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# MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL

October 23, 1999

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## AGENDA

- Introductions
- Status Reports
- Ozark Trail Team Status  
& Workshop Report (Niki)
- Ozark Trail Master Plan  
Meramec Greenway (Bev Knox)
- Report From Arkansas (Dwayne Woltjen)
- Next Meeting Date

**MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 23, 1999**  
**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	Frank Bloemke, St. Louis Council BSA
Teresa Kight, MO Department of Conservation	Duane Woltjen, OHTA / Ozark Soc.
Bruce Linders, Am. Youth Hostels	Terry Laup, Am. Youth Hostels
Wayne Miller, Sierra Club	Dan & Louis McKeel, Village Image, W.U.

The October 23, 1999 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 May 15, 1999 Ozark Trail Council meeting were approved.

**STATUS REPORTS:**

**AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS (Bruce Linders & Terry Laup)**

Bruce reported that they would be going out this winter to do maintenance on their 5.8 miles of the Trace Creek Section. He also reported on the Ozark Trail Backpacking Trip. They had eight people travel for the whole week and five people attended for one-half week. Bruce would like to see the OTC more involved next year. They need their information advertised nationally. The next trip is scheduled for Oct. 14-21, 2000. The specific trail sections are to be determined. Bruce asked Deb if DNR could possibly promote the hike in their calendar of events on their website. There was also some discussion about the OT patches. Deb and Bruce will check with the company in St. Louis to make sure that they have all of the OT sections patches. Deb and Bruce also discussed the potential to use money made from the trips to develop a new slick OT general brochure. The OTC agreed that the brochure definitely needed to be updated.

Terry reported on the Conservation Alliance. He works for a design studio in St. Louis called Phoenix Creative Studios that just joined the Conservation Alliance -- a group of companies (REI, Kelty, etc.) that donate money for conservation projects. A member of the Conservation Alliance must nominate an organization in order for them to receive a grant. Deb pointed out that the grants could not be used for trail maintenance; they must be used for a specific project, i.e. Taum Sauk Mountain easement project. Terry reported that the grant proposals are due twice a year. His company will submit a recommendation for the OTC. Grants are given semi-annually.

**MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (Teresa Kight)**

Teresa reported on the oak sale that is taking place along the OT on the South end of Peck Ranch. They are cutting the oaks that are diseased on each side of the trail and then replanting.

**US FOREST SERVICE (Karen Mobley)**

Karen reported that she had spoken with Bruce Bailey (Americorp). His group has performed GPS on most of the OT on USFS property. They have not reached the

Poplar Bluff area yet, but it is on their agenda. (They did reach Pioneer Forest even though it is not on USFS land.) GPS coordinates will be available in the near future. Americorp is continuing their partnership with USFS. (They are not limited to the OT, so they will be working on some other trails in the districts.) Karen announced that they received a TEA-21 Grant to install toilets at Berryman Trail Campground and Sutton's Bluff campground. They are using concrete blocks (less expensive) instead of wood to build the structures. They have also received grant money to upgrade sections of the Eleven Point River and the Current River Sections of the OT. They have purchased more brochures from DNR. Deb explained the economic benefit of this process. Furthermore, Karen suggested that the OTC should write a letter to her superiors regarding replacing the gray diamond markers with the official OT markers (Diamonds will still be used on side trails). Also, Karen reported that the USFS has three new district rangers for Potosi, Poplar Bluff and the Doniphan/Eleven Point Districts.

Karen briefed the group on the status of the Potosi District. Paul Nazarenko has had quite a few volunteers and workdays, but he is still concerned because not all of the TRAIL TEAMS have checked with him prior to their outings. There have also been signs of ATV use on the western half of the Berryman Trail. Any witnesses should contact Paul as soon as possible. Furthermore, Karen reported that they are working on an easement to make the connection with Huzzah CA. The connection from the Trace Creek Section to the Berryman Trail should be completed this winter.

