Finishing the Murdock Trail:
Jayne Snyder’s Wish

The City of Lincoln is going to pave the Murdock Trail from 56th to 70th Street. A gravel trail for runners will also be constructed along side the paved trail. GPTN is raising $250,000 to support this much needed improvement. 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

Lincoln’s trails system is thriving and the Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN) will tell us how at its 28th Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 26, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at the CHI Health Nebraska Heart Medical Office, 7440 South 91st Street in Lincoln. Julie Harris, Executive Director of the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance (NeBA), will be the featured speaker. The public is invited.

The Nebraska Bicycling Alliance is a nonprofit corporation primarily supported by public donations, memberships and grants. Their mission is to cultivate a safer, more bicycle-friendly Nebraska through partnerships, education and advocacy. Their vision is: A Nebraska where bicycling is a safe and enjoyable part of the Good Life. Harris will discuss the progress the organization has made since it was formed three years ago.

Sara Hartzell, Park Planner II for Lincoln Parks and Recreation, will give an overview of the Lincoln Trails System, and will showcase the progress that has been made on the trails in 2016. Lincoln’s trails system is 132 miles in length, and includes approximately 86 miles of Commuter/Recreation trails, and 46 miles of Hiker/Biker trails in parks.

John Blumer, from the Nebraska Trails Foundation will give a report of the Nebraska Trails Foundation and conduct its Annual Meeting immediately following the GPTN Annual Meeting.

Following the presentations, GPTN’s annual awards program and election of the 2017 Board of Directors will take place. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information about the Great Plains Trails Network or the annual meeting, contact Roger Hirsch, President of GPTN at 402-421-1018, rhirsch@neb.rr.com, or visit our website at www.gptn.org.

2017 PROPOSED GPTN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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<tr>
<td>Dale Arp</td>
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<td>Matt Baumeister</td>
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<td>Parks Coble</td>
<td>Ann Ringlein</td>
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<td>Roger Hirsch</td>
<td>Bill Wehrbein</td>
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<td>Corey Goldfrey</td>
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LINCOLN NUMBER ONE AGAIN!

No not in college football. Something even more important…The 2016 National Bike Challenge!

More than 2,000 Lincoln riders logged over 750,000 miles this summer, steering Lincoln into the top spot in the National Bike Challenge.

The nationwide event, organized by PeopleForBikes, is in its fifth year and runs from May through September. And from the inception of the Challenge, a rivalry was established between Nebraska and Wisconsin — the two battling it out for the title. Lincoln achieved the top spot in 2013 but then Madison reclaimed the title during 2014-2015.

For the first time, both Lincoln and Nebraska claimed wins in the state and city categories, outpacing Madison and Wisconsin.

“We’re really proud to get that win, because Lincoln gets overlooked for a lot of things,” said Sarah Knight, a board member of Bicycling lincoln. “People think Lincoln doesn’t bike because it’s too hot or it’s too cold to ride most of the time. But we’re out there and we’re riding big miles.”

Beyond trails and neighborhoods, Lincoln has gained attention for the city’s protected bike lanes downtown and ranked among the top 50 bike-friendly cities in Bicycling magazine this year.

Recognition like this clearly demonstrates that Lincoln’s investment in trails and other bicycling infrastructure is paying great dividends.

Welcome to new members and support from:


Thank you from the 2016 GPTN Board of Directors. Your memberships are crucial to GPTN’s efforts.
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

Lincoln was named a League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2016. The City was awarded the Bronze level in 2012 and was hoping that recent efforts would bump the City up to the Silver level. But alas, it was not in the cards. Recommendations from the 2012 application suggested the following steps to achieve Silver.

1) Increase the on-street bikeway network with good connectivity to the off-street system.

2) Implement a bike share program.

3) Create an official full time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator position.

Since 2012, the City has made some headway on #1 with the N Street Protected Bikeway and #2 with new bike share program coming this year to Lincoln, which counted in the 2016 application. In regards to #3, the City has taken a more comprehensive approach by having several City staff members in various departments involved with bike/ped activities. This was deemed to be a more effective strategy than a single coordinator position.

