

THE

# NOBSTONE



FALL 2016 NEWSLETTER Vol. 3, No. 3

of the KNOBSTONE HIKING TRAIL ASSOCIATION, *founded in 2013*

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**SEPTEMBER 14th 150-MILE KHT COMPLETION SUMMIT MEETING** An overflow crowd of more than 50 came from as far away as Ft. Wayne, Columbus, and Salem to express their support for the completion of the Knobstone Hiking Trail. The KHTA has been informed for years by DNR and Hoosier National Forest agencies that they have seen no demand from the public for this. Community leaders, business people, trail easement donors, hiking trail association representatives, and hikers were invited to the meeting. **ASKED: WHERE IS THE SUPPORT? THE PUBLIC RESPONDED; THEY ONLY NEEDED A FORUM** The hiking public, though by far the largest group of trail users, is not organized the way other trail users are, and is rarely heard from. Given the opportunity, however, they explained what a 150-mile KHT meant to them.

Jamie Taylor (photo, left), executive director of the Martinsville Chamber of Commerce, said: **“Companies are looking for quality of life as a job benefit, and the trail will help locals develop healthier life styles. This recreational opportunity will also foster economic development.”** Tosha Dougherty, exec. director of Visit Morgan County! Said **“There’s a trend for expanding**

**trails all over; people talk about trails at meetings. The 150-mile trail will develop community connectivity.** I cannot express enough appreciation and support for completing the trail.” Amy Hillenburg, Reporter-Times: **“This will make Martinsville the Gateway to the Knobstone, the Gateway to Southern Indiana.”**

Ken Hale, Morgan County Planning Director (photo right, caught after the meeting at work site), spoke eloquently, saying **“The County and Indiana need this trail.”** I have built many new park acres in the County after the '08 flood; I will focus attention here on progress on completing this trail.” From hiker William Bassett: **the trail will put Indiana on the national trail map. It’s needed. Indiana ranks 41st out of 50 states nationally on health and recreation.**

Easements are needed to complete it, along with government lands. But many easements have already been donated. Robert Darlage, businessman from Columbus, spoke about the process of realizing he could and should donate an easement: **“I did it to leave a legacy.”**

**Washington County Council President Jonathan Spaulding, drove up from Salem,** and told about how he had first heard of the project in April, when resolution of support for the project was asked for (and approved). He was impressed enough to join the KHTA, and is now a trail adopter, maintaining a section of the original Knobstone Trail near his home.

**PARTNERS AGREE TO MEET DECEMBER 14** The desired outcome of the meeting was reached. The major partners to the conclusion of the project agreed to participate with the KHTA in the process of completing the KHT. Representatives were identified from the DNR and HNF, to meet again at the Morgan-Monroe State Forest Activities Center.



**KNOBSTONE BRICK AWARD GIVEN TO JOHNNY JONES** In August, KHTA president Charles Andrew presented to Mr. Johnny Jones [photo left, in cap], owner of JW Jones LLC, a global stone crushing corporation, the Knobstone Brick Award. It was awarded for his donation of a 2 acre parking lot on Burton Lane just east of SR37. [The award was announced at the KHTA’s Annual Meeting in March.] The awards are mounted on “Knobstone pavers”, made in Martinsville’s Poston brick factory more than 100 years ago. The parking lot will provide ample parking for the new northern KHT/Tecumseh Trail trailhead. Access to the nearby MMSF is through an easement granted by the Martinsville Sportsmans Club. Hikers are awaiting approval for the proposed 7-mile route to connect to the present original TT trailhead at the MMSF office.

