation and 32% are for transportation. In the last few months Lincoln Challenge riders have burned 21,524,930 calories, have saved \$72,141 dollars in driving cost, and have saved 114,915 pounds of CO2 from entering our air.

The Challenge started in April and goes through the end of September. It is never too late to join and to start logging miles. Lincoln has been a major contender in the Challenge from the very start with a top three finish in the nation every year including first place in 2013. The National Bike Challenge is a fun way to inspire yourself, friends, family, and coworkers to hop on a bike more often. Every day on a bike is worth 20 points for Lincoln, our Local Challenge, and for Nebraska. Our high placing in the Challenge is also a way to show our community and the rest of the nation that folks in Lincoln ride their bikes. So show some local and state pride and log those miles at [nationalbikechallenge.org](http://nationalbikechallenge.org). GO BIG RIDE



*Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler with Scott Senne, a winner in the Trail Trek drawing for one the 20 bicycles.*

### And The Winners Are....!

Thanks to The Bike Rack & Cycle Works, 20 winners rode away on new two-wheelers at the conclusion of Trail Trek.

Jared Headrick	Maggie Hahn
Abigail Jarchow	Ashley Gartee
Erin Pool	Boyd Dietrich
Ephren Rutledge	Paul Wisnieski
Mike Gealy	Greg Reicks
Scott Senne	Daryl Fikar
Kim Nelson	Jolene John-Beckstrom
Tony Houk	Eilers Machine & Welding - Small
Gena Hegemann	Mac Practice - Medium
Pat Trainer	Journal Star - Large

## THANKS TRAIL TREK VOLUNTEERS

Trail Trek depends on our awesome set of volunteers. Thanks!

Bruce Abenethy, Su Allen, Dale Arp, Hannah Augustine, Derek Augustine, Brett Baker Family, Byron Barner, Mike Berger, Tami Bernholtz, Mike Bernholtz, Mike Blessing, Tracey Boettcher, Kurt Boyle, Scott Braly, JoLynn Brown, Sydney Brown, Steven Carlson, Jim Carveth, Brooks Carveth, Kim Carveth, City of Lincoln, Rebecca Clark, Steve Clements, Parks Coble, Don Dingman, Mike Disney, Nate Dorske, Nate Dorske, Charlene Dunbar, Steve Dunbar, Joyce Ely, Dean Fisher, Jack Flanagan, Peggy Forcier, Mark Forester, Jeanen France, Corey Godfrey, Marynelle Greene, Sue Guild, Elaine Hammer, Bruce Hammond, Paul Harrison, Mike Heyl, Jack Higgins, Jayden Hile, Stephen Hile, Roger Hirsch, Spenser Huszard, Courtney Jerk, Chuck Jones, Sarah Knight, Tim Kovar, Roger Lempke, Therese Liegl, Nancy Loftis, Michael Long, David Loos, Pat Lorenze, Lower Platte South NRD, Gale Lueth, Matt Maw, Ron Mayhew, Wendy Mayhew, Rick McLaughlin, Patsy Meyer, Steve Meyer, V.T. Miller, Mike Minnick, Dena Noe, Sven Noe, Connie Parrish, Rick Rogers, Dalyce Ronnau, Greg Rosenboom, Gina Simanek, Bob Sindlar, Hal Smith, Ken Snyder, Southeast HS Cheerleaders, Pat Stehly, Tom Stine, Ralph Thompson, Sandra Villa, Village of Eagle, Ken Volker, Peggy Volker, Amy Wagner, Will Wallace, Bill Wehrbein, and Michael Wilkins



Oh I'm glad to say,  
I'm on my way,  
I'll be gone for most of the day.  
My head is down,  
My wheels are spinning around,  
I'm gonna take a little ride down Jamaica Trail."

Could you dedicate the opening of Jamaica North Trail with anything other than a rendition of Erving Burgess' Caribbean ditty, "Jamaica Farewell", made famous by Harry Belafonte in 1957?

With lyrics adapted to the song for the occasion, the City of Lincoln sponsored a dedication ceremony on May 8th for the opening of the Jamaica North Trail – just a couple of days after a 7-inch rain left substantial parts heavily damaged. Led by Dan Lynn, the Union College Singers led attendees in the adapted lyrics, concluding "Our journey is complete on the brand new trail." And its been a long journey.

