

PRAIRIE TRAVELERS



Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2020

Dear friends,

2020 has definitely not been the year we were expecting.

But one thing we realized pretty quickly is just how essential trails are to our community. In the early days of the pandemic, as spring asserted itself and normal life was disrupted, we saw record trail usage. Families, cyclists, runners, explorers - we heard from people who had never even known about the trail before this year.



We've had to pivot a lot this year. We made the Wicked Wind 100k virtual, held our monthly meetings virtually or outdoors on the trail, cancelled the Walnut Valley Metric and held our first virtual telethon. Now, we're launching our first virtual silent auction (more on that in a bit!) Prairie Travelers has no paid staff - we are a volunteer led and run organization. That makes the support of YOU - our community - so important.

In 2020 we:

- Completed the Memorial Brick Park at the Cecile Kellenbarger Memorial Trailhead in Goddard (see insert for information on purchasing a brick);
- Advocated successfully for the Wichita City Council to approve \$2.2 million to extend the Prairie Sunset Trail from Hoover to Delano in 2023.
- Installed new trailhead signs in Goddard and Garden Plain and additional trail signs (at crossings and as guides) along the entire 15 mile trail;
- Met with the city councils of Garden Plain and Cheney about the possibility of extending the trail westward;
- Received commitments from the cities of Garden Plain and Goddard for each to help with maintenance of three miles of the trail;
- Hired a contractor to remove sand plum trees along 7 miles of the trail (due to encroachment);
- Met virtually with WATCO about potential westward trail extension;
- Actively participated in both Goddard and Wichita's Chamber of Commerce;
- Completed drainage work on the trail from 263rd to 279th;
- Attended Sunflower State Trails Appreciation Day in Topeka;

In This Issue

- Winter 2020 Update
- Fundraising updates
- Ivonne Goldstein Community Volunteer Award
- Memorial Brick Park
- Andover-Augusta Rail Trail Initiative updates
- Upcoming meetings/workdays
- **Inserts:** Bid to Ride virtual auction, Memorial Bricks, Membership Form

We've received an anonymous \$15,000 donation we are trying to match by the end of the year. We need your help to keep this momentum going, and to raise the additional funds necessary to meet our goals this year and next. Donations can be made by check or online (through PayPal) at www.prairiesunsettrail.org. With gratitude,

The Prairie Travelers Board of Directors

Wicked Wind 100k Virtual Challenge

We made the determination in April that we would need to cancel the Wicked Wind 100k ride, and try to move it to a virtual platform. We weren't sure exactly how it would turn out, but we knew our supporters would participate in whatever format we needed to. And turn out you did! We had 62 people register for the virtual challenge, and raised over \$2600 - no small feat for our first foray into the world of virtual events. Thank you to all who participated, and to those who posted your #WickedWind100k challenge selfies!



And now, for something completely different...

When we realized that holding the Walnut Valley Metric would be impossible this year, we looked for a creative event that could still give us an opportunity to connect with our supporters and raise money and awareness for the trails. Enter the virtual telethon.

On November 15, our supporters gathered virtually on Facebook and YouTube to listen to live music and entertainment. Don Guidas, local cyclist and radio personality, was the MC for the event. Local musicians Keo and Them, Karen and Richard Crowson, Dennis Hardin, Pretend Friend, Randy Rathbun and Dave Kamerer, Roni Lowry Worcester, and Kent with RKO Blues performed at the event, as well as two comics, David Scott and Dale Hilton. We also watched interviews with people using the trail that Scott Cortus and Ruth Holliday recorded, and a great promotional trail video by Lee Lemunyon.

In all, the event had 652 views on Facebook and 128 views on YouTube. We raised \$6070 to split between the trails - comparable to what the Walnut Valley Metric usually raises.