However, the League’s 2016 recommendations indicate that they do not place as much value on this collaborative approach. Undeterred, the City, GPTN, and it’s many partners are looking forward to building on this report and working together to move Lincoln to the next level.
2017 NEW GPTN BOARD MEMBERS

Shelby Robinson

My name is Shelby and I’m a runner who would rather be out on the winding trails of Wilderness Park than on the car-filled streets of Lincoln. I’m from North Platte and attended Wesleyan many moons ago. I served 2.5 years in the Peace Corps in Moldova as a health education and life skills teacher in a local school. While in grad school in San Diego, I began working for Road Runner Sports as a store leader and then as their corporate trainer. While that job was really fun and living in San Diego was pretty glorious, I realized I really did miss The Good Life—seasons, good people, lower cost of living and friends and family. In August of last year I jumped ship at RRS and took a job with a small software company named Pen friends and family. In August of last year I jumped ship at RRS and took a job with a small software company named Pen -Link where I work as their senior trainer in charge of curriculum and content development. My current joy of

Kevin Fitzgerald

Kevin is the creative director for Carson+Co Global, a mar-

keting and communications firm focusing on sustainabil-

ity. Kevin brings more than a decade of graphic design ex-

perience building distinctive brand visuals, creative pro-

cesses, and marketing cam-

paigns for nonprofit and com-

mercial organizations. A Lin-

coln native, he grew up riding the trails for both fun and travel to work and school. That habit continued on to his time as an art director for Thought District (now Agent), through which he designed GPTN’s first edition fold-out trails map to coincide with the opening of the Jayne Snyder Trails Center. Kevin has volunteered for environmental groups both local (Lincoln Green by Design), and in Portland, Oregon (350 PDX, Oregon Climate). After living five years in the proud state of Maine, Kevin, his wife Sarah, and their son Rowan returned to Lincoln in 2016, where they thoroughly enjoy Lincoln’s fine parks and trails.

John Paul “J.P.” Jamison

J.P. lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with his spouse, Nelle (Woods) Jamison and their two children. J.P. is an outdoor enthusiast who takes full advantage of the Lincoln trails system, riding his cross-

bike on the paved and limestone trails, and his mountain bike through Wilderness Park. J.P. enjoys traveling with his family, visiting the National Parks throughout the U.S., and with friends on biking and skiing adventures. J.P. is a retired pilot, who enjoys restoring automobiles and working on his bikes. He is looking forward to serving on the GPTN board to help grow the great trails network in the Lincoln area.

Jesse Peterson

Jesse is a family man, cyclist and graphic designer, — in that order. When he’s not pedaling he enjoys cheering for his wife at Lincoln Track Club events. Jesse’s passion for riding bikes has steered him toward designing, building and maintaining off -road trails. As Nebraska’s former State Rep. for IMBA (International Mountain Bike Assoc.) he volunteered as area trail leader for local trail group THOR (Trails Have Our Respect). Jesse has worked with race directors, grant applications, and land managers — organizing volunteer groups making designs on paper into a reality. Jesse has utilized the network of trails in and around Lincoln for the past 27 years. He hopes to preserve and promote these community resources for future generations of trail users.

Check them out at http://bicyclincoln.org/
EVENT CALENDAR

FEBRUARY
26 — GPTN Annual Meeting (see front cover for more info)

MARCH
11 — Run for the Bridges (see advertisement in newsletter)
23-24 — Nebraska Bike/Walk Summit (see adjacent column)

MAY
1 — National Bike Challenge Begins
15-19 — National Bike to Work Week
18 — Give to Lincoln Day
25 — Tour de Lincoln

JUNE
1 — Tour de Lincoln
25 — Annual Trail Trek

AUGUST
21 — Total Solar Eclipse

The first Nebraska Bike/Walk Summit will be held March 23 – 24, 2017 at the Embassy Suites Lincoln. This event, sponsored by the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Walkable Communities project and S & G Endavors, is the beginning of our journey to bring biking and walking advocates and professionals together each year to learn, network and plan.

Participants will have the chance to hear from dynamic speakers, learn about what others are doing around the state and region, and receive skills training needed as we work to enhance the Good Life in Nebraska through biking and walking. Fun social gatherings also will provide time to network with others and enjoy time in Lincoln.

Keynote Speaker: Chuck Mahren, Strong Towns
Chuck is the author of Thoughts on Building Strong Towns (Volume I) and A World Class Transportation System.

Plenary Speakers: The Topeka Story
Since 2011, our neighbors to the south in Topeka, KS have strategically and systematically transformed their city into a bicycle friendly community. Hear their story from the perspective of the Public Works director, city planner, city council member, and the consultant that helped shaped the present and future.

Breakout session topics will include:
- Analysis of state bike/ped crash data
- Bicycle tourism
- Worksite wellness success stories
- Trail development
- Bike sharing
- Walkable Communities initiative update
- Safe Routes to School

To find out more and to get registered, check out: https://www.nebikewalksummit.org/

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

When this newsletter went to the printer, no proposed bills have been introduced to the Nebraska Unicameral that directly affect trail development or trail users. However, there are a couple of bills that might be of interest to GPTN members. GPTN has not taken a stand on either of these bills.

