

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 331, MAKING THE FLINT HILLS TRAIL A STATE PARK

My name is Dave Jones, and I'm writing this testimonial as a private citizen that retired from the Marine Corps and moved to Herington, Kansas in 2012. Since moving to Herington, my wife and I have become very active in the local community, volunteering in our church, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the local VFW Post. I was elected to our City Commission in 2015 and am currently serving as the Mayor of our fine town. I mention all of this only to help establish the breadth of people we encounter on an almost daily basis, a people very proud of their heritage and rural history.

Herington has first and foremost always been a railroad town, and as such was a natural fit for the Rails to Trails program in 1983 after one rail line shut down. Situated on the western point of a 117-mile rail trail known as the Flint Hills Trail, this former rail line begins at Lime Creek and runs through the heart of Herington and continues eastward. As it travels through scenic Kansas grassland, cropland, creeks and rivers, the trail really gives person a feel for what life was like during the bygone days before we were all in such a big hurry. It gives the public access to areas very remote through the native countryside; some segments of the trail as much as seven (7) miles long with no intersecting roads.

The United States Congress recognized the value of these recreational trails, and in 1968 passed the National Trails System Act. That act has resulted in many trails being built across the country including The American Discovery Trail which runs from the East Coast to the West Coast. The former Missouri Pacific corridor now known as the Flint Hills Trail is part of the American Discovery Trail and is the longest trail in Kansas (seventh longest rail-trail in America).

The Herington community strongly supports this trail being a state park, and stands ready to offer trail users lodging, food, fuel, shopping, recreation, and camping which in turn will impact the economic growth of Herington and the numerous other rural communities along the wonderful route this trail takes across our great state. Please help us to continue developing this resource and support its designation as a state park. Thank you for your time.

SIGNED


David M. Jones

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