

Oklahoma Recreational Trails Plan

2001

Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department
Division of Planning and Development
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FOREWORD

The 2001 Oklahoma Recreational Trails Plan was truly a team effort combining faculty and students at Oklahoma State University. Since this was the first statewide planning effort focused on trails in twenty years, this opportunity offered special incentive to this team - a team composed of outdoor recreation enthusiasts and avid trail users. The student members of this team provided particular skills and experiences that greatly benefitted the people of Oklahoma.

- Jay Tiefenthaler had worked with trail planning in Iowa and was very familiar with issues related to public trail development. Jay provided the primary writing for the trails accommodation guide.
- Darla Hugaboom has excellent skills in map development. Darla prepared the maps included in this plan.
- Melissa Gibson had the unenviable task of data entry from all the surveys. Her work resulted in an extraordinarily “clean” data set allowing for statistical analyses, plus the recording of comments from the various respondents.

We hope this plan will serve the people of Oklahoma and the agencies that provide planning and development of recreational trails.

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Vision Statement for the Plan

The 2001 Oklahoma Recreational Trails Plan documents Oklahoma's recreational trail resources providing social, physical, environmental, and economic benefit to the state's citizens and guests.

This plan is envisioned to serve as a foundation, promoting research, cooperation and planning in decision making related to recreational trails. The purpose of the plan is to provide citizens of Oklahoma and visitors to Oklahoma with excellence in outdoor recreation opportunity through trails.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Trails as Components of the Recreation Estate

For more than twenty years, Oklahoma has approached recreational trails on an individual basis since the last statewide plan was produced in the late 1970s. As a result, planning for trails has focused on local facilities with occasional regional discussions. Those regional discussions have been primarily concentrated in metropolitan areas linking trails in one jurisdiction with trails in other jurisdictions. No statewide planning documents could be located for the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s. As a result, trails have been perceived as individual developments without connection to a broader plan.

The term “trail” means different things to different people, depending upon their expected use or means of locomotion. The Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was originally authorized in 1991 in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. RTP was re-authorized in 1998 as part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21, 23 U.S.C. 206). That act defines a recreational trail as a “thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes such as: pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use; skating or skateboarding; equestrian activities, including carriage driving; nonmotorized snow trail activities, including skiing; bicycling or use of other human-powered vehicles; aquatic or water activities; and motorized vehicular activities, including all-terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles.”

RTP provides for a Federal-aid assistance program to states for provision and maintenance of recreational trails for motorized and nonmotorized trail use. These funds are managed through the Federal Highway Administration as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation. At the state level, the program and associated funds are managed through the state Oklahoma Trails Advisory Board, a part of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department in Oklahoma.

How important are recreational trails? Nationally, approximately 75% of the general population reported that they are “trail users.” Oklahoma shows lower reported trail use, as discussed later, but still presents about 40% of the general population as being users of recreational trails. Oklahoma tends to be below national averages on participation rates in most outdoor recreation activity. In addition, Oklahoma state leadership has made some decisions that have reduced the opportunities for Oklahomans to participate in trail activity. Among these decisions are those related to rail-to-trail conversions and those related to academic credit for skill development in outdoor recreation activity.

Processes in the Development of the Trails Plan

This plan was prepared to provide information and recommendations to guide Oklahoma in planning for trails for the period 2002 - 2006. Oklahoma State University contracted with the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD), Division of Planning and Development to complete the statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP). That document is required for eligibility to receive funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The SCORP addresses recreation planning to meet a variety of recreation needs. The contract between Oklahoma State University and OTRD combined the efforts for preparation of the SCORP with efforts for preparation of a State Recreational Trails Plan. As a result, efficiency in data collection and economy of funds were achieved through the combined efforts in planning to meet recreational needs in Oklahoma.

A substantial portion of the effort necessary to develop a State Recreational Trails Plan was focused on two efforts. First, existing recreational trails needed to be identified, inventoried, and reported. As a result, this plan documents the “known” trails in the state. Second, the attitudes and opinions of recreational trail users were crucial to planning for the future. Therefore, public input was provided through surveys of Oklahomans who use recreational trails and those who provide trails at the municipal level.

Oklahoma’s Recreational Trails

Searching existing data bases for documentation of existing trails in Oklahoma proved to be a major challenge. No single data base could be located to provide a comprehensive list. Further, the multiple data bases available proved to be difficult to locate and incomplete.

In an effort to identify existing trails, communities, cities and towns from across Oklahoma were contacted as part of the SCORP. The Oklahoma Municipal League provided name and address contact for municipal leaders (mayors, city managers, city clerks, directors of departments, and other individuals). Four hundred sixty seven individuals representing these communities were mailed a survey addressing recreation facilities in the respective municipalities and addressing specific issues related to planning for recreation in those communities. Each of these communities was contacted by mail during March 2001 with a letter and survey instrument. Using the Dillman Total Design Method, the author provided postage for the return mail, informed consent for the participant, and assistance as needed for completion of the survey. The full detail on this study is shown in the 2001 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Four hundred one cities or towns responded to this survey for an 85.9% response rate. These 401 communities across Oklahoma represent a reported 2,647,667 individuals, 76.7% of the population of the state. Several other measures were evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the reported data.

Each of these respondents was asked to report on specific recreational facilities provided within the respective communities. Trails and areas used for “recreational trail purposes” were included in those items reported by the respondents. The following table reports the aggregate of space and facilities provided by municipal agencies in Oklahoma for “recreational trail purposes.”

Table 1
Municipal Recreational Trails

Type of Facility	Unit of measurement	Number
Active recreation areas		
Off road vehicle area	Acres of land	2,250
Outdoor Moto-Cross area	Acres of land	2,898
Hiking/Walking	Miles of trail	319
Hiking/Walking/Biking	Miles of trail	332
Hiking/Walking/Equestrian	Miles of trail	9
Hiking/Walking/ Biking/Equestrian	Miles of trail	103
In-line skating only	Miles of trail	16
Equestrian	Miles of trail	18
Jogging/Exercise	Miles of trail	119
All Terrain Vehicle (ATV)	Miles of trail	126
Motorcycle	Miles of trail	102

No communities reported on “water trails” although they are increasingly popular across the United States. Many communities have the potential resources to develop water trails, thus meeting a new and growing interest area.

These respondents from communities across Oklahoma were asked to address several issues related to recreational planning. The first issue addressed funding sources related to public outdoor recreation. These respondents believe that local parks should be funded through local funds, but the state should play a role in supporting a competitive state grant program. This was recommended in the 1992 SCORP and was rated as very important by 45.7% of respondents in the 2001 survey with continued importance into the future.

The second issue focused on environmental protection and preservation. This issue with its sub-categories received the greatest indication of importance from the respondents. Protection of fish and wildlife habitat and promoting conservation education were rated as very important by more than three quarters of the respondents. Environmental protection and preservation were also perceived to be of increasing importance for the next decade.

A third issue included in the survey was greenways and trails. Protection of corridors that connect open space and wildlife habitats was perceived as being very important presently, as was development of multiple-use trails. Also of importance to these respondents was the development of short connector trails to supplement vehicular transportation routes. These respondents, as representatives of local communities, did not see the same level of importance for development of long distance trails.

Specific community needs were identified as the fourth broad issue for these respondents. Revitalization and redevelopment of lands within communities to increase recreational opportunities close to community residents was seen as the most important item in this category. Recreation opportunities for less affluent, minority, or disabled populations were also of great importance and perceived as being of continuing importance for the next decade. Local planning was identified as the importance determinant in meeting high demand recreation now and into the future. However land acquisition programs were also seen as important.

The final issue presented to these community leaders concentrated on technical assistance. The single most important item by rating was the need for assistance in locating and receiving grant funds. Three other items of high importance at present, increasing in the next decade, were assistance in complying with federal mandates, research related to meeting community needs, and research related to local economic development and impact.

A more detailed assessment of local trails is shown on the table in the following pages. This list should not be considered to be all inclusive, nor exhaustive. These trails were identified through a variety of efforts. Other trails are known to exist in various communities in Oklahoma, but little (if any) information was available from representatives of these other communities.

Following are several maps providing detail on identified trails in Oklahoma. These maps show the general location of various trails for specific types of uses in Oklahoma. In addition, the following tables provide further detail on recreational trails in Oklahoma based on managing agencies.

