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MINUTES OF THE
MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 3, 1992

PARTICIPANTS:

Larry Furniss	U.S. Forest Service
Darsan Wang	U.S. Forest Service
Rebecca Hays	Corps of Engineers, Wappapello Lake
Greg Iffrig	Pioneer Forest
Ramon D. Gass	Volunteer/Department of Conservation
Barbara Muhlack	Sierra Club, Ozark Chapter
Dan Wedemeyer	DNR, Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park
Nick Donze	Missouri Park & Recreation Association
Craig Stubblefield	Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Debbie Schnack	DNR Trail Coordinator

The October 3, 1992 meeting of the Ozark Trail Council convened at approximately 10:00 am at the Meramec State Park dining lodge. The meeting was called to order by Debbie Schnack, Department of Natural Resources, Trail Coordinator.

Following the introductions, the minutes of the last meeting of May 2, 1992 were approved as written.

STATUS REPORTS:

Missouri Park & Recreation Association:

Nick stated that MPRA would probably be able to support Ozark Trail Day similar to the way they had in the past, i.e. volunteer help and with financial support.

U.S. Forest Service:

Larry (Poplar Bluff Ranger District): He has completed flagging a 3 mile section and plans to flag six more miles this year. It is the plan to construct the 9 miles prior to September 30, 1993. The Corps and the Forest Service have jointly agreed on a Highway 67 crossing. They have also identified two options for crossing FF Highway and believes the Corps has narrowed it down to one choice. The Highway 67 crossing has been identified. There is a lot of controversy right now on the old Black River bridge on Highway 67 whether it will be retained or not. The Forest Service definitely will not maintain it specifically for Ozark Trail purposes. Larry has also worked with the Highway Department for an under the highway crossing, which is a long-term objective. There is no permit system required from the state to cross the highway, but at the same time, they need to be involved. The cost of putting in a crossing for the Ozark Trail under the highway is initiated in the initial planning phase or if the trail does exist they will recognize it.

Larry stated that a news release had been drafted that promoted the trail and basically it tells about the Missouri Ozark Trail Council seeking the assistance or a volunteer group to construct a 12 mile section of the Ozark Trail that will convert the Ozark Scenic Riverways and the Poplar Bluff ranger district around the Elsinore area.

There was a great deal of discussion about the appropriateness of seeking volunteers without actually having trail easements across this segment. Larry is concerned about closing the gap and is wondering who will do it since it is outside the Forest Service purchase unit. It was decided that if Larry could get the names of the landowners in the gap to DNR they would send out a letter to see if landowners would be willing to grant an easement. It was also decided that it would be a good idea to find a local person who supports the trail and get them to make some contact with landowners. Larry will attempt to find such a person. It was decided that no news release would go out at this time.

Darsan (Salem & Eleven Point Ranger District): The Salem Ranger District has completed 5 miles of trail and have plans for another 5 miles. They have done some relocation of trails to reduce the grade and improve the tread. They are doing the scouting on the section from Sutton Bluff north to Highway J. They are looking at crossing the highway at Oats. In 1994 or 1995 they plan to do some construction north of Sutton Bluff area.

The Eleven Point District is inventorying their trails and doing tree removal and light brush removal. Work will continue into the winter. The ban on herbicides is beginning to show, sprouts are encroaching and hand work is becoming time consuming. The U.S. 60 Ozark Trail parking area is being changed slightly due to new highway construction. There is also a need to renovate

this parking area to accommodate horse trailers. Overall, the trail is in good condition. More Ozark Trail markers are needed.

Corps of Engineers:

Becky reported that the Corps had re-routed a section of trail that was very steep and it now is open and ready for use. The existing 12 miles of trail was maintained this summer by a special crew that also marked the trail. The Corps has recently flagged 2 miles of new trail and is planning to construct 5 miles this next fiscal year as long as there is manpower and money available. They will be requesting a map for this section in the near future.

Pioneer Forest:

Greg reported that after the last meeting he sent a letter in support of the Willow Springs Ranger District's proposal for their 34 mile section of trail and also sent a letter to Leo to respond as a private landowner. He responded from the Pioneer Forest perspective.

Greg shared a map of a proposed loop trail that will begin at Himont Tower and tie into the Ozark Trail. Debbie has agreed to come down and walk it and do some flagging. The next step is to get some help with the development. The hope is the loop trail will encourage some additional use in that area.

Department of Conservation:

There was no representative from the DOC, but Ramon gave a brief update. He and Jerry Vian have been working as a team and looking at various routes connecting Sutton Bluff to Kieth Spring. Ramon informed the group that Jerry

has been ill. However, early in the summer he and Jerry put a routed route sign at the junction of the Ozark Trail and the spur to Russell Mountain. He also cleared brush on the new trail from Taum Sauk Mountain to Russell Mountain.

National Park Service:

Craig stated that routine maintenance had been done on the Current River Section and that a registration box was installed at Powder Mill.

Sierra Club:

Barb reported that the Sierra Club had worked on the trail between Marble Creek campground and Minimun road. She noted that there seemed to be a fair amount of horse use on the Marble Creek section, but, as far as she could tell it really didn't seem to do any damage to the trail, if anything, it was a little easier to maintain.

During the next two months the Sierra Club plans on going back down to Pioneer Forest and possibly working on the loop trail that Greg mentioned.

Department of Natural Resources:

Dan reported that the park's trail crew had been hired for the season and their priority would be trail maintenance on the section from Taum Sauk Tower to Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, the Bell Mountain to Johnson's Shut-Ins section, and the park's Shut-Ins Trail. The Ozark Society is scheduled to do maintenance on October 16. The reroute of the Taum Sauk Section to Mina Sauk Falls is proceeding, it is being developed by DNR's statewide trail crew. Dan noted that the Ozark Trail registration box at the park had been vandalized but would be replaced.

The Forest Service, the DOC, DNR and Ramon will participate. Debbie will call individuals to establish a meeting date.

Ozark Trail Association:

Ramon stated that there seems to be some interest in starting an Ozark Trail Association made up of all trail user groups that would help recruit volunteers to construct, maintain, and promote the trail. He asked if the council would endorse such a group. After much discussion about the benefits of such groups in other states and present volunteer organizations in our state, the council endorsed and encouraged the establishment of such a group. Ramon indicated that he would like to provide information about forming such a group at the Ozark Trail Day event. The council thought that would be appropriate.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Ozark Trail Council will be held on April 13, 1993 at the St. Charles Convention and Visitor Bureau at 1:00 p.m.

PREPARED BY: Detrick Schrad

APPROVED BY: W. P. Palmer