Jennifer Dam Shewchuk, UNL’s Assistant Director for Campus Planning and Space Management, will be the featured speaker at the 25th Annual Meeting of the Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN). The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 16 at 1:00 p.m. at the Bryan College of Health Sciences, Room 204, 5035 Everett Street in Lincoln. The public is invited.

Jennifer will provide details of the overall bike plan for UNL and the bike/complete streets concept. Jennifer’s main responsibilities at UNL include campus master planning and space management for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. During her time at UNL, she has been involved in major university initiatives including the development and implementation of an updated physical master plan, implementation of an enterprise-wide space management system, and management of campus signage and way-finding.

She has acted as liaison between the University and local agencies, and impacted hundreds of planning and space initiatives. Most recently, she played a major role in the development of the Innovation Campus concept and model on State Fair Park property. This was a major undertaking and Jennifer was a key member of the university team.

As the Planning and Construction Manager for nearly 14 years, Yost has been involved in overseeing a variety of projects. These projects have included major renovation efforts at Holmes Lake, Sunken Gardens and Sherburn Field, as well as the development of new facilities of the Antelope Valley/Union Plaza, spraygrounds at Woods and Trago Parks, and several new neighborhood parks.

Following the presentations, GPTN’s annual awards program and election of the 2014 Board of Directors will take place. Refreshments will be provided.
Great Plains Trails Network

since 1988
dedicated to the goal of developing a network of commuter and recreational trails within Lincoln and Lancaster County

2013

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5000 NORTH 7th
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WWW.GPTN.ORG

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Great Plains Trails Network

It’s that time of year when we are preparing for the annual GPTN Board Meeting that I get to talk to each member of the board and ask how things are going. It always amazes me to think that this organization has raised over $3 million during its 25 year history with no paid staff.

I am happy to announce that we have some fantastic candidates selected by the nominating committee to add some new talent and ideas.

The nominated candidates are listed later in the newsletter and as members of GPTN, you have the opportunity to shape the makeup of the board by attending our Annual meeting and voting on the candidates. We hope that you can attend the annual meeting on Sunday, February 16th and vote for the individuals that will be volunteering on your behalf to make sure that Lincoln continues to be a national recognized, rising star in trail advocacy and accessibility.

I also wanted to take a moment to thank the six departing board members for their help over the years. Each of them has done their part at the many events we ask our board members and membership to help with, for example: Trail Trek stuffing registration packets or setting up trails signs; writing letters to the editor and fundraising in support of trail projects; paying our bills and balancing our accounts; taking photos at trail events; writing articles for this newsletter; and meeting with politicians to advocate for continued support of our trails.

Todd Kellerman, Ann Bleed, Clayton Streich, Wesley Trout, Rose Quackenbush and Curt Donaldson – Thank you all for your time and efforts on the GPTN board. We will miss you!

Thank you all for your continued support of GPTN and I hope to see you at the annual meeting on February 16th, at our 25th Anniversary Celebration April 10th and out on the trails again soon,

Karen Griffin, President

December 2013 to January 2014


**TRAIL UPDATES!**

- Jamaica North Trail construction to begin Spring 2014.
- Pioneers Park Trail—Phase II completed.
- Design has begun on the Wilderness Park Bike bridge between Pioneer Blvd. and Old Cheney. Expected completion by December 2014.
- The Boosalis Trail completed but some sections will have to be replaced during 2014 because they did not meet trail construction standards.
- N Street Protected Bikeway is expected to be under construction during Summer 2014 with a Fall 2014 completion date.
- Billy Wolff Trail renovation from 27th street to the new bridge near Randolph expected to be completed by December 2014.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- GPTN’s Annual Meeting
  - February 16, 2014
- Bike To Work Day
  - May 16, 2014
- Run for the Bridges
  - March 15, 2014
- Bike to Work Week
  - May 12 - 16, 2014
- Trail Trek
  - June 22, 2014
- GPTN 25th Anniversary Celebration
  - April 10, 2014

Mark your calendars! More information to come.

**WEATHER**:

- **Wednesday**: High 63°/Low 48°, partly cloudy.
- **Thursday**: High 67°/Low 49°, mostly sunny.
- **Friday**: High 69°/Low 51°, mostly sunny.
- **Saturday**: High 69°/Low 51°, mostly sunny.
- **Sunday**: High 70°/Low 51°, mostly sunny.

**BICYCLING SAFETY THROUGH COMMUNITY EDUCATION**:

We actively promote bicycling with weekly rides ranging from 20 to 100 miles. We have ice cream or coffee shop easy-paced rides, hammering training rides, moon-lit rides, trail rides, and show ‘n’ go rides. We sponsor the Spring Fling in April and the Heatstroke 100 in August. We also promote bicycling safety through community-sponsored events. For more information and an online application, see [http://greatplainsbikeclub.org](http://greatplainsbikeclub.org).