Equestrian Trails

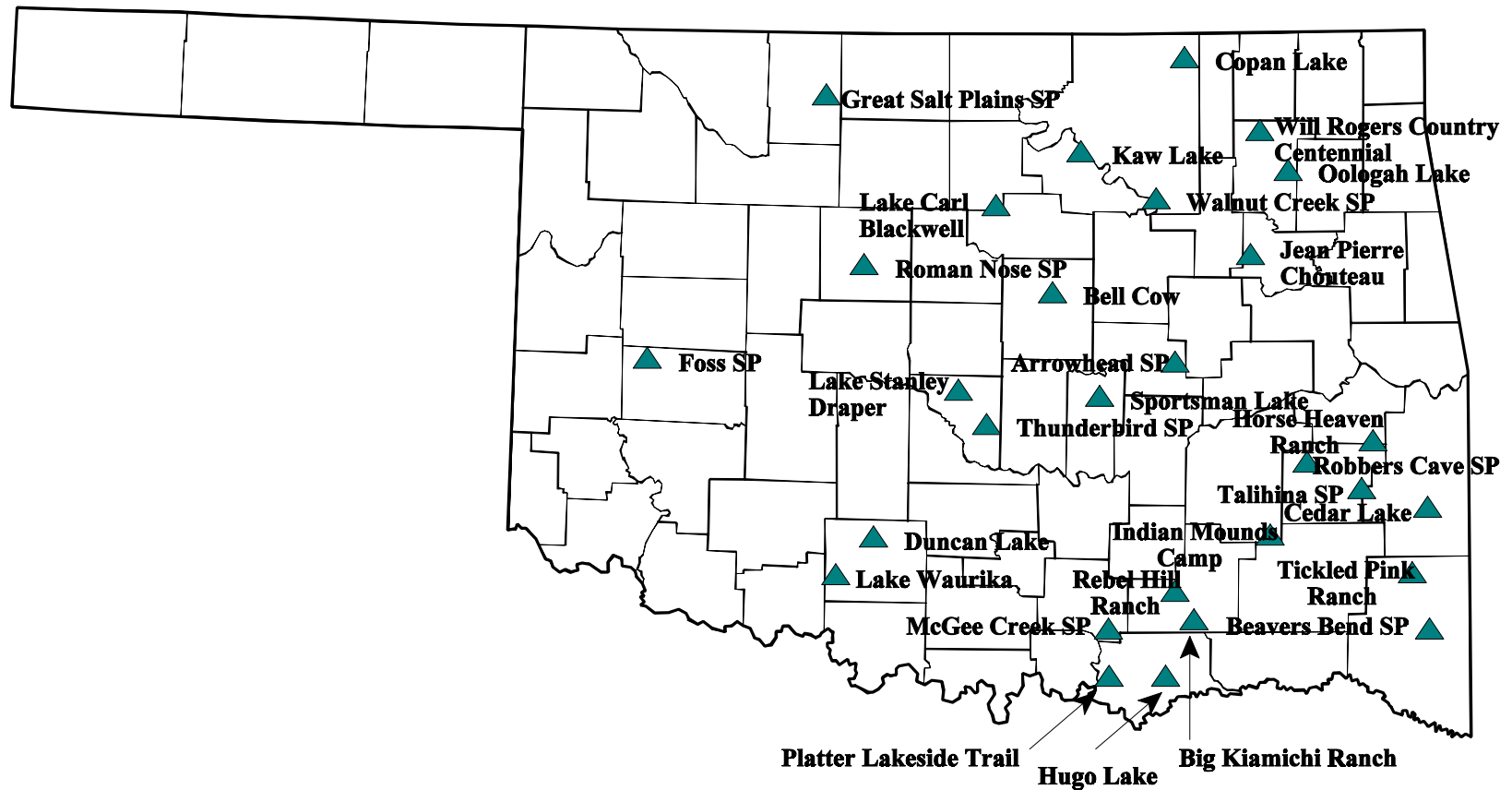


Figure 1 Equestrian Trails

Hiking and Backpacking Trails

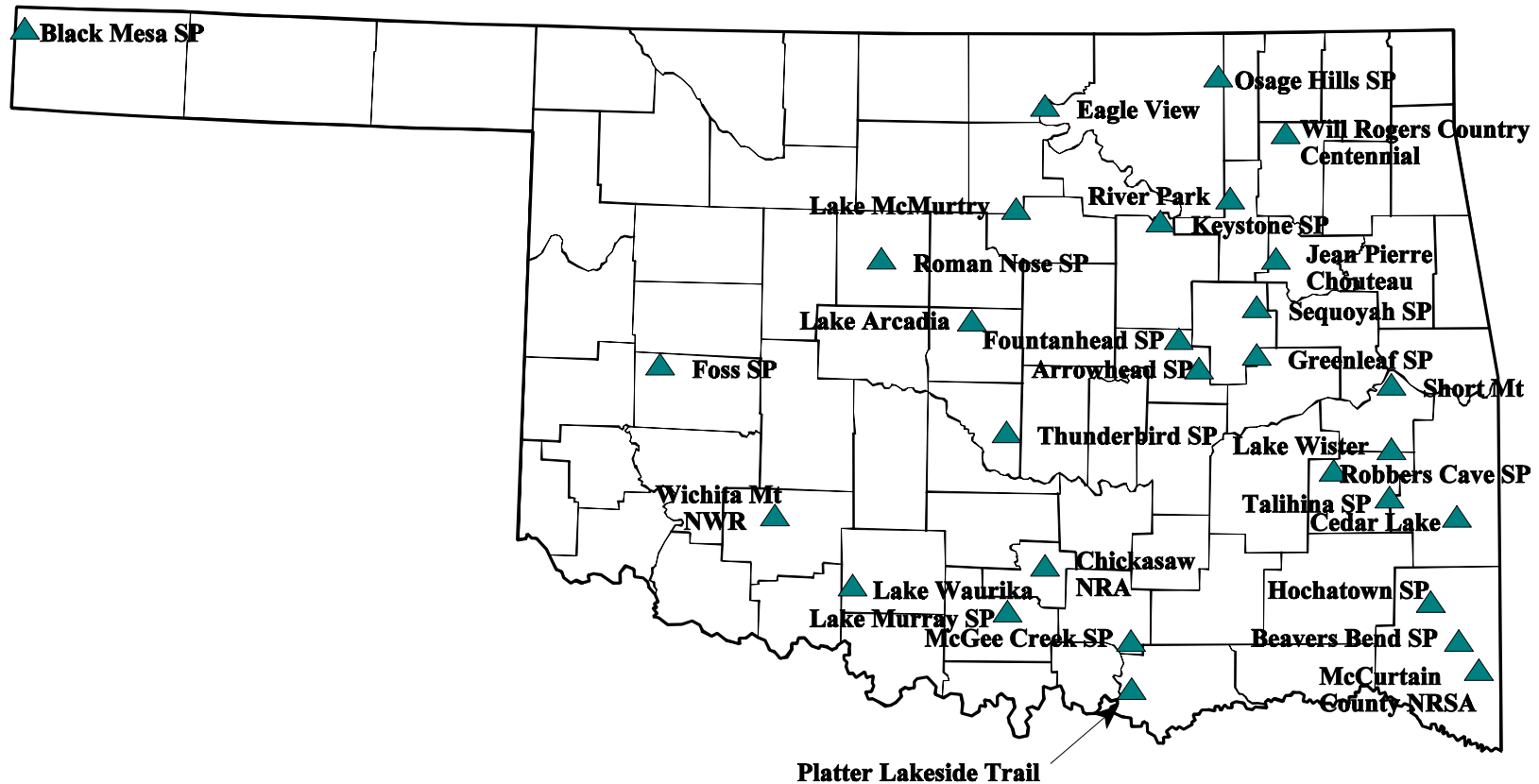


Figure 2 Hiking and Backpacking Trails

Mountain Biking Trails and Areas

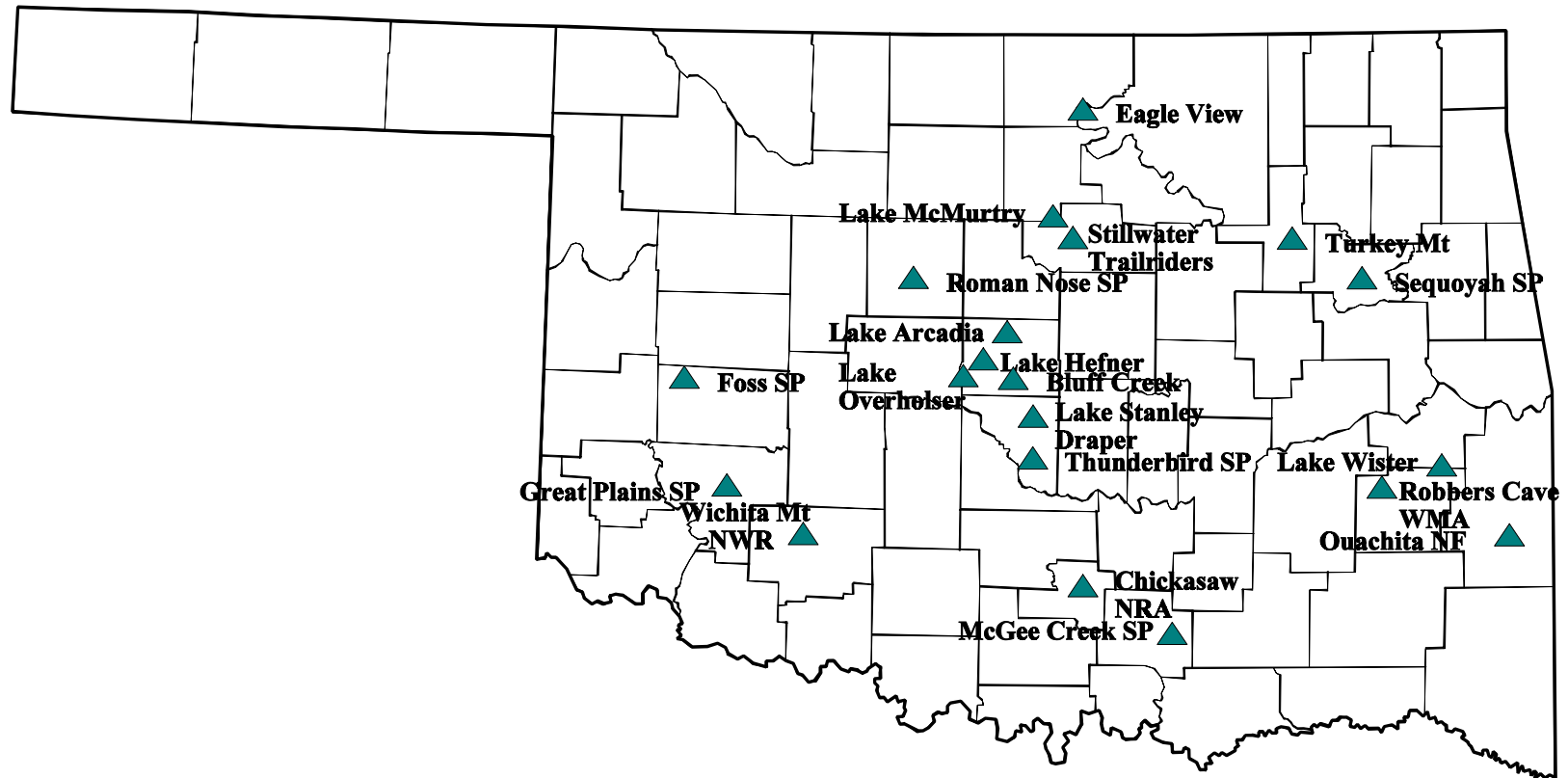


Figure 3 Mountain Biking Trails and Areas

Off Road Vehicle Trails and Areas

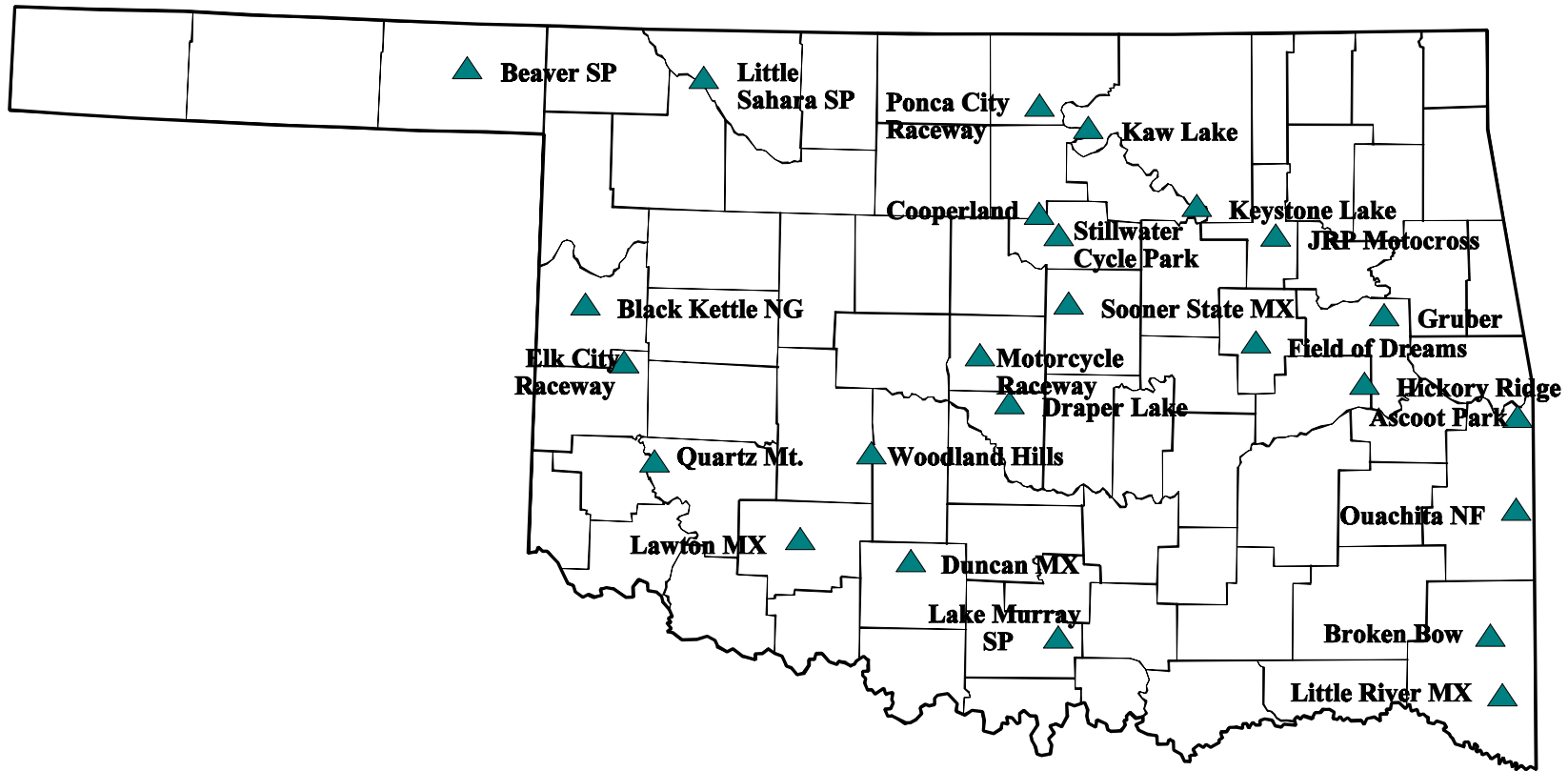


Figure 4 Off Road Vehicle Trails and Areas

Oklahoma State Parks with Trails

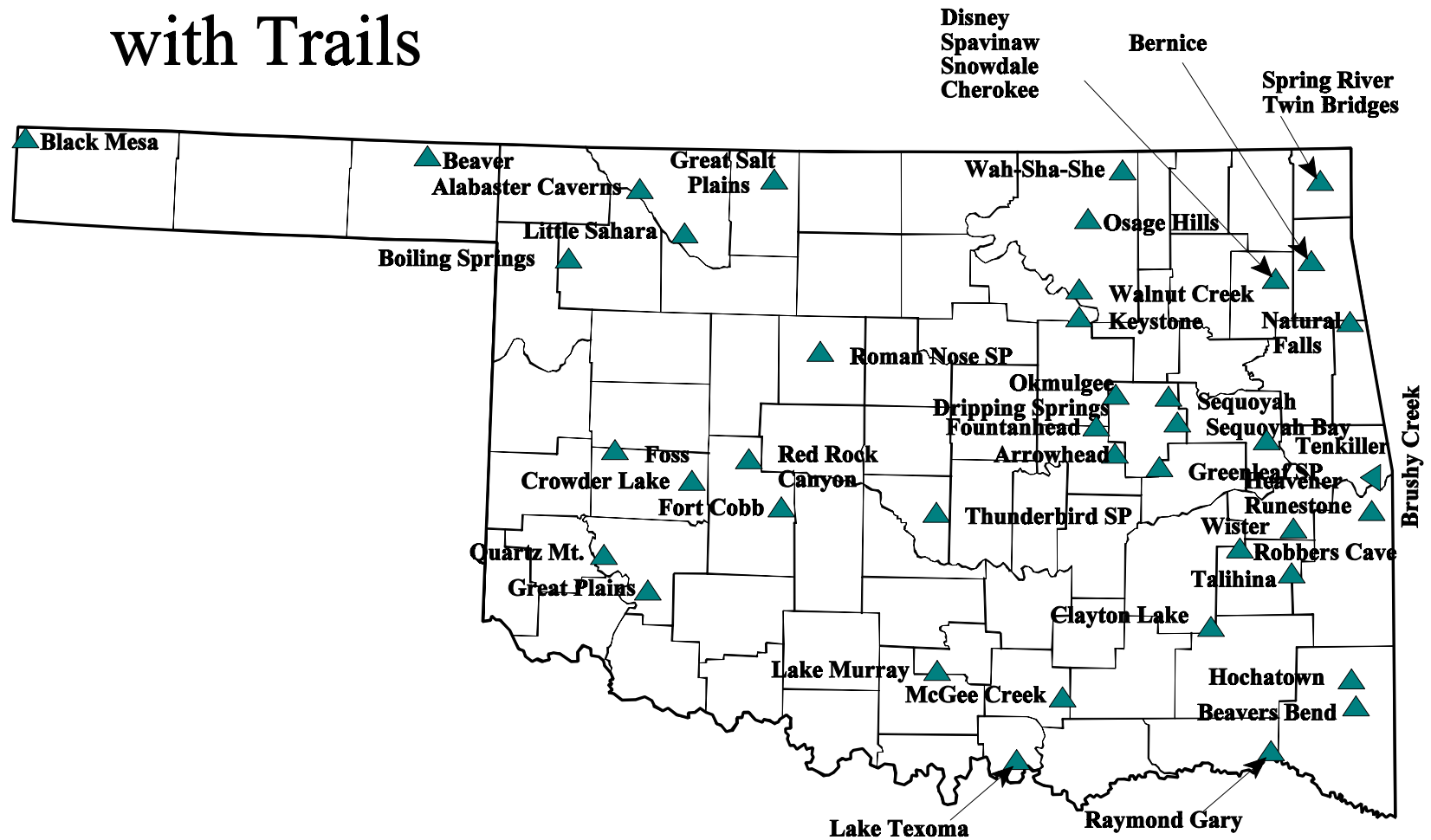


Figure 5 Oklahoma State Parks with Trails

Table 2
Municipal Trails Reported in Oklahoma

Trail Name	Location	Miles of trail	Type of trail surface	Type of trail user	Trail design	Managing Agency
Centennial Trail	Braman			Multi-use		Town of Braman
Washington Irving Park	Bixby	1	crushed rock	Walking		City of Bixby
Bell Cow Lake Trails	Chandler, OK	37	dirt, sand, grass	E		City of Chandler
Choctaw Creek Park	Choctaw	5,500 ft	natural			City of Choctaw
	Choctaw	1	asphalt	E		City of Choctaw
Cleveland Trail	Cleveland, OK	3	Asphalt	H, B, RB, WC	Loop	City of Cleveland
Turner Falls Trail	Davis	2	Limestone	Walking		City of Davis
Arcadia Lake Trail	Edmond, OK	7	dirt/sand	B	Horseshoe	City of Edmond
Ackley Sports Complex	Elk City			Multi-use		City of Elk City
Guymon trail	Guymon		concrete	Multi-use	Loop	City of Guymon
Jogging Trail	Harrah		asphalt	walking, jogging	Loop	City of Harrah
Redbud Park	Marlow			Multi-use		City of Marlow
Soldier Creek Nature Trail	Midwest City			walking, nature		City of Midwest City
Brand-Kiwanis	Moore					City of Moore
Little River	Moore	1	asphalt	walking, nature		City of Moore
Stem Beach Nature Trail	Muskogee		concrete	walking, nature		City of Muskogee

Sports Complex	Muskogee		asphalt	Multi-use		City of Muskogee
Civitan Park	Muskogee		concrete	Multi-use	Loop	City of Muskogee
Wild Horse Park	Mustang			walking		City of Mustang
Colonial Estates	Norman	1		walking		City of Norman
Reaves Park	Norman	1	asphalt	H, B	linkage	City of Norman
	Norman	1.5	Asphalt	H		City of Norman
Clearbay	Norman, OKC	8	dirt	H, B	Loops	City of Oklahoma City
Lake Hefner/Bluff Creek Trail	Oklahoma City	3.5	dirt/sand	MB, H	Loop	City of Oklahoma City
Draper Lake						OK Earthbike Fellowship
Draper Lake	Oklahoma City					OKC Water Utilities
Old Draper	Oklahoma City	8	dirt	B	Loops	City of Oklahoma City
Draper Lake ORV Area	Oklahoma City	85	sand, dirt	ORV	Multiple trails	City of Oklahoma City
Nudraper	Oklahoma City	12	dirt	B	3 Loops	City of Oklahoma City
Recreation Trail	Prague			Multi-use		City of Prague
Kelly Lane Park	Sapulpa			Multi-use		City of Sapulpa
Pretty Water	Sapulpa			Multi-use		City of Sapulpa
Wetlands Trail	Sapulpa	2.5		Multi-use		City of Sapulpa
Sportsman Lake	Seminole			Multi-use		City of Seminole
Stigler	Stigler	1.43	asphalt	H, B		City of Stigler
Boomer Lake Trail	Stillwater, OK	3.2	Concrete	H, B, RB	Loop, Line	City of Stillwater

Couch Park Loop	Stillwater, OK	1.2	Concrete	H, B, RB	Loop	City of Stillwater
George Loop	Stillwater, OK	30	Asphalt roads	H, B, ORV	Loop	City of Stillwater
Lake McMurtry	Stillwater, OK	27	grass, hill, dirt, asphalt	H, B	Loop	City of Stillwater
Turkey Mountain	Tulsa, OK	15	dirt	B	Loops	City of Tulsa
Gruber Recreation Area	near Braggs, OK	450 acre	sand, dirt, rock	ORV, B, H, E		Gruber Recreation Trust Authority
Old Frisco Trail	Poteau, OK	8.2	Gravel	H, B, RB, WC, E	Line	Lake Wister Association
Katy Trail	Sand Springs, OK	11	Asphalt	H, B, RB, WC	Line	Tulsa River Parks Authority
Midland Valley Trail	Tulsa, OK	2	Asphalt	H, B, RB, WC		Tulsa River Parks Authority
Williams Park	Westville			Multi-use		City of Westville
Chisholm Trail and Park Mound Trail	Yukon					City of Yukon

Key to the type of use.

H = hiking

E = equestrian

WC = wheel chair

B = biking or mountain biking

RB = roller blading

ORV = off road vehicle

Table 3
Recreational Trails on State Lands in Oklahoma

Trail Name	Location	Miles of trail	Type of trail surface	Type of trail user	Managing Agency
Black Mesa Nature Preserve	Black Mesa State Park	8	sand, dirt, grass	H	OK Department of Wildlife Conservation
Lake Carl Blackwell	Stillwater, OK	8	grass, hill, dirt	H, B, E	Oklahoma State University
Freedom	Alabaster Caverns State Park	1	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Little Black Bear	Alabaster Caverns State Park	1.16	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Old Two Toes	Alabaster Caverns State Park	1	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Raptor's Roost	Alabaster Caverns State Park	0.66	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Arrowhead	Arrowhead State Park	3	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Outlaw	Arrowhead State Park	0.75	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Pioneer Trail	Beaver State Park	1	grass, dirt	H	OTRD
Beaver Creek	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Beaver Lodge	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	1.1	dirt	H	OTRD
Cedar Bluff	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	0.84	dirt	H	OTRD
David Boren Trail	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	16.4	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Dogwood	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	0.46	dirt	H	OTRD

Forest Heritage	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	1.1	dirt	H	OTRD
Pine Ridge	Beaver's Bend/ Hochatown State Park	0.79	dirt	H	OTRD
Little Cedar Nature Trail	Boggy Depot State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Burma	Boiling Springs State Park	1.5	dirt	H	OTRD
Chisholm Trail	Boiling Springs State Park	1.75	dirt	H	OTRD
River Trail	Boiling Springs State Park	0.75	dirt	H	OTRD
Warrior Trail	Foss State Park	14	dirt	H, E, B	OTRD
Arrowmaker	Fountainhead State Park	0.75	dirt	H	OTRD
Crazy Snake Trail	Fountainhead State Park	0.25	asphalt	H	OTRD
Fountainhead Hiking Trail	Fountainhead State Park	2.5	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Savannah	Fountainhead State Park	0.75	dirt	H	OTRD
Area D	Great Plains State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Mountain Bike Trail	Great Plains State Park	12	dirt, grass	H, B	OTRD
