KNOWLEDGE POINT NETWORK

OUTDOOR DISABLED VETERAN PROGRAM

The Track Chair Story

How one brother's idea, a borrowed chair and a lot of good people put veterans back where the trail goes.

IT STARTED WITH FRANK

Decades before Knowledge Point Network existed, Ed Ponikvar's brother Frank planted an idea: a veteran in a wheelchair should be able to go where the trail goes. Ed never let it go. He became the father of the KPN track chair transportation tool, and once KPN was founded in 2020, the idea finally had a home.

A VISION AND A BORROWED CHAIR

Ed's vision was to resource the chairs, and Jay Fondren made the first step possible by lending track chairs to KPN. Jay is a retired Army staff sergeant and chaplain, and a triple-amputee Purple Heart combat veteran of the war in Iraq. He also put his support in writing.

> *He calls Ed "a fixer" who "doesn't see problems only solutions."*
>
> Jay Fondren, letter of support for Ed Ponikvar and KPN, August 19, 2021

FROM MONTANA TO KODIAK ISLAND

Then the chairs went to work. KPN supplied them to veterans who fished in Montana and hunted off Kodiak Island. A chair that can cross rough ground turns "I used to do that" back into "Watch this."

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

The chairs are not only for fun. Alongside Dozer Dogz land stewardship work, KPN volunteer Charles Cook rides a track chair onto work sites to shoot elevation and inspect erosion and sheet-flow corridors. The same chair that reaches the trail now helps take care of it.



Sand, sun and salt water: a KPN track chair on the Texas coast.

INTO THE SALT WATER

Yes, the chairs go to the beach, right down into the salt water. Ed knew what that meant for the machines. In his words to the restoration crew: "That salt will eat that thing up." And in the next breath: "Yep and will fix it again so get busy living."

BOBCAT OF HOUSTON KEEPS THEM ROLLING

That is where Bobcat of Houston came in. A Bobcat of Houston grant underwrote the refurbishment, and in 2025 the chairs were restored at Cars & Coffee Garage in South Houston. KPN also thanks The Berry Company for its part in providing the track chair.

THE NEXT TRIP

Another trip is in the works for a Navy veteran, guided and supported by Zach Griffin, a retired Army combat veteran and ODV Program Coordinator. Zach later joined as co-founder of the Track Chair Adventure under the Outdoor Disabled Veteran Program, and the story keeps going.

HELP PUT ANOTHER VETERAN ON THE TRAIL

About **$4,500** funds one adventure day. About **$20,000** a year houses, maintains and transports each chair.

Give to the Track Chair Adventure

Request a device

RUN FOR IT

Bigfoot Running Company's **Legacy of Courage Half Marathon** on March 13, 2027 supports the Outdoor Disabled Veteran Program through KPN.

Sign up to run

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