

MINUTES OF THE
MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 13, 1993

PARTICIPANTS

Barb Muhlack	Sierra Club
Greg Iffrig	Pioneer Forest
John Kurtzborn	Volunteer - Mo. Rambler
Bill Alden	U.S. Forest Service
Ramon Gass	Volunteer
Dan Wedemeyer	Mo. Department of Natural Resources
Debbie Schnack	Mo. Department of Natural Resources

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SIGNING

NAMING OF NEW SECTIONS

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

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NEXT MEETING DATE

The April 13, 1993 meeting of the Ozark Trail Council convened at approximately 1:00 p.m. at the St. Charles Convention Bureau and Visitor Center. The meeting was called to order by Debbie Schnack who was representing Bill Palmer, Director of the Division of State Parks.

Following the introductions, the minutes of the last meeting of October 3, 1992 were approved as written.

OLD BUSINESS

At the last meeting there was a discussion of signing. The question was if the Forest Service still wanted to use the diamond blaze since the other agencies were using the Ozark Trail blaze exclusively. It was decided by Forest Service representatives that they would prefer to continue using the diamond in addition to the Ozark Trail blaze.

STATUS REPORTS

Sierra Club:

Barb reported that the Sierra Club had walked the northern three-quarters of the trail through Pioneer Forest and removed blow downs, so it is in pretty good shape. There is another outing planned on Pioneer Forest in May. They also did tread work on the Courtois River Section for the Forest Service, near the Bass

property. This area will need additional work. There are no other outings planned on the Ozark Trail but the club does plan to do some work on a trail in Meramec State Park. The question was asked if the trail through Huzzah Wildlife Area had been developed so it could connect with the Forest Service segment. Ramon indicated he had laid the trail out before he retired and knew some work had been done. He did not know the exact status.

Pioneer Forest:

Greg reported that Debbie had made a trip to Pioneer Forest and had flagged a connecting loop from Himont Tower to the Ozark Trail. He is searching for help to actually construct the trail. Pioneer Forest staff has pulled all the registration boxes and renovated them so they accommodate the standard Ozark Trail registration card. Greg has also been working with the Sierra Club on their outings.

U.S. Forest Service:

Bill reported that the Potosi District is developing a trail around Council Bluffs Lake. The concept is to have a connector from that trail to the Trace Creek Section. Bill said that the Courtois Creek Section which the Sierra Club had been working on still requires some additional easements to connect with Conservation Department lands. It is possible to get through but you must walk old roads. The Forest Service is about to complete

transactions that will allow the trail to cross Highway 8 and make the connection between the Trace Creek and Courtois Creek Sections. Rick has scouted the route and if they are lucky there may be a little money this summer so that construction can begin. Ramon had been scouting a route that will connect Sutton Bluff to Highway J and the Potosi District has been looking at a route from J to the Keith Spring area. By splitting the main trail from the eastern loop near Keith Spring, the Forest Service will be able to stay on public property and no other easements will be necessary. A portion of the segment that Ramon has been working on is actually flagged. When the gap at Highway 8 is complete and the northern portion of the Karkaghne Section is finished, the Forest Service will essentially have the majority of its trail in place.

The Willow Springs District has completed the section through their area which involved the construction of about 12 miles of new trail that ties into the Ridge Runner Trail. The Forest Service is ready to officially name that section and to produce maps. The Victory Section on the Poplar Bluff District is pretty well in place, there are just a couple of small gaps. The staff has been working with the Corps on the segment north of Highway 49. Connecting the Lake Wappapello Section with the Marble Creek Section will be about the only segment requiring Forest Service efforts. At this time, no progress has been made regarding the gap between Ketcherside Mountain and Crane Lake. The Department of Conservation and Forest Service have both made efforts. Bill

did note that there was a landowner between Thomasville and the Willow Springs District that was a large landowner interested in the trail. Debbie had also talked with this person but had not received any of the follow-up information she had requested. Debbie will attempt to keep in contact with this person. Debbie also noted that with the Forest Service efforts in Missouri bringing the trail so close to the border there seems to be a bigger push for the Corps in Arkansas to make the connection.

Volunteer - Ramon Gass:

Ramon stated that most of what he had been involved in had been discussed by Bill. But he did want to make a point about easements. When he first tried to secure easements, he always tried to get them in perpetuity. He now believes people may be more receptive to shorter term easements for five or ten years. Debbie noted that DNR frequently uses short term easements for trails.