George Sibley	Great Salt Plains State Park	7	dirt, grass	H, B, E	OTRD
Green Leaf Lake Trail	Green Leaf State Park	17	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Cliffside Hiking Trail	Heavener Runestone State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Runestone Nature Trail	Heavener Runestone State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Deer Run	Hochatown State Park	2.22	dirt	H	OTRD
Maple Ridge	Hochatown State Park	1.93	dirt	H	OTRD

Physical Fitness Trail	Keystone State Park	1.4	asphalt	H	OTRD
Whispering Hills	Keystone State Park	1.4	dirt	H	OTRD
Anadarche	Lake Murray State Park	4	dirt	H	OTRD
Buckhorn	Lake Murray State Park	4.2	dirt	H	OTRD
C.C.C.	Lake Murray State Park	1.5	dirt	H	OTRD
Field Trial Area/w permission	Lake Murray State Park	10	dirt	E	OTRD
Motorcycle Area/w permission	Lake Murray State Park	10	dirt	ORV	OTRD
Winding Trail	Lake Texoma State Park	2	dirt	H	OTRD
Lake Texoma	Lake Texoma State Park	10+	dirt, sand, grass	E	OTRD
Hiking Trail	Lake Wister State Park	6.2	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Lone Star	Lake Wister State Park	0.75	dirt	H	OTRD
ORV Park/w permission	Little Sahara State Park	1790 acre	dirt	ORV	OTRD
Banasaw Nature trail	McGee Creek State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Boundary Trail/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	4.8	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Coon's Way/Wolf creek/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	2.2	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Hog Camp/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1.8	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Hunter's Cabin/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1.8	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Little Bugaboo/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1.4	dirt	H, B	OTRD
McGee Cree	McGee Creek State Park	15.5	Water, no-wake zone	canoe	OTRD
North Rim/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	3.3	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD

Rocky Point/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1	dirt	H, B	OTRD
South Rim/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	3.1	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
West Boundary Trail/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1.2	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Whiskey Flats/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1.6	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Wildcat Canyon/w permission	McGee Creek State Park	1.8	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Quartz Mountain ORV Area	near Lone Wolf, OK	50 acre	sand	ORV	OTRD
Oak Leaf Nature trail	Okmulgee State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Bugle Trail	Osage Hills State Park	5	dirt	H,B	OTRD
Falls Trail on Sand creek	Osage Hills State Park	0.25	dirt	H	OTRD
Overlook Trail	Osage Hills State Park	1.75	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Motorized Area	Quartz Mountain State Park	50-200 acres	dirt	ORV	OTRD
New Horizon	Quartz Mountain State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Wichita	Quartz Mountain State Park	0.25	dirt	H	OTRD
California Road Trail	Red Rock Canyon State Park	0.2	dirt	H	OTRD
Rough Horsetail Trail	Red Rock Canyon State Park	0.4	dirt	H	OTRD
Cattail Pond Trail	Robber's Cave State Park	2.25	dirt	H	OTRD

Equestrian Trail	Robber's Cave State Park	52	dirt	E	OTRD
Mountain Bike/Hiking Trail	Robber's Cave State Park	1.5	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Mountain trail	Robber's Cave State Park	4.7	dirt	H	OTRD
Rough Canyon Trail	Robber's Cave State Park	2.85	dirt	H	OTRD
Frontier Daze Area	Roman Nose State Park	1	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Natural Springs Footpaths	Roman Nose State Park	0.5	dirt	H	OTRD
Roman Nose Hiking Trail	Roman Nose State Park	0.75	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Roman Nose Horseback Trail	Roman Nose State Park	1.5	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Wildlife Refuge Service Road	Roman Nose State Park	1.25	dirt	H, B, E	OTRD
Wineglass Trail	Roman Nose State Park	6	dirt, grass	H, B, E	OTRD
Eagles Roost Trail	Sequoyah State Park	1.25	dirt	H	OTRD
Fossil Trail	Sequoyah State Park	0.5	dirt	H	OTRD
Physical fitness Trail	Sequoyah State Park	0.75	asphalt	H	OTRD
Three Forks Nature Trail	Sequoyah State Park	1.25	dirt	H	OTRD
Whispering Pines Mountain Bike Trail	Sequoyah State Park	14.1	dirt	H, B	OTRD
Spring River	Spring River State Park	22	water	canoe	OTRD
Turkey Track Walk	Wah-Sha-She State Park	1	dirt	H	OTRD
Sand Plum Trail	Walnut Creek State Park	15	dirt	H, E	OTRD
Hiking trail	Lake Wister State Park	6.2	Natural	H	OTRD

Lone Star	Lake Wister State Park	.75	natural	H, I	OTRD
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Table 4
Recreational Trails on Federal Properties in Oklahoma

Trail Name	Location	Miles of trail	Type of trail surface	Type of trail user	Trail design	Managing Agency
Chickasaw National Recreation Area	Chickasaw National Rec. Area	30-35	Concrete, dirt, gravel	H, E, B	Multiple trails	National Park Service
Jean Pierre Chateau	Kerr-McClelland Navigation					U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Appalachia Bay ORV Area	Keystone Lake, OK	600 acres	dirt/sand/grass	ORV	Loops, line	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Indian Nations Recreation Trail	Porum, OK	39	Asphalt, Ballast	H, B, RB, WC	Line	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Charons Garden Trail	Wichita Wildlife Refuge	2.5	dirt, rock	H	Line	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department
Dog Hollow Trail	Wichita Wildlife Refuge	6	dirt, sand	H	Loops	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department
Elk Mountain trail	Wichita Wildlife Refuge	1	dirt, rock	H	Line	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department
Cedar Lake Trails	Near Heavener, OK.	50	hills, rock, dirt, sand	E		U.S. Forest Service
Beech Creek Trail	Ouachita National Forest	32.5	dirt	H	Loops	U.S. Forest Service
Billy Creek Trail	Ouachita National Forest	8	dirt	H, B	Loop	U.S. Forest Service