LB 339 was introduced by Transportation and Telecommunications chair Curt Friesen, on behalf of Governor Ricketts. This bill would “…merge the Department of Aeronautics into the Department of Roads; to create the Division of Aeronautics; to rename the Department of Roads as the Department of Transportation.” Nebraska is the only state with a Roads Department instead of a Transportation Department.

LB 471 was introduced by Senator Rick Kolowski. The intent of the bill is “to provide for the enforcement of the prohibition against using a handheld wireless communication device as a primary action; and to repeal the original section.” In other words, this bill would change texting while driving from a secondary offense to a primary offense.

AUG 21 — TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

Mark your calendar for August 21, 2017! That is when the U.S. will be experiencing a total solar eclipse and Nebraska happens to be one of the best places in the country to watch it. A particularly good location will along the Jamaica and Homestead Trails. GPTN and others will be organizing an eclipse watching party on the trails. Stay tuned for more information on this once in a lifetime event. More information on the 2017 total solar eclipse can be found at: http://www.eclipse2017.org/2017/path_through_the_US.htm

AMERICAN DISCOVERY TRAIL AWARD TO FORTENBERRY AIDE

The American Discovery Trail Society presented its highest award to Alan Feyerherm for his work for legislation to add the American Discovery Trail to the National Trails System. Feyerherm is deputy chief of staff and legislative director for Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Ne)., who has been a consistent sponsor of the National Discovery Trails Act.

It was the support from Rep. Fortenberry and his predecessor, Doug Bereuter, that brought the American Discovery Trail to Nebraska—and so each year the trail brings increasing numbers of travelers and tourists to enjoy the natural beauty and historic sites of the state.

The nation’s only coast-to-coast trail, the American Discovery Trail is unique among long-distance trails—it passes through not only pristine wilderness but also communities and cities. It links together a patchwork of towns and parks and makes local trails like Nebraska’s MoPac East, Oak Creek, and Johnson Lake trails part of a nationwide network.

“Alan Feyerherm has worked for years to raise the profile of the American Discovery Trail and bring its benefits to the people of Nebraska as well as all Americans,” said Eric Seaborg, president of the American Discovery Trail Society. “This kind of support has been indispensable to the success of the trail.”

The American Discovery Trail enters the state from the east on the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge and follows the footsteps of pioneers through the state. It connects sites from Ash Hollow State Park to Fort Kearny State Historical Park and roughly follows the routes of several historic trails.

Alan Feyerherm receives American Discovery Trail Society’s Happifoot Award at Capitol Hill ceremony. From left to right: Neb. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, ADTS Coordinator Elizabeth Littleton, ADTS President Eric Seaborg, Alan Feyerherm, and ADTS Legislative Liaison Peter Schoettle.

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The Alliance for Biking & Walking creates, strengthens, and unites state and local bicycling and walking advocacy organizations. In conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Community Design Initiative, the Alliance publishes the biennial Benchmarking Report to collect and analyze data on bicycling and walking in all 50 states, the 52 largest U.S. cities, and a select number of midsized cities. The Report combines original research with over 20 government data sources to compile data on bicycling and walking levels and demographics, safety, funding, policies, infrastructure, education, public health indicators, and economic impacts. It’s an essential go-to resource for public officials, advocates, decision makers, and researchers. Here are a few highlights from this informative report which is available for free at http://www.bikewalkalliance.org/index.php

Community Size & Mode Share
While biking and walking are seeing a steady increase in mode share nationwide, the most rapid advances are happening in cities—most notably the larger cities. For instance, among the most populous cities, the percentage of commuters walking to work has always been higher than the average across states.

Health & Active Commuting
While a growing body of research has proven the health benefits of biking and walking, data from the states and cities continues to show a correlation between active transportation and critical health issues.

Gender and Commuting
Women walk to work in relatively equal proportion to their percentage of all commuters. In fact, in the 50 most populous cities women are slightly overrepresented, with females making up 49% of walking commuters and only 47% of overall commuters. That trend doesn't hold for bicycling. Despite rising advocacy efforts to engage more female riders, even in the most populous cities, women are vastly outnumbered by men, making up just 29% of commuters who bike.

Age and Safety
Like the 2014 report, the 2016 report shows a continued uptick in fatalities for people who walk or bike — and this burden falls disproportionately on low-income, seniors and people of color populations. In 36 states, a higher percentage of seniors are killed while walking than their representation in the general population.

While youth make up 21% of the population, they account for 39% of bike trips — but in 12 states youth are overrepresented among bicyclist fatalities than their representation in the general population. People of color are vastly overrepresented in bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities with 35 states showing higher rates than the general population for walking deaths and 18 states showing higher rates than the general population for bicycling deaths.