The City of Lincoln is building a pedestrian bridge over the BSNF Railroad to connect the Rock Island and Jamaica North Trails near Densmore Park and the Cooper YMCA. GPTN is raising $600,000 to support this important trail connection. Please consider donating to this exciting project.

Make contributions payable to:
Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
City, State, Zip: ________________________________
Designated Project: ________________________________

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

The Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN) continued to celebrate its accomplishments of 30 years of trails at the GPTN Annual Meeting March 23 at the Cornhusker Bank Center.

A larger than usual crowd turned out to learn about the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch project from an ensemble presentation by Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler, Michael Forsberg, and Sara Hartzell. The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch is a tallgrass prairie passage and trail that will build on our nationally recognized trail and greenway system and will link two of Lincoln and Lancaster County’s premier environmental resource and education centers. It will follow the Haines Branch of Salt Creek from the Pioneers Park Nature Center, to the Conestoga Lake State Recreation Area; extend down through the Village of Denton and on to the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center.

Mayor Beutler spoke about his long-term vision of preserving the Prairie Corridor for its simple beauty as well as connecting with our trail and greenway system. As he said “if this land is not protected and preserved, it will be gone forever”. He also discussed how the corridor project is our legacy project of today. Just as others before us preserved and built Pioneers Park, we have a chance to preserve one of Nebraska’s most valuable resources, the tallgrass prairie. As with other legacy projects before it, the Prairie Corridor will not be finished overnight, but now is the time to make a commitment for future generations.

Michael Forsberg, a conservation photographer who has dedicated 25 years of his life to photograph America’s Great Plains, presented a rare insight through photography of what the prairie holds from the past and the future and why it is so important that we protect it. His presentation centered around how he captured a phenomenal photo of a bobcat on the Prairie Corridor. His photo allowed the audience to visualize his dream and that of others for this area.

The third presenter at the meeting was Lincoln Parks and Recreation Park Planner, Sara Hartzell. She gave an overview of the Lincoln trails system, including the completion of the Murdock Trail. That trail is now paved to 70th Street with a softer rock surface next to it to accommodate runners that have used this trail as a mainstay.

Continued on page 3
A Note from the President

This is my first letter as president of GPTN, and I feel fortunate to work in this capacity for this group of people so passionate about our trails and within this organization with a 30 year record of accomplishments.

We currently have a couple big projects on the agenda: The Prairie Corridor and The Rock Island - Jamaica North Connector Bridge are the two largest. Thank you, Michael Forsberg, Mayor Chris Beutler, and Sara Hartzell for bringing to our members in such a personal way the importance and the unique qualities of the Prairie Corridor. Their presentations at our Annual Meeting demonstrated the completion of this project and the 14.5 mile trail connecting Pioneers Park, Conestoga Lake and Spring Creek Prairie will be a source of pride for our community.

The Rock Island Jamaica North Connector Bridge will bring us more immediate satisfaction. We have an unexpected challenge due to the rising cost of steel, but everyone involved has approached the issue with steely resolve. This bridge will provide safe, convenient access to the Homestead Trail, Jamaica North Trail andWilderness Park trails, one of my personal favorite places to hike, bike, and picnic. By the way, there will be a new bridge completed in Wilderness Park this year too.

These two major projects certainly make it an exciting time for me to come in as president, but I could never underestimate the importance of all the regular GPTN activities; the annual Tour de Lincoln rides in May, our participation in the community events where we meet so many members and trail supporters. This regular activity of our organization provides a place where we can meet you, bringing to our members in such a personal way the importance and the unique qualities of the Prairie Corridor.

Speaking of Trail Trek, I’d like to give a special thank you to our outgoing President, Dena Noe. Dena played a central role making our largest fundraising event, Trail Trek, in June, the maps, and her service as president has left the organization in fine shape as I begin my service. Thank you, Dena.

I’m eager to serve GPTN and build on the successes of the last 30 years. See you on the trails!
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).

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

Support Lincoln Trails

By donating to the Nebraska Trails Foundation through the:

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRAILS

continued from page 1

to their training year in and year out. She also gave an update on the Rock Island to Jamaica North Trail Connector bridge that will be built near Denomore Park and the Cooper YMCA. This project will provide a pedestrian bridge over the BNSF railroad tracks.