Boardstand Trail	Ouachita National Forest	8.1	dirt	H, B, E	Line	U.S. Forest Service
Cedar Lake Trail	Ouachita National Forest	2.9	dirt	H, B	Loop	U.S. Forest Service
Horsethief Spring Trail	Ouachita National Forest	11.2	dirt	H, B	Loop	U.S. Forest Service
Kerr Arboretum Trails	Ouachita National Forest	2.1	dirt	H, B	Loops	U.S. Forest Service
Mountain Top Trail	Ouachita National Forest	0.9	dirt	H, B	Lines	U.S. Forest Service
Old Military Road	Ouachita National Forest	7	dirt	H, B, E	Line	U.S. Forest Service
Old Pine Trail	Ouachita National Forest	0.4	dirt	H	Line	U.S. Forest Service
Ouachita National Trail	Ouachita National Forest					U.S. Forest Service
Winding Stair Equestrian Trail	Ouachita National Forest	77	dirt	H, E	Loops	U.S. Forest Service
Winding Stair National Rec. Area	Winding Stair National Rec. Area	54	dirt, gravel	H, E, B	Multiple trails	U.S. Forest Service

Table 5
Recreational Trails on Private Properties in Oklahoma

Trail Name	Location	Miles of trail	Type of trail surface	Type of trail user	Trail design	Land Owner
Will Rogers Centennial Trail	Lake Oologah, OK	13	natural	E	Line	Nature Conservancy
Tallgrass Prairie Preserve	Pawhuska, Oklahoma	3	natural	H		Nature Conservancy
Broken Bow	Broken Bow, OK	100+	natural	ORV	Loops, roads	Weyerhaeuser Company

Chapter 2

Public Input into the Plan

Public Use of Recreational Trails

As stated earlier, approximately 75% of the nation's population identify themselves as trail users. That percentage varies regionally and from state to state. A telephone survey of Oklahoma households (2000 Eco-Tourism Phone Survey, OTRD Division of Planning and Development) provided recent insight into the recreation habits of Oklahomans.

This survey of more than 2000 households in Oklahoma revealed that 34.9% of respondents had hiked a trail of at least two miles length in the past year. This was verified with follow-up questions indicating that the trail users had a moderate to strong interest in trails. Among the respondents to this statewide survey, 5.4% had been mountain biking, 16.6% had been horseback riding, 27% had been off-road in a variety of vehicles.

Conversely, 48.8% of the respondents had walked a nature trail less than two miles in length during the past year. Interest in nature trails was stronger than that interest expressed for other types of trails. Particular interest was expressed for specific amenities including nature centers, self-guided tour materials, restrooms, interpretive materials, and educational signs.

Community assessments for specific locales in Oklahoma also indicate high interest in trails within communities. This interest was expressed in Perry, Sand Springs, Stillwater, Chandler, and Heavener. The Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation System (OCARTS) indicated that 1.5% of their study group rode bicycles to work, while an additional 4% of respondents walked to work. Alternative choices in transportation was the third highest priority for planning for the Central Oklahoma region. Over 90% of the study respondents favored requiring developers to construct sidewalks in new residential developments.

Survey of Trail Users

As stated earlier, the development of Oklahoma's state recreational trails plan was one component in the preparation of the statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP). In the context of preparation of the SCORP, recreational trails serve as one

component of a much broader recreational resource. Public input is a requisite component of planning to meet public recreation needs. As a result, a survey of recreational trail users was conducted to gain a perspective of attitudes, opinions and expectations present among those who most frequently visit trails.

An address listing of trail users was provided by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and supplemented by addresses of trail use groups maintained at Oklahoma State University. Three-hundred-fifty-five individuals were contacted by mail with a letter, consent form, and survey. From this sample, 318 individuals responded for a 94.6% response rate. In addition, several trail organizations posted the survey instrument, in one or more of its early editions, on web-sites or other electronic access points. From this electronic delivery an additional 46 responses were generated.

The author conducted t-tests and analyses of variances on demographic and attitudinal components from the two response groups (mailed survey and web survey) to determine whether the two response groups were similar. The statistical analysis revealed no significant differences between the two groups on demographic measures or attitudinal measures. As a result, it can be assumed that these two groups come from the same population and the response are reported in total. However in Appendix A the two groups are reported separately to show the detail from each response group with the letter, consent form, and institutional review board approval sent to those in the mail response sample.

The respondents to this survey were predominantly male (261 of 357) with an average age of 41.4 years. The oldest respondent was 78 while the youngest was 21 based on a median of 44.5 years of age. All respondents, except two, identified themselves as white, non-Hispanic individuals. One respondent indicated American Indian or Alaskan Native as best describing race, while another respondent indicated Hispanic origin. Clearly the respondents to this survey of trail users were members of the majority racial and ethnic community in Oklahoma. In addition, the respondents were better educated than their fellow Oklahomans.

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference in trail use. Almost half of the respondents (49.6% or 179 individuals) indicated a preference for multiple activities on trails that separated motorized and non-motorized use. Most of the rest of the respondents (157 or 43.5%) indicated a preference for a single purpose trail - walking OR riding, but not both. Only twenty five respondents (6.9%) indicated a preference for multiple activities with motorized and non-motorized use combined.

Eighty-four percent (302 respondents) indicated their most frequent trail activity was some form of non-motorized activity. These responses included 130 mechanized,

but non-motorized (bicycle or wheelchair); 123 walking or hiking; and 49 animal assisted trail activities. Sixty-two respondents (17.2%) indicated that their most frequent trail activity was a motorized activity.

The respondents were asked to rank the top five activities, by frequency of involvement, when they used public trails. Therefore a ranking of ‘1’ was the most frequent activity in this group, while a ranking of ‘5’ was the lowest reported frequency in this sample. The following activities are presented with the relative ranking and the number of respondents indicating that particular item at some level of ranking.

- Horseback riding (2.00, N = 70)
- Commuting to work or school (2.26, N = 19)
- Hiking, backpacking (2.42, N = 197)
- Mountain bicycling (2.43, N = 193)
- Walking (2.52, N = 287)
- Bicycling (2.53, N = 159)
- ATV riding (2.62, N = 55)
- Motorcycle (2.68, N = 53)
- 4WD driving (3.02, N = 56)
- Family outings (3.28, N = 167)
- Running, jogging, exercising (3.39, N = 141)
- Other: “exploring for wildflower identification,” “trail maintenance,” “wildlife viewing,” “pushing stroller,” “birding, nature photography, emotion release,” and “hiking with llamas to carry packs” (3.77, N = 37)
- In-line skating, roller-blading, roller skating (4.11, N = 37)

Respondents in this sample also preferred a trail of moderate difficulty (211 respondents, 58.4%). While it is difficult to separate between a “hard” trail and a “challenging” trail, 128 respondents indicated a preference for that level of difficulty. Clearly, the respondents in this sample prefer trails beyond those perceived as “easy.”

A variety of trails based upon design and purpose were presented to the respondents for an indication of present or possible use, if such a trail were available. This response group again favored non-motorized activity in the design and purpose of trails. However, one fifth of the respondents did indicate a desire for motorized use of long distance trails or loop trails. By contrast, two thirds of the respondents or more indicated use or plans to use interpretive trails with signs, short linkage trails, long distance trails, and loop trails.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the current importance of several issues related to trails. The following items were identified as being presently the most

important issues as perceived by these trail users. Full detail on these issues with survey response is shown in the appendix.

1. Lack of funding for trails (331)
2. Too much litter or trash along trails (325)
3. Erosion or deterioration of trail (306)
4. Lack of maintenance on trails (299)
5. Lack of trail etiquette or ethics (281)

Looking to the future, these respondents placed the major issues in a slightly different order as follows.

1. Lack of funding for trails (267)
2. Lack of maintenance on trails (258)
3. Lack of trail etiquette or ethics (227)
4. Too much litter or trash along trails (226)
5. Lack of trails close to home (219)

In a related question, the trail users were asked to rank the top five trail management needs from their perspective. A generated list of fourteen management needs were presented based upon existing literature related to trails.

1. Acquire land for new trails
2. Maintain the existing trails
3. Develop new trails
4. Acquire land for trail access
5. Provide education and safety information for trail users
6. Enforce rules and regulations on established trails
7. Keep trails clean of litter and trash
8. Provide law enforcement
9. Provide trail information, maps, etc.
10. Mitigate or repair damage to existing trails
11. Renovate deteriorated trails
12. Develop support facilities at trail heads
13. Develop support facilities along trails
14. Provide landscaping along trails.

Respondents were asked to indicate which trail support facilities they presently use and which ones they would use if available. Interestingly present use of existing facilities was not representative of possible use if facilities were available. The most frequent trail support facilities presently used were trash cans/dumpsters (314), parking

lots or space (284), trail signs (259), and rest rooms (220). By contrast a few items showed greatly anticipated use if available than under present conditions. These trail support facilities showing latent demand were drinking water, shade structure, interpretive or educational materials, and shelters.

Motives for using trails has been examined in a number of research efforts nationwide. These trail users in Oklahoma were similar to other trail users in their reasons for recreation activity on a trail. The following list shows the motive and relative weight represented by these trail users.

1. Enjoy nature (332)
2. Observe the scenic beauty (313)
3. Be with others who enjoy the same things I do (295)
4. Improve physical health (282)
5. Be away from crowds (245)
6. Reduce/release built up tensions (245)
7. Experience adventure/excitement (245)
8. Challenge or sport (201)
9. Develop skills and abilities (189)
10. Do things on my own (152)
11. Experience self-reliance (108)
12. Test equipment (92)

A national study by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy provided the basis for several questions related to attitudes and opinions of trail users. While the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy national study has not been released, the Oklahoma trail users strongly support actions and positions that enhance trail development. These positions included:

- 324 respondents believe their respective communities need more trails.
- 214 respondents indicated they would reduce use of a car if there were more trails in their respective neighborhoods.
- 342 respondents indicated they plan vacations based on trails in the area.
- 309 respondents favor the establishment of a national network of trails based on rail-trails.
- 344 respondents believe that use of government funds is appropriate for building and maintaining trails.
- 2 respondents believe that trails should be the responsibility of the federal government, but 240 respondents believe that multiple levels of government should manage trail funds.
- 310 respondents indicated a willingness to pay more for a home near a trail.

Summary of Public Input

Oklahoma has not demonstrated the same level of trail use as shown in certain other states (Wisconsin, Arizona, Alaska, South Carolina, and Florida, to name a few). That lower level of trail use may reflect several causes: (1) lack of opportunity, (2) lack of information on available opportunities, (3) a general pattern of recreation inactivity among the populace, or (4) a variety of other causes.

Oklahoma is near the top among states with obese young people, near the top among states in teenage pregnancies, near the top in a number of diseases related to sedentary lifestyles, and among the nation's leaders in littering. In addition, as reported in the SCORP, Oklahoma must do a better job of educating its citizens regarding health and safety while participating in outdoor recreation. Oklahoma public schools rarely offer education related to outdoor recreation, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education have devalued such education efforts at the collegiate level. Oklahoma education must include skill development related to outdoor recreation, recreation ethics, and personal responsibilities for recreation environments.

Several conclusions drawn in the SCORP have direct application to the State Recreational Trails Plan. These conclusions include the following. Full detail on the rationale for these conclusions is available in the SCORP.

- Oklahoma's population is growing more rapidly over the past decade than it did in the preceding decade. However, that population growth rate is lower than the national average. That population growth in Oklahoma is most rapid among Hispanic or Latino populations.
- Oklahoma's population is aging parallel to the pattern occurring with the nation's population. As percentages of the total Oklahoma population, those age groups under 15 years of age showed decline in the past decade, while those age groups from 35 to 59 and those over 85 years of age increased during the 1990s.
- Oklahoma's population is concentrated in six counties in the state with a continued trend of movement from the rural western counties to the more urbanized I-44 corridor. Income and wealth are unevenly distributed in Oklahoma with great disparity shown between those counties of highest household income and those counties with lowest household income.
- Oklahoma's population shows an unusually high percentage of individuals reporting disabling conditions when compared with other states. This large

segment of the population reporting disabilities is especially an issue of concern in light of the aging populace and the increasing frequency of disability with age.

- Oklahoma has linked travel, tourism and recreation without discrimination between the differences or commonalities of each activity. Outdoor recreation and related travel has had a positive economic impact on many parts of Oklahoma, and the state more generally. The social and environmental impacts are much less positive.
- Oklahoma has a smaller percentage of land area (about 4%) available as public recreation estate than is common around the nation. On average nationally, 58% of land area is in private ownership, 33% of land area is federally managed, 7% belongs to states and cities, and 2% is Indian land. The Oklahoma public recreation estate is unevenly distributed around the state with particular concentration in northeastern Oklahoma, southeastern Oklahoma, and southwestern Oklahoma. However, those land and related water resources provide an outstanding diversity of opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Oklahoma cities and towns continue to struggle with financial resources for local park and recreation facilities. Most communities use general tax revenues to support local parks, but a greater number seek federal or state grants. Very few communities have attempted bonded indebtedness to fund outdoor recreation facilities.
- Demand for trails is increasing in Oklahoma as identified by representatives of cities and towns and present trail users. The diversity of trail use is increasing as well, and trail users prefer a separation of motorized and non-motorized use by design of the trails.
- Trails are an important consideration for community development as alternative transportation routes, green space and linkages, properties offering positive economic benefit, and properties that improve quality of life for residents.