Lincoln Parks and Recreation Director Lynn Johnson told the revelers "this is one of the longest running trail projects we have had." The City purchased the rail corridor in 2002, then completed and dedicated Phase I of the Jamaica North Trail in 2007. Phase II is now complete after a connection between A St and Calvert was recently graded and paved.

Johnson praised GPTN for raising all the matching funds for the project. He cited the importance of the trail, including its connection with the Homestead Trail extending to Beatrice, and the eventual connection to Kansas when the Standing Bear Trail is constructed.

The ceremony featured PANgea, Lincoln's premier steel drum band made up of talented students from grades 9-12 in the Lincoln Public Schools. Led by director Megan Manning-Kechely, the steel band serenaded attendees snacking on Jamaica-themed cookies provided by The Cookie Company.

Terry Genrich of Lincoln Parks and Recreation served as master of ceremonies, and led the ribbon-cutting. Genrich expressed his thanks to government groups, including the Lancaster County Board and the Lower Platte South NRD for their participation. Speeches were also made by former GPTN President Jason Albers and David Schmidt, past president of the Nebraska Trails Foundation.

Schmidt served as Jamaica North Trail Campaign Chairperson, and praised all the donors who made Jamaica North possible. He specifically cited a long list of those contributing \$5,000 or more to the project, including a \$100,000 grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation.

Those contributing between \$10,000-99,999 included Catherine & John Angle, Assurity Life, Community Services Fund individual gifts, GPTN, J.A. Woollam Foundation, Lincoln Cares, Olivia Lincoln Memorial Trust, Pfizer Inc., Jayne Snyder, TierOne Foundation, and Zermatt Equity Corporation.

Contributors between \$5,000-9,999 included Bike Rack of Lincoln, Bikes Belong Coalition, Gale & Becky Breed, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation, Donlan Foundation, Lincoln Community Foundation, Lincoln Family Foundation, Margaret & Gregory Sutton, and Union Bank & Trust.

And those adapted lyrics to celebrate the opening of Jamaica Trail North? Those were crafted by GPTN's own Beth Thacker, TrailTrek entertainer Chris Sayre, and Gretel Mientka. Our favorite stanza?

"Down the way, where the trail is grey,  
And the sun shines daily on the green tree top,  
I took a ride on my pedaling bike,  
And when I reached Saltillo I made a stop."

### Sustainable, Responsible, & Impact Investing



**Tyler Mainquist, CAP®, CLTC®**  
Central Financial Services  
6355 South 56th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68516  
402-423-4022  
tmainquist@aicinvest.com

**Financial Planning - Risk Management - Investment Strategies**  
Securities and investment advisory services offered solely through Ameritas Investment Corp. (AIC). Member FINRA/SIPC. AIC is not affiliated with GPTN or CFS. Additional products and services may be available through Tyler Mainquist, CFS, or GPTN that are not offered through AIC.

## BICYCLING LINCOLN™

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/>

**NEBRASKA Home Sales**  
Rich Rodenburg P.O. Box 6165, Lincoln, NE 68506  
Partner, Associate Broker Rich@NebHomeSales.com  
402-440-7570 www.NebHomeSales.com

### The Canine Scrub



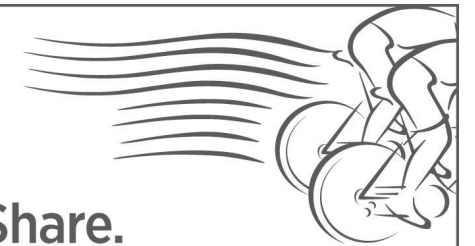
#### Self-Serve Dog Wash

2774 South Street  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
(402) 477-2782



[www.thecaninescrub.com](http://www.thecaninescrub.com) email@thecaninescrub.com

**HOURS:** Monday: 10 AM – 7 PM  
Tuesday: CLOSED  
Wednesday: CLOSED  
Thursday: 10 AM – 7 PM  
Friday: 10 AM – 7 PM  
Saturday: 10 AM – 6 PM  
Sunday: 12 PM – 6 PM



## 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](http://greatplainsbikeclub.org).



The Nebraska Bicycling Alliance is a nonprofit corporation primarily supported by public donations, memberships and grants. Our mission is to promote health and safety for all who ride bicycles in Nebraska.

The vision of the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance does not compete with existing clubs or organized bicycling groups, but rather enhances and supports all of these groups, bike shops, health and safety groups, city planners, policy makers and NDOR. We plan to promote bicycling in Nebraska when needed at the State and local levels in any way we can with project design, seeking federal funding, promoting safe routes for kids, and public education.

