

OVERLAND DESPATCH

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

VOL. IV No. 3 REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL Fall/Winter 2011-12



DONNA MALSOM, 1956-2011

OUR Association experienced a major loss last year with the death of Vice President Donna Malsom. She is missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her and working with her. To pay tribute to one of the most respected and tireless workers in our organization, we are reprinting an edited copy of the tribute offered by her family and friends which was distributed at her funeral:

Thank you for coming to remember and celebrate Donna Malsom's life. She was born December 31, 1956, in Roseville, CA, to Charles Harlan and Shirley J. (Regur) Smith, and left this earth Wednesday, September 7, 2011, in Denver, CO. Everyone who knew Donna misses her terribly and her departure leaves a huge void in our hearts that may never be filled.

Donna had love in her heart for so many; she held no preconceived ideas when she met you. If you were basically good people and treated others in the way of a Christian spirit, you were welcomed into her circle of friends. It not, she gave you many chances to come around because she believed everyone had goodness

(continued on page 3)

COMBINED ISSUE

THE Fall and Winter issues are combined. Articles are welcome any time. Deadline for the Spring issue is April 1. Keep up to date at the SmHTA web site: <www.smokyhilltrail.com>.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE 5th annual Smoky Hill Trail Association Conference at Oakley, Kansas, October 14-16, 2011, was a resounding success, with the theme "The Contested Plains." The SmHTA Board met Friday afternoon and a preconference program was presented that evening.

Dr. Henrietta Mann was the keynote speaker Saturday morning, telling about "Walking the Cheyenne Road of Life." This was followed by presentations about two military posts on the trail. Bob Wilhelm, administrator at Fort Hays State Historic Site, presented "Fort Fletcher and the Smoky Hill Trail," and Leo E. Oliva looked at "Fort Wallace and the Smoky Hill Trail."

Jim Gray led a tour of trail sites east of Oakley Saturday afternoon. The banquet, memorial tribute for Donna Malsom, membership meeting, presentation of awards, and program by Will Comstock (portrayed by Mark Berry) comprised Saturday evening events. The silent auction, administered by Kay Homewood, was concluded Sunday morning. Jim Gray led the tour of trail sites west of Oakley Sunday afternoon. Plans are now underway for the 2012 annual conference in Abilene, October 19-21. Mark your calendar and arrange to be there.

2011 SmHTA AWARDS

A highlight of every conference is the presentation of awards. The following awards were presented at the Oakley conference.

AWARD OF MERIT

Butterfield Trail Historical Association and Museum, Russell Springs KS
Michael Olsen, Colorado Springs CO
Roger Hanson, Parker CO
Nancy Arendt, Colby KS

HERITAGE PRESERVATION AWARD

Smoky Valley Ranch: The Nature Conservancy,
Logan County KS

HOWARD C. RAYNESFORD LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Floris Weiser, Oakley KS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

AS I write this it is 8 degrees below zero with six inches of snow on the ground and a heavy mirage. Such mornings engender a great appreciation for the grit of the native plains people, those who manned the station sites along the Smoky Hill Trail, and the soldiers who were posted at the various posts along the route. Accounts of their experiences during such weather would make interesting reading.

Our entire membership mourns the loss of Vice President Donna Malsom, whose unexpected death in September left a void in our lives and our organization. Donna was one of the key leaders in the founding of the Smoky Hill Trail Association, and her leadership and friendship are truly missed. A special tribute to Donna was presented by her family at the annual conference and a special Donna Malsom Ambassador Award has been created to honor her memory and importance to the SmHTA. We are pleased that Kay Homewood has agreed to fill the office of vice-president.

Our 6th annual Smoky Hill Trail Conference at Oakley is now history and the feedback I have received from those who attended has all been positive. Excellent presentations by our speakers and well planned tours made an enjoyable and educational weekend. Our Friday evening pre-conference "dutch treat" meal and Leo Oliva's presentation as Private Robert Morris Peck, First U.S. Cavalry, 1856-1861, were well received and plans are to arrange for a like event at the 2012 conference in Abilene. My thanks to our officers and board whose planning and efforts produced another outstanding conference for our Association.

