

NOTICE



Ozark Trail Council Meeting
Meramec State Park
Visitor Center

May 6, 2000

10:00 a.m.

(Note: Date has changed from April 15, 2000)

Please call (573) 751-5360 the week before the meeting to inform Debbie Schnack if you plan to attend. No other meeting notice will be sent. Agenda items are welcome.

MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL MEETING
May 6, 2000
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PARTICIPANTS:

Deb Schnack, Department of Natural Resources	Fred Stenger, Ozark Trails Club
Niki Aberle, Conservation Federation of Missouri	Carol Springer, MO Equine Council
Karen Mobley, US Forest Service	Suzanne Smith, Sierra Club
Paul Nazarenko, US Forest Service	Robert Gestel, Sierra Club
Teresa Kight, MO Department of Conservation	Jason Jett, Volunteer
Bruce Linders, Am. Youth Hostels	Dean Hodapp, Volunteer
Charlie Davidson, Conservation Federation of MO	Rich Ashley, Volunteer
Mark Veach, Volunteer	Keith & Nathan Coplin, Volunteers
Rich Bauer, Volunteer	Andy Kerwin, Americorps
Emily Kunz, Americorps	

The May 6, 2000 meeting of the Ozark Trail Council convened at approximately 10:00 a.m. at the Meramec State Park Visitor Center. The meeting was called to order by Deb Schnack, Trail Coordinator, Division of State Parks. Following the introductions the minutes of the October 23, 1999 Ozark Trail Council meeting were approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Deb announced that she did send a letter to the USFS and NPS in Arkansas that indicated the desire of the OTC to complete the connection from Missouri to Arkansas.
- Bruce reported no new news from the Conservation Alliance through Terry Laup's company. Deb explained that the money used from this grant would go to the purchasing of property south of the fire tower at Taum Sauk Mountain. This is a new route that would alleviate a number of problems. As far as Deb knows, the property is for sale.
- Although no official word or letter has come out of administration, Karen reported that the OT markers are gradually replacing the gray diamond markers. (Gray diamonds will remain on side trails.) Fred stated that until the Poplar Bluff Ranger District receives official word, they would continue to use the gray diamonds. Karen asked Deb if she would agree to draft a letter to the USFS asking for an official response permitting the use of the OT markers.
- Bruce asked Deb if the OTC received a letter from the AYH concerning the designated account for OT donations. Neither Deb nor Niki received this letter. Bruce commented that setting up a dedicated fund and actively pursuing donations would bring in land and tax-deductible monetary gifts from those unable or unwilling to do actual trail work. Furthermore, he reported that the Executive Director of AYH would contact Deb about getting their annual backpacking trip profits into the fund. Charlie Davidson explained the purpose of Conservation Foundation of Missouri Charitable Trust. It is a 501(c)(3) organization that acts as a fiscal agent for many different programs i.e. Katy Trail acquisition. He needs a letter written by the OTC asking the trustees for a designated fund operating account for the OT. (The Foundation will accrue the interest.) If the OTC wants to eventually invest the money, the Foundation will do that through Edward D. Jones. The fund must have a goal. The money will stay separate – earmarked for the OT only. Deb explained to the group that the OTC was an organization

concerned with the development and maintenance of the OT; it is not established as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The OTC will be able to control the account. The motion was made and passed to establish the account through the Foundation, and then the OTC can solicit for donations. Charlie announced that the annual Foundation meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2000.

- Bruce suggested that since the general OT brochure is outdated, it would be helpful to have an updated list on the construction of each section at each OTC meeting. Karen suggested just filling in the red lines on the old map for now. The group went through each section of the trail to determine what is open and what is not.

The northern terminus is at the Huzzah CA (there is a gap across Courtois Creek – they are working on a plan for a bridge for MDC and USFS to link together.) The USFS trail will go through the Bass property. The trail through Harmon Springs is complete (sign is missing--the dry creek is the OT which comes out on the county road). South of this area the gap is being filled in between the Berryman and the Trace Creek Section. South from Trace Creek to the Karkaghne Hwy J to Sutton's Bluff is built and marked. Temporary labor crews are brushing and marking the trail in this area this spring. Just north of Hwy A going north is a gap (Ottyer Creek to where it connects at Hwy K.) Paul stated that the USFS is still waiting for NEPA approval. The Indiana Bat resides in this area and the US Fish and Wildlife Service must approve. They have to make sure the trail does not affect its habitat. From Hwy J south to Sutton's Bluff the trail is complete. The Blair Creek Section is complete. The Current River Section is complete. The Between the Rivers Section is complete. The Eleven Point River Section is complete. This takes us to the west boundary of the MTNF – there is a large gap running generally from east to west along the Eleven Point River corridor to the next USFS unit (large gap across private property), which will eventually connect into the North Fork River Section. Although there is no map, the North Fork River Section is supposedly complete. Then, there is a large gap down to Arkansas. On the eastern loop, the Taum Sauk section is complete from Hwy A to Hwy 21. (At one time a small piece was complete up to Ketcherside Mountain, but it ended there.) A gap remains on private property approaching Crane Lake. The Marble Creek Section is partially complete. It will eventually hook into Sam A. Baker State Park. (Two gaps – one south of Marble Creek and one north of Marble Creek.) From Sam A. Baker State Park south the trail is complete. Wappapello Lake Section is complete all the way to the Black River. A large gap remains heading towards Van Buren.

