



Sunflower Foundation

*Paving the Way: From
Blazing Trails to
Building Community*



Trail Blazer Learning Series

Supports communities that are exploring the creation of their first public trail. Through a structured virtual learning series and early planning funds, it strengthens local leadership, fosters community engagement, and lays the groundwork for a sustainable, well-designed trail.



Session 6: After Your Trail is Built

- Making the most of trails in your community
 - Trail maintenance — an up close and personal view
 - How will you know if your trail vision is happening?
 - Open discussion
- **Put your questions in the chat — what's on your mind as we wrap up this learning series?**
 - Anything you want to make sure we talk about today?
 - Anything you want a deeper dive into (maybe a webinar this fall?)



Joining us today



Michele Archie,
Harbinger
Consultancy



Kelli Mark,
Sunflower
Foundation



Noah Flores,
Parks Director,
City of Lindsborg



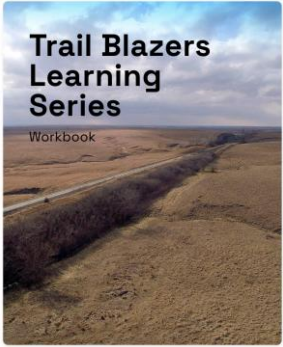
Mike Scanlon,
Kansas Trails Inc.



Dr. Jeff Dorsett,
Osawatomie



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Workbooks

Finish up (as much as you're going to) and download your workbooks by October 1!

Session 6: After Your Trail Is Built

Do you have a trail opening celebration or other events planned for your trail (or your trail site, if the trail is not finished)? How could you use events to build excitement about your trail?

What are your plans or your thinking about maintaining your trail?



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Making the most of trails in your community



- Celebrations
- Events
- Openings
- Engaging trail users and could-be trail users

And celebrate online! Benton Two Angels Trail is a rockstar on Facebook.



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Dr. Jeff Dorsett — Osawatomie's trail ambassador



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TRAIL BLAZERS • SEPTEMBER 15



Be Your Trail's Ambassador

How events turn a trail into a trail culture

Jeff Dorsett, Trail Ambassador — Osawatomie, Kansas



Jeff Dorsett outside the Osawatomie "Mile Zero" mural

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

A Trail Is a Living, Breathing Thing

- A trail doesn't build its own culture — someone has to.
- Events turn pavement and gravel into something a community rallies around.
- They get people outside, build local pride, and put a face on the trail.
- An ambassador is how a trail's impact gets multiplied — one relationship, one event at a time.



Osawatomie Pride, trailside

SEEN AT THE TRAILHEAD

A Trailhead With Personality

Little touches that make a trail feel like somebody's proud of it



Mile Zero — the Flint Hills Trail's Osawatomie start



"Got ride?" — a trailside touch nobody asked for and everybody loves

CASE STUDY

Bikes, BBQ & John Brown

One Osawatomie ride weekend, four reasons to show up



Ride Options

Multiple distances so every skill level has a reason to register



The BBQ

Riders finish and stay — food turns a ride into a gathering



History Tie-In

John Brown and Osawatomie's story root the event in place



Redneck Olympics

Pure, unexpected fun that gets talked about all year

bikesignup.com/Race/KS/Osawatomie/BikesBBQandJohnBrown

Slow & Say Hello

Adapted from RFTA (Colorado), Safe Trails Marin (California), and Carson Valley Trails (Nevada)



Slow Down

Give others space. Take it easy.



Say Hello

Eye contact and a wave coordinate a safe pass.



Show Up

Be visible and predictable.



Tune In

Know the route. Skip the earbuds.



Stay in Control

Keep yourself — and your dog — on the path.



Leave No Trace

Pack it out, every time, no exceptions.



MULTIPLY YOUR TRAIL'S IMPACT

Your trail already has a story.

Someone just has to tell it.

Take this home: what's your community's own
Bikes, BBQ & John Brown?





A CONVERSATION ON TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

Keeping Lindsborg's Trails in Good Shape

A Q&A with Noah Flores

Parks Director, City of Lindsborg, Kansas





TRAIL SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Can you give us an overview of Lindsborg's trail system and your role as Parks Director in maintaining it?