Board member Joanne VanCoevern is also Manager of the Santa Fe Trail Association and is working with Alexa Roberts and Greg Holt of the National Park Service at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site to make our May board meeting a special one. The meeting will be held at Bent's Old Fort on Friday, May 11, 2012. The Cherokee Trails Chapter, Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), the National Stagecoach and Freight Wagon Association, the Santa Fe Trail Association, and Bent's Old Fort are sponsoring a Transportation Weekend, May 11-13, 2012. You are invited to attend our Association board meeting and enjoy the weekend of activities planned at the fort. A tentative schedule will include our board meeting on the 11th, with afternoon activities including tours to area sites, including Bent's Old Fort and the Lamar Transportation Museum. A Friday evening meal at the fort is planned with programs that may include "Food on the Trail," by Leo Oliva, "The Night the Stars Fell from the Sky," by Greg Holt, and "spooky or scary" stories provided by two women from Pueblo.

Saturday, May 12, is planned to begin at 9:00 a.m.

at Bent's Old Fort, with speakers, guided tours of the fort, a display of wagons, and living-history presentations. That evening, an after-diner visit to the Koshare Indian Museum and entertainment by Indian Dancers may be scheduled. Sunday's activities will provide time for a ride, walk, or drive along the Sante Fe Trail with opportunities for taking photographs and sketching. La Junta will be the nearest location for motels. Again, the schedule is tentative, so when the plans have firmed the information will be provided to you.

Since the conference bus tours are so popular, your board is looking into the feasibility of conducting a tour to historic sites along the Smoky Hill Trail between annual conference dates.

When the weather cooperates, the Mapping and

OVERLAND DESPATCH is the official publication of the Smoky Hill Trail Association, Inc., a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), corporation chartered in the State of Kansas. Primary missions of the Association are to preserve, protect, promote, and interpret the Smoky Hill Trail for the benefit of present and future generations, and to promote awareness of the historical legacy associated with remnants and locations that represent the historic trail and Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD) and its successors as well as the railroad that replaced the overland trail. Letters and articles are welcome, and they become the property of SmHTA and may be edited or abridged at the editor's discretion. All rights reserved.

Membership in the Association is open to all individuals, families, institutions, and businesses. Annual dues are \$25.00 for individuals, \$30.00 for families, \$40.00 for nonprofit organizations, \$50.00 for businesses, and \$100.00 for patrons. Life membership, individual or family, is \$500.00. Membership fees should be sent to Smoky Hill Trail Association, PO Box 322, WaKeeney KS 67672. Annual memberships are for the calendar year and expire on December 31. Other donations are always welcome.

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Marking Committee is continuing with site surveys along the Smoky Hill Trail in western Kansas. The last site survey team spent a day at the Smoky Hill Springs Station location and another day at the Eaton Station site in Russell Springs. More work is needed to identify the Smoky Hill Springs site, but the Eaton Station site has been reconfirmed. Much credit is due to the Colby Chapter of the Kansas Archeological Association and investigation leader, Nancy Arendt, in assuring that the site surveys are conducted professionally.

Our membership continues to grow and planning is in process for our 6th Annual Smoky Hill Trail Conference to be held in Abilene October 20-21, 2012. Mark your calendars now as you will want to include the conference in your 2012 scheduling.

I hope each of you have a happy and prosperous New Year! **Remember the Smoky Hill Trail!**

—Mike Baughn

DONNA MALSOM (continued from page 1)

in them.

It's amazing how big Donna's heart was. Her number one love was her granddaughter, Dylan. Next would be her close friends and family. Everyone who knew her, has their own special relationship and memories that will live on in each of us.

Donna loved Kansas History, especially the Collyer Community Alliance (CCA) and Smoky Hill Trail Association. Her participation was instrumental in their establishment and daily operations. She was very proud of the Collyer Community Alliance's achievements: Main street clean up, the painting of store fronts, the purchase of the Catholic Convent and Catholic school, and the thousands of volunteer hours that went into cleaning the property and renovating the convent into a Bed and Breakfast. Added to the clean up, the CCA upgraded and successfully renovated the city park into a functioning part of the city. Work on the sod house, dance hall, school, American Legion, creamery, and Coyote Point continues. We know Donna will watch and applaud the continuing CCA efforts from heaven.

