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## Announcement

### KNRC Releases its Rails-to-Trails Accountability Program Member Counties See Results

In Spring, 2020 KNRC released its *Rails-to-Trails Accountability Program for Local Governments (R<sub>2</sub>T)*. The easy-to-use, R<sub>2</sub>T education and tracking system was developed for use by county governments who wish to support, monitor, or even hold rail-trail managers accountable to provisions of their Surface Transportation Board (STB) railbanking permits or requirements imposed under State law. In Kansas, local requirements can include tax liabilities, insurance requirements, invasive species control, fencing access, or signage requirements.

In June, 2020 KNRC member Clark County realized results from [adoption](#) of the KNRC R<sub>2</sub>T program. At issue in Clark County's case was an insufficient [response](#) by Sunflower Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (SRTC) to [fire and erosion threats](#) posed to a county bridge by debris lodged against a rail trestle on the [Short Grass Prairie Trail](#) (SGPT). Following several months and an incomplete SRTC response to initial notifications, the Clark commissioners imposed [insurance and maintenance requirements](#) on SRTC to facilitate action and provide for long-term control of invasive plants along the 30 mile SGPT.

Rather than address obligations imposed by Clark County, SRTC elected to [relinquish](#) their federal NITU permit. If approved by the [Surface Transportation Board](#), the permit for the SGPT will be vacated, and the rail alignment will again be subject to railbanking, abandonment, or even reversion to adjacent landholders.

The KNRC *Rails-to-Trails Accountability Program for Local Governments* has been adopted by other KNRC counties who also desire an effective Rail-trail accountability system. The program is available to other counties and can easily be customized to individual rail-trail permits, regional or municipal conditions, and various state laws.

*The Kansas Natural Resource Coalition (KNRC) is an association of counties who maintain collective and participatory involvement in administrative government on behalf of its citizenry. The Coalition serves as a conduit between local, state and federal governments to promote balanced, necessary and effective administrative policymaking through the mechanism of government-to-government coordination. Our mission is to monitor, analyze, understand, communicate, and participate in those initiatives that materially affect the natural or human systems governed by individual member counties.*