Chapter 3

Local Trail Planning

Context for Local Trail Planning

Hiking, biking, riding and other recreational activities are increasingly common among members of the general public. As a result, recreation trails are recognized as important facilities for such activities throughout the nation. Recreation trails combine the beauty of the natural environment, the excitement and spectacle of urban life and the peacefulness rural areas have to offer. With construction of each recreation trail an individual is given an opportunity to enjoy both the environment and the experience inherent in trail activities. Groups ranging from neighborhood organizations to state and federal government agencies are developing recreation trails and recreation trail projects with the goal of one day connecting Oklahoma's magnificent state parks, urban communities and historic past by means of a comprehensive system of multi-modal recreation trails. These trails offer social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits.

There are two major trails programs defined by federal law for which funding is available. The details on these trails are provided in the Transportation Enhancement Program Implementation Manual and the Oklahoma Transportation Enhancement Program Application Packet of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation or the 2001 Oklahoma Recreational Trails Grant Application Guidelines packet published by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD). Each of these publications provides a step-by-step reference guide for recreation trail funding and implementation. They also detail the roles and responsibilities of various groups involved in recreation trail projects, and offer resources for technical assistance opportunities.

Although "trails" were defined in Chapter 1 of this plan, the concept of "trails" varies slightly between these two programs. As a result it is necessary to define trails in light of the available support programs.

- A **trail** as defined by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21, 23 U.S.C. 206) is a "thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes such as: pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use; skating or skateboarding; equestrian activities, including carriage driving; non-motorized snow trail activities, including skiing; bicycling or use of other human-powered vehicles; aquatic or water activities; and motorized vehicular activities, including all-terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles."

- The Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program defines a ***Recreational Trail*** as “a trail serving a recreational purpose with no transportation function.” For example, a closed loop trail within a park or recreation area would be a recreation trail. Trail projects funded through the NRTFA are primarily recreational in nature and are intended to enhance the recreational opportunity and resources of the park or recreation area.
- The Federal Transportation Enhancement Program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration for the Department of Transportation. The Special Projects Branch of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is responsible for development and administration of the Enhancement Program at the state level. A ***Transportation Enhancement*** can represent a stand-alone project, or be implemented as part of an ongoing Transportation project. As a requirement, all projects must be related to the Intermodal Transportation System. The required relationship must be one of “function, proximity, or impact.” For example, an independent bike path is a functional part of the Intermodal Transportation System. The removal of outdoor advertising within sight of a highway is justified because of proximity. Retrofitting an existing highway by creating a wetland to filter highway runoff would qualify based on the impact on water pollution from the highway. In the case of alternative transportation enhancements such as railroad depot restoration, or trail development, it is not necessary for the project to lie within or be adjacent to the highway right-of-way. Federal guidelines also provide that environmental analysis, planning, design, land acquisition and construction activities necessary for implementing a qualifying transportation enhancement project are eligible for funding.

As the network of recreation trails in Oklahoma expands, it is important to consider the views of those that own land adjacent to proposed recreation trails as these trails are planned and implemented. Recreation trail development within the state of Oklahoma has traditionally met strong opposition due to concerns relating to ownership and protection of private property. To make a statewide recreation trail network a reality for the state of Oklahoma each recreation trail planning agency is wise to analyze past state and national issues related to the sentiment of adjacent landowners regarding trail projects. Many of the states most beautiful recreation trail opportunities exist adjacent to lands held by concerned private property owners. This situation creates the need for the development of strategies acceptable to concerned landowners and recreation trail users alike. Communication from the beginning stages of recreation trail planning between Oklahoma landowners and planning will help to alleviate landowner concerns and ensure a working partnership throughout the life of a statewide recreation trail network.

As existing recreation trails age and as new recreation trails are planned, it is important to consider maintenance costs of recreation trails and further enhancement of recreation trails. Construction costs are becoming more apparent, and federal and state dollars to cover these costs are not being awarded to competing agencies without intense competition. Specific policies regarding the operation and maintenance of recreation trails, including jurisdictional responsibility, liability issues, general maintenance and funding sources should be set forth early in the planning stage of any recreation trail facility. Federal and state agencies that provide funding for recreation trails will also provide information regarding technical assistance to ensure each recreation trail that is constructed is of high quality in design and safety. Additional assistance can often be found from local citizen groups and organizations promoting recreation trail use for all modes. It can not be over emphasized how important it is for recreation trail planning agencies to work closely with the public not only at the beginning stages of planning, but also throughout the life of a recreation trail.

A statewide recreation trail system within Oklahoma is best served if it is able to link population centers with major recreational amenities across the state. In order to effectively accomplish such a task the development of “feeder” or “connector” trail systems within local communities must be included within recreation trail planning. Through the implementation of local recreation trails systems, more recreation trail users will be able to easily access longer-distance recreational opportunities, the main purpose of the statewide system.

Recreation trails can provide significant economic benefits to individual business owners, local communities and the state of Oklahoma. The financial benefits originate primarily from tourism dollars spent by recreation trail users. Recreation trails can provide significant economic benefits when local and state recreation trail planning agencies work in conjunction with individual business owners, local communities and the state. Though the financial benefits originate from spending by recreation trail users, they do not stop as just tourism dollars. Businesses and individuals throughout Oklahoma will then spend the money spent by recreation trail users. This important economic cycle is why recreation trail planning agencies should work in close cooperation with local communities in order to capture spending from recreation trail users. Communities should also try to capture the additional rounds of spending generated by the inflow of recreation trail users in order to maximize the economic benefit.

Recreation trail users spend money. Such expenditures may range from snacks or drinks to bicycle and ATV repair or to purchase overnight stays at a bed and breakfast. Oklahoma communities that would serve as recreation trailheads are poised to take advantage of the economic inflow that potentially exists. Income and education levels,

on average, are higher among recreation trail users. A North Carolina State survey found that "households earning, \$75,000 to \$99,999 are most likely to have used trails over the last 12 months." The surveyed sample is also well educated. Thirty-one percent have a college degree and 88 percent are high school graduates. A 1989 Iowa trails survey also concluded that heavy trail users tend to have above average incomes. A user study of the Raccoon River Valley Trail (RRVT), concluded that the "typical trail user ... has a college education and earns over \$45,000 a year." Those surveyed on Iowa's Wabash Trace Nature Trail also had higher than average incomes. More than half of the trail users report annual household incomes above \$50,000.

Recreation trails offer trail users a reason to visit a town, and may spur other community benefits including downtown revitalization, an increase in property values, and attraction of additional businesses regardless of whether they serve the recreation trail or not. The economic potential for many of Oklahoma's smaller and more economically suppressed areas can be realized with local, regional and statewide cooperation. A statewide recreation trail network linking Oklahoma's small and large communities can also create a more diverse economy not reliant upon mineral extraction or high technology development.

With the help of rural and urban citizenry to promote the development of recreation trails, the future of Oklahoma recreation trails is bright. Popularity in the development of recreation trail facilities has increased throughout the country, with many states enjoying the economic and recreational opportunities that often follow recreation trail development.

Planning for trails in Oklahoma is a cooperative venture linking public and private agencies. In addition the cooperation extends to linkages between the local interest groups, municipal and county government, state agencies, and federal funding sources. The following resources are provided to assist local planners in initiating trail planning at the local level.

Resources to assist in Local Trail Planning

- T Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO): 1999 (hereafter referred to as the AASHTO Guide). This is the recognized standard for bicycle design guidelines. Updated in 1999, this document contains the most current recommendations available. In addition, trails that will receive federal transportation funding must adhere to these AASHTO guidelines.

- T Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
- T A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets “Green Book”, AASHTO. This resource offers design details for Interstate and Primary Road design.
- T Oklahoma Department of Transportation Design Manual and Standards, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Roadway Design Division. This document offers details and procedures for the design of transportation facilities in Oklahoma.
- T Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Outdoor Developed Areas Final Report, U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (U.S. Access Board): 1999. This document is the final report of the Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas. This committee developed accessibility recommendations through a consensus process for a variety of outdoor areas, including trails. The U.S. Access Board will use the committee’s recommendations, in conjunction with public comment, to develop standards for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Until standards are developed, this report contains the best information for meeting the requirements of the ADA.
- T Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): 2000. This document provides detailed planning and design recommendations for developing pedestrian and non-motorized multi-use trails that meet the needs of a broad spectrum of users, including people with disabilities. This document also contains background information regarding user needs, the benefits of universal design, and recreation equipment used by people with disabilities.
- T Selecting Roadway Design Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles, Federal Highway Administration: 1994. This is primarily a planning document for bicycle facilities, but also offers general design guidelines. This document makes frequent reference to the AASHTO Guide described above.
- T Minnesota Bicycle Transportation Planning and Design Guidelines, Minnesota Department of Transportation: 1996. This document offers both planning guidance and design guidelines. It is nationally recognized for its detailed guidelines dealing with roadway crossings.

- T Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Oregon Department of Transportation: 1995. This is a detailed, well-organized planning and design guide. It is known for innovative recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation with traffic calming and expressway interchanges.
- T Portland Pedestrian Design Guide, City of Portland, Oregon, Office of Transportation: 1998. This guide focuses on the accommodation of pedestrians in urban areas.
- T Hennepin County Bicycle Transportation Plan, Hennepin County, Minnesota, Department of Public Works: 1996. This document gives an extensive array of guidelines for the implementation of bicycle facilities within road rights-of-way.
- T Trailbuilding Basics, International Mountain Bicycling Association.
- T General Guidelines for In-line Skating Trails, Rollerblade In-line Skate Association.
- T National Park Service Trails Management Handbook, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service: 1983.
- T Motorized Trails: an Introduction to Planning and Development, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of State Parks: 1980.
- T AMC Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance, Robert D. Proudman and Reuben Rajala, Appalachian Mountain Club: 1981.
- T A Guide to Off-Road Motorcycle Trail Design and Construction, American Motorcyclist Association: 1984.
- T Trails for the Twenty-First Century: Planning, Design, and Management Manual for Multi-use Trails, second edition. Charles A. Flink, Kristine Olka, and Robert M. Searns. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. 2001.
- T Soil Stabilizers On Universally Accessible Trails. Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Forest Service. 0023-1202-SDTDC. 2000.
- T Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice. Federal Highway Administration and the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee.

- T Off-Highway Vehicle Trail and Road Grading Equipment. Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Forest Service. 9823-2837-MTDC. 1998.
- T Geosynthetics for Trails in Wet Areas, 2000 edition. Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Forest Service. 0023-2838-MTDC. 2000.
- T Handtools for Trail Work. U.S. Forest Service. 8823-2601-MTDC. 1997.
- T Rails-with-Trails: Design, Management and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Railroads. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in cooperation with the National Park Service. November 2000.
- T Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind: A Handbook for Trail Planners. Trails and Wildlife Task Force, Colorado State Parks and Hellmund Associates. 1998.
- T Trail Traffic Counters, Update. U.S. Forest Service. 9923-2835-MTDC. 1999.
- T Cattle Guards for Off-Highway Vehicle Trails. U.S. Forest Service. 9823-2826-MTDC. 1998.
- T Web-site listing in Appendix B to this plan.

In addition, the following agencies are available to provide assistance in planning for trails at the local level. These agencies and their representatives serve as partners - with experience - in trail planning, development and operation.

- T Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Roadway Design Division, Special Projects Branch, 200 N.E. 21st Street, Oklahoma City, OK. 73105-3204
- T Enhancement Project Coordinator (ODOT), (405) 522-3797
- T Division Administrator (FHWA), Oklahoma Division Office, (405) 605-6011
- T Planning and Development (OTRD), (405) 521-6891, (405) 521-2904, (405) 521-2030
- T U.S. Forest Service, (918) 653-2991

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions of the 2001 Plan

Several conclusions are appropriate based upon the research related to this plan, the public input provided, and the additional information available to the authors. These conclusions provide the basis for actions recommended for the next five years.

1. The conclusions presented in the discussion of the 2001 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) are appropriate to the State Recreational Trails Plan. Several of those conclusions related directly to trails in Oklahoma, two of which follow as principal conclusions for the trails plan.
2. Demand for trails is increasing in Oklahoma as identified by representatives of cities and towns and present trail users. The diversity of trail use is increasing as well, and trail users prefer a separation of motorized and non-motorized use by design of the trails.
3. Trails are an important consideration for community development as alternative transportation routes, green space and linkages, properties offering positive economic benefit, and properties that improve quality of life for residents.
4. Oklahoma is fortunate at this point to have relatively few conflicts between use groups on trails. Such conflicts are occurring in surrounding states and are likely to increase as demand for trails increases.
5. Information regarding Oklahoma trails is difficult to locate and inadequate when found. Recreational trail users must make considerable effort to locate and verify the available information regarding trails.

Recommendations Based on the Conclusions

The following recommendations are based on the conclusions and the literature presented as part of the 2001 Oklahoma Recreational Trails Plan. These recommendations are intended to focus on salient issues that may be achieved within the next five years (2002 to 2006). The authors determined that the most sensible tactic for this recreational trails plan would be to recommend a few actions that were truly

achievable rather than more numerous recommendations that could not be accomplished within the specified time frame.

