REPLACING PIONEER’S PARK TRAILS

The Parks and Recreation Dept. is in the process of seeking funds to begin the replacement of the aging (1972) asphalt trails in Pioneer’s Park. If funding is secured this will be the first step of a long-term, multi-stage project to replace all the existing trails with 8 foot, concrete trails. GPTN has agreed to provide some of the necessary matching funds.

Make contributions payable to the Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name___________________________  Mail to GPTN  5000 No. 7th St.
Address_________________________  Lincoln NE 68521
City, State, Zip _____________________

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If you have a chance to ride or walk south from the Antelope Valley Trail, cross the creek on the new bridge just south of Randolph and pass through the tunnel under 27th and Normal you will discover the improvements to the Billy Wolff Trail which extend to just south of the new A Street bridge. The first thing you will notice is that the steep grade formerly encountered when exiting the tunnel is no more. All grades meet ADA specs of 5% or less.

This entire section of the trail has been lowered as a part of a stream widening project undertaken by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. A part of the Antelope Valley Project, widening the channel has removed approximately 100 structures from the flood plain. It also offered an opportunity to improve this section of the Billy Wolff, one of the oldest of Lincoln’s Trails. Lowering the trail will not increase closure due to high water since flooding would occur first at an even lower point in the tunnel under 27th Street. Plans are in place to post signs alerting trail users to use the detour in case of high water.

A new connection to the Rock Island Trail is provided by a branch or “switchback” curving to the northwest and then back to the south. The structure at the former junction of the two trails has been enclosed and is now used for equipment storage.

Billy Wolff Reworked

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...
NOTE FROM GARY
December 2011

A s winter’s embrace is fast approaching, so is the conclusion of my two-year tenure as GPTN president. It has been an exceptional ride and I believe we have achieved some exciting milestones along the way due to undying support from our many partners. We are extremely fortunate to have public allies, such as the City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte Natural Resources District, who work tirelessly through red-tape and politics to bring the trail projects to fruition. Hopefully, these public entities can serve as role models for other agencies, passing along a greater understanding of the vital social-economic role that bicycling and pedestrian facilities fulfill within our community.

The Great Plains Bicycling Club, Lincoln Trail Club, and other fellow organizations are also deeply valued comrades in our efforts to expand and integrate the trails network into a larger community fabric. Of course, these accomplishments continue to remain possible because of the thirty-one GPTN board members who invest significant time and effort in making this a wonderful trail project. Last but not least are GPTN’s members and other trail enthusiasts, who offer unwavering support through volunteering, membership fees and generous donations to trail projects, even during times of lower economic bounty. Clearly, our trails system is a result of a wonderful collaboration of many individuals and groups who believe in building a priceless treasure for our community.

This journey was also punctuated by great sadness in the passing of Jayne Snyder; a lifelong trails advocate who helped in the creation of GPTN. She and several other dedicated trail supporters mortgaged their homes to provide collateral for a loan in order to purchase the MoPac easement, so that it could be converted to a multi-purpose trail. This selfless act highlights the amazing commitment of our original founders, drawing up a blueprint for efforts and leadership, which will forever be remembered at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center.

It is my hope that we will be able to cultivate similar involvement and enthusiasm in the next generation of trail leaders. The last two years have provided me insight on the dynamic role of this leadership, combining the insight of many individuals and groups who are working towards a common vision. For progress and innovation to occur, we must listen and incorporate the many voices who share this in common. As I turn my duties over to another, I plan on continuing to be involved in this work and hope to embrace it with a greater understanding.

Now it is time to throw on my hat and gloves, lace up my running shoes, and enjoy what we have worked diligently to achieve. Hope to see you on the trails!

GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS
November 15 – December 1 – 2011


GPTN $$$$$
GPTN gets nearly 100% of its revenue from membership dues. Funds from Community Service Grants, although designated for GPTN, are normally assigned to a designated project. The follow- ing is a summary of GPTN expenditures for the past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>4,040</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic service</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,908</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trait TREKK $$**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbecue</td>
<td>$5,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirts</td>
<td>4,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion*</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Total** | $12,071**

*Over $11,000 was designated for trails projects.*

**A major in-kind promotional contribution from the Lincoln Jayhawk-Start in the form of newspaper publicity was included.**

*Their support was vital in the success of this project.*

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occlusion, location, location — it is often touted as affecting the value of residential property. Now, new University of Cincinnati research suggests that location near nature trails could hold a financial benefit for homeowners and ultimately neighboring communities.