**IN SEPTEMBER, A BOARD OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES** (photo) managing the **Owen-Carr Township Fund** of the Community Foundation of Jackson County awarded the KHTA a grant of \$2787 to maintain the Sparksville County Park and develop amenities for the KHT in southern Jackson County. These included: a footbridge over a creek on the John Howard easement trail leading north up the ridge behind Sparksville, a commemorative bench inside the trail loop at the trailside Sparksville County Park, and an informational three-panel park sign (to be completed by Spring). We were asked: “Why should the Fund help the KHTA do this?” The Board accepted our rationale that Jackson County’s resources are so limited we are lucky they are taking on grass mowing, picnic pavilion improvements, and privy maintenance. On Friday, October 28, the footbridge was built, the trail cleared, and the bench installed (photo p. 6) by students of nearby Medora Community School (photos pp. 3-4.)



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## DEVELOPMENTS ALONG THE KHT North end at Martinsville



**COMPLETING THE MARTINSVILLE SPORTSMANS CLUB EASEMENT TRAIL** 2nd Sat. Volunteer trail crews have almost completed building the trail on the "Conservation Club" easement. With a bit of luck it will be finished in December. This is the nearly mile long trail that starts at the Jones Parking Lot on Burton Lane at the edge of Martinsville, and will connect through 6 miles of Morgan-Monroe State Forest land to the present northern trailhead of the KHT's Tecumseh Trail. A sign at the new trailhead indicates the easement requirements from the Conservation Club. It declares properties adjacent to the trail truly off limits. As the trail occupies an extremely steep-sided narrow valley all to itself, hikers are in no danger from hunters, but in the next valley over there is a shooting range. Hikers are always required to stay on easement trails, even on agricultural lands.



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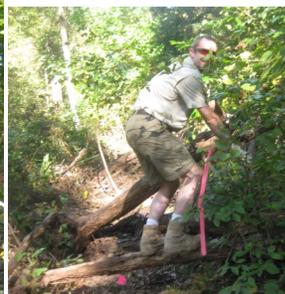
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More and more volunteer trail builders are returning these days, becoming involved in the KHTA and gaining skills (October's 2nd Saturday gang in photo below). The project has demanded two sets of skills: finishing the trail to fairly exacting specifications for level surface, drainage features, & proper back-slope tilt for sustainability.



Photos [above] show workers installing one last grade-diminishing reroute through an awful deadfall mess on a frightful brier-infested steep slope at the top near the Morgan-Monroe State Forest boundary.

Photos show KHTA members Rodney McLean (right) and Bob Merriman doing the work of turning the earlier scrape into a visibly standard footpath. After the



Nov. 12 work day, folks could really see the benefit of the finishing work—

### DESIRED OUTCOME WITH DNR FORESTRY OF KHT TRAIL SUMMIT: TT TRAIL SOUTH TO FOREST HQ.

Hikers are already following the trail up from the new KHT/TECUMSEH Jones trailhead on Burton Lane. It's timely that the Sept. 14 Summit follow-up meeting is set for December 14 with representatives from the DNR. Its objective is to begin the planning for the connecting trail from the Conservation Club easement to the Morgan-Monroe S. F. office, the original Tecumseh Trailhead. The outpouring of support for the trail at the Sept. 14th Summit showed the community is really ready. We hope construction can begin early in 2017.

and it made the walk back so fast one wondered why the work on it had taken so long! But the new trail through the brier patch awaits for December.... We can only hope the weather holds.



**MEDORA COMMUNITY SCHOOL BECOMES KHT PARTNER AS PART OF A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT... MEDORA PARENTS FIGHT VALIANTLY TO KEEP THEIR SCHOOL... COMMUNITY SERVICE WAS NOT FUN—IT WAS HARD LABOR... I HOPE THE HELP I GAVE TO THE TRAIL AND THE TWO (ADULT) WORKERS WAS GOOD ENOUGH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE... IT'S A GODSEND...**

It's a common practice for long-distance trails to involve trailside schools in partnerships. It can be win/win, with the trail gaining support while students become aware of and involved in projects that connect them to the wider world.

