

AGENDA

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OZARK TRAIL DAY

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MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 1993
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Participants: **Debbie Schnack, Department of Natural Resources**
 John Kurtzeborn, Missouri Rambler
 Robert Smith, Boy Scouts, St. Louis Area Council
 Barbara Muhlack, Sierra Club
 Mark Rowland, STREAM
 Bill Alden, Mark Twain National Forest
 Jerry Viau, Volunteer - Edgar Springs
 Ramon Gass, Volunteer - Jefferson City
 Charles Davidson, Conservation Federation

The October 9, 1993, meeting of the Ozark Trail Council convened at approximately 10:00 at the Meramec State Park Visitors Center. The meeting was called to order by Debbie Schnack who was representing Bill Palmer, Acting Director for the Division of State Parks.

Following the introductions, a request for the approval of the minutes of the last meeting was made. Barb requested that the National Trail Day report be amended by changing "inter-city kids" to "inner-city kids."

OLD BUSINESS:

Debbie distributed an updated list of Ozark Trail Section names that had been approved at the last meeting. She also has received nomination forms from the USFS for the Eleven Point River Section and the North Fork River Section which have been added to the registry.

STATUS REPORTS:

U.S. Forest Service: Bill gave the report for all the districts.

- The Pike Creek Crossing, on the Current River Section, which incurred flood damage, has been reworked and is open.
- Early summer tree blow down problems still exist in the first 2 or 3 miles of the Between The Rivers Section. It will be cleaned up this coming winter. A horse trailer parking area has been constructed at the junction of the Between The Rivers Section and the Eleven Point River Section, on FR 3152. It will accommodate autos and trailers. A horse trailer parking area is being constructed on The Blue Ridge Trail. The Blue Ridge overlies the Eleven Point River Section on one arm. The Forest Service soil scientist is looking at a part of the Eleven Point River Section that parallels the river and that has incurred severe erosion. The river bank is receding, and 3 time in 10 years has wiped out the trail. The

acquisition of the Greer Spring Tract provides the opportunity to place the trail next to the river in several places. Relocation of parts of 8 miles is proposed. Greer Spring will not be affected, nor will it be connected to the Ozark Trail. The Eleven Point District is doing 7 miles of tread rehabilitation, primarily in locations associated with trail heads. Volunteer groups continue doing light maintenance work. Two scout troops are active. Overall, the Ozark Trail on Eleven Point District is in good condition and will be very good by early winter.

Raymond Gass has completed flagging the Ozark Trail north from Sutton Bluff to "P" Hwy. east of Oats, Missouri. Plans are to start construction on this section in January 1994. Five miles of reconstruction were completed this year (FY 93). The grey diamonds are being used for reassurance markers and the Ozark Trail symbol at other trail and road crossings.

The Willow Springs District has a contract on a 1 1/4 mile of trail connecting the Blue Hole trail head with the Ridge Runner NRT. This will tie the Ozark Trail from the Pomona trail head to the Collins Ridge trail head in the Devil's Backbone Wilderness. The Pomona trail head is completed and user ready. It is designed to accommodate horses, mountain bikes and hikers. While there is a sign directing the public to the trail head, a more complete job is needed.

Construction around the Fox Den Mine area on the Victory Section is on hold because of cultural resource concerns. This issue should be resolved fairly soon. Completion of this segment will help tie the Victory Section to the Corps of Engineers lands at Lake Wappapello. It is hoped to have all the trail on Poplar Bluff District constructed, except for needed right-of-ways which are being worked on. The Sings Trail Ride will take place this month on one of the new segments that have been constructed, so the trail is being used by horsemen.

The land exchange with Sunnun Lake Corporation is all but complete. This is the connective link between Berryman Campground and the Trace Creek Section (7 miles +/-). Some locational exploration has been done on this link. Negotiations are continuing with Bass Canoe Rental on the private crossing to connect Forest Service and Missouri Department of Conservation lands near the Huzzah State Wildlife Area. An easement across mining company lands to facilitate a trail connection between Keith Spring and Sutton Bluff has been secured. Some locational scouting of this route has been accomplished. Plans are to connect the Karkaghne Section with the Trace Creek Section near Highway 32 instead of at the Ottery Creek trail head. This route will require less private land crossings.

Work on the Council Bluff Lake Trail continues with a connector to the Ozark Trail.

Volunteer - Ramon Gass:

Ramon said he thought the Department of Conservation had been working on the trail in the Huzzah Wildlife Area. There was some discussion about whether a bridge would ever be constructed across Huzzah Creek. At this time there are no plans by the Missouri Department of Conservation to construct such a bridge, so hikers will be required to wade the stream. There was also a question about the route of the American Discovery Trail.

Debbie indicated that the route will probably not be using any of the Ozark Trail because of the difficulty crossing major rivers in order to head south. The American Discovery Trail will probably use a portion of the Katy Trail. The National Park Service is conducting a study of the route at the present time.

Boy Scouts:

Bob reported that the St. Louis Council had just combined with Southeast Missouri and now extends all the way to the Bootheel. There seems to have been a drop-off in hiking by scouts. In 1992 there was a promotion called the "Year of the Hiker" during which a 50% increase in participation was recorded. The council is looking for an increase again this year. The only promotion this year was for National Trails Day and there was good participation. With the change of the scout camp location at Taum Sauk, Bob was wondering about some needed trail rerouting to connect the camp with the trail. Debbie indicated that she was going to Taum Sauk the next week to lay out a connecting trail. Debbie reinforced the requirement that the scouts use the trails provided by the agencies on the public lands and not continue to use old trails closed by those agencies. Debbie offered to meet with the scouts on-site if they have any questions about the new facilities or trail locations in the Taum Sauk area.