Two University of Cincinnati researchers, Rainer vom Hofe, an associate professor of planning, and Olivier Parent, an assistant professor of economics, have examined how the Little Miami Scenic Trail — a 12-mile southern stretch of the trail that runs through the Cincinnati metropolitan region — impacted residential property values in Hamilton County, Ohio. The scenic, multipurpose trail beckons walkers, hikers, skaters and bicycle enthusiasts and also has horseback riding paths.

“For the ‘New Urbanist,’ multipurpose trails provide the potential for bicycle commuting; help alleviate noise, pollution and congestion, and expand the means for green transportation and a community’s walkability,” write the authors.

Using a research model they developed, Parent and vom Hofe found that from a real estate perspective, trails can have significant, positive spillover effects on property values when these properties are located within reasonable distances to the trails. To be more specific, housing prices went up by nine dollars for every foot closer to the trail entrance. Ultimately, the study concluded that for the average home, homeowners were willing to pay a $9,000 premium to be located one thousand feet closer to the trail.

The researchers say their study is among the first to quantify the impact of multipurpose trail proximity on residential property values while isolating the results from the biasing effect of nearby property values.

The research used street network distances between residential properties and the closest trail entrance, in addition to standard parameter estimation. The average home studied was about 40 years old and had an average 2,203 square feet of living space. The average price was $263,517.

As a planner, vom Hofe adds that even amid tough economic times and tough budget decisions by local governments, the research emphasizes that investment in infrastructure and public amenities is a solid investment that will result in a positive return for communities. Parent adds that their future research will examine how the effect of the location of green spaces and transportation infrastructure on residential property prices has changed over the last decade in Hamilton County.

The research was supported by a $21,000 interdisciplinary grant awarded in 2010 by the University Research Council at UC. The University Research Council Interdisciplinary Grant Program blends the diverse expertise of UC researchers and lays the groundwork for research that could open opportunities for federal funding. The researchers say the majority of that funding was invested in developing a database of housing characteristics of some 300,000 properties over a 10-to-12 year period for use in this and future studies. The current study focused on 1,762 residential properties located within 10,000 feet of the trail.

SNOW DAYS
by Jason Bakewell

It's official. winter has arrived in Lincoln. For many, the frigid temps and snowy conditions mean putting the bike in the garage, placing the running shoes on the shelf and forgetting about the trails until at least April.

For others, winter is just the next season to be outside and enjoy the trails with a bit more solitude. It always amazes me how a few inches of fresh snow can transform even an urban landscape into an apparent wilderness and create a sense of peaceful isolation right here within Lincoln's city limits. And what better way to enjoy this landscape than to fill a thermos with your favorite warm beverage, head out to a local park, and glide your way to freedom on a pair of skinny cross country skis.

Lincoln may never be confused for a Nordic winter sport destination, but there are plenty of miles of trail to explore just a stones throw from home and usually several weeks to enjoy them on skis. Favorite local hot spots include skiing the woodlands of Wilderness Park, tackling the rolling hills of Pioneers Park, or making fresh tracks across the frozen waters of Holmes Lake.

Wherever you go, you'll be glad you made the effort. Whether its a quick solo ski after work or an all Saturday morning epic with your normal cycling or running crew, cross country skiing can be a great way to stay outside, keep those holiday pounds at bay and get the most out of winter. Who knows, maybe when April finally rolls around, you'll actually be hoping for one last dump of snow rather than longing for warmer temperature and to drag the bikes and running shoes out from storage.

Interested in giving cross country skiing a try? Ski and snowshoe rentals are available from UNL Outdoor Adventures located at 841 North 14th street. Make reservations in person or by calling 402.472.4777.

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TWENTY YEARS OF TRAILS

Between 1991 and 2011, over $2,250,000 has been raised to support an area-wide trails system. Private gifts have helped to buy and develop these trails for public use. All of the trails are owned either by the City of Lincoln or the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. With the added signs, maps and the Jayne Snyder Trails Center, the system will be ready for thousands more users. It will be more user-friendly and available to tourists and riders from all over this area.