Now, we're trying our first ever virtual auction from December 13-20: www.32auctions.com/bidtoride

We're crossing our fingers that next year we can gather in person again, *so mark your calendars tentatively for next year:*

- **May 16, 2021:** Oz Wicked Wind 100K (start at Lake Afton)
- **September 26, 2021:** Walnut Valley Metric (start in Winfield)



Ruth receives Ivonne Goldstein Community Volunteer Award

Ruth Holliday, founding member and active board member of Prairie Travelers, was awarded the Ivonne Goldstein Community Volunteer Award in February for her work on the Prairie Sunset Trail and bicycle advocacy in Wichita. The award, which honors "Difference Makers for Wichita," was created by Newman University and the Wichita Eagle and presented by Emprise Bank.

The award was named for the late Ivonne Goldstein, who served on the boards of, or raised money for, more than 50 Wichita organizations. This award is presented to an individual who through outstanding volunteer community service and commitment is making a measurable difference.

Ruth is a founding member of Prairie Travelers, and has served as secretary of the organization for the past 20 years. She coordinates the Wicked Wind 100k and the Walnut Valley Metric, handles the internal operations of the organization, and bakes delicious oatmeal bars for the rides. She is also the co-owner of the Bicycle Pedaler. **Congrats, Ruth!**

Memorial Brick Park

The Memorial Brick Park surrounding the Cecile Kellenbarger Memorial Statue was completed in March 2020 by Stan Goodin, and was a joint project between Prairie Travelers and the City of Goddard.

Since its completion, we have sold 32 bricks. A bench memorializing former Prairie Travelers board member Bill VanderWall will be installed across from the brick park in 2021.

For more information on purchasing a brick or bench, please contact us at prairietravelers@yahoo.com.



AARTI Update

The Redbud Trail also experienced record numbers of users during 2020. AARTI moved all operations virtual in March, and partnered with Prairie Travelers on the three virtual fundraisers this year (the Wicked Wind 100k, the Kansas Trails Telethon, and the upcoming “Bid to Ride” silent auction.) Other exciting Redbud Trail developments in 2020 include:

- The City of Augusta received two grants that will extend the trail from the historic train depot downtown to the Whitewater River.
- The City of Wichita is completing three additional miles of the Redbud Trail from 159th to K-96.
- The City of Andover completed linking the trail across 13th Street to the already existing continuation of the Redbud Trail at Prairie Creek.
- Construction on the Andover trailhead restroom and pump station should start in early 2021.

We continue to hope that the trail will be completed to Augusta soon.

AARTI and Prairie Travelers work closely together to promote trails across the metropolitan area. If you would like to donate (tax-deductible, non-profit) or volunteer, updates are posted on our NEW website: www.redbudtrail.org

In Memoriam



It's not an exaggeration to say that the Prairie Sunset Trail wouldn't be the success it is today without **Bill VanderWall**. Bill volunteered hundreds of hours on the trail, including mowing the right of way in Goddard for several years, and made the first mile of trail (from Garden Plain) a reality. He was an avid cyclist, a committed board member and a good friend. He loved to travel, and rode across the U.S. and in Europe. Bill also donated his time to the Belle Plaine Arboretum and the restored Doc B-29. He passed away in December 2019 (after the newsletter was published).

At age 98, **Wanda Groves** was a fixture in the Wichita cycling community. She was a long time trail supporter, member of the Women of Wednesday cycling group, former Wizard of the Oz Bicycle Club, and a 12 time Bike Across Kansas alumni. She passed away in October. Friends and family held a socially distanced memorial service for her at the Goddard trailhead, in the picnic shelter next to the Cecile Kellenbarger Memorial Brick Park.

Both Bill and Wanda will have memorial benches installed for them in 2021.



Upcoming events & meetings

Workdays: 2nd Sat. of the month
Check Facebook for details.

Meetings: 2nd Wed. of the month
Currently virtual.
Email prairietravelers@yahoo.com for sign on link.

