

Dolores Baker and Virginia Lefferd for serving the watermelon.

From the Editor's Desk

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dedication to proper layout and construction of trails to protect the ecosystem and guard against erosion. On numerous occasions, KTC board members, with experience in trail building, have served as advisors to other groups and individuals in proper layout and construction of new trails. The board has always made it a point to have at least two board members involved in the advisory process.

As cases in point, I am including some of my personal experiences with KTC and trail building. In 1996 when I approached the Elk City State Park Manager, Randy Curtis about building a mountain bike trail at the State Park, he was receptive to the idea, but he would not allow me to proceed without first consulting with members of the Trails Council. Permission was granted only after members of the Trails Council had visited the proposed site for the trail and made their recommendations. Mr. Curtis' trust and respect for the work and efforts of KTC were obvious to me from the beginning.

Just recently, I found myself on the other side of the advisory process when board member, Jim Copeland and I made a couple of visits to the trail and recreation project in progress just north of Parsons. This past spring, Jim and I visited the site again to help them lay out the multi use trail that will be a part of the recreation area.

While the Council has a long and rich tradition in trail advocacy and trail building, the board of directors is not content with relying on past achievements. We have some excellent board members, who are actively involved in the latest trends in trail advocacy and trail building. Some of them have recently attended and/or sponsored trail-building workshops. The board is currently making plans to sponsor a trail-building workshop of its own in the coming year.

A brief history of the Trails Council is currently in production and it is intended to preserve the proud achievements and traditions of the organization. At the same time, the current board of directors is working hard to make the changes and transitions necessary to ensure that KTC will remain a vital force in Kansas for trail advocacy in the future.



Trail Running

Trail runners and ultra or long distance runners have been using our trails for some time now and KTC has finally recognized them as a user group within our organization. KTC members Eric Steele of Wichita and Michael Goodwin (who is a board member and coordinator for the trails at Clinton Lake) of Topeka are active proponents of trail running.

Eric Steele founded the Kansas Ultrarunners' Society and established the 25K and 50K Flatrock Run on the fifteen-mile Elk River Trail along Elk City Lake nine years ago. Only those who have hiked a significant segment of the Elk River Trail can fully appreciate the rigors of this event. Veterans of this event have come to refer to the trail as *the rock* and their watchwords are *if you look up, you are going down*.

The Elk River Trail could easily be designated as KTC's flagship hiking trail and it is nationally recognized. Most of the trail is classified as a rugged and difficult hiking trail. To the average person, the trail could be classified as **impossible** as a running trail, but trail runners and ultra runners conquer the trail every fall during the Ultrarunners' annual event and they complete the thirty-mile run with amazing times. This year's 50K winner, Paul Schoenlaub of St. Joseph, Missouri completed the run in 4 hours and 57 minutes. He is one of only four people, who have completed the 50K run in less than five hours during the nine-year history of the event.

The following is an excerpt from Steele's report on this year's event held on September 27. If you would like to read more about this year's run and ultra running, you will find these in the Stories and Articles section of our web site.

[From Eric Steele]

"Thirty-eight runners from nine states (CO, IL, KS, MO, NE, NM, OK, TN, TX) toed the line for the Ninth Annual Flat Rock 50K, while twenty-two runners from four states (IL, KS, MO, OK,) lined up for the 25K. After a previous day of eighty-plus degree temperatures and high humidity, race day would start out cool and remain so all day with the high only reaching the low 70's and a nice cool breeze blowing continuously. Many Flat Rock Veterans returned this year to get another "dose of the Rock", which has undoubtedly become a late September ritual to them and an ever growing number of individuals, for we attracted plenty of Flat Rock Neophytes, as well."

Note: Steele and the Kansas Ultrarunners' Society have volunteered more than 1200 hours of clean up and maintenance on the fifteen-mile Elk River Trail over the last nine years. The truth is that they have taken over most of the maintenance of this important KTC trail for the sake of a one-day event each year.