Learn more at: <http://www.nebike.org/>

## TRAIL UPDATES!

**N St. Protected Bikeway:** The bikeway is under construction and has a late fall completion date. *GPTN is still raising funds for this project.*

**Billy Wolff Repair:** A short stretch of the Billy Wolff Trail from the underpass at 27th and Capitol Parkway on the north side up to the new pedestrian bridge over the Antelope Creek will be replaced this fall. The current ramp and trail will be removed and replaced with a 10 feet wide, concrete wide trail.

**Sheridan Street Penny Bridges project:** The Rock Island Trail between Calvert and South Streets is still closed while the Sheridan Street Bridges are being replaced. Trail should be opened later this year.

## UNL RECREATIONAL RIDES

**Oak Creek Ride** 9/13/15 \$55 for general public (UNL Campus Recreation Members: \$35)

Enjoy one of Nebraska's most versatile trails on this full day of cycling through natural prairie and oak woodlands along the Oak Creek Trail. Just an hour from Lincoln, this trail connects the towns of Brainard and Valparaiso. Cruise along the crushed limestone rails-to-trails path, unwind from everyday stresses and connect with other local cyclists.

**Nebraska City Apple Picking Ride** 10/3-10/4/2015 \$75 for general public (UNL Campus Recreation Members: \$55)

What better way to spend a weekend than along the beautiful Steamboat Trace Trail—complete with a stop to pick fresh apples at a trailside orchard? Join us for an overnight getaway along this limestone trail, running alongside the Missouri River. Get an early start on Saturday morning for a ride to Nebraska City, taking a rest stop along the way for some apple picking. We'll camp out and enjoy some apple crisp to cap off the day, returning home to Lincoln on Sunday morning.

**Sub-24 Bike Camping Ride to Branched Oak** 10/10-10/11/2015 \$45 for general public (UNL Campus Recreation Members: \$35)

Take a ride to one of Nebraska's tranquil state recreation areas on this zero-emissions trip! Learn the basic skills needed to plan your own cycling adventures as we carry all of our food and camping gear on our bikes. Meet other cyclists and unwind from the week on this quick getaway.

For more information on these specific trips, please contact Todd Grier at [todd.grier@unl](mailto:todd.grier@unl) or [402.472.1853](tel:402.472.1853).

## EVENT CALENDAR

### AUGUST

24—Heatstroke 100 Ride  
<http://greatplainsbikeclub.org/heatstroke/>

### SEPTEMBER

9—UNL Oak Creek Ride  
20—Streets Alive! <http://www.healthylincoln.org/>

### OCTOBER

3—Market to Market Relay  
3-4—UNL Nebraska City Apple Picking Ride  
10—UNL Bike Camping Ride to Branched Oak

## 11TH ANNUAL HEATSTROKE 100

The 2014 Heatstroke 100 ride will be Sunday August 24th. The ride will start and end at the Strategic Air and Space Museum east of Ashland on Nebraska Highway 66 next to Mahoney State Park. From Interstate 80 take exit 426 and go 1/2 mile west on Highway 66.

The course consists of three loops: 24 miles, 35 miles, and 49 miles. You can combine these loops to get distances ranging from 24 to 108 miles. The routes explore the scenic Platte River valley between Louisville and Ashland and range as far west as Ceresco. All routes are on paved roads except for 1/4 mile of limestone trail approaching the Lied Platte River Bridge; this short trail is suitable for road bikes. Several SAG support stations and roving SAG vehicles will be provided.

Registration at <http://greatplainsbikeclub.org/heatstroke/>

## VOLUNTEER FOR THE M2M RELAY!

This year GPTN will be helping with exchange point 15 and race recovery at the Shindig at the end of the Market2Market (M2M) race. M2M will have 500 teams this year with 4,000 runners from over 25 states. Each year this event gets bigger and better. Please consider volunteering by visiting <http://gptn2015m2mrelayne.evenbrite.com>. If you have any questions about volunteering at the event, please contact Dena Noe at [noe.dena@yahoo.com](mailto:noe.dena@yahoo.com).