The following are specific projects that will use TEA 21 funds:  
They will upgrade six miles of the Eleven Point River Section (widen the trail, improving tread and installing additional markers.) Some of these funds will be given to the Americorp operating plan so that they can assist with trail maintenance. Americorp will help the Forest Service reconstruct and relocate parts of the Current River Section. Funds will also be used to upgrade the Highway A trailhead in the Potosi District including the evaluation of heritage site resources and site planning (as of now, no actual trail work will be performed – just planning). In the Salem District, the Forest Service is adding a loop off of the OT to connect to TNC land at Grasshopper Hollow. They are using an old USFS road and adding a kiosk. Due to the sensitivity of the area, horses will not be allowed on the loop. Also in the Salem District, they are trying to relocate four sections. They will reroute the trail around the fen at Blair Creek and reroute around Sutton's Bluff. Furthermore, the northern Blair Creek Section will be routed to a more scenic area. All of these projects will be reported to NEPA. Karen did report that the Brushy Creek Trailhead has been reopened. Lastly, the Forest Service will have a Webpage out of Rolla sometime in 2000.

#### SIERRA CLUB (Wayne Miller)

Wayne reported that Bob Gestel has been working with the Boy Scouts (approx. 25 volunteers) on trail maintenance at Pioneer Forest. Pioneer Forest would like to add some spur trails in their area for day hikes. Furthermore, there has been discussion among Sierra Club members about adopting another OT section closer to St. Louis to eliminate the overnight requirement.

#### ST. LOUIS COUNCIL BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA (Frank Bloemke)

Frank reported that a granite marker on Russell Mountain (a monument to "Pop Connelly" – founder of the Taum Sauk Trail) was dedicated in May 1998. It is adjacent to the Hwy. CC OT trailhead.

#### MISSOURI EQUINE COUNCIL (Carol Springer)

Carol reported that Governor Huckabee (AR) appointed Dr. Betty Robinson (Professor of Education – University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, AR) to the Recreational Trails Advisory Committee. She is on the Board of Directors for Back Country Horsemen and the North American Saddle Mule Association. Carol suggested that the OTC could connect with Dr. Robinson through MEC. Duane Woltjen could contact her about the problems with the Ozark Highlands Trail connections. Carol went on to explain that the MEC is starting to raise its political conscience.

#### OZARK TRAILS CLUB (Fred Stenger)

Fred reported that his group has been diligently working on tree removals, tread work and a footbridge on the Victory Section. They are finishing their second major trail maintenance project, which this year entails mostly downed tree removal. They have scheduled a hike of their whole section to check on wet areas. They are working with the USFS on this project. Fred also reported that he is getting several e-mail inquiries a week (more and more from out of state). Fred is working on more trail promotion from Sam A. Baker State Park to Poplar Bluff. They are getting a lot of horse use in that area. There is well over 100 miles of trail for all three users in that area.

#### VILLAGE IMAGE (Louise and Dan McKeel)

Louise reported that their website has been down for quite some time now and they are working on getting it back up as soon as possible. Dan and Louise both reported on the trip they took in August to the Arkansas Highlands Trail. (They traveled the whole trail from west to east, including part of the Buffalo River Trail). There they took a lot of video and pictures for visuals for their website. Dan was very impressed by the trailheads in Arkansas. They consist of a wooden signboard with a locator map on each one. Paper maps are also provided for the user to take with them on the trail section. Dan suggested doing this in Missouri when we get more funds. The subject of donation boxes came up and it was decided from past experiences that they promote vandalism. The idea of having only donation envelopes was discussed and the consensus of the group was to stick with this idea (users can take the envelopes with them and mail their donations back to the land manager). Louise reported on the 30-minute GREENTIME television show on which she, Dan, Bruce Linders and Niki Aberle will be appearing to promote the Trans-Ozark Trail. The show will be broadcast four times in the City of St Louis (cable channel 21) during the months of November and December. Louise can get council members a copy of the video for \$10.00, if they so desire.

