

# TRAIL ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

## *Current Status*

### **Existing Trails and Trail Connectors**

In an effort to satisfy the public's desire for trails and make progress in accomplishing the goals set forth in the Trails Plan, the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department has diligently pursued the development of a wide range of trails and trail connectors. (Some of these trail developments were accomplished with federal funding through GetAbout Columbia.)



MKT Trail

Of the four major trails on the Trails Plan that make up the proposed trail loop around the city, the MKT Trail and portions of the Hinkson Creek and Bear Creek Trails are completed. Other destination trails and connectors have also been constructed. Below is a list of completed major trails and connectors in the City of Columbia's trail system:

- The **MKT Nature/Fitness Trail** is an 8.9 mile trail running from downtown Flat Branch Park to the southwest where it connects to Missouri's cross-state Katy Trail. It was the first railroad conversion project in Missouri and serves as an excellent example of a destination trail, offering opportunities to exercise, commute or simply enjoy nature in a beautiful setting.
- In 2001, the City completed the 4.8 mile **Bear Creek Trail** in the northern part of Columbia extending from Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area (aka Cosmo Park) to Albert-Oakland Park.
- The **Hinkson Creek Trail** was a joint effort between the City of Columbia and the University of Missouri to connect Grindstone Nature Area to the MKT Trail at the 1.9 mile marker.
- The **County House Trail** connects Twin Lakes Recreation Area/MKT Trail to the north side of Stadium Boulevard.
- The **South Providence Trail** is the beginning of a major north-south connector, connecting Rock Bridge State Park to the Hinkson Creek Trail.
- The **Garth Avenue Connector** links Lathrop Rd. and Clarkson Rd. to the MKT Trail.
- **Blue Ridge Rd. Connector** links Blue Ridge Rd. to the Bear Creek Trail.
- **Python Court Connector** links the western portion of the Vanderveen Subdivision to the Bear Creek Trail.



Blue Ridge Connector - GetAbout Project

## Current Development

Several new trails and trail connectors are currently under various stages of design, engineering and/or under construction. They are:

- **The Hominy Creek Trail** extends from Stephens Lake Park under Highway 63 and Interstate 70 to Clark Lane in northeast Columbia.
- The **Scott's Branch Trail** connects Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary through Dublin Neighborhood Park to Scott Blvd.
- The proposed **Grindstone Creek Trail** will connect the Grindstone Nature Area to Maguire Boulevard.
- The **Greenbriar Connector** is part of the route that connects Rock Bridge State Park to the Hinkson Creek Trail at the MU Tennis Complex.
- The **Katy Place Apt. Connector** will link the apartment complex and the Forum Shopping Center to the MKT Trail.
- The **pedway connecting Grindstone Nature Area to Stephens Lake Park** was widened in 2011 and GetAbout staff is working on constructing the trail connections at both ends.

These ongoing projects, as well as several smaller links that connect various neighborhoods to the trail system, represent a continued effort to develop a loop trail around Columbia with connecting links to the main loop.

Other trails that have become very popular in the parks range from the natural surface nature trails found at Grindstone Nature Area to the 12 ft.-wide, hard-surface fitness trail located at Cosmo Park. Trail designs vary depending on surrounding park elements and the intended purpose of the trail. A loop exercise trail is often one of the main elements park planners include when designing neighborhood parks in Columbia. Each trail offers unique qualities contributing to the overall trail system. Several of these recreation loop trails can also provide connecting links to the overall trail system. Interestingly, the concrete trails within Stephens Lake Park ranked second only to the MKT Trail as the most used trails in the park system according to the 2011 Park User Survey.

The Grindstone Creek Trail is the last proposed trail development project to be funded with the 2010 Park Sales Tax. Currently, the City Council is working on determining which projects will be funded by the second round of federal funds from the Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Project. The amount that will be allocated to trail projects and which trail projects will be selected for funding have not yet been determined.



Lake Trail at Stephens Lake Park