Department of Natural Resources:

Dan reported that he had a crew maintaining the trail last fall and they covered most of the section from Taum Sauk Mountain to Goggins Mountain. The Ozark Society also did some trail maintenance in this area from Johnson's Shut-Ins to Taum Sauk Mountain. They're planning another outing next weekend. Debbie reported that the statewide trail crew had just completed a three

mile loop trail to Mina Sauk Falls. The southern half of this trail will serve as the Ozark Trail. This segment of trail also now links with the Conservation trail leading to Highway 21, so the Taum Sauk Section is now complete from Highway A to Highway 21. The old trail (road) to Mina Sauk Falls will be closed. There is also a new trail head, primitive camping area and scout areas on Taum Sauk Mountain. Debbie also reported that she had been working on developing another section map and that the Victory Section was now available. The next section that will be mapped is the section in the Willow Springs District. The other thing that Debbie has been working on is making preparation for Ozark Trail Day which was discussed later. Debbie also related to the council a phone conversation she had with Art Sullivan from the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. The Missouri Highway and Transportation Department is going to replace the Current River bridge in Van Buren. The design does not include a separate route for pedestrians or bicyclists, like the old bridge. Since this bridge has been the proposed crossing for the Ozark trail for many years, he thought the council would want to write to the MHTD expressing their concern. The MHTD has offered to give the old bridge to the city along with some funds to deal with needed repairs, but the city is reluctant because of liability and future costs. Debbie asked if the council would like to send a letter to the MHTD expressing concern and requesting that they either save the old bridge or provide a separate lane on the new bridge. The council decided they did want to send such a letter and that it would be signed by agency

directors and organization chairpersons. Debbie will draft the letter and send it to council representatives so they can get the appropriate signatures. There was some discussion if enhancement funds could be used to provide a walkway. Debbie explained that such a project was eligible but that all projects for this year had been evaluated and ranked and that the MHTD was not going to release any funds until they knew the outcome of President Clinton's initiative package. Since the bridge is already under construction, it is unlikely that funds would be available soon enough to alter the new structure, but perhaps they could be used to secure the old structure. Debbie explained to the council some of the other provisions of ISTEA including the National Recreational Trails Fund.

Corps of Engineers:

The Corps was not able to attend the meeting but sent a written report as follows: We are maintaining the 12 miles of trail that have been previously cut. We are anticipating to cut at least 3 to 5 miles of trail this year if manpower and funding are available. We have had several scouting days with the Poplar Bluff U.S. Forest Service and have laid out approximately 2 miles of flagging. Today we will be scouting and flagging a 1 to 1 1/2 mile portion that will connect Horhouse parking area with FF Highway.

Ozark Trail Day:

Debbie informed the council of the conditions at Taum Sauk Mountain State Park which were not very desirable. The constant rain has slowed construction and there is a question if the area will be usable. The final date to make a decision will be April 20. Debbie will call everyone, including participants, as soon as possible if the event has to be canceled. A news release will also be prepared. Ramon reported that the MDC had reserved the bus and recommended that Royce be called so they could cancel the bus if necessary. Debbie explained the layout of the new area and described where shuttle vehicles and staff were to park. The registration tent will have the Ozark Trail banner on it and a larger tent will be available for the dedication if it is raining. The water bottles which the council will be giving to all participants were distributed to council members. The number of registered participants at the time of the meeting was 118 out of a possible 360. This is a little down from normal registration at this time.

NOMINATION OF NEW SECTIONS

Debbie explained to the council the formal process of naming a section of the Ozark Trail and for officially designating a section of the trail. Official names are given to sections of trail by the council as a means of identifying a particular segment. Each segment is usually 25-30 miles long which is the

length of a weekend backpack trip. Once a section of trail is complete a nomination form is completed and presented to the council which then voted to accept it as part of the Ozark Trail. Debbie passed out a list of all approved section names, informed the council that there were several sections that had not been officially named or designated as sections, and requested that the council do so. After some discussion, the council approved the name and the designation of the Victory Section (Highway 172 -- Highway V), designation of the Eleven Point River Section (name and location previously approved), the designation of the Taum Sauk Section (name and location previously approved), and the name and designation of the North Fork River Section (FS 835 Pomona Trail Head -- FS 404 Collins Ridge Trail Head). Nomination forms for these sections should be sent to Debbie for entry into the official registry.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Barb reported that the Sierra Club and several other organizations plan to participate in National Trails Day by providing trail information in St. Charles at Frontier Park. The Sierra Club also plans to provide Ozark Trail information at Meramec State Park. They have a shelter reserved and plan on leading hikes. They also hope to show the Ozark Trail slide show at the Saturday evening program in the park and then on Sunday actually construct some trail with volunteers they recruited on Saturday. A group of inter-city kids, 15-22, will be involved

with the hike. Debbie agreed to get the Ozark Trail banner to Barb for the event. Debbie indicated that she had been passing on information about National Trails Day to groups she thought would be interested but that DNR had no special event planned.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Ozark Trail Council will be October 9, 1993 at Meramec State Park in the dining lodge at 10:00 a.m.

Prepared By Deborah Skene

Approved By W^m Palmer