02

How does your community approach trail maintenance — do you have a regular schedule, or is it more responsive to conditions and reports?



MAINTENANCE APPROACH



SETTING PRIORITIES

When maintenance needs pile up, how do you prioritize what gets addressed first?

04

How do you fund ongoing trail maintenance — is it built into the city budget, grant-supported, volunteer-driven, or a mix?



FUNDING THE WORK



LESSONS LEARNED

What's a lesson you've learned the hard way when it comes to keeping trails in good shape?

06

When you're prepping a trail for an event, what does that process look like — and what's your policy on signage and banners? Are organizers allowed to put them up, and if so, where are they permitted along the trail?



EVENT PREP & SIGNAGE



ADVICE FOR OTHERS

If another small Kansas community wanted to build a maintenance program like yours from scratch, what's the first thing you'd tell them to do?



Thank You

Noah Flores, Parks Director — City of Lindsborg, Kansas



How can you know if your vision is happening?

That depends on your vision. 😄

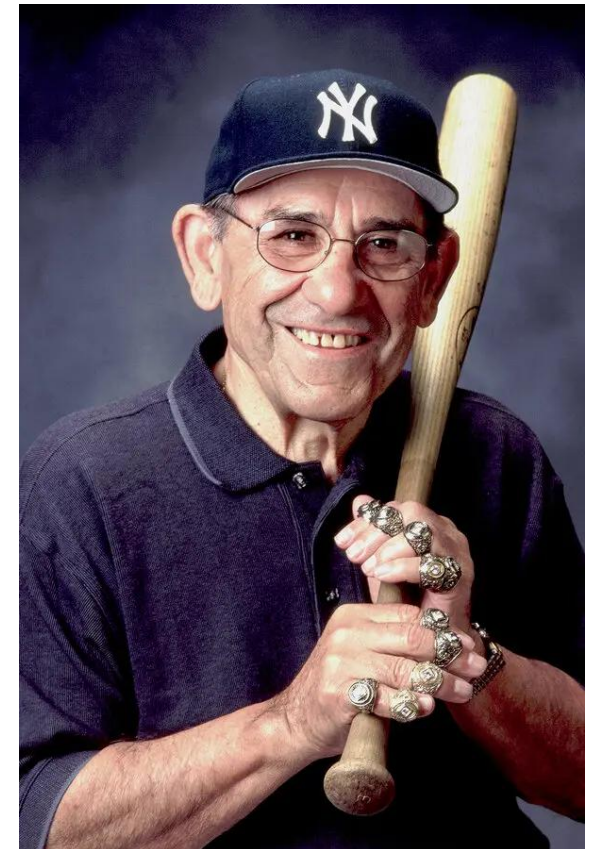
Go back to who you want to use your trail. How would you know if that's happening? Or if something else is happening in addition or instead?

What other things do you want to keep track of? What kinds of stories do you want to be able to tell — whether it's to your board, your community, your partners, your funders, or anyone else?

You can observe a lot just by watching

- Pay attention when you're out on the trail — and enlist others to help out
- Sign-in / user log stations where people can leave comments
- Trail cameras
- Trail-side counting and observation days
 - [Connecticut Trail Census](#) has volunteer resources for manual counting and observation

Yogi Berra



Connecticut Trail Census

manual count form

#	Time	Ped	Bike	Other	Comment	# <18
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						



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Connecticut Trail Census
Statewide multi-use trail user study

Manual Count Form

Date _____
Location _____
Name _____
Time Start _____:____:____
Weather _____

All times Eastern Daylight Saving (www.time.gov). **Begin at top of the hour, record for full hour.**
Record groups on the same line. Record bicyclists and pedestrians separately.
Record strollers, skateboards, wheelchairs, etc. as "other", list type in comments.
Record additional activity in comments - jogging, walking dog, etc.
Denote the number of children (under 18) in the group in "#<18" column.
(note that children should be included as "Ped, Bike or Other" as well)
Scan completed forms and email to: cttrailcensus@gmail.com. **Thank you!**

#	Time	Ped	Bike	Other	Comment	# <18
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TOTALS:

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Why count trail users?

