



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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ADT Featured Trail: Tahoe Rim Trail



Overlooking the crystal clear blue waters of Lake Tahoe Photo courtesy of Michael Alvino

By Michael Alvino

At 6,200 feet high in the Sierra Nevada between Northern California and Nevada, rests gorgeous Lake Tahoe. The 165-mile Tahoe Rim Trail follows the towering ridges above the water, bringing hikers majestic views of the lake that Mark Twain called “the jewel of the Sierra.” The Tahoe Rim Trail stands as a proud accomplishment for the thousands of volunteers who worked together to build and maintain it, bringing a dream into reality.

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the Tahoe Rim Trail system to provide public access to the beauty of the Lake Tahoe region. The association’s projects include continuing to maintain the completed loop, building new connector trails, offering interpretive

programs, and sponsoring educational programs for kids.

The 165-mile loop takes hikers up 10,000 foot peaks, through lush meadows, past high alpine lakes, and over volcanic rock formations, and throughout it all are awe-inspiring views of Lake Tahoe. Visitors might encounter a black bear, marmot, or mountain lion all while stumbling through a blossoming field of wildflowers teaming with lupines, columbine, or Indian paintbrush. As hikers climb through stands of quaking aspen below the snow-covered peaks of the Desolation Wilderness, and past 400-year-old junipers jutting out from granite cliffs, the towering majesty of the Sierra becomes clearly evident.

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Lake Tahoe Quick Facts

Lake Tahoe is two-thirds in the state of California and one-third in the state of Nevada.

At 1,645 feet deep, it is the second deepest lake in the United States, after Crater Lake.

It is 22 miles long and 12 miles wide.

Sixty-three streams flow into Lake Tahoe but only one, the Truckee River, flows out.

Its average surface elevation is 6,225 feet above sea level.

The waters of Lake Tahoe do not flow into the ocean. The Truckee River, its only outlet, flows east through Reno and into Pyramid Lake in Nevada’s Great Basin.

The water in Lake Tahoe could cover a flat area the size of California by 14 inches.

Queen of Lakes

Conservationist John Muir first visited Lake Tahoe in October-November of 1873, calling it the “queen of lakes.” Writing his friend Jeanne Carr, he said he had “sauntered through the piney woods, pausing countless times to absorb the blue glimpses of the lake, all so heavenly clean, so terrestrial yet so openly spiritual.” He continued, “The soul of Indian summer is brooding this blue water, and it enters one’s being as nothing else does. Tahoe is surely not one but many. As I curve around its heads and bays and look far out on its level sky fairly tinted and fading in pensive air, I am reminded of all the mountain lakes I ever knew, as if this were a kind of water heaven to which they all had come.” [Source: *Letters to a Friend*, 1915].

Today, Michael Muir continues his great-grandfather’s commitment to conservation, outdoor recreation, and the environment by serving on the board of directors of the American Discovery Trail Society.

California: A Sign of the Times



Orinda, Calif., boasts a new sign welcoming newcomers to town and recognizing the American Discovery Trail with an 18-inch diameter logo. Near the ADT sign is a logo from the Orinda Roadrunners who provide support and trail work for the ADT. The trailhead is just 1.5 miles from the sign. Orinda was honored as a charter Trail Town USA winner some years ago.

Photo courtesy of John Fazel

Colorado: A Temporary Reroute

The confluence of the northern and southern routes of the American Discovery Trail in Sheridan, Colo. near Denver is undergoing a temporary relocation due to an extension of a road and the construction of a shopping center in the area. The temporary route includes about a two-mile section of the ADT and is expected to be in use for about one year.

When construction is completed, the confluence will move 1.5 miles closer to Denver. The ADT confluence sign, which was temporarily taken down, will be re-erected in a prominent spot near gardens, providing a more attractive and visible location.

Iowa: Bridging the Gap

The Maxwell City Council has approved plans to complete a bridge on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail. The Iowa Department of Transportation will furnish 80 percent of the cost of the project and has already given the city \$69,000 toward the cost of the bridge.

The Heart of Iowa Nature Trail is a part of the American Discovery Trail although only a portion of the trail is currently usable. As more of the trail opens up through progress such as this bridge, ADT users will be able to enjoy more and more on-trail experiences across Iowa.

