

SHOW ME MISSOURI BCH OFFERED RARE OPPORTUNITY

SMMBCH has been presented with the opportunity to partner with Missouri State Parks (DNR) and the L-A-D Foundation to build a new equestrian use only trail through the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry. This trail will parallel the Ozark Trail on the Pryor land that currently exists but does not allow equine traffic.

This will be a huge undertaking with SMMBCH taking the lead. We have already had a scouting expedition with representatives of the L-A-D Foundation who are the owners of the Pryor land, and the Ozark Trail Association. Each step in the planning phase must be approved by the L-A-D Foundation and the Missouri State Parks, who have the recreational lease on the land, to ensure minimal environmental disturbance.

The Ozark Trail Association has an excellent history of building sustainable trails and is taking an active interest in this project. The Ozark Trail is a total of 350 miles of continuous trail that travels through properties managed by several public land agencies. Horses are restricted on the trails that go through land managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation, but welcomed on the Ozark Trail on land managed by the Mark Twain National Forest and most of the Missouri State Parks managed land. This trail building opportunity will further advance SMMBCH's dream to ride or pack with our horses spanning the state.

SMMBCH has also met with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to plan work needed to reopen trails at Knob Noster State Park. We will do the preliminary work of repairing and rerouting of trails as well as moving the equestrian campground. A grant for trail upgrades, rerouting and armory is currently waiting approval. There will be a "soft opening" of trails as they are completed. Projected completion is the spring of 2011.

Cuiver River State Park is also awaiting money from a RSTP Grant to buy materials for repairing their trails. SMMBCH will then be able to schedule workdays. Pack animals will be used to haul gravel into the wilderness areas where the trails are muddy and in bad need of repair. This has been an ongoing project where BCH has worked in cooperation with park managers at Cuiver River State Park.

Show Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen will need plenty of volunteers from our membership to accomplish all these projects. For more information on our organization, visit our website: www.showmebch.org. For information on the Ozark Trail: www.ozarktrail.com. For information on Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry: www.mostateparks.com/rogerpryor.