- Identify pressure spots, potential overuse for visitor management monitoring & planning
- Track visitation/use trends
- Plan for new facilities
- Support funding proposals for maintenance, expansion, visitor management, etc.
- Feed into an economic impact analysis



Trail counters and trail cams collect data automatically. (TrafX infrared trail counter)



Resources

- [American Trails Trail User Management Hub](#) — All about trail counters, trail user surveys, and other information to better understand and engage your trail users.
- Rails to Trails Conservancy Trail-Building Toolbox; [Trail User Surveys and Counting](#)
- [How to Leverage AllTrails Data for Better Stewardship](#) recorded webinar from Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia



Collecting stories

Make it easy to leave a story

- Trail journal in a weatherproof box; comment line on the sign-in sheet
- Chalkboard or whiteboard at the trailhead with one rotating question
- QR code to a 3-question form — or just your phone number

Go get stories

- Deputize your regulars: ask the 6 people who walk it daily to send you one thing they noticed each month
- 60-second video at openings, 5Ks, work days — one volunteer, one phone
- Two minutes of "trail tales" at the top of every board or council meeting



Collecting stories, part 2

Ask better questions

If you ask someone, "How's the trail?" you'll get an answer like, "Great."

- "What do you do now that you didn't before the trail?"
- "Who do you see out there?"
- "Tell me about a time something surprised you on the trail."

Look for unexpected stories & storytellers

- the landowner who granted the easement
- the business owner who was skeptical
- the school PE teacher
- the person who lost weight or found a walking group
- the maintenance volunteer
- the kid who learned to ride a bike there



Match the story to the audience

- City council / commission, at budget time → a story with a constituent's name in it
- Funders → proof the change you promised is actually happening
- Landowners on the next segment → how it went for the neighbors who said yes first
- Volunteers → your work mattered, here's who it reached
- People who don't use it yet → someone like them, on the trail
- Skeptics → connect to their concerns



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Here's a trick:

Pair numbers with stories: “4,200 counts in June and one of them was Delores, who's 81...”

What's on your mind?

What are you wondering about?



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Trail Town Community of Practice — October 16

What can communities learn from one another about using trails to strengthen local economies, protect special places, and improve quality of life? Join the [Trail Town Exchange on October 16](#) to hear real-world examples, discover resources, and connect with peers working in trail towns and gateway communities.

Amy Camp (Cycle Forward) and Julie Judkins (Just-Trails) are organizing this FREE ONLINE EVENT with a host committee of trail town movers and shakers.

Workbook

Next

Session 1: Why Invest in Trails? ▾ ⋮

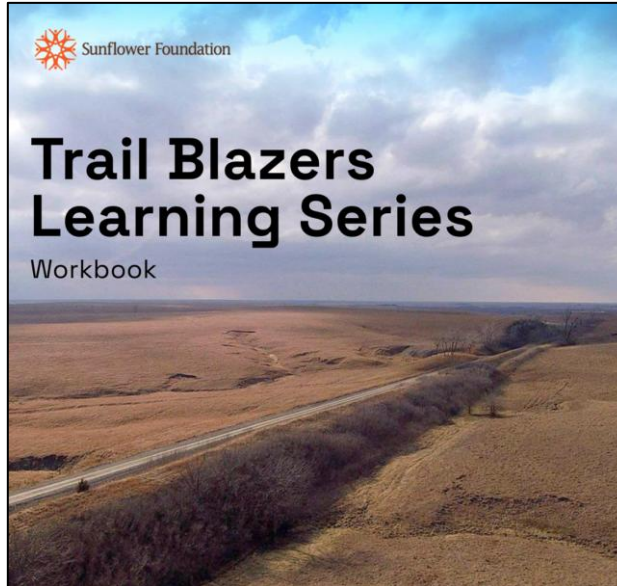
Session 2: Land, Routes & Partnerships ▾ ⋮

Session 3: Safety & Accessibility ▾ ⋮

Session 4: Funding & Other Resources ▾ ⋮

Session 5: From Trail to Community – Building Engagement ▾ ⋮

Session 6: After Your Trail Is Built ▾ ⋮



What's

See you at Trail Exchange Day!

Get in touch anytime. We are still here to support you.

Feel free to join Trail Stewards/Trail Towns learning sessions.

Loads of resources in the Learning Library!

Thank you!



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