1. **The Oklahoma Recreational Trails Advisory Board must determine, publicize and follow a vision and mission statement that fits its mandated purpose and statewide commitment.** A review of existing information since the early 1980s showed that the Recreational Trails Advisory Board has been active. However, the Board has not reached agreement on critical aspects of vision and mission, thus making it difficult to determine whether goals are set or met. The Board has provided materials communicating national requirements without specific application to the state of Oklahoma or service to the various sub-units within the state.
2. **The Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program must concentrate on developing a good inventory of existing trails in the state, mapping of that inventory, and communicating that inventory to potential recreation trail users.** As indicated in the text of this plan, locating information on Oklahoma recreational trails was a major task. While the authors are reasonably confident of the inventory provided in this plan, there is also an acknowledgment that the inventory may be incomplete. Developing and communicating an accurate inventory is important to the recreational visitor with potential positive impact on the local and state economies. This inventory should be available in print and electronic media, possibly as a CD-ROM or Web based information source. Print or electronic maps should provide essential information to the potential users including location, length of trail, trail design, trail surface, type of use, trail amenities, location of trail heads, and much more.
3. **The Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program must initiate a statewide education program related to trail development, trail use, and the values of trails to local environments.** City leaders across Oklahoma expressed great interest in trails as a part of their communities. City leaders also believe protection of Oklahoma's air, water and land is critical at present and will become increasingly important. They also believe that conservation education must be provided for residents of the state. Such education must place emphasis on the relationship of human behaviors to the natural environment. There is still a lack of knowledge related to trails, especially in perceptions of impact on adjacent properties, potential economic benefits, and social values gained through trail environments.
4. **The SCORP recommended that Oklahoma must develop programs that encourage and promote outdoor recreation participation at an early age and**

continue an active, outdoor life style into adult years. Such a recommendation is also appropriate for the State Recreational Trails Plan.

Such encouragement of participation in outdoor recreation as a lifestyle choice asserts that outdoor recreation is not just an activity. These programs instill recreational ethics and user responsibilities through education. Oklahomans are well below national averages in participation in trail activities, and thus in need of some of these programs to encourage a change in lifestyle. Several such programs are available in the state (Project WET, Project WILD, Leopold Education Project, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, and others), but young people in Oklahoma have not heard the message nor acted on it. Oklahoma is near the top among states with obese young people, near the top among states in teenage pregnancies, near the top in a number of diseases related to sedentary lifestyles, and among the nation's leaders in littering. In addition, as reported in this document Oklahoma must do a better job of educating its citizens regarding health and safety while participating in outdoor recreation. Oklahoma public schools rarely offer education related to outdoor recreation, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education have devalued such education efforts at the collegiate level. Oklahoma education must include skill development related to outdoor recreation, recreation ethics, and personal responsibilities for recreation environments.

5. **Oklahoma must encourage greater cooperation and communication between the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation related to planning for trails.** Little communication appears to be occurring at present between these two agencies involved in planning for trails. The independence of the agencies is belied by the fact that the funding for trails under the two agencies is produced by the same source - public payment of fuel taxes. Although there are differences in purpose between OTRD and ODOT, trails should be integrated into a consistent, coordinated plan.
6. **Oklahoma must seek to reduce conflicts between competing recreational trail use groups to increase carrying capacity of recreation properties and improve quality of outdoor recreation experiences.** As indicated in the survey of trail users, there is a preference for single-use trails. Such may not be possible with the public recreation estate in Oklahoma. As a result, Oklahoma is experiencing some of the same conflicts in use that have been common in other states for years. Such conflicts have occurred between equestrian trail users and hunters, motorized trail users and non-motorized trail users, boaters and operators of personal water craft, anglers and water-skiers, and other incompatible groups.

Minimizing future conflicts between competing activities is key to increasing satisfaction for all participants.

7. **As concluded in the SCORP, OTRD should seek to re-establish an annual Outdoor Recreation Rally hosted at an Oklahoma State Park. In addition, an Outdoor Recreation Rally may serve as a launching point for an Oklahoma Trails Coalition.** Such outdoor recreation rallies were hosted about a decade ago and offered excellent linkage between recreation providers and the recreating public. These recreation rallies may be better provided through a neutral host, but OTRD's involvement would be crucial to the success of such programs. These recreation rallies would provide communication, focus groups, and planning opportunities between management agencies and the recreation participant with particular emphasis on trails. In addition these recreation rallies could be important factors in reducing conflict between user groups through increasing understanding of various outdoor recreation interests. Oklahoma needs a unified, public advocate for trails. An Oklahoma Trails Coalition could serve that purpose.

Appendix

Appendix A
Survey of Recreational Trail Users

STATE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PLAN

SURVEY OF TRAIL USERS

The following survey is a part of the state supported recreational trails planning process. Oklahoma State University is conducting this study for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department as part of the State Recreational Trails Plan and for inclusion in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Your participation in this survey on behalf of trail users is voluntary, and is extremely important in the planning of recreational trails for the state. Your response represents the interests of trail users throughout the state. Your response will be reported in aggregate form only and will not be personally identified, nor reported in association with any special interest group.

Please complete this survey **by April 30** and place the form in the mail. If you have any questions about this research you may contact University Research Services at Oklahoma State University (Sharon Bacher, 203 Whitehurst, 405-744-5700) or the principal investigator on this project – Lowell Caneday, Ph.D., Leisure Studies, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-5503.

SURVEY OF RECREATIONAL TRAIL USERS

Mailed Surveys 336 responses

1. When you use a trail, do you prefer that the trail be designated for – (check one only)

144	A single type of recreational use? (walking OR riding, not both)
157	Multiple activities separated for motorized or non-motorized use?
18	Multiple activities with motorized and non-motorized use combined?

2. Is your most frequent trail activity – (check one only)

42	Motorized (not including wheelchair)?
108	Non-motorized, but mechanized (for example, bicycle, wheelchair)?
120	Non-motorized (for example, walking, hiking)?
49	Non-motorized, but assisted by animal (for example, horse)?

3. What trail do you use most frequently (name, location) for that activity?

Trail used most
frequently

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4. What are your five most frequent activities when you use a public trail? Rank these activities from 1 (most frequent) to 5 (fifth most frequent).

2.87	4WD driving	3.3	Running, jogging, exercising
2.43	Walking	4.2	In-line skating, roller-blading, roller skating
2.24	Hiking, backpacking	1.91	Horseback riding
3.00	ATV riding	2.00	Commuting to work or school
2.61	Bicycling	3.23	Family outings
2.59	Mountain bicycling	3.00	Motorcycle
3.8	Other: Explain		

5. What level of difficulty do you prefer for your most frequent activity on a trail? – (check one only)

25	Easy trail
197	Moderate trail
48	Hard trail
48	Challenging trail

6. Following are several types of trails based upon design and purpose. Please indicate those trails that you use or would use if they were available – Check all that apply.

Type of trail	Non-motorized Activity	Motorized Activity
Exercise trail with aerobic/work-out stations	138	0
Interpretive trail (educational, environmental)	203	12
Interpretive trail – self-guided with signs	222	30
Interpretive trail – self-guided with brochure	175	6
Short-linkage trails (branches to other trails)	216	36
Interconnected trail network within city/urban area	211	23
Long-distance trail	216	48
Loop trails (circular route from common trailhead)	259	55

7. Please use the following guide to indicate the importance of the following issues.

- A. First, rate the importance of each issue by circling the number that best describes the current importance of that issue.
- B. Second, indicate whether the importance of that issue has increased, decreased, or remained the same in the past ten years.
- C. Third, indicate whether the importance of that issue will most likely increase, decrease, or remain the same over the next five years.

Issue	A. Current Importance			B. Change in Importance over the past decade			C. Future Importance		
	Not Important	Undecided	Very Important	Decrease	Same	Increase	Decrease	Same	Increase
Lack of trail etiquette or ethics	24	36	240	12	150	144	6	108	198
Too much litter or trash along trails	12	6	288	30	108	168	24	90	198
Erosion or deterioration of trail	6	24	270	18	132	156	0	132	174
Lack of support amenities along trail	126	126	48	12	246	48	0	210	90
Too many different users on trail	72	108	126	18	144	138	6	114	186
Conflict in type of use on trail	42	54	216	6	138	150	6	120	174
Lack of trails close to home	42	30	228	42	108	162	24	96	192
Security at the trailhead	36	102	162	6	180	114	18	108	180
Accessible or barrier-free trails	54	114	138	12	168	108	18	162	126
Inadequate information on trails	48	114	138	18	186	102	12	144	150
Lack of directional signs to trails	60	66	186	18	186	102	18	156	138
Lack of funding for trails	0	12	288	18	60	222	12	54	234
Lack of maintenance on trails	6	30	264	18	78	198	24	60	228

8. From your perspective, what is the most important issue to be addressed regarding recreational trails in the state of Oklahoma?
9. Please rank the top five trail management needs from your perspective using 1 for the most important need, 2 for the next most important, and so on to 5 for the fifth most important need.

Rank	Management need
3.17	Keep trails clean of litter and trash
2.57	Maintain the existing trails
3.30	Mitigate or repair damage to existing trails
3.07	Enforce rules and regulations on established trails
3.39	Renovate deteriorated trails
3.00	Provide education and safety information for trail users
3.25	Provide trail information, maps, etc.
4.00	Develop support facilities along trails
3.25	Provide law enforcement
2.84	Acquire land for trail access
2.45	Acquire land for new trails
2.67	Develop new trails
4.38	Provide landscaping along trails
3.63	Develop support facilities at trail heads

10. Please indicate the trail support facilities that you presently use or would use, if available, during your trail visits. (Check all that apply)

Presently Use	Would Use	Trail support facility
276	150	Trash cans/dumpsters
150	180	Drinking water
192	180	Rest rooms
246	150	Parking lot, parking space
114	120	Picnic facility
90	114	Shade structure
186	114	Trailhead/staging area
228	138	Trail signs
84	138	Interpretive or educational materials
66	150	Shelters

11. Please indicate your reasons for using a trail for your most frequent recreation activity on a trail. Check all that apply.

282	Observe the scenic beauty
222	Be away from crowds
240	Improve physical health
210	Reduce/release built up tensions
258	Be with others who enjoy the same things I do
294	Enjoy nature
210	Experience adventure/excitement
132	Do things on my own
156	Develop skills and abilities
162	Challenge or sport
78	Test equipment
90	Experience self-reliance

12. Do you believe that your community needs more trails?

282 Yes 6 No 24 Undecided

13. Would you use your car less if you had more trails near your neighborhood?

180 Yes 66 No 66 Uncertain

14. When making vacation plans, are areas with trails more attractive to you than those without trails?

300 Yes 0 No 12 Uncertain

15. Do you favor the establishment of a national network of trails through the United States, based on rail-trails, so that people could walk, ride, or bicycle around the country?

270 Yes 0 No 42 Undecided

16. Do you believe that spending money on building and maintaining trails is a legitimate use of government funds?

300 Yes 0 No 12 Undecided

17. If you answered "yes" to question 16 what level of government should manage these funds?

0 Federal government 48 State government 66 Local government
198 Multiple levels

18. Would you be willing to pay more for a home near a trail than for a home without access to a local trail?

276 Yes 30 No 6 Undecided

The following items help us to understand more about the demographics of trail users in Oklahoma. Your responses to these items will be reported in aggregate form only and cannot be personally identified.

19. Sex of respondent.

222 Male

90 Female

20. What is your age?

41.4 Age Range 21 to 78, Median = 44.5

21. What best describes your race?

312 White

0 Black

0 American Indian or Alaskan Native

0 Asian or Pacific Islander

22. What is your ethnic origin?

0 Hispanic

306 Non-Hispanic

23. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

0 Some high school

60 Some college

12 Graduate degree

30 High school graduate

162 College graduate

48 Post-graduate

Please share any other comments you may have related to trails and planning for trails in Oklahoma. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

STATE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PLAN

SURVEY OF TRAIL USERS

The following survey is a part of the state supported recreational trails planning process. Oklahoma State University is conducting this study for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department as part of the State Recreational Trails Plan and for inclusion in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Your participation in this survey on behalf of trail users is voluntary, and is extremely important in the planning of recreational trails for the state. Your response represents the interests of trail users throughout the state. Your response will be reported in aggregate form only and will not be personally identified, nor reported in association with any special interest group.

Please complete this survey **by April 30** and place the form in the mail. If you have any questions about this research you may contact University Research Services at Oklahoma State University (Sharon Bacher, 203 Whitehurst, 405-744-5700) or the principal investigator on this project – Lowell Caneday, Ph.D., Leisure Studies, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-5503.

SURVEY OF RECREATIONAL TRAIL USERS

382 responses

1. When you use a trail, do you prefer that the trail be designated for – (check one only)

157	A single type of recreational use? (walking OR riding, not both)
179	Multiple activities separated for motorized or non-motorized use?
25	Multiple activities with motorized and non-motorized use combined?

2. Is your most frequent trail activity – (check one only)

62	Motorized (not including wheelchair)?
130	Non-motorized, but mechanized (for example, bicycle, wheelchair)?
123	Non-motorized (for example, walking, hiking)?
49	Non-motorized, but assisted by animal (for example, horse)?