An email solicitation was made to develop a relationship with a school 5 miles away from the KHT in Southern Indiana on the bank of the White River. It got the following response from Medora Community School Social Studies teacher Pat Bahan: "This is a godsend. I am in the process of creating a school service project for my students, especially the seniors. I would be delighted." Twenty-eight days later, the students met at the KHT Trailside Sparksville Park (senior class photo (above) in Jackson County's Sparksville Park parking lot). Three tasks: build a 16-foot KHT footbridge at the edge of town (photos p.4), clear a quarter mile of weed and brier-infested trail (photos below), and erect a commemorative bench. Money had been granted for the materials, but no workers had materialized as yet. Trail work was the least glamorous, but most important for Park users; the briars made the trail impassable, and the weed/mud scraping was tedious. The students clearly made a valuable contribution.

**Why should the KHT get involved with a school losing its state educational funding, its students, and its basketball games,** and ask it for help with improving and maintaining the Knobstone Hiking Trail? The school became infamous because of a 2013 documentary of its hard-luck basketball team in an "economically devastated" rural area with a school of 70 students. The film could not tell the whole story. Parents hold fund-raisers to help pay for essential school services the state has stopped paying for; the school has food drives. Friends of the school help with sports programs, and there is a local historically significant brick plant preservation project in the works. But like communities all over Indiana, the area is hard hit by drug problems.

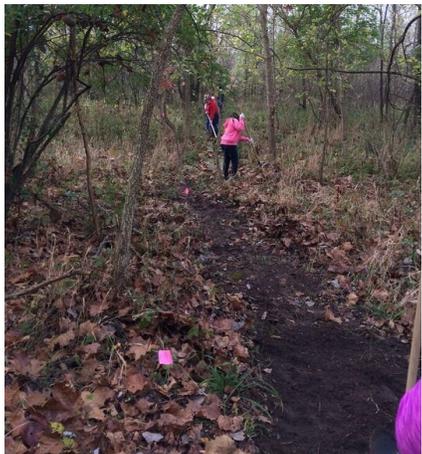
**Here are the students' answers,** from a class assignment. For the occasion, a new version of the KHTA t-shirt trail map was produced, with Sparksville and Medora C.S. added along the trail; shirts were given to each member of the class. One student wrote: "One of the coolest parts of this project was being able to say I helped build a bridge. Another cool part was **we were finally on the map!** Most people don't know where Medora is...getting on the map is awesome. Also it shows how beautiful our town is—the woods and creeks are just gorgeous. One "found out she was lazy, and wasn't strong enough to use an axe." But she still claimed she'd "learned she could work just as hard as the guys in my class." Many were not used to the physical work, and "wondered if they could do it, and hated it at first." Of course many "really enjoyed being outside, not cooped up inside all day." No one had ever heard of the KHT, "a state-wide trail a few minutes from my house...I can't wait until they are completely finished with it so I can go and see how cool it is. It's neat to think that one day you can tell your kids and grandkids that you helped forge a trail that will last for years and years." Some spoke of the "good feeling about yourself when you help people in your community" and many noted "how much can be done if people work together." **One spoke for many: "It wasn't fun, and I was sore and tired, but overall it was cool."** For the record, every one of the young women holding tools in the photo at left when surveyed spoke of plans for careers involving post-secondary training.



Medora C.S. seniors and KHTA project leader Nina Andrew, front row left and English teacher Chrissy Townsend; Social Studies teacher Pat Bahan, far right. Back row, left, school principal Austin Absber. KHTA supporting volunteers not pictured: Ronnie Pendency, Ed Lizewski, Chris Donohue, and Bruce Barr.



