

## Horse Trails

### Group seeks way to create horse trails throughout Oldham County

#### New proposal would tie trails with O.C. Greenways plan

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(September 2007) – A constant complaint of horse lovers is that there are not enough trails to ride in Oldham County. A new proposed trail would one-day link a system of trails in the Harrod's Creek area with the larger Floyd's Fork Greenway Project area. Brett Donner is a member of the Harrods Creek Trail Association, which proposes an extension of trails to accommodate the many equine enthusiasts in the local area. The Harrod's Creek Trail Association is the vision of developer Jim Brown, who created the initial one-mile Harrod's Creek trail at the rear of his farm on U.S. Highway 42.

Brown's goal is to connect his trail with trails on adjacent lands, thus creating a hiking or riding trail system. The trail would extend along Harrod's Creek with access points along Covered Bridge Road and Hwy 1694 (Gum St.), Ky. Hwy. 393 and KY Hwy. 53 to Old Sligo Road and eventually join the L'Esprit equine development, and the County Horse Park on KY Hwy. 524 near Westport.



Photo provided

“The proposed trail will travel along my property on Harrod's Creek,” said Donner. The best part about the Harrod's Creek Trail is that 257 acres of Kentucky State Reformatory property adjoins Harrod's Creek between U.S. Hwy 393 and U.S. Hwy. 53, he said. If access were given to this additional acreage, “That would make this area a tourist attraction.”

**Members of the Harrod's Creek Trail Association enjoy the outdoors during a hike through the wooded areas of Harrod's Creek**

Donner took his idea to State Sen. Ernie Harris in the form of a written proposal to use the 257 acres to develop a low maintenance, low erosion trail system. The Kentucky Trail

Riders Association, of which Donner is president, would fund and design the trail system. Three members of the group are State Certified Trail Masters.

In addition to benefiting trail users, the Harrod's Creek Trail would "benefit restaurant owners, hotels and motels, retail shops, fueling stations and the list goes on," said Donner. "Bottom line, it would bring dollars to this area."

Donner said Metro Louisville Parks is considering connecting the Floyd's Fork Greenway Project in eastern Jefferson County to the Harrod's Creek Trail project. "The potential is incalculable. We would have one of the largest trail systems connected to a major metropolitan area in the world."

The Floyd's Fork Greenway Project is a component of a larger project, the City of Parks initiative, begun in February 2005 by the Metro Louisville Parks Department. In addition to a 27-mile corridor along the Floyd's Fork watershed area, this project calls for a 100-mile paved Metro Loop pedestrian and bicycling trail that will begin in Louisville and stretch to outlying cities, such as Oldham County.

It would connect with trails established by Greenways for Oldham County. The Greenways committee has begun to install proposed trails following the path of the abandoned interurban railroad corridor through the county. The master plan for Greenways for Oldham County calls for installing connector corridors, which would extend multi-use trails from points of interest and community centers. As their website indicates, "These connecting corridors will integrate walking, horse and bicycle paths into our local transportation system."

The Harrod's Creek Trail Association's trail system plans fit nicely into the Greenways master plan. If extended the full length of Harrod's Creek, this segment of the trail system could stretch more than 18 miles long.

Brown's idea was born from the Appalachian Trail, which begins in Georgia and extends 2,000 miles to Maine. "It was developed and maintained by volunteers," said Harold Helm, president of the Harrod's Creek Trail Association. Helm lives on the banks of Harrod's Creek. He said that when Brown developed Paramount Subdivision, he built "a really nice trail above the creek" to be used by the Paramount Homeowners Association.



**Brett Donner**

The Harrod's Creek Trail Association is trying to get its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. While

waiting, the group is asking for easements from property owners along the proposed trail path. The challenge now is to gain access to huge stretches of land that are in the control of single landowners, he said.

“This would be a wonderful asset for Oldham County,” said Helm. “It would be a good use of the natural asset of the whole watershed area. Everybody could enjoy it.” At some point, the Harrod’s Creek trail might have to be separated for hikers and equestrians. Helm has hiked for many years. One trail he is particularly fond of was a 14-mile trail in Edinburgh, Scotland.

“It was in the middle of a very urban area, behind my hotel.” After walking it Helm thought, “We could do this now in Oldham County,” and future generations would benefit from it as well.

On Sept. 26, a Greenways Summit will be held from 4 p.m to 7:30 p.m. at the Oldham County Fiscal Court building to discuss the Greenways for Oldham County master plan that will be completed by December 2007. This meeting will consider potential trail options.

In attendance will be Planning and Zoning representatives, consultants, developers, real estate agents, county and government agencies, and all individuals interested in the Greenways trail system. Those interested in establishing equestrian trails are also invited to attend.

• *For more information, visit the Greenways for Oldham County website at: [www.oldhamgreenways.org](http://www.oldhamgreenways.org) or email: [info@oldhamgreenways.org](mailto:info@oldhamgreenways.org). For more information on the Harrod’s Creek Trail Association, visit: [www.harrodscreektrailassociation.org](http://www.harrodscreektrailassociation.org).*