

Nebraska Trails News

December 5, 2010

NTC Partners with Agencies to Present Adaptive Paddling Workshop

Nebraska Trails Council recently partnered with agencies to present a day and a half workshop on Adaptive Paddling. Mike Passo, an instructor for American Trails, led the workshop which examined ways an agency can offer water trails that accommodate people of all abilities.

Passo explained that the first step in making a water trail more accessible is providing information about a site's characteristics. Detailed descriptions about launch/access sites, water flows, potential hazards and available facilities, allow individuals to assess whether a trail is best suited to their needs. Emphasizing abilities rather than disabilities within this information creates an inviting and nondiscriminatory environment for public use.

Passo demonstrated how inexpensive adjustments can be made to existing launch sites to improve transfer and accessibility. To further illustrate his ingenuity he provided a collection of adaptive paddling equipment, the sum total of which cost him less than the bag he carried them in. Developing innovative uses for everyday items provides paddlers comfort on the water.

The educational workshop was successful thanks to partnership efforts between Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Papio-Missouri Natural Resource District and National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.

Karen Anderson of NPS would like to thank Fremont Parks and Recreation Department for information about the put-in site and for picking everyone up at the take-out point and getting them back to Fremont.

Panhandle Trails Website

The Nebraska Panhandle is a treasure trove of outdoor recreation opportunities set amidst the rugged beauty of buttes, canyons, small peaks, streams and forests.

When Tom Schimo, an avid hiker, transferred to the area seven years ago, he was thrilled to find himself in a hiker's paradise. However, he was disappointed with the difficulty of finding information on area trails.

Through persistent communication with the U.S. Forest Service, state park and wildlife management area personnel, he soon acquired a basic knowledge of hiking resources in the panhandle. Missing information was filled in through detailed studies of topography maps and extensive internet searches.

Realizing there were probably others out there interested in finding all this information under one website lead to the creation of the [Panhandle Trails](#) website. The site allows hikers and

bicyclists to search opportunities to evaluate which trail will best suit their needs. A photo gallery is also provided.

Tom is often asked “What are the best hikes in the Panhandle?” According to Tom, Pine Ridge has the most public access, but the most unique hike is at Toadstool Geologic Park, near Crawford. The three mile long Bison Trail takes hikers through incredible rock formation in soft stone canyons, with a great archeological excavation site located near the south end of the trail.

Other opportunities include a 15 mile network of hiking and biking trails at Chadron State Park. All trails have been improved and are now well-marked and kept mowed. Bead Mountain, near Scottsbluff, has recently been opened to the public and has great potential for off-trail hiking.

A big thanks to Tom for all his hard work.

Other Trail News

- Lincoln NRD won't turn down federal trail money. From the Lincoln Journal Star an [article](#) about the recreational trail between Omaha and Lincoln.
- Papio-Missouri River NRD will use local money for trail project. From the Omaha World Herald an [article](#) about the recreational trail between Omaha and Lincoln.
- Construction will begin soon on the final section of a [Missouri River Hiking/Biking Trail](#) segment in Douglas County. Completion is anticipated for the fall of 2011.
- Rails to Trails Conservancy is concerned over American Automobile Association (AAA) advocating for the elimination of existing federal programs that help fund bicycle and pedestrian projects. Learn more and [sign a petition](#) to AAA.

For more information on [Nebraska Trails Council](#) visit our website where you can also find a form for becoming an individual or organizational support member of Nebraska Trails Council.

Nebraska Trails Council is on [Facebook](#). We are always looking for more friends, please pass the word.