

Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy

Annual Meeting

October 11, 2014

Members in Attendance: Clark Coan, Carol O’Neal, Steve O’Neal, Fred Peterson, Larry Ross, and Richard Stein. Also present was Elizabeth Stewart with the Sunflower Foundation. The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by President Ross in Topeka.

I. Year in Review

Coan gave the “Year in Review” Report. The Conservancy received two grants this year which is a first and the organization accepted an easement for the new Portland Lehigh Rail Trail in South Iola. Coan will add this trail to our general liability insurance policy. It was suggested that David Tolland, Trent McCown or Randy Rasa could recommend a board member from that region.

II. Membership Dues Renewal

- a. C. O’Neal will send out a dues renewal notice to all members.

III. Recruitment of directors, members

- a. Coan and Ross suggested that we try to recruit Michelle Cullen from CKC and Ruth Holiday from Prairie Travelers.
- b. S. O’Neal suggested we attend the board meetings of regional trail groups to see what they are doing and to recruit board members and members. He said that lots of people are focused on their own trail and don’t see the bigger picture, so we need to be better at outreach.

IV. Election of Directors

- a. It was moved by members C. O’Neal/Stein to elect the following slate of directors:

Coan, Stein for a three-year term;

Peterson, Weiner for a two-year term;

Kozubowski, Novak for a one- year term.

The motion passed unanimously.

V. State Rail-Trail Plan and Grants

- a. Elizabeth Stewart explained their grant program. There are the \$55,000 trails grants, \$10,000 discretionary grants and mini-grants. It may be possible to get a grant to promote the State Rail-Trail Plan and establish a social media presence. The deadline now is to finish the plan by May 1, 2015. We need to find out who replaced John Rosacker and the Transportation Enhancements person. S. O’Neal stated the importance of the plan regarding future transportation planning projects.

VI. Kansas Sampler and Kansas Built Environment

- a. The Built Environment conference will be Oct. 13, 14, and 15, 2015, in Overland Park. Stewart said we need to promote how to build a rail-trail listing the steps from Step A through Step K.
- b. The Kansas Sampler will be in Wamego on May 2 and 3rd. It was agreed we would decide by email in early January if we are going to participate or not. People have to commit to do it. We might be able to get a mini-grant to beef up the display for the booth. We would need a reasonable “wish list” and budget. It’s homegrown now and not quite professional enough. It’s possible we could combine this grant proposal with printing rail-trail development guides.

VII. Project Managers

- a. Stein proposed hiring an unemployed park ranger to organize an active trail group in Coldwater. S. O’Neal said that wouldn’t be necessary if funding is available. Trail specs could be simply given to a contractor who would do everything for that one mile.

VIII. Meeting dates schedule

The following dates were set for 2015 board meetings:

- a. Feb. 21 McPherson
- b. June 12 Cottonwood Falls
- c. Aug. 29 Wichita
- d. Nov. 7 Emporia.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Clark H. Coan
Corporate Secretary

Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy

Board of Directors

October 11, 2014

Directors in Attendance: Clark Coan, Carol O’Neal, Steve O’Neal, Fred Peterson, Larry Ross, and Richard Stein. Also present was Elizabeth Stewart from the Sunflower Foundation.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 a.m. by President Ross in Topeka.

I. Election of officers.

- a. A motion by Peterson/C. O’Neal to elect the following slate of officers passed unanimously:

Larry Ross	President
Richard Stein	Vice-President
Carol O’Neal	Treasurer
Clark Coan	Secretary

II. Holyrood deed.

- a. C. O’Neal explained the Holyrood deed she prepared. Ross will sign it before a notary and then send it to O’Neal who will ensure it is registered and the Holyrood mayor receives a certified copy.

III. Online voting matters.

- a. The following motion by C. O’Neal/Stein passed unanimously:

“There shall be a seven-day voting period for online voting unless a matter needs immediate attention and a shorter period is included in the motion. Further, the quorum shall be 51 percent of the number of directors.”

IV. Treasurer’s Report

- a. C. O’Neal gave the Treasurer’s Report. Due to the easement payments and grant received, there is a balance of \$30,298.18. This does not include the GreenWay grant of \$2,500. A motion by S. O’Neal/Stein to approve payment of \$155 to Tom McFarland passed unanimously.

V. Trail Reports

- a. **Smoky Hill Rec Trail**—Peterson reported that he’ll know more about Scenic Byways funding after November 1. Obtaining the 20% match will be the problem.
- b. **Blue River Rail Trail**—S. O’Neal said that the trail is supposed to be completed by the end of the year and a southern extension will help boost trail use.
- c. **Flint Hills Trail**—Coan reported that construction on the Ottawa-Pomona section of the trail under Phase I of the TE grant will start this fall. The problem is KDOT is requiring that bridges be 14’ wide.
- d. **Portland Lehigh Rail Trail**—Coan reported that Thrive Allen County has a \$100,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to build the 2.3-mile trail. They are cutting back brush now and the surface will be crushed limestone. We hold the easement.