- Bruce asked if it was possible to document all gaps and what it will take to complete them e.g. money, land acquisition. Then, when the OT fund is set up, we can start asking for contributions and eventually make land purchases. Deb reported that she can provide the gaps, but she doesn't have the staff to catalog the ownerships: Bruce was satisfied with just getting the gaps documented. He suggested asking retired volunteers to do the rest. He would also like to know which trail segments are ready for construction so that we can advertise trail building weekends like we did in April. Deb reported that currently there are not many segments ready for construction. Deb will write up an explanation of what's done and where the gaps are located. She will also explain why the gap is there. In future meetings, Deb will bring a poster-sized map to show any changes on the OT.
- Bruce asked Carol if she'd bring the protocols and procedures for the Missouri Equine Council to the next meeting. The MO Equine Council is now an affiliate of the Conservation of Missouri.

- Some trail users that were present asked for warning signs in needed locations. They would also like re-routes where necessary. The land managers will do what they can with their limited budgets. The Council agreed that all three users must work together for the greatness of the trail.

STATUS REPORTS:

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (Teresa Kight)

Teresa asked about the necessity of the OT registration cards at the trailheads. Deb said that we should continue to use them for safety and maintenance reasons. Teresa reported that a short section of trail has been rerouted due to erosion problems (no map changes – only 20 feet difference).

AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS (Bruce Linders)

Bruce reported that his group has spent a lot of time helping Paul Nazarenko on a nine-mile section in the Potosi Ranger District. They did do a walk through of their section and explained that they needed boulders hauled to Ottery Creek (it is too wide to build a bridge there). The 12th annual AHY Backpacking trip will take place on parts of the Karkaghne and Blair Creek Sections October 14 through October 21. He would like help from the OTC with publicity.

US FOREST SERVICE (Paul Nazarenko and Karen Mobley)

Paul reported that the connector trail between the Berryman and Hazel Creek is almost completed (less than 2 miles to go). They had a couple of workdays in the Potosi District, which were organized by Rich and Niki. There were approximately fifty volunteers including the Americorps group. This trail section should be finished by June. The actual connector trail is about 14 miles to Trace Creek. Paul thanked Rich for all of his volunteering (he is now graduated to trail layout). Paul presented Rich with a certificate of appreciation from the Potosi Ranger District. Also the OTC thanked Rich for all of the money and hard work he has contributed. Deb noted that DNR has OT certificates of appreciation for others who may deserve the honor. Paul is setting up a tool shed at the Potosi office. Volunteers will be able to check out tools and write down their location so that others who go to the shed will know where help is needed. Bruce suggested charging a fee for the key. Furthermore, Paul questioned which Ozark TRAIL TEAMS (OTT) were in his district. Niki passed out her report of OTT's and their designated segments.

Karen distributed maps of the new northern Karkaghne Section. There is a USFS Team that is doing environmental analysis on recreation trails. They are prioritizing a list of projects. This Team will also write up the Blair Creek NEPA plan. The USFS will start maintaining this new section next week by marking and brushing the trail. Karen also reminded the OTC of the USFS website. Furthermore, Karen brought copies of the ATV policies of the USFS – basically say that people cannot ride on any USFS roads or cross-country. For more information, the Highway Patrol has an excellent brochure on ATV's.

SIERRA CLUB (Bob Gestel)

They are currently taking care of the Pioneer Forest segment; it is currently in good shape. The connector trail from the Himont Tower site to Laxton Springs will be open this fall. Deb reported that Greg Iffrig has completed some signing as he asked for carsonite posts. This section is not open to horses.

MISSOURI EQUINE COUNCIL (Carol Springer)

Carol reported that the MO Equine Council has been spending their energy on the Roadless Initiative. Karen announced that the roadless policy would be out next week. The hearings will be in June.

OZARK TRAILS CLUB (Fred Stenger)

Fred reported that they are making permanent progress on the Victory Section. The weather has been very cooperative and they are actually working on areas of trail they have never been on before. They have a couple of scout troops helping them in that area. They have not had a problem with stolen signs yet this year (although, there is still an ATV problem around Ellsinore). In order to track better use, Fred has been working with the USFS trying to get registration boxes at the trailheads.

AMERICORP (Emily Kunz and Andy Kerwin)

They reported on the GPS mapping of the OT. So far the following sections are completed; the Berryman, Trace Creek, Karkaghne, lower part of the Current River, Eleven Point area, the Victory Section and they are currently working on the North Fork Section (where the trail is rough or lost completely). The USFS has the GPS coordinates and they are working on the first phase of checking these coordinates. Furthermore, Americorps has applied for a NRTF Grant.