#### CORPS OF ENGINEERS (Dick Chenoweth):

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

“The overall condition of the lake section has improved since the last status report of May 1999. Most of the previously reported blow-downs could not be removed, therefore the trail was rerouted with the use of new signing. Also, some new signs have been put up on the trail; however, most of the old signs were in good condition. Overall, the trail shows no major or significant erosion problems. Some sections of the trail will require some maintenance. At Caldwell Creek to Cozart Point Road, sections need more signing. It could be difficult locating the trail around Cozart Point Road. Also, the fields north of Wet Fork need more signing due to brush hogging and sign

deterioration. South of 34 Bridge, sections of the trail need to be widened in some of the fields. The status of Clark's Creek Crossing remains the same with no significant changes planned or funded. Please remember to exercise caution, even though both stream banks are "horse friendly", as the stream bottom is still soft due to the large buildup of sand, silt and gravel. The Corps of Engineers at Wappapello Lake hosted an Ozark Trail Team Workshop at the Bill Emerson Memorial Visitor Center in September 1999. Nineteen volunteers and agency workers attended. Tentatively, a Spring 2000 workshop is planned for March. Currently, an Eagle Scout Candidate from Boy Scouts of America Troop #24 in Marble Hill, Missouri, is seeking approval for his Eagle Review Board to locate, design, and construct an overlook or vista on the trail as his requirement for his Eagle service project. Presently, the Corps is continuing to solicit and coordinate all volunteer trail workers with Niki Aberle, the Ozark Trail Team (OTT) Coordinator for the Conservation Federation of Missouri. Also, good news...The Ozark Trail map for the Wappapello Lake section (the official publication of the Ozark Trail Council) is now here, however, in limited quantities from this office at this time."

#### MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (Deb Schnack)

Deb also announced that the new section map for Wappapello Lake is completed. She explained that to insure high quality of accuracy, the digital method couldn't yet be used. Deb also reported that during the upcoming fall and winter seasons, she will do trail layout in the Goggin's Mountain area where it connects to Bell Mountain. She will be laying out a loop trail going into a wild area in Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park for hiking and equestrian use only, (The loop is not part of the official Ozark Trail, but it will connect to it in the future.) The Division of State Parks Crew will do the initial work. They now have the funding to build a new trailhead immediately, then they will eventually develop an equestrian campground on some new property. Furthermore, Deb reported that DNR is continuing to participate in the OTT workshops.

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

Niki reported that two OTT workshops were held this fall – September 18th at Wappapello Lake and October 2nd at Babler State Park. (This makes three total for 1999.) Both fall workshops went well; most attendees seemed very serious and promised dedication. To date, Niki has registered 18 official teams (made up of all three users) and 1,700 hours logged. The Trace Creek Section is most popular due to its location. Furthermore, Niki announced that she is reapplying for a NRTF grant in order to keep the OTT program going. During the winter months, she will continue promotion, publicity and the coordination of future workshops in spring of 2000.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

##### MERAMEC RIVER REC ASSOC / ST LOUIS CO PARKS (Ben Knox, Dennis Hogan)

Ben was unable to attend so Deb gave the status report on the Meramec Greenway project. The MRRA has been diligently working to identify the route of the OT along the Meramec Greenway (about at 53-mile segment). Cities and municipalities along the route have endorsed the idea. (Some small segments of trail are already completed.) They are currently applying for grants since they now know the specifics of what they want to do and the project will lead to something bigger and grander, i.e. the OT connection. At the last OTC meeting, Dennis Hogan presented the concept, but at that time they were not this far along and now the master plan is in process. There is still a large gap between Castlewood State Park and Route 66. The eastern-

half is more urban and the western half is more primitive. The Meramec Greenway will be similar to the OT in that different sections will have different management styles. Dan and Bruce agreed to go to some public meetings. Deb suggested an official endorsement from the OTC. A motion for the OTC to endorse and support this concept was made and the motion carried.

