

Spring 2019

## SUNFLOWER RAIL-TRAILS CONSERVANCY



### \$17,000 Grant Approved for Coldwater Trail

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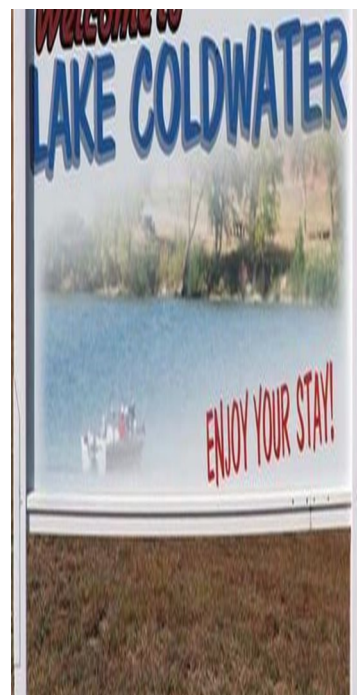
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Sunflower has received approval of a \$17,000 federal National Recreational Trails Program grant allocated by the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism for the Short Grass Prairie Trail, Phase I Project. The funds will match monies already raised by SRTC and will primarily be used for crushed limestone for a one-mile section of the Short Grass Prairie Trail from Coldwater to Coldwater Lake. The Conservancy is planning to put

down the screenings in July.

The trail segment will provide a safe way for children and seniors to access the popular Coldwater Lake. This will be a demonstration project for the 78-mile trail. Once it is a success, demand is expected to grow to complete the trail west to Protection.

"We are excited by this grant," said SRTC President Richard Stein. We will finally be able to build the Coldwater segment which will benefit SW Kansas residents for many years."



#### Highlights of the Southwind Rail Trail:

- Connects Humboldt with the 52-mile Prairie Spirit Trail in Iola.
- Crosses scenic Elm Creek on an historic steel tress bridge.
- Connects to the Lehigh Portland Rail Trail in South Iola.

### Pipeline Company Pays Conservancy \$5,000

The large oil pipeline company Oneok is building a liquefied natural gas pipeline from Montana to Hutchison which will cross our 38-mile undeveloped Quivira Trail stretching north from Lyons and west to Beaver. The pipeline will cross near Frederick. Alt-

hough the landman for the company offered only to pay \$1,400, we were able to negotiate with the company and get \$5,000. We emphasized we are a non-profit organization providing a public benefit--a recreational trail open to the public.

The pipeline will cross under the trail and will not disturb the rock ballast railroad bed. The funds will be used to pay administrative expenses and legal fees for any future rail-banking effort in the Sunflower State.



## New Board Members Elected

At its March meeting in Manhattan, the Board of Directors elected four new directors. Elected were Jody Hoener, MBA, who is the Economic Development Director for Bourbon County and is working on building the Sunrise Trail from Ft. Scott to Missouri; Catherine Doud, JD, Director of Communications at Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia; Randy Rasa,

administrator of KansasCyclist.com, member of the board of Thrive Allen County (Iola) and who working on the Lehigh Portland Trails in south Iola; and Bob Lavelle, manager of the Prairie Sunset Trail (Wichita-Garden Plain) and resident of Park CitySunflower regularly updates its Facebook page, so check it out periodically.

The Conservancy has also has launched a crowd – funding campaign on MightyCause.com. The fundraising goal is to raise \$5,000 by October with the funds to be used for future railbanking initiatives and for the required liability Pass the word about our crowd-funding campaign and contribute to it if you are able.

## Lehigh Portland Prairie Project



Randy Rasa reports that the Lehigh Portland Prairie (8-10 acres) for which Sunflower holds the easement (located south of Iola) is being restored. During the winter Kansas State University students helped remove invasive cedar

trees. Nearby is John Brown Cave for which SRTC also holds an easement to. Randy says visitors are being respectful of the cave and are not vandalizing it. The rest of the land has mt. bike trails and our 2.2-mile Lehigh

Portland Rail Trail. Here's what the Lehigh Portland Trails website says: "Ride, run, hike, picnic, or just sit and take in the beauty of 100+ acres of rugged woodlands, lively prairie, and scenic views of the lovely spring-fed quarry."



## Fort Scott's Sunrise Trail Project

Jody Hoener, the Economic Development Director of Bourbon County, reports that an effort is underway to build a 7.8-mile rail-trail from southwest of Fort Scott to the Missouri state line utilizing an out-of-service Union Pacific rail corridor. The trail surface

will be crushed limestone which packs down into a hard surface suitable for road bicycles and wheelchairs. The trail project is described in both the 2017 Fort Scott Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and the 2019 Allen, Bourbon

and Crawford (ABC) Trails Plan. If successful, there will be two long-distance rail-trails in Southeast Kansas. The planned Watco Trail stretching six miles from Pittsburg to Cherokee is also a rails-to-trails project.

## Rail Flatcars Can Serve as Bridges

More and more trail groups are using old rail flat cars as bridges. The wheels are removed first, then it is transported and a crane lifts it onto concrete footings. A typical flat car is 89' and can support heavy equipment and trucks. The price can range from \$15,000-20,000 and can be delivered for perhaps \$5,000. This is much cheaper than regular trail bridges and it's pretty cool

that a piece of railroad history is used as a bridge. The Frisco Highline Trail, a popular rail-trail near Springfield, MO, has several rail flatcars serving as bridges. Central Kansas Conservancy is exploring replacing a burned bridge on their Meadowlark Trail with a rail flatcar. A 90' new bridge could cost \$135,000, so by using a flat railcar, trail builders can save a substantial amount.



## Western Sky Trail Group Forms

Randy Rasa reports that a group has formed to explore building the Western Sky Trail which stretches 19 miles from Chanute to Fredonia. SRTC railbanked the rail corridor in 2011. Rasa surveyed the rail corridor and found that it to be in good shape and

ready for development. Some funds are already allocated to build a section of the trail but a Project Coordinator and active group of volunteers need to come forward. The Project Coordinator organizes volunteers; serves as a public spokesperson for the trail; recruits a grant-

writer and treasurer; and, negotiates with suppliers such as quarries and trucking companies. Volunteers cutback vegetative growth; deck and rail bridges; install signs and bollards; pick up litter; and, mow and spray noxious weeds. This would be the first long-distance rail-trail in the

Chanute-Fredonia area, though there is the short Katy Hike/Bike Trail in Chanute. It has been proposed that a connecting trail be built between the Western Sky Trail and the Southwind Rail Trail at Humboldt. This would be rails-WITH-trails trail within a rail corridor.

## SRTC Membership Renewal Form

**Complete, enclose check, and mail to  
SRTC**

☐ \$25 Pathfinder

☐ \$50 Wanderer

☐ \$100 Trail Explorer

*Checks may be made out to:*

**Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy**

Mail remittance along with this **Address:**  
form to:

**SRTC**

**P.O. Box 442043**

**Lawrence, KS 66044**

**Name:**

**City:**

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SRTC**

**P.O. Box 442043**

**Lawrence, KS 66044**