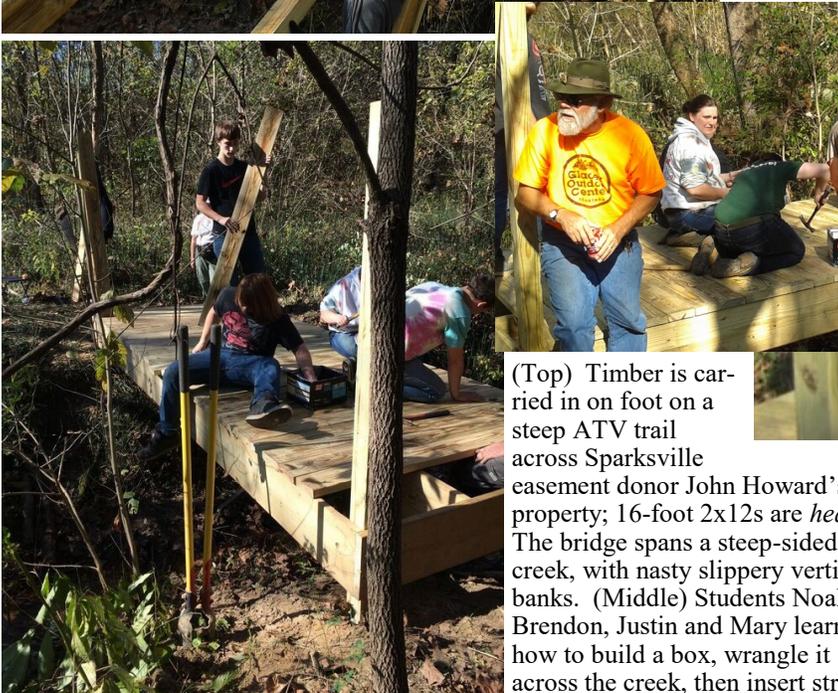
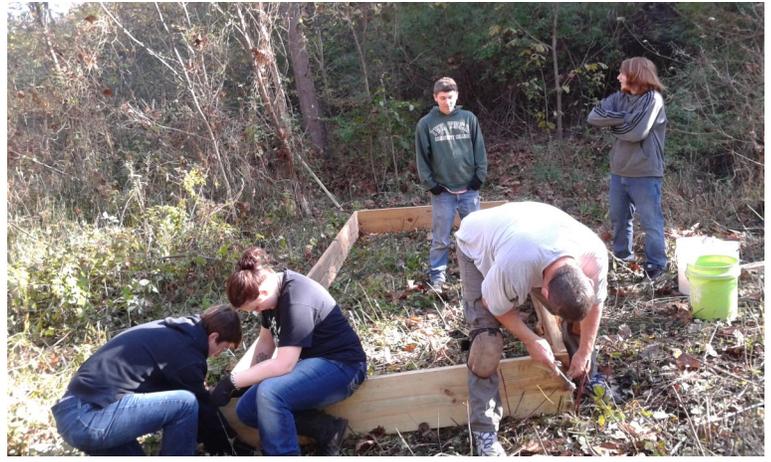
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**PERMANENT KHT TRAIL PARTNERSHIP?** Pat reports the MCS Junior class students had wanted to join the Seniors on October 28th; we're planning projects for next spring. Turns out the lower wetland pond footpath needs some real work, 80 feet of old waterlogged boardwalks need replacing. And nearby, easement trail building awaits. The CFJC has a special fund for small projects that come up outside of the lengthy annual application process. We'll apply for boardwalk lumber. Community Service projects are a permanent feature of the civics curriculum requirements. Trail maintenance on the nearby KHT will be needed as long as the trail endures.

OCT. 28TH OWEN-CARR TWP FUND PROJECT CONT.

KHT footbridge across creek on John Howard easement at eastern edge of town of Sparksville.



