

Melvern Trail

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they'll visit our businesses as well, and that benefits everybody."

Bush and Burnett say the project could not have gotten underway without special local volunteers. Both point to Friends of the Trail members Dee Robinson and Lacey for providing inspiration and encouragement to other volunteers.

Local companies, especially Criqui Construction and Lacey's Backhoe Service, became involved, providing equipment and manpower. Families of volunteers worked in small groups to start developing the trails.

"A lot of people have good visions of what this could become," Burnett said.

As area volunteers plodded along on the trail project, great progress was shown in April with the arrival of Kansas Corps, a student volunteer organization that was itself in development stages.

Meeting at the Crossroads

On April 19, the river trails became alive with activity as a variety of organizations and people converged at Melvern.

Westar's Green Team, Kansas PRIDE, and Kansas Trails Council volunteers joined with Kansas Corps, which had selected the town's plan as a pilot project for the fledgling student volunteerism program.

As explained by Kansas Corps organizer Dr. Curt Brungardt, the organization had been developing for over a year.

"We were looking at ways to get schools, technical schools, community colleges, four-year institutions, and private schools to work together to serve the state," Brungardt said. "One of the ways is through community service and volunteerism."

"The idea is that these students will get one day to

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Keith Thompson, Osage City, rides a mountain bike to test a portion of trail that Brady Kentfield, Fort Hays State University, Skyler Wainwright, Melvern, and Thompson built over a rocky outcrop.

Wayne White/Herald-Chronicle

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