Prairie Travelers Board of Directors:

- Larry Hatfield, President
- Rick Sroufe, Vice President
- Ruth Holliday, Secretary/Treasurer
- Renee Boyd
- Larry Debolt
- Tony Flax
- Matt Freund
- Bob Lavelle
- John Moore
- Kelly Wenz
- Larry Zimmerman



We exist because of supporters like you: your donations and your volunteer labor. Please join us in making Kansas trails accessible to everyone. Use the enclosed membership form and envelope for a tax deductible contribution. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Contact Us

Larry Hatfield,
316-253-1807

Ruth Holliday
316-685-4545

Prairie Travelers, Inc.
P.O. Box 781033
Wichita, KS 67278-1033
www.prairiesunsettrail.org
prairietravelers@yahoo.com

The mission of Prairie Travelers is to develop, maintain and promote the Prairie Sunset Trail. Our vision is that the Prairie Sunset Trail connects neighbors and communities; promoting healthy, active lifestyles, stewardship of nature and appreciation of the region's history.



*facebook.com/
prairietravelers*

Prairie Travelers, Inc.

P.O. Box 781033

Wichita, KS 67278-1033

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

MEMORIAL BRICK ORDER FORM

Please return to *Prairie Travelers, P.O. Box 781033, Wichita, KS 67278* or by email, prairietravelers@yahoo.com

Donor Information
 Name _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ ZIP/EMAIL _____

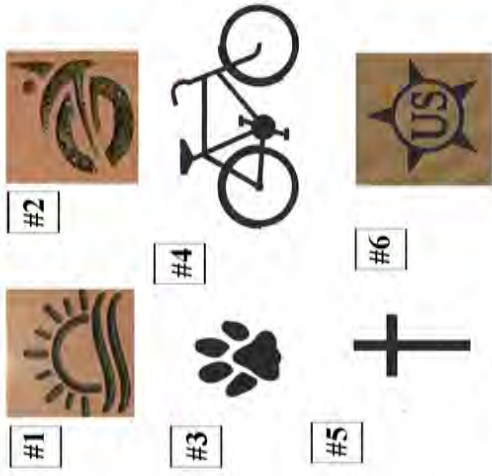
PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:
 PRAIRIE TRAVELERS
 P.O. BOX 781033
 WICHITA, KS 67278

TOTAL DONATION _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

DO NOT FILL IN SHADED AREA WHEN ORDERING LOGO. ONLY ONE LOGO PER BRICK.
 LOGO SELECTED _____
 We are not responsible to correct spelling

4" X 8" Brick \$100 Donation or with Logo \$125.00 (Maximum 3 lines 12 characters per line)

8" x 8" Brick \$250 Donation or with Logo \$280.00 (Maximum 6 lines 12 characters per line)



4X8 BRICK



8x8 BRICK

BRICK EXAMPLES

Prairie Travelers Membership Form

****Please consider an end of the year tax deductible contribution to Prairie Travelers****

Just imagine a network of interconnecting trails in Kansas available to anyone for walking, bicycling, and jogging. You would discover a world of wide-open skies, rolling prairie, wildflowers, forests, and wildlife. Envision traveling from town to town, exploring Kansas' natural and historical heritage. With your help, this and more can be realized.

Check dues level below:

- New Renewal
 \$25 Pathfinder (student or limited income)
 \$50 Wanderer
 \$100 Trail Explorer
 \$250 Trailblazer
 \$500 Life Saver

Other gift \$ _____



This gift is in honor of _____

(Please include address if you want notification of gift sent.)



Donations can now be accepted online through PayPal!

Visit www.prairiesunsettrail.org and click on the "Donate" button.

Remember: Please note t-shirt size with donation of \$100 or more.

T-SHIRT SIZE: Unisex Women's
 XS SM MD LG XL XXL

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail: _____

Please include me on communications related to the Andover-Augusta Rail Trail Initiative

YES! I would like to help Prairie Travelers in the development of rail trails in Kansas. Please send me more information on _____



Make checks payable and send to:

Prairie Travelers, Inc.
P.O. Box 781033
Wichita, KS 67278-1033

***Prairie Travelers is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization.
All contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.***