**When:** Saturday, October 3

**Where:** Exchange point 15 at 262<sup>nd</sup> Street - 11:15 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. – 10 volunteers needed

Race Recovery Crew - Lincoln Haymarket – 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. – 10 volunteers needed

## LOCAL TRAILS DAMAGED FROM MAY STORMS

The City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte South NRD have been assessing the damage to local trails from May's torrential rains. Here is the latest:

**Jamaica North Trail:** This trail sustained the most damage. Closed south of Pioneers Blvd, this entire stretch of trail has been impacted with portions of the trail being completely wiped out. The force of the water not only washed away large parts of the limestone surface, but in a few places it washed away the track ballast once used as the railroad bed.

It will be costly to repair the trail but in the middle of July, the City received a FEMA disaster declaration. The Federal government will match 75% of the necessary funds, state disaster aid will cover 12.5% and local funds (city, county, donations, NRD) will cover the remaining 12.5%. Hopefully the reconstruction project will take just a little over 1 year to complete from engineering to construction.

**Bison Trail:** A portion of the trail that passes under the Highway 77 West Bypass is closed to the public. A section needs to be removed, soil re-compacted, and replaced which will hopefully be completed by end of September.



**Salt Creek Levee Trail:** The two underpasses were blocked by flood debris but have been cleared. The trail is now open.

**Wilderness Park Trails.** Salt Creek at Pioneers Blvd reached a record 15,200 cubic feet of water per second on May 7, more than 200 times the median flow for that day. Wilderness Park functioned as a sponge for the floodwaters, minimizing damage to surrounding areas. Fortunately the floodwaters did not damage any of the bridges inside the park -- including the \$415,000 span south of Pioneers that opened earlier this year -- although it did wash out some bridge approaches. However, the surge of water carved away whole stretches of the creek-side trail. Crews will have to carve new paths, which could be as simple as rerouting a trail around a tree or as difficult as building new, 300-foot stretches. Only the northernmost piece of the park, the day camp area, was spared. Much of the 1,470-acre trail system will remain closed for the rest of the year and it may take a couple of years to complete rerouting of trails.

### Lower Platte South NRD Trails

The **Homestead Trail** is closed from Saltillo Road to Firth Road. Many sections of the **MoPac East Trail** remain open except for a two-mile section at the east of the trail, northeast of Elmwood that is closed due to bridge damage. The NRD is working to have the repairs under contract by fall/early winter.

The new section of the /Salt Creek Levee trail extension from Charleston Street to 14<sup>th</sup> street is now open.



## Nebraska's MoPac Trail East and West

*Original article by Laura Stark for Rails to Trails Conservancy. She is the content manager for TrailLink.com and lead writer and editor for Rails to Trails magazine. Please consider joining Rails-to-Trails Conservancy at [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org).*



If you had to name a city with a longstanding and thriving trail culture, Lincoln, Nebraska, may not come to mind, but perhaps it should. The city currently boasts 131 miles of multi-use trail; to help put that in perspective, Portland and Minneapolis, two cities long touted as bicycle friendly, have 152 miles and 92 miles of off-road trail, respectively. One of the cornerstones of Lincoln's network, the MoPac Trail (consisting of the seamlessly connected West and East segments) begins at the University of Nebraska campus in the heart of the city and stretches eastward 27 miles, just shy of Omaha's doorstep.

"I think you'd be pleasantly surprised if you came here and experienced the trail opportunities that Lincoln offers," says Dan Schultz, resources coordinator for the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, which manages the MoPac Trail East.

Exciting change is literally afoot in the Cornhusker State. Omaha currently ranks among the top 50 of America's Best Bike Cities, and less than a dozen miles separate its trail system from Lincoln's. The MoPac Trail, which will join them, is also a key piece of a bigger puzzle, the developing Quad State Trail, a regional network which will span more than 700 miles in four Midwestern states: Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri. The momentum to close that gap between the state's two largest cities and tie in to the larger system is built upon efforts that go back decades.

In 1989, the citizens of Lincoln voted 3-to-1 in favor of a bond issue to support the city's burgeoning trail system. As an editorial in the Lincoln Journal put it, the result "reaffirms the responsible desire of Capital City residents; they want to maintain theirs as an unusually progressive and attractive community, being willing to pay for it." Keep in mind that this was not too long after Rails-to-Trails Conservancy opened its doors in 1986 at the cusp of the rail-trail movement.

"It started the whole trail system in Lincoln," says Great

Plains Trails Network (GPTN) Founder Elaine Hammer of the bond initiative. GPTN, an all-volunteer organization, has since raised approximately \$3.75 million over 25 years for local trail projects, including the MoPac.

