

### *The Kit Carson Trail*

The Kit Carson trail was built in 1973 by Explorer Post 120 from California, Missouri. This trail is 8 miles long though rugged terrain and should take an entire day to complete.

It was named the “Kit Carson Trail” after the famous mountain man who ran away from his home in New Franklin, Missouri, and joined a Santa Fe bound Wagon train. After exploring the west as a trapper, mountain man, and scout, he settled down on a ranch in New Mexico on the Rayado River (now part of Philmont Scout Ranch). There he served as a Colonel in the New Mexico Volunteers and as a well-liked Indian Agent at Cimarron.

This trail crosses a great variety of country offering adventure at every turn. It will test your courage and strength.

The country is very wild and we hope you find adventure and can experience some of the thrills of discovery that the Kit Carson did as he crossed the Rocky Mountain Wilderness.

### *The Trail*

The trail first goes down “Jackass Hollow”. This is a rich, well-drained oak forest. On the forest floor, you can be found the common Christmas Fern and the herb, Golden Seal. The roots of this herb can be sold to root dealers for \$5.50/#. Ginseng, which is sometimes found here, will sell for \$60.00/#.

After crossing “Moonshine Creek”, the trail starts a long steady uphill climb. You will pass “Medicine Oak” with a large deformed section of its trunk caused by uncontrolled cell growth. Nearby is another tree with a hole through it. If you stand on the nearby rock and can manage to spit through this hole you will become a millionaire (old miner’s tale).

When you finish climbing “Son-of-a-Gun Hill”, you will be at “Eagle Scout Lookout.” This is the highest point on Hohn Scout Reservation. You are 950 feet above sea level, and 300 feet above the level of the lake. This is a great place to rest.

As you leave “Eagle Scout Lookout”, you will be hiking on part of an old wagon road that was part of the now named “Ozark Frontier Trail.” This old road was a course of travel between Boonville and Springfield and it goes through Hohn Scout Reservation. It must have been an exciting trip in those days to travel this rugged country and to cross the Osage River with a horse and wagon.

From here, the trail goes downhill all the way to the lakeshore. On this section you will hike through “Wold Run” where some pines have been planted by fellow Scouts. Then you will stagger down “Drunkards Hill,” a very steep downhill section. Be careful and do not run.

After hiking through “Bull Tick Hollow,” where many Paw-paw trees grow, the trail finally opens on the lakeshore at “Flap-Jack Cove.” The trail now follows the edge of the shore and crosses huge logjams in the ends of small coves. This is fun, but tricky. Watch the beach for all sorts of stuff washed up by the lake. You may find some good fishing lures here. Be careful around logs on the beach. This is a good spot for copperheads! Do not kill the harmless water snakes. These creatures make this trail exciting and help keep it wild.

Now the trail leads you to the “Swimming Area”. The trail goes behind, not through, this camp program area. You will find it again at the end of the water front jeep trail.

After hiking through a cedar grove, the trail comes to the bluff section of the trip. This will be one of the more difficult areas and it is certainly the most exciting part! Your first landmark, and good resting spot, is “Crawl-Belly Cave.”

When you get to “Hangover Rock,” you will be halfway through the trail. Soon you will get to “Landslide” section of this thrilling bluff section. A cable has been stretched across to assist you. Kit Carson never had it so good.

“Sinners Rock” was named because many a young sinner has prayed a prayer to help him on this narrow ledge. Some crawl on their hands and knees to get around it.

After you leave the bluff, you re-enter the woods. In the first small hollow you cross you will find “Walking Fern Rock.” The walking fern is a very interesting plant. This member of the fern family is not easily located and is a rare plant. Notice how it grows and how it got its name, walking fern.

The trail now goes through “Lost Forest.” This was a very beautiful, cool, thriving forest with a good stand of young trees, mostly white oaks. Wild Turkey found this quiet section of the trail ideal for a winter feeding area. White oak acorns are the number one turkey food. Turkey hens nested here in the deep leafy hideouts. In April of 1974, during a very dry and windy day two cabin owners on the lakeshore allowed a trash fire to escape and burn this area. You can see you yourself the destruction. Many small future trees are now permanently fire scarred or dead. Important under shortly plants that held the soil and fed the forest animals are gone.

From here on, nearly all the remaining trail is through burned areas. Some areas had been burned often and the past years and the rocks show clearly. This should be a good lesson in soil, water, forest, and wildlife conservation for you.

After climbing “Toss-Across Hollow,” you will reach a road. This is called “Quitter’s Point” and is where many Scouts quit and walk back to camp.

The trail bends south and for those rugged Scouts that continue the trail takes them to a little knob called “Indian Hill.” It crosses another road and starts a long, tiring trip to the “Devil’s Rock Pile.”

The slope of the “Devil’s Rock Pile” has been burned so many times that nearly all of the surface soil, the vital humus, has been eroded away. Only rocks and poor quality, fire scarred timber remain. It will be hundreds of years before this hillside will rebuild its once rich soil and healthy plant life. Explorer Scouts have sown pine seed on this site even this effort was destroyed by fire. The Explorers will continue to plant pine here and hope for a better future.

When you cross the gravel road at the high hill to the trail enters its final stretch. However, it is a long and weary stretch. The trail crosses “Turkey Trot” and then skirts the old dump. Soon the gate that you started from comes in sight and the trail is completed.

We hope you tested yourself physically and mentally, and felt a little of the excitement of exploration and danger that young Kit Carson felt when he was your age. We hop you learned a little about nature and what happens when men are thoughtless and careless with fire.

We hope your pack is now heavy with memories and that your litter is in your pocket and not back on the trail.

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## Trail Information

**Who:** Any group under adult supervision with permission from the Great Rivers Council, Boy Scouts of America.

**What:** The Kit Carson Trail is the boundary trail located on Hohn Scout Reservation. The trail is 8 miles long.

**When:** The trail is open year-round except during firearm deer season.

**How:** Permission and reservations may be made through the Great Rivers Council, Boy Scouts of America, 1203 Fay Street, Columbia, MO 65201. The phone number is 573-449-2561.

**Further Information:**

**Awards:** A cloth patch is available after completing the trail. The cost of the patch is \$1.50 each.

### Application for Awards

After the Hike  
Kit Carson Trail  
1203 Fay Street  
Columbia, MO 65201

Or by contacting the Camp Ranger

Unit type and # \_\_\_\_\_ Community: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Leader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please list the name of each participant:*

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

### Registration before the Hike

You may register to hike the Kit Carson trail by filling out a short-term camping permit available from the council service center in Columbia, MO. No walk-ins allowed.