3. What trail do you use most frequently (name, location) for that activity?

Trail used most
frequently

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4. What are your five most frequent activities when you use a public trail? Rank these activities from 1 (most frequent) to 5 (fifth most frequent).

3.02	4WD driving	3.39	Running, jogging, exercising
2.52	Walking	4.11	In-line skating, roller-blading, roller skating
2.42	Hiking, backpacking	2.00	Horseback riding
2.62	ATV riding	2.26	Commuting to work or school
2.53	Bicycling	3.28	Family outings
2.43	Mountain bicycling	2.68	Motorcycle
3.77	Other: Explain		

5. What level of difficulty do you prefer for your most frequent activity on a trail? – (check one only)

25	Easy trail
211	Moderate trail
56	Hard trail
72	Challenging trail

6. Following are several types of trails based upon design and purpose. Please indicate those trails that you use or would use if they were available – Check all that apply.

Type of trail	Non-motorized Activity	Motorized Activity
Exercise trail with aerobic/work-out stations	147	3
Interpretive trail (educational, environmental)	217	16
Interpretive trail – self-guided with signs	239	38
Interpretive trail – self-guided with brochure	185	10
Short-linkage trails (branches to other trails)	241	52
Interconnected trail network within city/urban area	235	31
Long-distance trail	240	68
Loop trails (circular route from common trailhead)	284	74

7. Please use the following guide to indicate the importance of the following issues.

- A. First, rate the importance of each issue by circling the number that best describes the current importance of that issue.
- B. Second, indicate whether the importance of that issue has increased, decreased, or remained the same in the past ten years.
- C. Third, indicate whether the importance of that issue will most likely increase, decrease, or remain the same over the next five years.

Issue	A. Current Importance			B. Change in Importance over the past decade			C. Future Importance		
	Not Important	Undecided	Very Important	Decrease	Same	Increase	Decrease	Same	Increase
Lack of trail etiquette or ethics	25	38	281	17	165	166	6	118	227
Too much litter or trash along trails	13	12	325	31	127	189	26	100	226
Erosion or deterioration of trail	7	32	306	20	152	177	1	142	203
Lack of support amenities along trail	148	142	55	17	279	52	4	237	99
Too many different users on trail	90	124	137	24	170	148	10	132	204
Conflict in type of use on trail	49	67	240	13	157	165	10	136	194
Lack of trails close to home	45	36	264	43	127	183	25	107	219
Security at the trailhead	47	112	186	6	206	129	18	125	201
Accessible or barrier-free trails	62	127	162	13	194	121	21	180	144
Inadequate information on trails	57	125	163	21	211	114	14	165	165
Lack of directional signs to trails	66	77	213	21	207	119	18	174	158
Lack of funding for trails	1	13	331	20	71	251	12	60	267
Lack of maintenance on trails	8	38	299	21	93	222	24	69	258

8. From your perspective, what is the most important issue to be addressed regarding recreational trails in the state of Oklahoma?
9. Please rank the top five trail management needs from your perspective using 1 for the most important need, 2 for the next most important, and so on to 5 for the fifth most important need.

Rank	Management need
3.10	Keep trails clean of litter and trash
2.57	Maintain the existing trails
3.27	Mitigate or repair damage to existing trails
3.10	Enforce rules and regulations on established trails
3.39	Renovate deteriorated trails
3.04	Provide education and safety information for trail users
3.32	Provide trail information, maps, etc.
3.98	Develop support facilities along trails
3.38	Provide law enforcement
2.76	Acquire land for trail access
2.44	Acquire land for new trails
2.66	Develop new trails
4.39	Provide landscaping along trails
3.61	Develop support facilities at trail heads

10. Please indicate the trail support facilities that you presently use or would use, if available, during your trail visits. (Check all that apply)

Presently Use	Would Use	Trail support facility
314	171	Trash cans/dumpsters
164	210	Drinking water
220	208	Rest rooms
284	174	Parking lot, parking space
131	133	Picnic facility
99	132	Shade structure
218	134	Trailhead/staging area
259	165	Trail signs
88	157	Interpretive or educational materials
73	171	Shelters

11. Please indicate your reasons for using a trail for your most frequent recreation activity on a trail. Check all that apply.

313	Observe the scenic beauty
245	Be away from crowds
282	Improve physical health
245	Reduce/release built up tensions
295	Be with others who enjoy the same things I do
332	Enjoy nature
245	Experience adventure/excitement
152	Do things on my own
189	Develop skills and abilities
201	Challenge or sport
92	Test equipment
108	Experience self-reliance

12. Do you believe that your community needs more trails?

324 Yes 7 No 26 Undecided

13. Would you use your car less if you had more trails near your neighborhood?

214 Yes 74 No 69 Uncertain

14. When making vacation plans, are areas with trails more attractive to you than those without trails?

342 Yes 0 No 14 Uncertain

15. Do you favor the establishment of a national network of trails through the United States, based on rail-trails, so that people could walk, ride, or bicycle around the country?

309 Yes 2 No 46 Undecided

16. Do you believe that spending money on building and maintaining trails is a legitimate use of government funds?

344 Yes 0 No 13 Undecided

17. If you answered "yes" to question 16 what level of government should manage these funds?

2 Federal government 50 State government 66 Local government
240 Multiple levels

18. Would you be willing to pay more for a home near a trail than for a home without access to a local trail?

310 Yes 34 No 13 Undecided

The following items help us to understand more about the demographics of trail users in Oklahoma. Your responses to these items will be reported in aggregate form only and cannot be personally identified.

19. Sex of respondent.

261 Male

96 Female

20. What is your age?

41.4 Age Range 21 to 78, Median = 44.5

21. What best describes your race?

354 White

0 Black

1 American Indian or Alaskan Native

0 Asian or Pacific Islander

22. What is your ethnic origin?

1 Hispanic

347 Non-Hispanic

23. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

0 Some high school

73 Some college

18 Graduate degree

35 High school graduate

179 College graduate

52 Post-graduate

Please share any other comments you may have related to trails and planning for trails in Oklahoma. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

TRAILS COMMENTS

Question #3:

- Various – Snake Pit, St. Valentines, 3-Stage Clayton, OK
- Camp Wah-Shah-She near Bartlesville, OK; Osage Hills State Park Pawhuska, OK
- Horse Haven Ranch, Talihina, OK
- Camp Gruber ORV Park, Muskogee, OK
- Clear Bay trail, Lake Thunderbird State Park
- Katy trail Tulsa to Sand Springs
- Cedar Lake
- Lake Draper Mt. Bike Park
- Cedar Lake Equestrian Camp, Heavener, OK
- Draper Lake Riding Complex
- 3 Stage, Upper & Lower Power Line, Bus Line, Clayton, OK. The enclosed video was . . . of the Clayton area. After watching the tape you'll have an idea of the exposure and possible tourism income that off road vehicle areas will bring to our state. Thank you
- Ozark Highland Ouchita Trail
- Lake Hefner Trail - OKC
- Tulsa, OK, Riverside 21st to 51st
- Bell Cow, Chandler, OK
- Skiatook Lake
- Tinker AFB – Greenway Trail
- Lake Carl Blackwell
- Lake Hefner Trails - OKC
- Arcadia Lake Trails
- Trails in Colorado
- Ouachita Trail between Talihina State Park & Queen Wilhelmina State Park, AR
- Wichita Mountains (numerous)
- Bell Cow Lake Trails, Chandler, OK
- Clear Bay, Lake Thunderbird, MTB NuDraper, Lake Draper, MTB
- Ozark Highland, AR, Ouachita, OK and AR, Buffalo River, AR, River Parks, OK, Katy Trail, OK
- Norman Park Trails
- No favorite trail exists.
- River Parks Trail – Tulsa, Katy Trail – Tulsa to Sand Springs
- Ozark Highlands Trail NW Arkansas
- Greenleaf Lake Trail
- Eagle Roost Nature Trail, Salt Plains NWR – Jet, OK (for bird watching)
- Draper Lake Mountain Bike Park
- Hefner Trail, around Lake Hefner
- Lake Hefner Trails, OKC

Question #3 – Continued:

- Beech Creek Scenic & Botanical Area, Ouachita Nat. Forest, S.E. Okla. 29 mi. Trail system 7500 acres: Beech Creek Trail, Turkey-Snout Trail, Walnut Mt. Trail. No “wheels” or hooves allowed.
- Lake Elk City Trails
- Draper Lake OHV Area in OKC
- Lake Thunderbird Trails, Norman
- Lake Hefner Trail in OKC
- Greenleaf State Park – only one trail
- Greenleaf State Park, Beavers Bend State Park, City of Blackwell Park Trails
- Bell Cow Lake, Chandler, OK
- Draper Lake Mt. Bike Park
- Hefner trails
- New Draper, OKC; Lake Draper, Clear Bay, Norman, Lake Thunderbird (about equally).
- Lake Carl Blackwell Equestrian
- Dog Run Hollow – Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge
- Clear Bay Lake Thunderbird Norman, “NuDraper” MTB Park & Lake Draper, OKC
- Ouachita Trail – S.E. Oklahoma

Question #4:

- Other – exploring for wildflowers identification.
- Other – trail maintenance.
- Other – wildlife viewing.
- Other – pushing stroller.
- Other – birding, nature photography, emotional release.
- Other – hiking with llamas to carry packs (limited to walking distance)

Question #6:

- Would use Interconnected trail network within city/urban area for non-motorized activity with certain restrictions.

Question #7:

- Used “undecided” as equivalent to “moderately important” since you didn’t

Question #8:

- Stopping trail closures.
- Litter & land management.
- Allowing for the creation of recreational trails. Oklahoma has thousands of acres of unused government owned land and hundreds of people that would be willing to help create, maintain, and administer trails, especially if they are trails that meet those people’s preferred recreational use. Can we not reasonably expect the primary users or beneficiaries of a trail to create & maintain that trail? Give a

group of people a sense of “ownership” over a trail or a group of trails and you’ll be surprised at the pride they take in it!!

- Keeping present trails open and acquiring new trails.
- Rails to trails program – bring back this issue for public input and vote.
- Continued increase in number & convenience of use.
- Funding for maintenance.
- The general public and the state need to realize that recreational trails are a positive thing that benefits the health and well being of its users and that more land and money should be made available for use.
- Since autumn is the very best riding season, I would like to see more equestrian trails opened in safe areas. Deer season greatly endangers our horse riding activities and severely limits the time the trails are available for our use during our mild weather seasons.
- I would say that getting people to work together is very important.
- To work with established four wheel drive clubs to become aware of what type of recreation activities may be developed. And by working with such clubs tap into their knowledge and energy to bring four wheel drive clubs from other states to enjoy the adventures of off roading in Oklahoma.
- Various groups to take care of different segments of trails.
- P.R.
- Financing.
- Good trail markers.
- Safety to public.
- Lack of trails.
- The ability to be used by horses.
- We need more trails and easy access to info on where they are.
- The number of quality trails that are long enough for good bike rides and hikes.
- Additional trails and adequate management.
- User conflict between motorized and non-motorized users.
- Safety, Information, Maps, Maintenance (erosion control & safety)
- The upgrading and maintenance of existing trails. It is usually left up to trail users and trail clubs
- More trails needed, but I think from a MTB or road cycling perspective, the state is doing a good job.
- Need more for bicycling and hiking.
- The Oklahoma Trails issue needs a higher priority to get more state funding.
- Lack of trails in number, geographic, diversity and diversity of use.
- We need more trails. Multi-use in metro areas. Long distance in rural or wilderness areas suitable for backpacking.
- Funding. Make trails specific for use – they can’t be all things to all people.
- Funding!
- Funding.
- The need for individuals getting involved to maintain and create new trails, and teaching the younger generations proper trail etiquette.
- Multi-trail use etiquette.

- The funding for building and continued maintenance of all trails which must include all costs including labor.
- It seems we need to have more advertising on the existing trails we have in Okla.
- Not enough trails open to motorized usage (ATV & trailbike use). Need to expand “rails to trails” to include ATV & motorcycle.
- Trail usage – motorized vs. non-motorized.
- Keeping idiots from getting hurt or lost.
- Locating trails around state for easier access.
- Lots of trails.
- Maintain existing trails with adequate access. Security at the trail heads and the trail. Etiquette for trail and non-trail users: including locals with traffic control.
- Keeping trails open and functional with access for biking.
- Amenities at beginning or end of trail.
- Separate walking & hiking only trails from other use trails such as horse or bike trails which wear down the trails much faster & horse droppings make walking on the trails unpleasant.
- Funding for more trail building and maintenance. The lack of offroad (MTB) bicycle trails in state parks and public lands.
- We need to develop backpacking loop trails that are between 8 and 15 miles in length to provide families & individuals with one car an “easy logistics” trip for a weekend. We should really begin to segregate trails between motorized (including Mt. Bicycles) and non-motorized use on these trails.

Question #9:

- All of these should be a #1.

Question #10:

- Bring your own water, unless in a campground; plant trees instead of shade structure; why not dress for the weather?

Question #14:

- Yes, in certain areas.

Other comments:

- I have repeatedly tried to work with governmental agencies to get existing trails maintained and to create new trails. I have even volunteered my own time and equipment to do the work but have repeatedly been met with resistance for one reason or another. For example, my property adjoins Hopewell Park in Muskogee which previously was a park operated by the US Army Corp of Engineers. The park, due to budget cuts has been abandoned and the only amenity that is being used now is the boat ramp. Why the 100+ acres surrounding this boat ramp is going unused is beyond me. A better question is “why are the thousands of acres that the Corp of Engineers owns

along the Arkansas river waterway going unused?" I would be happy to try to develop some type of trail system on some of this land.