The next meeting will be held Feb. 21 in McPherson. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Clark H. Coan
Corporate Secretary

Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy

Board of Directors

July 26, 2014

Directors in Attendance: Clark Coan, Jean Kuzubowski , Carol O’Neal, Steve O’Neal, Fred Peterson, Larry Ross, and Richard Stein. Also present were ex officio member Peggy Stein and guests Michel Cullen, Eric Johnson and Hoyt Hillman.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by President Ross in Lindsborg.

I. Meadowlark Trail Update

- a. Michele Cullen, President of Central Kansas Conservancy, gave an update on the Meadowlark and Sunflower SF Trails. Screenings are down for the first mile going south from Lindsborg on the Meadowlark Trail and it is expected that by Labor Day there will be 2.5 miles down. From 10-15 volunteers turn out for volunteer work days. There is an overlook and a 105’ bridge. They raised a total of \$80,000 from the Sunflower Foundation and Mingenback Foundation. KDWPT provided a wood chipper and there have been a total of 852 volunteer hours since Good Friday of 2013. Screenings are costing \$25,000/mile which S. O’Neal said is high. He was able to get them for \$15,000/mile. There are four miles done going North from McPherson from Moccasin Rd. to Pawnee Rd. The Sunflower SF Trail is completed from .75 mile from the center of Galva going east and west for a total of 1.5 miles.

II. Western Sky Trail

- a. Coan reported that Radiant Electric Co-op paid \$16,400 for an easement for a five-mile powerline along the trail within the ROW. He is waiting for a recorded copy of the easement. Ross reported that Enbridge gave \$5,000 for a grant plus the \$10,000 for the easement for the pipeline near Chanute. Coan said that he is communicating with an attorney with Atmos Energy about another pipeline which crosses the trail. Hillman said we should talk to the WRATS watershed manager to see if he would be the project manager.

III. Quivira Trail

- a. Coan reported that the Barton County attorney sent a letter asking for \$18,000 for past weed control, and \$46,000 for back taxes. Coan stated that the weed bill was contracted by the Iowa Trails Council and not SRTC. Mike Mills doesn’t think we should have to pay the real estate tax bill because easements are not taxed in Kansas. Cullen suggested that a trail in or near Lyons might be possible because they already have a popular trail in town.
- b. C. O’Neal stated there are two options for the parcels in Holyrood. We could grant the City the whole tract between Frank St. and Penn Ave. or a smaller tract surrounding the buildings. It was suggested that we ask the City to mow the whole ROW in town in exchange for the land. Coan will check to see who owns the small tract north of the ROW and see if they want to buy it.
- c. A motion by C. O’Neal/Stein to deed the land south of the trail ROW from Frank St. to Penn Ave. to the City if the City is agreeable to a maintenance agreement, passed unanimously.

IV. Built Environment Conference

- a. Ross said he and Weiner would staff a booth at the Built Environment Conference in Sept. in Wichita. C. O'Neal will print up 200 copies of the updated brochure and she and Coan will work on another one that might appeal to city/park officials. She'll be reimbursed for the card stock.

V. Great Osage Trail/Iola Trails

- a. Ross reported that he talked to Brad Snow with WATCO about securing the Oxford-Wellington Trail deed (after a three-year delay). Snow didn't promise anything. Hillman said Ross should work with one of his assistants. Coan reported that Iola is becoming a trails capital and the Conservancy will hold easements on three trails, including the Southwind Rail Trail and Lehigh Portland Rail Trail. Construction on the latter is slated for this October.

VI. Railbanking Initiative

- a. S. O'Neal gave a report on his survey of the Northwest Kansas rail lines.

VII. Allocation of funds received

- a. Coan stated that the \$5,000 grant from Enbridge has to be reserved for the Western Sky Trail and Barton County has yet to demand a performance bond. A motion by C. O'Neal/Stein to immediately pay McFarland and authorize payment of insurance premium when it comes due, passed unanimously.

VIII. Treasurer's Report

- a. C. O'Neal gave the Treasurer's Report. Due to the easement payments and grant received, there is a record high balance of \$31,878.18. There have been no donations or members in 2014.

IX. Grants/Fundraising

- a. Coan reported he hadn't heard the results of the Kansas Health Foundation Recognition Grant request. Cullen said she thinks trail projects don't qualify for this round. Ross still hasn't met with Doug Brehm at the INTRUST Bank to see about a match. Hillman said the Greenways Alliance would consider our request, but they have recently made some rather large allocations.