#### OZARK HIGHLANDS TRAIL ASSOCIATION / OZARK SOCIETY (Duane Woltjen)

Duane reported on the status of finishing the Ozark Highlands Trail. He stated that in August 1999 the OHTA organized a letter writing campaign to the superintendent of the Buffalo National River, the supervisor of the Ozark National Forest and to Congressman Tim Hutchinson. The American Hiking Society gave OHTA front-page publicity, which has in turn sparked more positive interest from the federal agencies. All of the letters written have been extremely effective. (The National Park Service still has not begun the process of making this a reality.) Duane went on to report that the OHTA has not used their other publicity contacts just yet (they are waiting for the right time). *Backpacker* magazine will have a blurb in the January issue highlighting this situation. Duane asked that the OTC add the OHTA web link to any sites they can access.

**STATUS:** Duane and Tim Ernst met with the US Forest Service in Russellville, Arkansas. They specifically spoke with Charles Richmond, Forest Supervisor, and two other staff people. Richmond announced that the USFS is strongly in favor of completing the trail (Duane agrees that this is a major step forward). From Highway 65 to Buffalo Point, the trail corridor is on normal NPS land. From just below Buffalo Point, the corridor is within the Lower Buffalo Wilderness (NPS). Leatherwood Wilderness (USFS) is contiguous with the east boundary of a portion of the Lower Buffalo Wilderness. This is the area of concern. There are several people who were instrumental in getting Arkansas Wilderness Areas established that extremely oppose any through trail in any wilderness area. This leaves the USFS with no logical alternative routes. From Highway 14, due east the trail would have to go through private land to reconnect to the Ozark National Forest in a non-wilderness area. Duane reported that some people in that area are extremely hostile to the NPS, USFS or any other similar organization. (He went on to explain the eminent domain history of the Buffalo River). These hostile individuals could potentially be a threat to trail users. Duane believes that there is a potential route along the edge of the Lower Buffalo River Wilderness Area, which follows the park boundary. Duane has walked and mapped a route including nine miles of old road in the Lower Buffalo Wilderness Area. He will continue to explore an alternative route around and to the east of the wilderness area. It may be feasible but he cannot guarantee it because of the geology and topography of the area. The USFS is doing an opportunity analysis, which should be finished and ready for public input by next spring. The USFS is trying to get the NPS to participate in this exercise. The NPS is currently not interested. This means that the letter writing campaign should continue.

**OPPOSITION:** The Ozark Society, consisting of those three individuals so vehemently opposed to the trail extension through the wilderness areas, may vote to oppose the trail. The Sierra Club has already voted to oppose the thru trail. They say that the area will get too much traffic and too much use, which will cause a lack of solitude. Duane went on to update the group on future day hikes on the OHT and he announced that he would possibly hike from Fort Smith, AR to St. Louis, MO next spring.

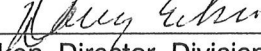
**MOTION:** The council discussed writing a letter from the OTC to the NPS (with a c.c. to the Ozark Society and the Sierra Club). The letter would ask the NPS to participate in the Opportunity Analysis. It would also explain our vision, eagerness and

willingness to connect the MO trail to the AR trail. Niki made a motion and Carol seconded. The motion passed with Karen and Duane abstaining from the vote.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next Ozark Trail Council meeting will be held on May 6, 2000 at Meramec State Park at 10:00 a.m. in the Visitor Center

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_ Niki Aberle \_\_\_\_\_

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

# NOTICE



Ozark Trail Council Meeting  
Meramec State Park  
Visitor Center

May 15, 1999

10:00 a.m.

Please call (573) 751-5360 the week before the meeting to inform Debbie if you plan to attend. No other meeting notice will be sent. Agenda items are welcome. Please bring status reports in written form to the meeting and give them to Debbie.