- Private lands need eligibility for funding.
- I feel that the trail systems we use most, Cedar Lake Equestrian Camp & Robbers Cave are well maintained except for horse-tethering areas which erode badly & are usually muddy. This problem is being addressed at Cedar Lake with experimental soils. Trails are not marked well at Robbers Cave and many are so rocky that they actually are dangerous for horses. Horseback riding has increased very dramatically in the last few years and the campgrounds are very crowded during nice weather. Being able to find a campsite available has become a real concern since many out-of-state groups arrive to stay for a week or two and usually consist of a dozen or more rigs. Some smaller equestrian camps are available, but only have an insufficient amount of trails, not nearly enough trails to entertain riders for a week of camping! All riders we currently are acquainted with, or meet are always looking for new places to camp & ride. Also, trails are becoming very littered. I think there should be strong warning signs and/or brochures to encourage people to not litter. We do not use Walnut Creek camp on Lake Keystone because of the many dangerous creek crossings. Many areas we've ridden are frustrating because of the lack of signs on trails and lack of maps.
- I would like to see some feedback on the results of this survey. Thanks for the survey! P.S. If you need anymore information from me or members of our organization just email me and I'll make sure that our group, (Oklahoma Dirt Riders) helps in every way that we can.
- Our four wheel drive club has monthly meetings on the 3rd Tuesdays at 1900. The meetings are at different restaurants within the OKC metro area. I'd like to invite any of the members involved in the Research Service Department to attend. Our meetings are informal and share a lot of information about upcoming events & trips. We also make one or more off road trips during each month. Again for first hand knowledge & relaxation filling up a seat on one of our rigs is open to your department. If you'd like more information please contact our Sec/Treasurer.
- See attached sheet. Shared Comments – I, myself, am a school teacher, and having the summers off meant I had lots of time for summer recreation. While I enjoy day-hiking into many areas, in '84 I started backpacking and enjoy a 4 to 6 day trip, usually setting up a base camp then day hiking out from there. My favorite areas include the Sawtooth Range in Idaho, The Grand Tetons in Wyoming, and the Sandy Creek entrance of the Wind River Range, again in Wyoming. When I am out there, even when with a group, I look for the peace and solitude the area offers. As a member of a group, we have several groups that go to maintain this or that section of trail. One area we maintain is a 7 mile section of the Ozark Highland Trail, and have for the last 4 or 5 years. This usually involves a spring and fall outing, but so far this spring we have had three outings, because of the fallen trees from the ice storms they experienced over there this last winter. One of our biggest successes is the Beech Creek Botanical Area, in southeast Oklahoma. The Forest Service told

us several years ago that if we would build and maintain 24 miles of trails in a 9000 acre basin, they would not clear-cut and tree farm the area. They gave us five years, we completed it in three. Since the completion, we have had two fall and two spring outings for maintenance. I have not had the opportunity to join this group, but will in the future. I remember the first year we did a cleanup trip on the Illinois River, with 10 or 12 canoes, two people per canoe. The sponsoring outfitter said we would not find that much, in 7 miles. He was completely stunned when we came back with a mountain of trash, enough trash to make three pickup loads with sideboards, piled high. For the past many years, this has been a very popular, usually twice a year, outing. In Tulsa, where the community trails have been established, I know our group has been using them. In the future, I expect we will adopt one or two segments for maintenance and cleanup. What we have noticed as a general trend, if we keep them clean, later trips find less and less trash.

- Been involved with trail effort in OKC.
- Because of ozone alerts, I believe we should have a network of trails for people to use bicycles on instead of driving.
- There are many areas that have great potential for good trails throughout Oklahoma. I hope that the powers that be realize that giving Okies a place to good and experience Oklahoma will result in a greater pride in our state. Good Ridin' & Hikin' Thanks! P.S. Go Pokes
- Legislation is needed to establish rail trails. Small communities should be presented with the benefit of rail trails. I tire of traveling to Kansas and Missouri for rail trail weekends. I'd like to travel a long rail trail in Oklahoma, and visit and stay in the small towns along the way.
- I am the current owner of a bicycle shop in Norman. The state park at Clear Bay has done a great job with the local cycling clubs to renovate the MTB trails, there.
- Question 7 was confusing. I bicycle and backpack. Some question I would answer one way for bicycling and another way for backpacking. The bottom line is that we need more trails of all types.
- The American Discovery Trail, The longest trail in this country, traverses various terrain from mountain wilderness to big city along its route from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast. The trail passes north of Oklahoma thru Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri, and is designed to allow people to discover this wonderfully diverse melting pot of the world we call America. Lets give them the opportunity to discover Oklahoma. The home of the Indian, Cowboy, Farmer, Industrialist, Researcher, Education, and Recreation. To name a few, with a loop off the A.D.T. from somewhere in Kansas, through Oklahoma to join the Ozark Highlands Trail in Arkansas which joins the Ozark Trail in Missouri and back to the A.D.T. at St. Louis. Maybe it would be possible with a combination of rails to trails, rivers, roads and state parks. It would be a wonderful addition to a great state.
- Multi-use trails require constant maintenance whereas single-use trails require much less maintenance. Most bikers, including me will use a multi-purpose trail because of the ruts caused by wheels & hooves. Especially the trails used

by horses. Volunteerism does not work all the time when it comes to maintaining most trails. Commitment is a prime problem & very hard to deal with. – And certain other problems. Call me.

- More horseback trails, more offroad veh. Areas, question #15 is a great goal.
- More trails to utilize.
- I have spent many hours backpacking & hiking trail in Colo., Ark., N.M., & Okla. And I think they are a wonderful benefit. The only vandalism or burglary at a trailhead was in Colo. There should be hiking only trails – no bikes or horses – too much damage. I also have been active in trail building and maintenance in the Ouachita National Forest.

WEB TRAILS COMMENTS

Original Question #3 (#4 on Web format):

- Bluff Creek Mountain Bike trail – NW OKC/NuDraper – SE OKC
- Bluff Cree, Nudraper, Clearbay
- Arcadia
- Arcadia
- Draper
- NuDraper; Lake Draper; and Roman Nose at Watonga
- Bluff Creek; Lake Hefner; Draper
- Draper Trail in OKC
- Arcadia Lake - Edmond
- Lake Draper
- NuDraper
- Bluff Creek
- Draper
- NuDraper
- Bluff Creek Trail
- Turkey Mountain
- Turkey Mountain trails; Lake McMurtry
- NuDraper
- Lake Hefner
- Lake Stanley Draper
- Lake Stanley Draper
- Lake Stanley Draper
- Lake Stanley Draper
- Stanley Draper Lake
- Mill Creek, AR
- NuDraper
- Euduro trail – Draper Lake
- Draper Lake
- Draper Lake
- Draper Lake
- Draper Lake – points 9 & 10
- Draper Trails
- Draper Lake
- Lake Stanley Draper
- Lake Arcadia - Edmond
- Lake Draper Recreation Area Trails
- Lake Murray State Park
- Draper Lake riding trails
- Lake Hefner Trails (OKC) and Lake Draper Mountain Bike trails (OKC)
- Beavers Bend State Park
- Lake Draper (OKC)

Original Question #3 (#4 on Web format): - Continued:

- Lake Draper ORV trails
- Lake Murray

Question #8:

- Availability
- Keeping new riders riding in the mud and not letting the trail heal.
- Importance of trails; developing trails in a timely manner; funding trails project.
- Consider safety when crossing roads. Lake Hefner trails on the south side are a joke.
- Safety.
- Keeping open and maintenance.
- Lack of.
- Lack of.
- Leave no trace. Keep trails maintained and litter free.
- There are not enough of them.
- Not enough trails and dangerous of dual use trails.
- Mountain bike access and maintenance.
- For off-road trails – “the lack of”; for paved trails – “traffic crossings”.
- Access for mountain biking and more new trails and maintenance of trails.
- 4x4 trails are non-existent; average 4x4 drivers abuse environment; above abuse causes closure not enforcement; mountain bikes are great!
- Maintenance
- Lack of multi-use trails.
- Addition of new trails with signs/markers in new areas.
- Lack of “rails to trails” and “rails with trails”
- Lack of funding for building, maintaining quality trails such as exist at Greenleaf, Lake Murry, and Roman Nose State Parks.
- Need more access to trail sin state and national forests. Also “rails to trails” program should be expanded to include motorized (ATV & motorcycles (trailbikes).
- Keeping them open to off-road motorized vehicles.
- Whack-o environmentalists trying to close all of them.
- Re-open closed trail sin SE Oklahoma.
- We need more trails.
- Keeping public lands open to the public.
- Protecting, preserving, & maintaining.
- Getting more motorized ATV’s and motorcycle trails.
- We need more trails developed. Both single and multi use trails, for as trail use increases there will be less environmental impact on the trails. Volunteers help to maintain these trails must be encouraged. If trail systems shrink and use grows the environmental impact could be overwhelming regardless of increased volunteer maintenance.

- Security of trails to guard against abuse, vandalism, crime, etc.

Question #8 – Continued:

- Education on trail maintenance and how to do it in a manner to hurt the environment as little as possible.
- Adding more trails of any type, in urban areas.
- Erosion & maintenance.
- Free access; more trails.
- Multiple use.
- We need more motorized trail areas in this state. Plus, it helps the local economy.
- Not to have the government mandate laws which will prohibit off road vehicles.
- Maintenance and construction of new trails. Also build more “rail to trails” and “rails with trails” projects.
- Lack of statewide trail system; like “rails to trails” programs in other states.
- Additional trails and maintenance.
- Multi-use of trails provides more users to help maintain existing trails and access for current non-users of trails.
- The most important issue is the closure of public land for recreational use. Through education I believe all types of activities can be supported on public land.

Other comments:

- You will never build the perfect trail and will never make everyone happy.
- An interconnected trail system that has no traffic crossings (like those in Ft. Collins, CO) would be beneficial to pedestrians and motorists alike.
- I live in Mustang. We need trails on this side of town. Maybe near the wildlife center near Lake Overhauser. Trails for mountain bikes or maybe along the Canadian river somewhere in the Mustang/Yukon area.
- Areas like Lake Draper provide dedicated areas for mountain biking, fishing, boating, horse back riding and a large area dedicated to motorcycles. For some reason it is ok to tear around in a motorcycle spewing 2 cycle oil exhaust, extreme noise pollution, massive erosion and high speeds. It is not legal for my family to climb the modest hills and sandstone rocks at 1 ½ mph in low range 4x4 in our jeep. 4 wheeling is not about ripping the earth up after a rain, those who do need a huge fine and community service. We need equal access within legal bounds.
(Signature).
- Question #7 of this survey was very confusing.
- Oklahoma needs to develop more multi-use (non-motorized) trails and do a better job of regulating and maintaining the ones that exist.

Other comments – Continued:

- There are many opportunities of trail users throughout the state. Although there are many state park managers who welcome mountain bikers the use of mountain bike specific trails or multi-use off road-unpaved trails, there seems to be a common theme. A lack of support to fund construction and maintenance of the trails. Volunteers can only do so much and in another sense, many state park managers are not properly educated when it comes to mountainbikers, hikers, and equestrian users utilizing the same trails/areas and therefore unfairly prohibit the use of mountain bikes. These areas would only benefit from opening of these trails areas to mountain bikes. Isn't tourism/recreation Oklahoma's newest cash crop? If so, let's do it right!
- What does ethnic origin have to do with trail access? (Signature)
- I currently maintain 5 miles of motorized trail at Lake Stanley Draper. I have attended the National Trail Symposiums - 1999 Oklahoma City Workshop, 2000 Robbers Cave. Feel free to contact me for more information.
- As you know the local Bike Clubs are very instrumental in the establishing/maintaining (work days) of the trails, locally & statewide with assistance from IMBA & state agencies. Us bikers appreciate the outside help. Awareness of trails is a big factor regarding response in maintaining. I think with cycling gaining popularity, this awareness is growing. Cycling is addictive, it has everything, speed, grace, skill, challenge, socializing, toned legs, cool equipment, moral support for fellow riders, physical/mental workout, stress relief. Is this a great sport or what? I am currently a member of OEF, BLN & Norba. (0 age barriers in cycling). Appreciate the survey opportunity. R.A.
- I think Oklahoma should look at a successful motorized vehicle park such as Little Sahara. These parks can provide a real economic boost to an area. They would be especially successful in Southwestern Oklahoma because Texans could use the trails. Most motorized vehicle users are willing to pay a nominal daily fee to use a trail network. These fees could be used to pay for trail maintenance and employee salaries.
- Most of the questions appear to be oriented towards walking trails inside towns. We need more trails, especially motorized trails. I do not know who this survey went to or how it was distributed, but I do not believe it is getting to the trail users. Therefore, I do not feel it will represent the views of the entire trail user community.

Other comments – Continued:

- I use off road trails for motorcycling and mountain biking. Are you aware of any studies being conducted in Texas? I feel the money driven

environmentalist groups are protecting singular use of public land or closure entirely. I pay annual dues to the American Motorcyclist Association to fund a voice in Congress to protect my right to use public land. Thanks.