

Nebraska Trails News

July 20, 2010

Welcome to the New Nebraska Trails News

Welcome to Nebraska Trails Council's inaugural Nebraska Trails News E-Blast. This e-blast will be issued periodically by the [Nebraska Trails Council \(NTC\)](#) with the intent of providing trail advocates and others interested in trail development in Nebraska with an update on news and happenings across our state. Additionally, we'd like to highlight one of Nebraska's many trail advocacy groups in each issue.

In this issue, you'll read about the nearly incomprehensible damage that occurred along the Steamboat Trace and Cowboy Trail due to recent flooding on the Missouri and Elkhorn Rivers. You'll read about some important pending federal legislation and how you can have your voice heard in supporting trail development. Lastly, you will find out about a vibrant and successful group of citizens from Columbus who have gotten the trail development ball rolling forward in this central Nebraska community.

To make Nebraska Trails News both successful and useful, we need to hear from trail advocates and trail groups from across Nebraska. Please contact our editor at netrailscouncil@gmail.com and provide information on your local trails, trail events or trails group. Please pass this e-blast on to other people interested in trails. Please consider becoming a member of [Nebraska Trails Council](#) to ensure that our state remains a leader in trail development. Thanks and enjoy the News.

Flood damage

Two of Nebraska's most popular hiking and biking trails have endured extensive damage due to this year's flooding. Similar damage has occurred in [Bessey National Forest](#) by Halsey. The Nemaha Natural Resource District has indefinitely closed all 22 miles of the [Steamboat Trace](#). Heavy flooding along the Missouri River covered multiple sections of the trail that runs between the Nebraska City OPPD power plant and Brownville. These areas are not expected to dry out for quite some time; the Nemaha NRD is still assessing the damages. Updates on the trail's status are available on the NRD's website.

Seventy-two miles of the [Cowboy Trail](#) from Norfolk to O'Neil were also heavily damaged by recent flooding and are indefinitely closed. The hardest hit areas on the Cowboy Trail in terms of repair are the Broken Bridge area, approximately three miles west of Norfolk, and areas between Neligh and Clearwater. Updates on the Cowboy Trail can be obtained on the Nebraska Games and Parks website. The section of the Cowboy Trail from O'Neil west to Valentine remains open for use.

On June 14, the U.S. Forest Service sent out a news release announcing that travel is not recommend in [Bessey National Forest](#) due to damages from extensive rains. Heaviest damage was sustained to the southern portion of the District, including Whitetail Campground, and adjacent Dismal Play Area, which received more than 15 inches during a five day period in June. Recently, all roads and trails were open again except for the trail to Whitetail, but more than four inches of rain recently have closed all roads and trails once more. In speaking with the ranger he suggested calling ahead at 1-308-533-2257. The area normally receives 21 inches per year, but has received 27 inches so far this year. He fears that with contractors already backed up into September that work on the roads and trails will be slow this year.

Legislation Alerts

The National Discovery Trails Act- H.R. 4671

Legislation to officially designate the [American Discovery Trail](#) as part of the [National Trails System](#) administered by the National Park Service was just re-introduced in the U.S. Congress by Rep. John Sarbanes of Maryland and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska as lead co-sponsor. NTC President John Royster recently requested that all NTC members urge their congressional representative to become a co-sponsor of HR 4671. NTC members please send a thank you to Representative Fortenberry for his work on this act.

More information on the [American Discover Trail](#) visit www.discoverytrail.org. For a complete copy of the HR 4671 visit www.house.gov.

The eight segments of the 523 miles section of the ADT that pass through Nebraska are:

- Omaha to Lincoln — 104 miles
- Lincoln to Stromsburg — 69 mi.
- Stromsburg to Doniphan — 65 mi.
- Doniphan to Ft.Kearney — 41 mi.
- Ft. Kearney to Johnson Lake — 50 mi.
- Johnson Lake to Maloney Reservoir — 81 mi.
- Maloney Reservoir to Lake McConaughy — 61 mi.
- Lake McConaughy to Colorado state line — 52 mi.

Clear Act - H.R.3534

A second legislative alert email sent out by NTC concerned the House Natural Resource Committee Chairman asking for an amended version of the [Clear Act \(H.R. 3534\)](#). The amended bill DOES NOT INCLUDE equal funding for state assistance programs for the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Please contact your members of Congress and remind them how important and valuable Nebraska state and local parks, trails and outdoor recreation areas are to Nebraskans. Also tell them how critical state administered Land and Water Conservation Funds are in their development.

What is Cart?

[Columbus Area Recreational Trails \(CART\)](#) is composed of a group of volunteers who envisioned a series of trail routes though out the Columbus community and are working together to see their master plan become a reality. So far there are four [CART](#) trails; Two Lakes Trail, Bob Lake Trail, Robert White Trail and Wilderness Park Trail. [CART](#) has obtained funding for a fifth trail, the Monastery Trail which will give [CART](#) approximately eight miles of trails. Adding in the two miles at Pawnee Park (not a [CART](#)-sponsored trail), there are total of ten miles of trails serving the entire community of Columbus. When the Monastery Trail is completed the [CART](#) trails will reach from Lake Babcock and Lake North, north of Columbus to 36th Street.

These trails are open to the public for year-round use. Trail visitors can enjoy biking, rollerblading, hiking, running, and walking through safe, scenic areas around Columbus. The trails are pet friendly but keep your motorized vehicles at home except for accessibility aids like electric wheelchairs and power scooters. The trail system is maintained by Loup Power District, City of Columbus and Platte County with the support of [CART](#).

Outgoing President Marv Peterson reports that whenever more funding or land becomes available, more trails will be on [CART](#)'s drawing board. [CART](#) Trail brochures are available at Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce or on-line at the [CART](#) website.

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.