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (Deb Schnack)

Deb read the report from Johnson Shut-Ins State Park. The trail crew in that area has worked hard to keep the trail cleared and marked. No one has complained about being lost this year. They have been advising hikers to carry all the water they need when hiking the Taum Sauk Section because the creek totally dried up last summer. Looks like it will be worse this year. The ultimate goal here is to connect the USFS land at Bell Mountain. They are currently lacking key ownerships.

VILLAGE IMAGE (Louise and Dan McKeel)

Since Louise and Dan were unable to attend, Louise sent Deb their update. They are continuing to update their Ozark Trail website. You can reach it at <http://home.stlnet.com/~slluez/transozarktrail.html>.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS (Dick Chenoweth):

Dick was unable to attend the meeting so he sent in the following written report:

"The condition of the Wappapello Lake Section is good and improved since the October 1999 status report. Most if not all of the blow-downs have been removed. However, one section of the trail, from the USFS Trailhead on Hwy F south to Caldwell Creek (PA #62) still needs inspection and maintenance. This should be completed in the next week to ten days.

The trail south of 34 Bridge Recreation Area as been widened as needed in some sections. The status of Clarks Creek Crossing remains the same with no changes planned or funded. The March workshop was relocated and rescheduled to Babler State Park on April 1, 2000.

The Eagle Scout candidate with BSA Troop #24, Marble Hill, MO has resubmitted his proposal for his Eagle Service Project to his Eagle Review Board to locate, design and construct an overlook or vista on the trail. We are still waiting to hear the results.

Presently, the Corps of Engineers is continuing to solicit and coordinate all volunteer trail workers with Niki Aberle, the OTT Coordinator.

MERAMEC RIVER RECREATION ASSOCIATION (Ben Knox)

Ben was unable to attend, so Deb read his updated report.

- "The new Route 66 State Park officially opened to public use in the fall of 1999. The new 409-acre park features a number of trails, including one that parallels with Meramec River between River Miles 33 and 34. Per the Meramec Greenway Ozark Trail Master Plan, the trail paralleling the river will be a part of the Ozark Trail.
- In the fall of 1999 St. Louis County opened the new 189-acre Sherman Beach County Park at River Miles 28 and 28.5. Improvements include a Public Trail and River Access Point and a one-mile trail system. A ½-mile part of that trail system, identified on the enclosed map as the Al Foster Trail, will be part of the Ozark Trail.
- In the fall of 1999 the City of Arnold officially approved the Arnold Meramec Greenway Master Plan. The plan shows the detailed location of the Ozark Trail from its northern beginning point at the junction of the Meramec and Mississippi Rivers, upstream through the City to the Highways 61-67 Bridge. With planning now completed, the City is proceeding into the development phase of their segment of the Greenway and Ozark Trail."

THE OZARK SOCIETY (Duane Woltjen)

Duane could not attend the meeting so Deb went over the update. The Ozark Society remains on record in favor of the trail. They accepted Duane's proposed route from Big Creek going around the Leatherwood Wilderness to the south and east up to Hwy. 134. The Ozark Society Board rejected a proposal to accept the route Duane had explored through the lower Buffalo Wilderness on the south side of the river, hugging the south boundary of the Buffalo National River from Hwy. 14 to Big Creek. The Sierra Club had a meeting to discuss the opposition to trails in the Arkansas wilderness. The good news is that the NPS has requested funding for the project for the next fiscal year (\$62,000 for the current year and \$108,000 for the next year). Furthermore, Duane had a letter personally delivered to the President. Since then the NPS in Washington DC is far more interested in the Trail. Duane is going to Washington DC to visit with policy makers.

CONSERVATION FEDERATION OF MO – OZARK TRAIL TEAMS (Niki Aberle)

Niki reported that the CFM has applied for the 2000 NRTF Grant to keep the program going. Furthermore, a highly attended workshop was held at Babler State Park on April 1 and a workday in the Potosi District on April 2. She compiled a list of OTTs and their adopted segments. She has 2,500 hours logged as of now. The next workshop will be held the fall of 2000 in the Springfield area. Niki, with the help of Paul and Rich, will organize more workdays and send notices to all volunteers (including the OTC).

OTHER BUSINESS:

- On behalf of Dick Chenoweth and the US Army Corps of Engineers at Lake Wappapello, Fred presented Niki and Deb with two beautiful hiking staffs (beaver sticks pulled from Lake Wappapello hand carved by Billy McClintock). These were presented for the work they have done helping coordinate the volunteer workshop and for the mapping efforts on the Wappapello Lake Section. Niki and Deb were very surprised and appreciative of this honor.
- Bob Gestel showed the OTC the Sierra Club Award – The Golden Pulaski. This year it goes to Daniel Talon for his work in trail maintenance and glade restoration.
- The group went over the planned events for National Trails Day 2000.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Ozark Trail Council meeting will be held on September 30, 2000 at Meramec State Park at 10:00 a.m. in the Visitor Center.

Prepared by: _____ Niki Aberle _____

Approved by: _____ Douglas K. Eiken _____
Douglas K. Eiken, Director, Division of State Parks
Chairman, Ozark Trail Council