(Top) Timber is carried in on foot on a steep ATV trail across Sparksville easement donor John Howard's property; 16-foot 2x12s are *heavy!* The bridge spans a steep-sided creek, with nasty slippery vertical banks. (Middle) Students Noah, Brendon, Justin and Mary learn how to build a box, wrangle it across the creek, then insert stringers for this very sturdy bridge. Up-

rights are anchored 5 feet deep, to increase bridge longevity (a power auger was used). Teachers Pat Bahan (yellow shirt) and Chrissy Townsend (bright green) couldn't keep away from the fun of banging deck boards. Volunteer carpenters Bruce and Ed from the KHTA lurk in the background. Bridge will have a ramp, to be built by John and students from Sparksville, who use his house as a drop-in center. From the bridge the trail goes straight up to the ridge behind Sparksville, to a great view of the Muscatatuck/White River valley. A commemorative bench is to be placed up there to honor easement donors, weather permitting, by the next Medora C.S. group.



**TRAIL ADOPTION PROGRAM BIOS** (cont. from p. 6) **JIM ISBELL, OF NEW SALISBURY, ADOPTS DEAM TRAILHEAD NORTH TO JACKSON.**

My wife of 36 years, Susan, and I live in New Salisbury IN. I recently retired from Floyd Memorial Hospital, ending a 40 year career as a pharmacist. I enjoy golf, sailing, motorcycling, skiing, bicycling and of course hiking.



My brother, Bill Isbell (Indianapolis), invited me to help flag a reroute at Elk Creek KT 10 years ago and that is when I met Suzanne. I have also worked with Suzanne reblazing the Adventure Hiking Trail at Harrison Crawford SF. I am a member of the Hoosier Hikers Council as well as the Knobstone Hiking Trail Association.

I have also served on the Board for Harrison County Community Foundation. I am also on the board of the Indian Creek Trail in Corydon IN. To see our work extending this multiuse urban

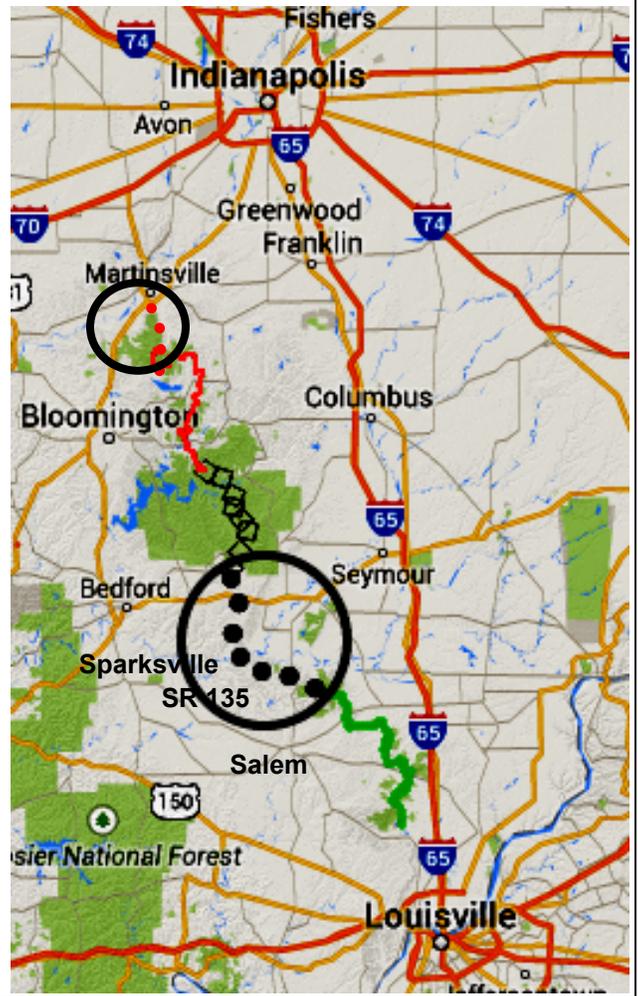
paved trail this past summer, check out our website <http://www.indiancreektrail.org>.