**WINTER BIKE COMMUTING!**

*by Cory Godfrey*

**Hands and Feet**

The most common complaint from cyclists who choose to ride outdoors in the winter are cold feet and hands. This makes sense since the hands and feet are far from your heart and don’t receive as much warm blood flow as the working muscles. To combat cold hands and feet I recommend investing in cycling specific winter gloves and shoes. Getting one size larger can help accommodate for an extra thick pair of wool socks or some glove liners for those really cold days. Be sure your footwear and gloves aren’t too tight. If they’re tight, you’re most likely going to end up with cold hands or feet since blood flow will be constricted.

**Winterize your bicycle**

In preparation for winter, the following items can make riding a much safer and enjoyable experience: front and rear fenders, studded tires, and illumination (lights). Fenders and lights are a good idea year round, but once winter arrives they are definitely a necessity due to the potentially sloppy roads/trails and shorter days.

Studded tires have an aggressive tread with small metal (usually carbide) studs embedded in the tire for extra traction in slick and icy conditions. Studded tires work remarkably well, but do add weight and some rolling resistance.

**Protective gear**

I shouldn’t need to say this, but always, always, always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. This is especially important when there is a potential for ice. Another piece of protective equipment I highly recommend is protective eyewear. The cold can be downright blinding at times. Protective eyewear will keep your eyes from watering up in the cold and allow you to focus on the trail.

**Check the weather forecast**

One final tip is to be sure to check the local weather forecast prior to heading out the door for a ride. When checking the weather forecast be attentive to the wind chill versus the thermometer temperature. Wind chills can have a dramatic impact on temperature while riding in the cold. I always recommend heading out into the wind and getting a push on the way home.

I hope these tips will help you consider riding in the winter. Be sure to check out your local bike shop for more tips on winter cycling and gear.
Recent Transportation Demand Surveys have found that 7% of the commuters in Lincoln use a bicycle as their primary commute mode while 50% use a bicycle at some point throughout the year for commuting purposes. In addition, 6% of commuters primarily walk to school or work while 47% walk to school or work at some point throughout the year.

Further, University of Nebraska student bicycle counts for 2012 show roughly a threefold cycling increase on East Campus and twofold increase on the City Campus since 2010.

Meanwhile, the American Community Survey (ACS) identifies cycling as the fastest growing primary mode of transportation to and from resident’s place of employment within the City of Lincoln. According to the ACS, between 2009 and 2012, the number of people who identified cycling as their primary mode of transportation rose from 1.5% to 2.3% - an 11.7% average annual increase.

Since 1991, GPTN has been conducting bicycle and pedestrian counts. These counts were conducted manually by volunteers and have occurred one time per year from 1991 until 2010 when the counts became biannual. While these efforts are extremely valuable, it is time to supplement the approach with a comprehensive counting program.

In addition, the Planning Department has decided to use the Eco-Multi from Eco-Counter. This system uses a combination of inductive loops placed in the pavement and an infrared sensor. Together, these sensors are able to distinguish between pedestrians and bicyclists as well as their direction of travel. The counter is very sensitive to count large groups of pedestrians and bicyclists that are crossing at the same time. Being able to verify direction is very useful because it will document commuting patterns and will aid the City when applying for grant and federal dollars for multi-modal transportation projects.

The pillars of the proposed program are:

- Manual counts by GPTN
- Automated counts (using automatic counters to monitor usage year-round)
- Voluntary user data gathering (smart phone application)
- User surveys and rack occupancy counts
- Capacity to evaluate the impact of bicycle and pedestrian investments
- Ability to track bicyclist and pedestrian demands over time
- Assessments of traffic safety and management interventions
- Support local agencies in safety, public health, and sustainability analysis
- Support performance-based measures under new federal transportation programs

A key piece in this program is the automated counters which will collect data 24/7. After evaluation and discussions with other agencies using automated counters, the Planning Department has decided to use the Eco-Multi from Eco-Counter. This system uses a combination of inductive loops placed in the pavement and an infrared sensor. Together, these sensors are able to distinguish between pedestrians and bicyclists as well as their direction of travel. The counter is even sensitive enough to count large groups of pedestrians and bicyclists that are crossing at the same time. Being able to verify direction is very useful because it will document commuting patterns and will aid the City when applying for grant and federal dollars for multi-modal transportation projects.

Each counter costs $5,000 and at the January GPTN board meeting, the board approved purchasing an Eco-Multi counter for the City of Lincoln. This counter will be placed on the Rock Island Trail just north of the Helen Boosalis Trail and Rock Island Trail intersection. This location should record the heavy use this trail receives both from recreation and commuting. The data from the counters will be uploaded daily via cell service, allowing daily counts to be displayed on the Bike Lincoln and GPTN website.

In addition, the City will be installing two counters on the N Street Protected Bikeway. The locations of these counters are anticipated on N Street between 9th and 10th Street as well as near the intersection of 21st Street. Together, these three counters will establish the first phase of the automated counting system and other counters will be added in the future.
Four Ways Protected Bike Lanes Benefit Businesses
by Michael Andersen, Green Lanes Project Staff Writer

The question isn’t whether your city can afford to build high-quality bike infrastructure anymore, say our friends at the Green Lane Project. It’s whether your city can afford not to.