In fact, Hammer and a handful of others believed in the trail's potential so strongly that they mortgaged their own homes to help purchase the abandoned Missouri Pacific Railroad (MoPac) corridor when it came up for sale. Trail advocates had been burned a few years earlier when they were outbid by opponents in an attempt to purchase a portion of another nearby rail corridor, the Rock Island Railroad, and were determined not to lose another opportunity.

Today, the MoPac Trail offers that perfect mix of urban connection and rural escape. Through Lincoln, the trail is paved. It then becomes finely crushed limestone as it leads travelers out of the city and through picturesque countryside, native tallgrass prairie dotted with wildflowers, and lush woodlands. Schultz describes it as a "linear habitat" with turkeys, deer, rabbits, songbirds and other wildlife commonly sighted.

"That aroma follows you," says nature lover Kathy Newberg of the fragrant wild plum thickets that bloom along the trail in late spring. Newberg, chair of the Nebraska Horse Council's Trails Committee, has made jelly out of the fruit and says that mulberries also provide a sweet trailside snack. Large cottonwoods, oak trees and sumac, the latter of which turn bright red in the fall, add to the trail's allure.

The passionate support of Newberg's group keeps the equestrian trail that parallels the MoPac in tiptop condition. The grassy horse trail begins at the trailhead at 98th and A streets just outside of Lincoln and follows the rail-trail for almost its entire distance. A few times a year, you'll see volunteers out there with clippers, handsaws and an assortment of other tools to keep overgrowth at bay.

"I like to turn around and look back to see what we've just cleared and how good it looks for riding," says Newberg, who rides horses on the trail two to three times a week.

Although the MoPac sees a diversity of users, conflicts are kept to a minimum. The Trails Committee works hard to educate the public about how bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians can best share the trail. Newberg advises, "If you see us coming, talk to us. If horses see something coming, they get kind of spooked, but if it's a person, they know it's okay. A simple 'hello' relaxes the horse instantly."

Like a carrot on a stick, the beautiful Lied Bridge is a tantalizing attraction that awaits the next step of the MoPac project. The pedestrian bridge stretches 1,714 feet across the broad swath of the Platte River, which divides Lincoln and Omaha. A remnant of the Rock Island Line, the bridge is a reminder that if the rest of that corridor had been saved, a rail-trail connection between the two cities—from the trail's current terminus at the small community of Wabash to the river—would have been possible. Without it, trail advocates are looking at more challenging alternatives.

"We're working with the state highway department to build the trail adjacent to some roads to complete it," says Ross Greathouse, vice president of the Nebraska Trails Foundation. "We're in the process of doing that, but it may take four to five years."

Greathouse says it was "a giant move forward" when the bridge opened in 2002. He adds, "When it was completed, 700 people showed up. I've never seen anything like it. We had bands playing and everything."

The fanfare of that trail bridge opening inspired Ben Cohoon to begin the Market to Market Relay, a running event that

spans 78 miles along trails and roads between the two cities, which has sold out every year since its inception in 2008. Now the nation's largest daylong relay with more than 4,000 registered runners, the event generates an estimated annual economic impact of nearly a half-million dollars from spending at local restaurants, lodging and retail outlets, and continues to build awareness and momentum for completing the trail system.

"I enjoyed exploring the city while I was running," says Cohoon. "And I liked seeing new places. When I learned about the Lied Bridge, I thought, 'There's your concept: running from Omaha to Lincoln.'"

Another beloved event utilizing the MoPac is the Tuesday Night Nacho Ride, which takes place weekly from May through October. What began with just a handful of people a few years ago now averages about a hundred participants a night, with riders traveling from Lincoln to the One Eyed Dog Saloon in the old railroad town of Eagle. "The restaurant and bar owners appreciate the trail and the business that it brings," says Cohoon. "They really benefit from that."

Greathouse points out that the events build connections between people, too. "The people that run in those relay teams, they really bond. They don't know each other at the start, but they sure do at the finish."

The Nacho Ride is something that local resident Matt Olson is looking forward to tackling this year with his 13-year-old daughter. "It's a 20-mile round-trip so it's been a stretch for Lyndsay, but I'm hoping we can do it this year!" says Olson.

For Greathouse, too, the incentive to develop and support these trails is a personal one. "I biked across Nebraska with my son when he was a teenager, and those are the fondest memories I have in my life."

