



EDITOR'S PICK TOPICAL FEATURED

Construction of Mineral Wells multipurpose mountain bike trail underway

By Autumn Owens news1@weatherforddemocrat.com Aug 5, 2020



COURTESY| LARRY COLVIN

Members of the Weatherford Mountain Bike Club on a day of building the new Western Heritage Park Trail in Mineral Wells.



In the coming months, Mineral Wells will have an added amenity that will draw residents as well as outsiders — a multipurpose mountain bike trail.

The Western Heritage Park Trail at 3051 N. Oak Ave., will be just 1.6 miles from the Baker Hotel in downtown Mineral Wells.

“We were approached by two brothers, Will and Rhett Warren, and they both grew up in Mineral Wells and explored this park when they were kids. They’re both avid mountain bikers and discussed the potential of building a trail out there,” Weatherford Mountain Bike Club President Larry Colvin said. “We went out there and did a little discovery work and decided to move forward with the project and do it similar to the way we did the Parks of Aledo Trail. This trail has an interesting acronym, it’s Western Heritage Park Trail, so we’ve decided for short we’re going to call it the WHiP Trail.”

The Weatherford Mountain Bike Club has built two trails in Parker County — the Quanah Hill Trail in Weatherford and the Parks of Aledo Trail.

Will Warren said he and his brother approached Colvin in July of 2019.

“I’ve been riding mountain bikes since 1993 and this park was right next to where I grew up in Mineral Wells. I just always thought it would be the perfect location for mountain biking,” Warren said. “It had been closed for 30 years before the Texas Frontier Trail organization, which is a non-profit, opened it back up. I approached the Weatherford club, which Larry is the president of, and they agreed to help us get this project rolling. So we went and talked to Texas Frontier Trails and the Mineral Wells city council and got everything approved.”

Texas Frontier Trails, out of Mineral Wells, was founded in the early 1990s and works to promote western heritage and increase cultural tourism in North Texas through entertainment and educational events.

“It’s been about a year jumping through all the hoops and doing it right. Larry’s done three other wonderful trails — one in Weatherford, one in Aledo and one in Bridgeport — and we wanted to build something like Larry had built,” Warren said. “That’s why we’re really happy that he and the rest of the Weatherford club agreed to help us out.”

Colvin said the Warrens were able to raise enough funds to get the project kick-started and has set an opening date of October 1.

“We got started building this trail about eight weeks ago and the club has been out there volunteering when we can — dealing with COVID issues and all the social distancing has really limited the number of volunteers we can have out there. We’ve been very productive and I’ve been really impressed with what we’ve gotten done,” Colvin said. “We’re very optimistic that it will be up and ready to go by Oct. 1. It brings a new opportunity for another county, Palo Pinto County. They really don’t have a true mountain bike trail out there.”

Warren said as a physician, he’s been on promoting exercise.

“I am a huge proponent of exercise, people getting out and exercising, and this trail is not just for mountain bikers, it’s for hikers, trail runners and it’s just part of having a healthy community and having a place to get out and exercise,” Warren said. “That’s why I’m really big on this.”

Colvin said the WHiP Trail is what they call a technical trail.

“It’s a term used in mountain biking for a trail that’s difficult to ride,” Colvin said. “That being said, there will be three separate trails out there — one that’s very beginner-friendly, a second that’s more intermediate and then the third will be one that will be really challenging for most riders. So you can bring anybody out there and they’ll have a portion of the trail that they can enjoy.”

A fundraising effort is underway to raise \$7,000 by the end of September.

“The money that we raise between now and the end of September is going to be used to purchase tools to maintain the trail, help construct a kiosk at the trailhead — it’ll have a trail map on it and the rules of the trail — and then we’ll also use the money to buy infrastructure to mark the trail and then also provide a little bit of funding for the trail to get through the next year. It typically costs \$3,000 a year to maintain a mountain bike trail,” Colvin said. “If we’re successful and raise this money, the trail will be off to a really great start and we’ll be able to maintain it. We’ve just found that it’s smart that when you build a trail you have the people and infrastructure in place to take care of it.”

Warren said he’s extremely excited about the Western Heritage Park Trail.

“Every time I go out there to work on it, it’s a dream coming true,” Warren said. “I’ve been thinking about this for 27 years and when I realized that I’m actually going to be able to get off work and go ride in the evenings, I’m extremely excited.”

Colvin said he hopes the public will support the trail.

“We’re hoping people support the trail, it’s in Mineral Wells and the vast majority of mountain bikers here in North Texas live east of Fort Worth and what we have proven by starting a mountain bike club out here in Parker County is people are willing to get in their cars and drive to a quality trail,” Colvin said. “So we’re very optimistic that once people come out and give this trail a try, they’re really going to like it.”

For more information on the Western Heritage Park Trail visit the Weatherford Mountain Bike Club Facebook page.