Donna was the leader in the founding of the Smoky Hill Trail Association and served as vice president from the beginning in 2007 until her death. She was presented a special BOD Award by the Association in 2008, recognizing her leadership.

In describing Donna, there is so much to say. She was loving, passionate, kind, determined, tenacious as a visionary and leader, caring, loyal, humble, and never blew her own horn. She had a very dry sense of humor. If she thought you were not quite doing something the way it should be done, she would walk to you and softly whisper her opinions in your ear.

The funny thing is how much harder she was on herself; we often wonder what she whispered in her own ear. We have all marveled at the projects she undertook and the many revisions she made before it was good enough.

Donna loved cooking. She was attending the International Culinary School in Denver, CO, and would have graduated December 16, 2011. Her ultimate goal was to own and operate her own restaurant in the Coyote Point building. Her colleagues at school, who spoke very highly of Donna, believed in her and her restaurant vision.

Donna, you will be sadly missed. We love you and we're so blessed to have had you in our life.

Sincerely, Your Family and Friends

Memorials may be made to SmHTA. Remember the Smoky Hill Trail and Remember Donna Malsom.

A special tribute to Donna was presented by her family at the annual SmHTA conference in Oakley in October, and her article from the first issue of *Overland Despatch* describing the founding of the Smoky Hill Trail Association was read. To honor Donna's memory and her work for the Smoky Hill Trail Association, the SmHTA Board established the Donna Malsom Memorial Ambassador Award to be presented annually to an individual who has contributed above and beyond to preserve, protect, and promote the Smoky Hill Trail. Donna was a true ambassador for the trail, and this annual award will continue to remind us of her many contributions. A special award was presented to Donna's family at the annual conference on October 15. It reads: "In Memory of Donna Malsom (1956-2011), Founder of the Smoky Hill Trail Association and First Vice-President (2007-2011), the Donna Malsom Memorial Ambassador Award will be presented annually, honoring Donna as the First Ambassador of the Smoky Hill Trail Association."

BOARD NOMINATIONS NEEDED

THE SmHTA nominating committee, Bonita Oliva, chair, Kay Homewood, and Garry O'Hara, reminds everyone that nominations for officers and directors will be needed before the annual conference at Abilene in October. President Mike Baughn has announced that he will not serve another term in that office. If anyone is interested in serving as president or knows someone who is willing, please let the committee know. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected annually and directors are elected for two-year terms (three directors up for election this year). All incumbents are eligible to serve again. All nominees must agree in writing to serve if elected. Please submit nominations or suggestions for possible nominees to Bonita Oliva, PO Box 1, Woodston KS 67675 or <bonitaoliva@hotmail.com>.

KIOWA CREEK: FOUR TRAILS, FOUR STAGE STATIONS, ONE WATERWAY

by Lee Whiteley

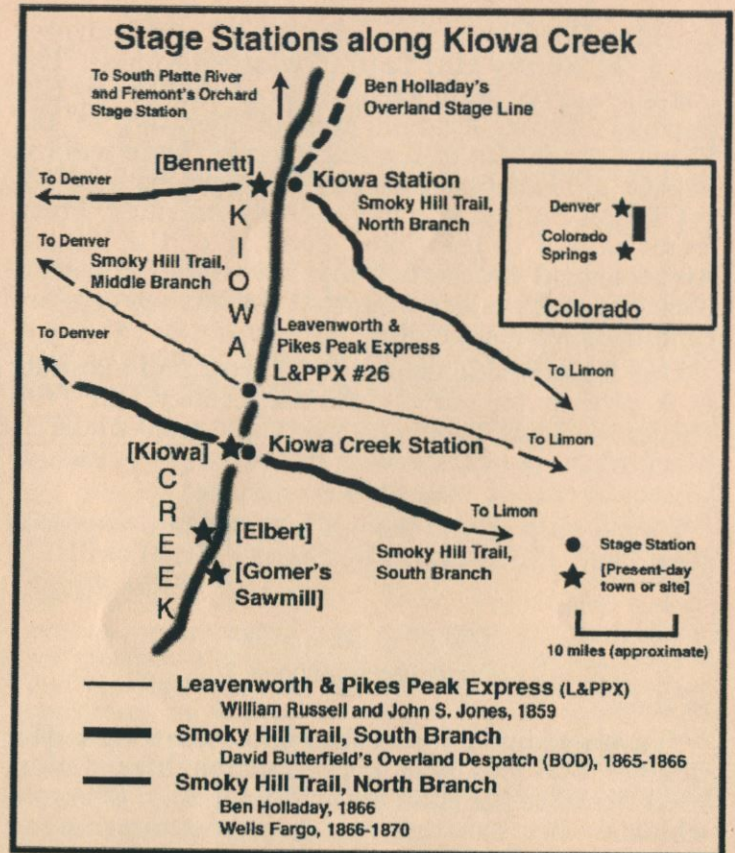
[Lee Whiteley is a member of the SmHTA Board, an authority on the trail in eastern Colorado, and a frequent contributor to Overland Despatch.]