The following individuals, businesses, foundations, groups and governments have played a major role in contributing to this tremendous effort. On the front face of the Trails Center (21st Street side) these names will be inscribed on metal (aluminum) plates that will be mounted into recessed panels on the brick façade.

If there are errors, corrections or additions, please let Elaine Hammer (elaine.hammer@windstream.net) know. We can make changes up until the end of the year. Then the list will go for inscription. Hopefully, this will be an inspiration for many years to come.

Business Recognition $10,000 or more
- Alfred Benesch & Company
- Assurity Life Insurance Company
- The Bike Rack
- Cornhusker Bank
- Duncan Aviation
- Journal Star Printing Company
- Pinnacle Bank
- Sandhills Publishing
- Southpointe Pavilions
- State Farm Companies
- Union Bank & Trust Company
- Windstream

Foundation Recognition $10,000 or more
- Ameritas Charitable Foundation
- Cooper Foundation
- Dillon Foundation
- Donlan Foundation
- GR’s Foundation
- J.A. Woollam Foundation
- J.C. Seacrest Foundation
- Kiewit Foundation
- Lincoln Community Foundation
- Lincoln Family Foundation
- Mosby Lincoln Foundation
- Olivia Garvey Lincoln Memorial Trust
- Olsson Associates & Olsson Family Foundation
- Rogers Foundation
- TierOne Foundation

Groups & Government $10,000 or more
- Great Plains Trails Network
- Lincoln Track Club
- Lancaster County
- City of Lincoln

Individuals $5000 or more
- John & Catherine Angle
- John & Jan Blumer
- Daryl & Kris Bohn
- Gale & Becky Breed
- Edward & Mary Copple
- Donald F. Dillon
- Alice Dittman
- Steve & Charlene Dunbar
- Katherine & Richard Endacott
- Charles & Carolyn Gregorius
- Byron Grote
- Elaine & Richard Hammer
- Robert H. Harris
- Tom & Candy Henning
- Mark & Deanna Hutchins
- Kirk & Jo Kinberg
- Jim & Doris Lewis
- Lynn & Sherry Lightner
- Lincoln Caree
- Campbell & Mem McConnell
- Steve & Patty Meyer
- Glen Moss & Nancy Sutton-Moss
- Holly & Tom Ostergard
- Lisa & Robert Rauner
- Lee & Carol Rees
- Ann & Bud Stidiles
- Jayne Snyder
- Arlene Sorensen
- Gregory E. & Margaret Kontras Sutton
- Dan Lynn & Beth Thacker Family
- Lyle & Joyce Vanner
- Dave Woll
- John & Cyndi Woollam

Some of the adjacent slopes have been planted to grass with the earlier planting well established. Others will show little green until spring. The present grass is a cover crop but the permanent variety will be a mixture of native grasses that should minimize mowing. While the major participant in this project was the NRD with additional funds coming from City of Lincoln Stormwater Management, Parks and Recreation cooperated in the planning.

The City also provided matching funds for a Recreational Trails Grant to pay for the new section of the trail from J Street to the new bridge over Antelope Creek. The NRD provided matching funds for a separate Recreational Trails Grant to construct the bridge.

Perhaps this project can provide a model for improving trail sections that adjoin it.

BIKES+SHORT TRIPS=SAVINGS

A recent study by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences provided statistical results related to the elimination of auto travel for round trips of 8 kilometers or less in 11 metropolitan areas of the Upper Midwest. This area included 37,000 square miles populated by 31 million people.

They reported that improvements in air quality as a result of making 50% of such short trips by bicycle would yield an estimated savings of $3.8 billion/year in avoided mortality and reduced health care costs. The combined benefits of improved air quality and physical fitness would exceed $7 billion/year.

HOMESTEAD PROGRESS

The state has accepted bids on the Pickrell to Cortland segment. Pavers Inc. is being awarded the project for $492,000 with construction in the spring (April/May.)

Shortly thereafter the trail will be completed from Lincoln to Beatrice.

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 application, see our website http://greatplainsbikeclub.org. $10/person and $15/family.