Following the presentations, GPTN’s annual awards program and election of the 2019 Board of Directors took place. President, Dena Noe presented Forsberg with a thank you gift for presenting at the meeting. Elaine Hammer gave a heartfelt speech presenting Mayor Beutler with the Trailblazer Award. This very significant award is given sparingly to an individual organization or corporation for outstanding contributions to the long-range development of trails. Beutler received the Trail Boss Award in 1994 when he was a state senator, and then again in 2012 as Lincoln’s Mayor for his continued support for the trails. Congratulations, Mayor, you deserve it!

Gary Bentrup presented the Trail Boss Award to Sara Hartzell for her work advocating and expanding the trails system in Lincoln. This award is given to an administrator or legislator who takes leadership in implementing trails projects or plans.

The newest members of the GPTN Board of Directors Marybelle Avery, Doug Dittman, and Denise Teahon were presented by the nominations committee and voted onto the board by those present at the meeting. President Dena Noe thanked Ron Case, Kris Sonderup and Chris Heinrich for their time given to the board as they completed their service.

A project award is given to individuals, organizations or corporations which made significant contributions in time or resources to a specific project. Paul Zillig, General Manager of the Lower Platte South NRD, was presented the Salt Valley Project Award by Gary Bentrup. Mary Torell presented Kelley Van Bruggen and Jamie Granquist project awards for their work in developing, administering and implementing the BikeLNK program. Following those presentations, Noe played a video of Glenn Moss, Lincoln Track Club president, as he accepted the Trailblazer Award on behalf of the club for their continued financial support of Lincoln’s trails.

The Board of Directors thanks 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!

Give to Lincoln Day is on May 30 and GPTN is raising an additional $150,000 for the Rock Island and Jamaica North Trail Connector. We just found out the price of steel has gone up and it will cost more to build the bridge.

WAYS TO GIVE!!

Go to www.GiveToLincoln.com and give to Nebraska Trails Foundation. Donations can be made from May 1st to 31st.

Give to Lincoln donations may be made in person on May 30 by cash or check at one of the three donation stations listed below:

- LCF office, 215 Centennial Mall South, from 8:00am to 5:00pm
- Tower Square, 13th & P Streets, from 10:00am to 2:00pm
- West Gate Bank, 6003 Old Cheney Road, 9:00am to 4:00pm

Thanks for your support!
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/

Friday, May 10 - Kickoff Event, 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center, 250 North 21st St. BicycLincoln and the Parks and Recreation Department will provide pastries, coffee and juice as well as information on cycling events during Bike Month and the rest of the year. Information will be available on BikeLNK, StarTran's bus-mounted bike racks, the new City of Lincoln Bike Plan, and the new Haines Branch Prairie Corridor. The corridor near Pioneers Park is a tallgrass prairie passage and trail that will build on Lincoln's nationally-recognized trail and greenway system and will link two of Lincoln and Lancaster County's premier environmental resource and education centers.

Friday, May 17 - Wrap-up Event, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the BikeLincoln office, 206 South Antelope Valley Parkway. Families are encouraged to celebrate a successful Bike to Work Week with free BikeLincoln passes, gift certificates from local bike shops and lemonade from BikeLNK. Beverages from Code Beer Company and food from the Porkcentric truck will be available for purchase. Secure bike parking and a dog-friendly environment will be provided.

BicycLincoln has a team that is open to anyone in Lincoln. Please join us!

2019 NEW GPTN BOARD MEMBER

Denise Teahon

I felt honored when I was recently asked to join the board of GPTN. Since I first discovered the trails after moving to Lincoln from central Nebraska 28 years ago, I've felt a sense of gratitude to those who founded the organization and their successors who have worked to create and maintain such a wonderful trail system! One of my favorite activities is to venture out either by bike or on foot to explore the most recent great trail improvement and I look forward to helping continue the hard work and dedication of GPTN and its members.

NATIONAL BIKE CHALLENGE

In 2018, more than 900 Lincoln riders logged over 700,000 miles, steering Lincoln into the top spot in the National Bike Challenge. Lincoln finished 1st in communities with populations from 150,000 to 400,000 in the National Bike Challenge, passed the second place finisher—Madison, WI—by more than 250,000 miles! The State of Nebraska also took 1st place in states with populations of 2 million or less.

The National Bike Challenge is back and Lincoln and the State of Nebraska are ready to retain top honors. The Challenge begins on May 1st and runs through September 30, 2019. The National Bike Challenge registration can be found at https://www.lovetoride.net.

Challenge participants can use several different apps to record miles or can also manually enter the miles. You can use one of the following apps: Strava, Ride Report, MapMyRide, Endomondo, and The Love to Ride app. There is no cost to participants and riders are encouraged to form teams at their workplace or school to motivate/their colleagues to log more miles or to start commuting for the first time. GPTN has a team that is open to anyone in Lincoln. Please join us!