KIOWA CREEK in east-central Colorado is a minor tributary of the South Platte River. Four Denver-bound gold-rush wagon trails crossed its waters or, more often, its dry sand-bed. The headwaters of Kiowa Creek are in the Black Forest on the Arkansas River-South Platte River Divide. This is 15 miles northeast of downtown Colorado Springs and 55 miles south-southeast of Denver. The creek cuts a north-northeast course for 100 miles, emptying into the South Platte River 15 miles west-northwest of Fort Morgan, and 65 miles northeast of Denver.

The Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express Company (L&PPX) ran the first stage coaches to the new gold-rush town of Denver in the spring of 1859. Stage stations were numbered 1 through 27, with Leavenworth #1 and Denver #27. Station #26 was located on the west bank of Kiowa Creek, five miles north of the present town of Kiowa. Four individuals, Horace Greeley, Albert D. Richardson, Henry Villard, and Libeus Barney, documented their experiences on the L&PPX. Barney noted: "May 6... Indians cease to excite even my curiosity. They are constantly following us, begging for tobacco, powder, caps, lead, blankets, sugar, coffee, etc. Encamped at sunset on the banks of Ciawah Creek. May 7-Left station 26 just after sunrise. Denver City twenty miles distant, and Pike's Peak looming up grandly, and its white surface brilliantly sparkling in the sunlight." Northwest of Limon, Colorado, the road became known as the Middle or Starvation Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail.

David Butterfield established his Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD), a stage and freighting business, in 1865. This route in Colorado became known as the South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. Kiowa Creek Station was established on Kiowa Creek at the present town of Kiowa. Bayard Taylor recorded in June 1866: "The view of the Rocky Mountains from the divide near Kiowa Creek is considered one of the finest in Colorado. From the breezy ridge, between scattered groups of pine, you look upon one hundred and fifty miles of the snowy range, from the Sangre de Cristo to the spurs away toward Laramie."

The *Denver City News* on September 9, 1865, ran the following notice: "The Butterfield Overland Dispatch..The teams belonging to the pioneer train of this enterprising company left yesterday for Kiowa creek, on the Smoky Hill route. Col. Eaton, the superintendent, informs us that he has contracted



here for lumber for all stations from here to Fort Ellsworth." Thirteen miles south of Kiowa Creek Station was the large sawmill operated by Phillip Gomer. Following are excerpts from an ad appearing in the *Rocky Mountain News* on March 7, 1870. "500 Teams Wanted! To haul 300,000 pine ties from the Divide to the line of the Railroad between Kit Carson and Denver. One hundred and twenty-five thousand of the ties are already out, and laying in piles of fifty each, in the Kiowa Pinery near Gomer's Mill."

In March of 1866, Ben Holladay, the "Stagecoach King," purchased the BOD and moved the route to what would be known as the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. Bayard Taylor noted the move: "From Hedinger's Lake [three miles southeast of Limon] to Denver a new cut-off has recently been made, shortening the distance about twenty miles. Ours was the last coach which passed over the old road, the stations and stock being taken up behind us, and transferred across the country to their new positions." One of Holladay's new stations was Kiowa Station, on Kiowa Creek, a mile east of present Bennett. Here the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail merged with Holladay's Overland Stage Line's Fort Morgan Cutoff.

