

Testimony on SB 331 on designating Flint Hills Nature trail state park and Little Jerusalem  
Badlands state park  
To  
The Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

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SB 331 seeks to amend K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 32-837.

Avid cyclist, Founder and Co-Owner of Dirty Kanza Promotions and Co-Owner of Gravel City Adventure and Supply Co., Emporia, KS.

The Flint Hills Nature Trail holds tremendous value to recreational outdoor enthusiasts. It spans from Osawatomie in the East to Herrington in Central Kansas. The trail surface is also easily traversable for all users. This is greatly important, because it means that many folks, from all walks of life, can easily access and enjoy this recreational resource. People of all abilities can enjoy the splendid and diverse Kansas topography. Being a Lyon County resident, we look forward to hosting many community events each year on the section of trail that comes through our county.

It is not just local residents who get to enjoy this beautiful trail. With the help of keystone events such as the Dirty Kanza, the Flint Hills of Eastern Kansas have quickly established themselves as a key cycling tourism location. The Flint Hills Nature Trail can be a key cog in continuing to solidify this region as a preferred destination for outdoor enthusiasts. These tourists will be essential for the economic well-being of the small Kansas towns that come along the Nature Trail and throughout the Flint Hills.

The Flint Hills Nature Trail is the longest rail-trail in Kansas, and seventh longest in America. The trail is open to pedestrians, horses, cyclists, and any non-motorized vehicle. From the perspective of a cyclist, the trail offers a variety of scenery, recreational areas to rest, and many entry/exit points to choose from – this appeals to all levels of cyclists.

State parks and open space improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities, counties, and state more attractive places to live and work. If the Flint Hills Nature Trail becomes a state park, it will undoubtedly benefit from the backing of state resources to maintain this valuable resource. There is an immense value in having the backing of the state behind a park, and KDWPT will be able to provide the support, infrastructure and maintenance that the Flint Hills Nature Trail requires to maintain its value to the cycling community.

Given the significance of the land/trail system to avid cyclists, and value to the surrounding areas, I respectfully request that Flint Hills Nature Trail be designated as a part of the Kansas state park system.

I, James K. Cummins, appreciate the opportunity to address the Committee and request favorable passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

James K. Cummins  
Executive Director,  
Dirty Kanza Promotions LLC