X. Trail Reports

- a. **Short Grass Prairie Trail**—Stein reported that he is getting absolutely no support in Coldwater and doesn't know where to go from here. It's only one mile from the town to the lake. Coan suggested hiring Doug Walker to be a Project Manager and get that section done. Then momentum will build.
- b. **Smoky Hill Recreation Trail**—Peterson reported that he'll hear in October if Scenic Byways funding will be available for the trail. He would like CKC to be the project manager, but has not discussed this with them.
- c. **Blue River Rail Trail**—S. O'Neal said that Marshall County Connections has the funds to finish the trail in Kansas this year.
- d. **Flint Hills Nature Trail**—Coan reported that \$1.9 million in federal Transportation Alternatives funds were approved for Phase II of the trail project. This will fund the trail from US 75 to Admire. Phase I construction starts in early fall between Osawatomie to US

75. Once both are completed, the trail will be open between Osawatomie and Council Grove, a distance of 90 miles.

- e. **Prairie Sunset Trail**—Ross reported that Prairie Travelers is trying to get deeds to extend the trail east into Wichita. The trail was railbanked, but the deeds were apparently never recorded.

The next meeting will be held October 11 in Topeka. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Clark H. Coan
Corporate Secretary

Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy

Board of Directors

February 22, 2014

Persons in Attendance: Clark Coan, Carol O'Neal, Diane Novak, Fred Peterson, Richard Stein, and Chris Weiner. Also present was ex officio member Peggy Stein.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 p.m. by Vice President Stein in Council Grove.

I. **GreenWays Alliance**

- a. The president of the organization would like to see the board in action before recommending that a grant be given to the organization.

II. **Railbanking Possibilities**

- a. **Crestline-Waco, MO.** Weiner surveyed part of the trail. He described its isolation and that part has been converted to cropland. Coan said that the ORLT has been paying taxes on it and that also presents a problem. It was agreed that there are too many negatives associated with this rail line including it being isolated, portions being converted to farmland, and a Superfund site. A motion made by Weiner/Peterson to not accept the line from the Ozark Regional Land Trust passed unanimously.
- b. **Oberlin-Norton-Almena.** It was agreed that this line has possibilities. C. O'Neal said that there is a convention center in Oberlin and Norton has a prison, so the towns are economically viable and their populations are fairly stable. Coan stated it would go by the Prairie Dog State Park. Coan will ask McFarland to provide a set amount for railbanking and when it will have to be done.

III. **Southwind Rail Trail Update**

- a. Weiner read a report from Dave and Lisa Fontaine about the trail. Efforts are underway to build a side trail to a park at Lake Bassola and to extend the trail from the southern trailhead in Humboldt to the river park. Coan said that the county attorney could not provide any benefits for SRTC or the landowners by annexation. A motion by Novak/Weiner to not approve annexation by the City of Bassett was unanimously approved. The Monarch quarry shouldn't affect the trail as a buffer with trees will be left.

IV. **Kansas Sampler**

- a. C. O'Neal said that the booth really needs six people to staff it properly and so we should pass on having a booth this year. It was agreed to put out brochures at the Prairie Spirit Trail and possibly the City of Iola or Southeast Kansas tourism tables. It was mentioned that a Q code for apps could be put on the next brochure.

V. **Website**

- a. Weiner said that we need a current website that is updated regularly. It would be best to put it on a cloud with a new domain name such as *www.sunflowerrailtrails.org*. Weiner will explore transferring the files (if they are in HMTL) so we won't have to start from scratch in building a new website. For time being he will send updates to the webmaster and have her add them. C. O'Neal said we should continue the domain name for one more year.

VI. Holyrood Buildings

- a. Sunflower does not have the deed to the parcel with the two buildings. C. O’Neal said it’s possible the Iowa Trails Council has the deed as we haven’t been billed for taxes. Coan will check into this. C. O’Neal stated that we could probably avoid having a land survey if each party paid one-half of title insurance.

VII. Flanagan South Pipeline Crossing

- a. Coan read a report from Randy Rasa about the pipeline crossing and a statement from an article in Planet Kansas that described the number of oil spills associated with the company. Enbridge hasn’t restored the railroad bed and drainage to its original condition. They apparently built the pipeline without buying an easement from SRTC. Coan will pursue payment and restoration of the trail. A volunteer reported that a company put a power line right down the middle of the railroad bed. Coan will check into this as well.

VIII. Trail Reports

- a. **Short Grass Prairie Trail**—Stein reported that anyone who supports the trail is shunned. Some local residents would help once it gets going, but they don’t want to initiate it. Local people on the ground are necessary for the trail to be built.
- b. **Western Sky Trail**—Weiner reported that he emailed various people including college and high school teachers trying to gauge support for the trail but didn’t get a single response. Neosho County illegally sold some parcels to adjacents in a tax sale, so opposition is strong.
- c. **Smoky Hill Recreation Trail**—Peterson reported that there will be a Heartland Byways Conference in Manhattan in April. He’ll attend the day which features marketing. The byways plan consultants will survey the byways this spring as part of the planning process for the new Byways Plan. They are looking for trail linkages.
- d. **Blue River Rail Trail**—C. O’Neal reported that the Sunflower Foundation will provide a \$30,000 grant to finish the trail to the Nebraska line once the match is found. Purchase of the old depot from the railroad and surrounding land makes it easier to build a trail from the Blue River Rail Trail trailhead to the downtown and the recreational path in the park where a new swimming pool is being built.

The next meeting will be held June 14 in Augusta. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Clark H. Coan
Corporate Secretary