East of the mouth of Kiowa Creek was Fremont's Orchard, a stage station on Holladay's Overland Stage Line from 1862 to 1864, the year the stage line moved to the Fort Morgan Cutoff. Frank Root, a

Holladay employee, noted the naming of Fremont's Orchard: "There was quite a cluster of stunted cottonwood trees in the bottom that looked much like an old Eastern apple orchard; hence the name of the station." Fremont's Orchard was located just east of the town of Orchard, used as the setting for the town "Centennial" in James Michener's television mini-series of the same name.

The Kansas Pacific Railway (originally Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division) followed the general course of the Smoky Hill Trail from Kansas City to Denver. It was completed in August of 1870 and crossed Kiowa Creek at present Bennett. On the night of May 21, 1878, a locomotive, tender, and nine freight cars plunged off the Kiowa Creek bridge and into the rain-swollen creek. Newspaper accounts noted the unsuccessful recovery of the engine. The reports stopped and the engine was assumed lost under the sand. Many attempts have been made over the years to locate the locomotive, including one by noted author Clive Cussler. An article in the *Colorado Rail Annual* 22, copyright 1997, noted evidence of the secret recovery of the "Lost Locomotive of Kiowa Creek." The *Kansas City Times* reported on August 30, 1878: "The Kansas Pacific engine which was lost in the quicksand some time ago has been recovered from its twenty-foot grave, and it passed east to Armstrong Monday night." The main repair shops of the Kansas Pacific were in Armstrong, now a part of Kansas City, Kansas. The lost locomotive article was written by the late Loyd Glasier, Smoky Hill Trail historian.

SMOKY HILL TRAIL BILL INTRODUCED

S. 1083, the Smoky Hill National Historic Trail Study Act, was introduced in the 112th Congress by KS Senator Jerry Moran and cosponsored by KS Senator Pat Roberts. After two readings it was assigned to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which assigned it to the Subcommittee on National Parks. Hearings were held in that committee on October 19, 2011. We still need to encourage more co-sponsorships of the bill. Ron Harris has been working to have a companion bill introduced in the House.

TREASURER'S REPORT ON 2011 CONFERENCE

by Treasurer Sam Chestnut

Financial report of the 2011 Conference held in Oakley, Kansas:

Total Income	\$9,083.00
Total Expenses	7,077.41
Net Income	\$2,005.59

Donated items and the lower-than-projected costs of several things contributed to the favorable outcome.

There are two items not included in the above:

The painting donated by Jerry Thomas was auctioned for \$350.00, which went into the general treasury. Income from the silent auction was \$755.50. This money is designated for the Mapping and Marking Committee.

TRAIL TREASURES

-DOCUMENTS-

Death Hollow

President Mike Baughn submitted this account of Death Hollow from William A. Bell's *New Tracks in North America* (London: Chapman and Hall & New York: Scribner, Walford & Co., 1870; reprint, Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, Publishers, 1965). Dr. Bell was part of a survey expedition organized in 1867 by the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division (later Kansas Pacific Railway Company), seeking the best route for a southern railway to the Pacific coast through Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and the southern part of California. The U. S. Government furnished escorts and transportation. Bell went as photographer and, shortly after they left, also fulfilled the role of physician.

They departed from Salina, at the time the terminal depot of the Railway, 471 miles west of the Mississippi, with twenty wagons, headed by three ambulances, with Gen. W. W. Wright in charge of the expedition. Bell recorded that they saw long ox-trains (as many as 80 wagons per train). Each wagon carried 6,000-8,000 pounds, drawn by 8-10 yoked oxen, each wagon with three "bull-whackers."

Bell's reflections on his visit to Death Hollow (from his book) are reprinted below:

June 23, 1867

At sunset, on this Sunday evening, unusual activity might have been seen in our camp. We had crossed the Smoky Hill Fork for the last time, and had pitched our tents on its banks, in a spot known as Death Hollow. The name was not a prepossessing one, but so many trains had been attacked there, and so much life had been taken on that piece of bottom-land, that it was, at all events, appropriate. Trains which camped there, it was said, were sure to be attacked; there were, however, three most tempting inducements to remain - abundance of wood, water and grass.