Sierra Club:

In September the Sierra Club worked on the Trace Creek Section from Hwy. A up to the top of the ridge. Some of the trail was pretty overgrown and people were beginning to head off in the wrong direction. There was significant damage in some of the steep areas which appeared to be caused by equestrian use. It was suggested that the USFS may want to consider a reroute or provide a different equestrian entrance. Overall the trail was in pretty good shape. Barb noted that a portion of the timber along the trail appeared to be marked for a cut. The question was raised if there would be a buffer along the trail, the concern being the extra maintenance required in clear cut areas. Bill stated that these cuts would have prescriptions that addressed the trail in relationship to the area through which it was passing, but that it would not have a buffer. Barb expressed concern about the dropping of trees on the trail and would like the timber cutters to be aware of the trail location so that the route could remain open.

Bill thought some of the trail in this area may be rerouted, but he did not know the details. The Sierra Club has outings planned in October and November for Pioneer Forest. Plans are to start working on the loop trail from Himont Tower down to Laxton Spring where it will connect to the Ozark Trail. Eventually the trail will loop back to the tower. Because of this new construction project, Barb plans to schedule four weekend outings per year in Pioneer Forest. The club is also planning a one-day outing some time in December to work in the national forest, the exact location still needs to be worked out with Rick.

Conservation Federation:

Charlie announced that in July the federation had hired a new person, Mark Van Patten, to coordinate the stream team program. Charlie would like for Mark and Debbie to get together to discuss the possibility of getting these stream teams involved in some trail maintenance or construction activities.

Department of Natural Resources:

The Department of Natural Resources has had a crew doing trail maintenance and resigning from Taum Sauk Mountain through Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park to Highway N. Plans are to continue to the Bell Mountain Wilderness Area at the USFS boundary. The maps for the Taum Sauk Section are out of date due to the numerous reroutes and new construction, so it will be the next Ozark Trail Section map to be produced. At the present time, an insert showing the correct route is being placed into the existing Taum Sauk Section map. Debbie reported that approximately 140 people participated in the hikes on Ozark Trail Day. Considering the weather that day it was a pretty good turn out. Everyone was asked to begin thinking about next year's event and whether it should be held at Johnson's Shut-Ins, Taum Sauk or some other place. Also the time of the year the event will be held must be considered. Fall seems to be the more popular time. Debbie reported that an article about the trail had appeared in *Backpacker* and quite a lot of interest was generated. The winter/spring 1994 issue of *Resource Review* will have an article about the trail, so that should be timely for the spring hiking season.

Corps of Engineers:

Since Andrew or Becky could not attend the meeting, Debbie read the Corp's report. Since August, the Corps has completed approximately 7.5-8 additional miles on the Wappapello Lake Section of the Ozark Trail. This additional portion of the trail has been culturally cleared, cut, and marked with the Ozark Trail markers. This brings the Wappapello Lake Section of the trail to approximately 20 miles of completed trail. This fall the Corps is looking toward securing a crossing point with the USFS Poplar Bluff District before completing the remaining 4 or 5 miles of the Wappapello Lake Section. Detailed maps and description of each completed segment were made available. In regard to the Wappapello Lake Section, Debbie stated that she had reviewed a Missouri Highway and Transportation project for road improvements along Highway 67 and has made MHTD aware of the proposed Ozark Trail crossings.

MAP FORMAT:

Bill requested that the council reconsider the design of the Ozark Trail Section maps. The Forest Service suggested that the format be changed so that the brochure would more easily fit in an envelope and be more visible in a brochure distribution box. After much discussion the council decided that the brochure should be changed and that both completed and non-completed sections should be a 8 1/2" x 3 1/2" format. The council decided to continue using a sketch for the front of the brochure and thought the section name should be moved to the top of the brochure so it would be visible while on display. It was also suggested that full scale topo maps be used if possible. This will require larger paper, but the final 8 1/2" x 3 1/2" fold would still be possible. It was recommended the USGS be contacted about putting the Ozark Trail on their maps as they are updated. Since the Forest Service is working on the new North Fork River Section map, Debbie and Bill will work on the details for this brochure and the new format will be phased in all other brochures as they require updating.

LEGACY PROGRAM

Bill briefed the council on the Legacy Program. It is a cooperative effort between the USFS and another entity like the state that would allow purchase of land outside the USFS boundary. Although the land would remain in USFS ownership it would be managed by the partner. The program is to focus on lands that are significant ecologically or recreationally. This program may be helpful in completing the Ozark Trail across private properties.

NATIONAL TRAIL DESIGNATION:

The concept of perusing designation of the Ozark Trail as a National Recreational Trail or a National Scenic Trail was discussed. The pros are that such designation brings recognition and use. The cons are that private land owners may be reluctant to grant easements if they think the federal government is involved. There was some interest in designating only those sections on public land. It was thought there might be an advantage in having some nationally designated trail to prove to private land owners that the trail was not over used or abused because it received national designation. Bill will follow-up with his contact in the USFS to see what benefits or drawbacks there are to designation.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Ozark Trail Council will be May 7, 1994 in the Ironton area at 10:00 a.m. Debbie will arrange a meeting location.

PREPARED BY: Debbie L. Schnack

APPROVED BY: Douglas K. Eiben

Director, Division of State Parks
Chairman, Ozark Trail Council