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EVENT CALENDAR

MAY
9 — Tour de Lincoln: Northeast
10 — Bike to Work Kick Off
14 — Celebrating the Prairie Corridor
16 — Tour de Lincoln: Southeast
17 — Bike to Work Wrap Up
23 — Tour de Lincoln: Northwest
30 — Tour de Lincoln: Southwest
18 and 25 — Historic bike ride with Ed Zimmer
30 — Give to Lincoln Day

JUNE
23 — Trail Trek

Join the Nebraska History Museum for the first History Bike Tour of the year! They are celebrating their exhibit featuring John Johnson’s historic photographs of Lincoln with a tour of the city his work features.

Celebrating the Prairie Corridor
Tuesday, May 14, 2019 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Martin Prairie at Pioneers Park Nature Center

- Visit the Hudson Cabin
- Explore the Heritage School
- Discover the Prairie Scavenger Hunt for Kids
- Enjoy Local Food for Purchase (Gelato to Go, Kitchen Sink Bakery, Gilded Swine and Roaming Tacos)
- Tour the Corridor Trail via Pedicab or BikeLNK bikes
- Experience the Prairie from a Drone’s Perspective
- Learn about Native Birds
- Stroll through the Prairie

All activities on the Martin Prairie—please dress appropriately. In case of inclement weather, this event will be cancelled. On-site parking available for vehicles and bicycles. For more information, 402-441-8258

2019 Tour de Lincoln Bike Rides by Mary Torell

Join the Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN) along with Lincoln Parks & Recreation as they celebrate National Bike Month in May with their annual Tour de Lincoln bicycle rides.

For nearly 15 years, GPTN sponsors Thursday evening bike rides designed to take participants to different quadrants of Lincoln. All rides start at 6:00 p.m. at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center at 228 North 21 Street (21st & Q Streets) Union Plaza Park. This year’s bike rides are scheduled for the last four Thursdays in May as follows:

- May 9 — Northeast Tour de Lincoln – 16 miles
- May 16 — Southeast Tour de Lincoln – 15 miles
- May 23 — Northwest Tour de Lincoln – 12 miles
- May 30 — Southwest Tour de Lincoln – 16 miles

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 16 miles each, and are designed to acquaint the city’s cyclists with different trails, conditions and features. People of all ages and families are invited to come out and enjoy the rides. Lots of positive comments have been made by riders on how much they enjoyed past rides. Many have never ventured out on trails that are not near their residence, so they welcome the opportunity to see where a new trail leads them.

Weather cancellations will be announced on Facebook and on our web site at http://www.gptn.org/. Let’s all get out on the trails and have some fun!
On November 18, 2018, the city of Lincoln, GPTN, the Lincoln Track Club, and others celebrated the completion of the Murdock Trail upgrade. The culmination of two years of fundraising efforts, the project was completed with the support of the Jayne Synder Bequest at the Nebraska Trails Foundation. Jayne Snyder, a long time GPTN stalwart, was a native of northeast Lincoln and proud Northeast Rocket, and had long sought an upgrade for this trail.

The David Murdock Trail is a major link in our city’s outstanding trail network. Running almost 5 miles, the trail’s west end connects to the John Dietrich Trail at 48th Street, runs east along the south side of Ballard Park, and then crosses 84th Street on the overpass just south of the Lancaster Events Center. The Murdock Trail was primarily only limestone. While many runners enjoy the softer surface, bikers and others do not. Also much of the Murdock Trails’ limestone was poorly maintained with major erosion problems. The biggest drawback was that limestone trails cannot be plowed in the winter. Especially along the 56th to 70th street portion which run through a residential, commercial, and industrial area, this limited use by commuters.

The upgrade of the Murdock was a unique project for Lincoln—a side-by-side trail. Part of the right-of-way was a paved trail with a limestone trail by its side. Runners have their softer surface; commuters have their plowed trails in winter. Roller boards and blades are now usable on the Murdock. As if to demonstrate the need for the upgrade, Mother Nature dropped a significant snowfall the night before the trail dedication. City crews had cleaned the paved portion of the trail so that participants could bike, run, or walk over to Ballard Park for refreshments after the dedication.

With the upgrade the Murdock Trail is now one of Lincoln’s premier trails. The side-by-side feature is one which might be used on other city trails. A special thanks to all who donated to this project. GPTN members can make a difference!