I have hiked the KT twice and have hiked the top ten long distance trails in Indiana except for Salamonie Res. which is way up north. I look forward to adopting Deam Trailhead to Jackson Rd; although this section is in transition and involves many difficult areas. I want to have a positive impact on this Southern "Gateway" to the KHT. Thanks for the opportunity [photo taken on a hike in Pisgah Forest, Asheville NC].

**NOVEMBER 2ND SATURDAY TRAIL CREW** (photo) at the northern KHT trailhead's Jones Parking Lot. Note: all are veteran trail builders!



**PROGRESS ON THE 150-MILE KHT**



**KEY:** red dots=provisional KHT extension M-MSF to Martinsville; red line = Tecumseh Trail; black chain=provisional Hoosier National Forest; black dots, circle=Pioneer Trail easements; red circle=J-WSF provisional Muscatatuck Bluffs & Chestnut Ridge; green line= original Knobstone. Trail.

**\* \* \* I WANT TO HELP BUILD THE KHT \* \* \***

**MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:**  New  Renew

- Student/Elder \$15
- Business \$100
- Milestone \$1000
- Individual \$30
- Legacy \$100
- Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Family \$40
- Benchmark \$250
- Org./Club \$50
- Landmark \$500

I'd also like to make a donation to the KHT LAND & EASEMENT FUND: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my contribution of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New Members receive a complimentary copy of the KHTA's Knobstone Hiking Trail Guide.

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**OR GO ONLINE TO THE KHTA WEBSITE, AND JOIN with PAYPAL: [www.KnobstoneHikingTrail.org](http://www.KnobstoneHikingTrail.org)**



**OWEN-CARR TWP FUND AWARDS GRANT OF \$2787** for KHT trailside Sparksville Park improvements in Jackson County. These include a trailside commemorative bench overlooking a wetland pond (photo), dedicated to the founders of Sparksville Park. Their inspiration, dedication, skills, and generosity helped create it: Edith Boling, Greg McPike, Charlotte Brewer, Nancy Mock Martinez, Robert Martinez, Vincent Shelton, John Duell, & the Hoosier Hikers Council. The bench was installed Oct. 28th as part of a larger project [cont. p. 1].



**OUTPOURING OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR 150-MILE KHT AT SEPT. 14 MEETING WITH HOOSIER NATIONAL FOREST AND DNR REPRESENTATIVES**  
At the MMSF meeting, business and community leaders and hiking organizations vehemently expressed their interest in seeing its completion. [cont. on p. 1]



**FR. STEVE SCHAFFLEIN, COORD. OF KHTA'S ADOPT-A-TRAIL PROGRAM MEETS WITH AAT GROUP.** Steve is working closely with Bradley Schneck Prop. Mgr. of Jackson-Washington S.F. Steve gathered adopters at his country home near the Spurgeon Hollow Trail-head in October [photo]. Interested? Sign up on the KHT website. More detail about the AAT Project will be posted soon.

**HIKER/NEIGHBORS ADOPT SECTIONS OF THE KNOBSTONE...** Two more adopters are profiled here, **Sid Prendy**, of Salem, and **Jim Isbell**, of New Salisbury. Only two sections remain unclaimed (Spurgeon Hollow south; Jackson Rd. to SR 160).



Sid reports: After retiring a year and a half ago, hiking the Knobstone trail was the farthest thing from my mind, but an old high school buddy talked me into hiking it with him. After the first time out, I was hooked. I didn't realize that this trail was basically in my backyard. Being outside hiking the trail has opened my eyes to the beauty we have here in southern Indiana. I have enjoyed it so much that I have joined the Adopt a Trail program. I would like to help preserve and extend this trail, so our children and grandchildren can also enjoy it's challenge and beauty for years to come.

Note: Since Sid submitted his bio, he has made a major contribution to the Oct. 28th Sparksville Park Bridge/Trail project. He spent the day clearing nasty willows and briars that totally obscured the parking area and some trail sections. He returned not once but twice for follow-up work (cont. on p. 5).



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The **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**  
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