On one side were the bluffs, which abruptly separated the depressed valley from the general level of the plain. On the other flowed the stream, its banks clothed with willow, cottonwood trees, and tall rank grass; beyond were the bluffs of the opposite side, lying close to the river. About a mile farther up the stream, on a carpet of the greenest grass, beneath a cluster of large cotton-wood tree, the bleached skeletons of a great many buffalo lay altogether, showing that this place had been a favorite camping-ground for Indian hunting parties.

At seven o'clock we were roused from our languid

enjoyment of the cool evening breeze and the glorious sunset, by two or three shots fired in quick succession from the plains, and one return shot from our sentinel on the bluffs, who ran directly into camp crying "Indians! Indians!" In a moment we were ready, with our Spencer carbines in our hands; but we heard no war-whoop - saw no enemy. Two large objects, however, quickly came in view, which soon, developed into two stage-coaches, covered outside with soldiers and their rifles. These soldiers had mistaken our men on the bluffs for Indians, and had fired at them, at which our escort, who were mostly recruits and unaccustomed to being made targets of, thought that their end had come, and that the Indians were upon them "sure." . . .

Nearly a week before, the coaches had left Fort Wallace, and had tried to run the gauntlet together to Denver. . . . The stages had started eastward two days previously, and been driven back to the fort; but with indomitable perseverance, they had tried again, and this time successfully.

That night we dug rifle pits around our camp; and long shall I remember discussing with my companion of the watch as we sat together in one of them, whether a light that appeared suddenly over the opposite bluff was an Indian signal or only a star. The coyotes howled dismally all through the night, and at daybreak joined in a chorus of such unearthly yells, that some of the knowing ones in Indian warfare declared that these coyotes had no tails, but faces like red-men, and teeth made of lead.

TRAIL MYSTERIES

IN the last issue the site-study team asked for help in identifying an item found at one of the stage sites. There were four responses. They all felt it was either a toe or heel cap and the responses were two for a toe cap and two for a heel cap.

Here is another trail mystery. A newspaper article from the Rocky Mountain News Weekly, December 6, 1865, mentioned a BOD station named Grant Station. From the article it appears Grant Station was somewhere between Ruthton and Monument stations. No other mention of Grant Station has been

found. Can you help? If so, please email Lem Marsh at <smht1865drifter@st-tel.net>.

NEW SmHTA MEMBERSHIPS

New members since last issue.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS

Tom & Rosa Ahrens, 807 Amber, Oakley KS 67748
Robert Aiken & Ann Miner, 1835 Harvey Ave, Colby KS 67701

Ronald & Shirley Blaesi, 1130 Gooseberry Rd, Sharon Springs KS 67758

Daryl & Arletta Dickman, PO Box 126, Grinnell KS 67738

Don & Dee McElroy, 1830 110th Ave, Ellis KS 67637

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Nancy Arendt, 665 Cherokee Dr, Colby KS 67701

Dennis (Buz) Bruzina, 304 W Ash St, Junction City KS 66441

Shannon Cain, 3522 P Terr, Bogue KS 67625

Curt Fabrizius, 813 Russell Ave, WaKeeney KS 67672

Newton King, 828 Broadway, Lawrence KS 66044

Shawn Plummer, PO Box 26, Winona KS 67764

Irwin Porter, 2270 Castle Rock Rd, Quinter KS 67752

Earle Rice, 1280 E 8th St, Colby KS 67701

DeAnna Sabin, 9395 San Bernardino Rd, Rancho Cucamonga CA 91739

TRAIL CALENDAR

Everyone is invited to send notices for this section; provide location, date, time, and activity. Thank you.

May 11, 2012: SmHTA Board Meeting, Bent's Old Fort NHS

May 11-13, 2012: Transportation Weekend, Bent's Old Fort NHS

Oct. 19-22, 2012: Sixth Annual Smoky Hill Trail Association Conference, Abilene KS

Visit the web site:<www.smokyhilltrail.com>

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: APRIL 1, 2012

Smoky Hill Trail Association
PO Box 322
WaKeeney, KS 67672

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