Lincoln recognizes that bike lanes make sense and dollars, hence the birth of the N Street Protected Bikeway. The Green Lane Project has been working with the Alliance for Biking and Walking on a study examining the different ways protected bike lanes help local businesses. They have identified four primary ways that protected bike lanes benefit businesses.

1) Protected bike lanes increase retail visibility and volume. It turns out that when people use bikes for errands, they’re the perfect kind of retail customer: the kind that comes back again and again. They spend as much per month as people who arrive in cars, require far less parking while they shop and are easier to lure off the street for an impulse visit.

2) Protected bike lanes make workers healthier and more productive. From Philadelphia to Chicago to Portland, the story is the same: people go out of their way to use protected bike lanes. By drawing clear, safe barriers between auto and bike traffic, protected bike lanes get more people in the saddle — burning calories, clearing the mental cobwebs, and strengthening hearts, hips and lungs.

3) Protected bike lanes make real estate more desirable. By calming traffic and creating an alternative to auto travel lanes, protected bike lanes help build the sort of neighborhoods that everyone enjoys walking around in. By extending the geographic range of non-car travel, bike lanes help urban neighborhoods develop without waiting years for new transit service to show up.

4) Protected bike lanes help companies score talented workers. Workers of all ages, but especially young ones, increasingly prefer downtown jobs and nearby homes, the sort of lifestyles that make city life feel like city life. Because protected bike lanes make biking more comfortable and popular, they help companies locate downtown without breaking the bank on auto parking space, and allow workers to reach their desk the way they increasingly prefer: under their own power.

The Green Lane Project is a PeopleForBikes program that helps U.S. cities build better bike lanes to create low-stress streets. Learn more at PeopleForBikes.org.

Source: Protected Bike Lanes Mean Business report from PeopleForBikes and the Alliance for Biking and Walking

Among Americans between the ages of 16 and 35, car travel is down by 23% while bicycle trips are up by 24%.

As cities across the country build better biking systems, it’s becoming clear to more businesses and politicians that, when used right, these networks are part of the path to prosperity. In fact, in the context of the new American urban economy, protected bike lanes promote economic growth in several common ways.

The Run for the Bridges is a fundraiser to replace the bridges in Wilderness Park. Because of partnerships with the city, Lincoln Community Foundation and Great Plains Trails Network, the north bridge connecting the Pioneers Boulevard and Old Cheney sections of the park will be built by December 2014. Funds for the Saltillo bridge are still being raised. Last year’s event was an amazing success and raised $16,793 for the bridges.

The Run for the Bridges offers a Marathon, 1/2 Marathon, 10K run with the addition of a kid's run, 1.8 miles. The trails of Wilderness Park and the Jamaica North trails comprise the route; a nice combination of single - track dirt trails and the crushed limestone trails until the north bridge connects the park. Because of limited parking, only 500 registrations will be accepted.

Thanks to our sponsors: Open Harvest, Complete Dermatology, Harding & Schultz, Lincoln Track Club, Moose’s Tooth/Cycle Works, Screen Ink, Zip Line Brewery, Lincoln Running Company, Jet Splash

If you would like to volunteer for this great event, contact Rosina Paolini at 402-423-1260 or rpaolini@gmail.com

The percent of people between the ages of 16 to 24 with a driver license peaked in 1983 and is at its lowest level since 1963.

Among Americans between the ages of 16 and 35, car travel is down by 23% while bicycle trips are up by 24%.
Bike Touring Class Offered

The Downtown YMCA is offering a new class that will prepare cyclists to participate in noncompetitive, multi-day bicycling events. Bicycle Tour Training is led by Susan Larson Rodenburg, avid cyclist and co-founder of Tour de Nebraska, a five-day bicycle adventure held every June. The class will meet twice weekly, and will include speakers on a variety of topics ranging from how to train, mental preparation, how to pack and set up a tent, basic bicycle maintenance and repair, nutrition tips and bike selection.

“The popularity of cycling for fitness has exploded in Lincoln the past few years, primarily because of Lincoln's expansive trails system. We hope to attract people who are interested in taking their cycling to the next level. We are thrilled that the Downtown YMCA is providing this opportunity to our community,” Rodenburg said.

The class meets Tuesdays and Saturdays from Jan. 28 - June 10. Tuesday sessions start with a 45-minute Group Cycling Class followed by a 45-minute informational session. Saturday sessions start as a 45-minute Group Cycling session through the end of March and will move outdoors for group rides as the weather improves, April through mid-June. Registration is $125 for Y members and $200 for non Y members prior to Jan. 22. Registration forms are at ymcalincoln.org or may be picked up at the Downtown Y, 1039 P St.

For more information, contact Susan Rodenburg at Susan@TourdeNebraska.com or 402-440-3227.

TRAILS: SMALLER WAISTLINES, LOWER COSTS

A regional trail network in Portland, OR helps area residents avoid gaining 17 million pounds each year, saving the region $155 million per year in obesity-related health care costs.