Ohio: Building a Conestoga Cabin

By Pat Hayes, Ohio state coordinator

The Hueston Woods State Park trail crew was busy building a Conestoga cabin to serve as a trail center in southern Ohio this summer. The American Discovery Trail uses several Hueston Woods trails and roads. The cabin is located by Acton Lake near the bicycle rental area.

The construction on the Conestoga cabin began with a kit that arrived on June 29. Most of the pieces were stored in a 20-foot metal pod while the site was being prepared. Trail crew leader Bob Feldman decided to wait until after July 4th to start construction but by July 15th they had the walls up and were starting to put on the roof boards.

Feldman said, "The Conestoga cabin will accommodate the Hueston Woods trail crew, hikers, bikers, and other trail users. We plan to dedicate it to Dr. Paul Daniel." Paul Daniel is a past American Discovery Trail Society and Buckeye Trail Association board member and the previous ADT state coordinator for Ohio. The site will also feature ADT literature, maps, and signs.



The Conestoga cabin comes together. Photos courtesy of Bob Feldman

Indiana: Getting out on the Trail

2006 American Discovery Trail thru-hikers Randy and Sheri Propster have been touring the United States as Backpacker Magazine's "Get Out More Couple." They came to the Indianapolis, Ind., area in July as part of their mission to encourage readers to enjoy the outdoors and give trail and hiking tips. The event, held at The Extreme Outfitters in Carmel, allowed Swati Gunale, the ADT state coordinator for Northern Indiana, to visit with the Propsters and swap ADT stories.

Also in Indiana, the Great Greenway Bike Tour was held along the Cardinal Greenway, bringing out almost 400 people to experience the trail. The tour benefits the local cycling clubs as well as the Cardinal Greenway, which is part of the ADT. Gunale also participated in this event, biking over 100 miles.



Dean Barkley, owner of The Extreme Outfitters, Sheri Propster, Swati Gunale, and Randy Propster all enjoy helping people learn about and get out on trails. Photo courtesy of Jane Burwell

ADT Featured on Cable TV

The American Discovery Trail was recently featured on "Perils for Pedestrians," a monthly television series promoting awareness of issues affecting the safety of people who walk and bicycle. Ross Greathouse, American Discovery Trail Society board member and secretary, helped to showcase the ADT and the network of trails that can be used to cross the country.

The interview appears on public access cable stations in many cities across the United States and is also webcast on the Internet. You can view episode 125 at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7822287394531618637>.

It's nice to know that among those perils out there for pedestrians is also progress for those of us who choose a slower method of transportation.

Nebraska: All Decked Out



Photo courtesy of V.T. Miller

By Caryl Greathouse

Volunteers from the Great Plains Trails Association of Lincoln, Neb., are shown at work this summer on the Homestead Trail, which goes from Lincoln to Marysville, Kansas. The efforts of these men, who number at least 20, has saved \$70,000 worth of taxpayer money in decking bridges and adding railings on 14 bridges over 14 miles of an abandoned section of the Union Pacific Railroad. Third from the left in the photo is Ross Greathouse (in white cap) who serves as secretary of the ADT Society board of directors. Ross is an interior designer. Others pictured are a retired CEO of a major drug company, a retired structural engineer, a retired university professor, a retired actuary, and a human resources director.

Later, the University of Nebraska's cross-country team added their volunteer efforts to complete three additional bridges. They were able to learn new skills while getting a better understanding of the value of trails and the fun of trail work. This proves there's more than one way to meet the challenge of building trails!

The Homestead Trail will eventually be a connection between the northern and southern routes of the American Discovery Trail. Although not directly a part of the ADT, one of the goals of the American Discovery Trail is to promote a network of trails across the nation with the ADT as a "spine" to connect various trails together.

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Memberships and Donations

A membership in the American Discovery Trail Society helps to promote and sustain America's only cross-country non-motorized trail. It also makes a great gift for holidays or birthdays.

Each membership includes a member I.D. card, a lapel pin, and *Discover America* newsletter. Discovery and Life members also receive an ADT decal, patch, and guidebook.

- Yes, I want to be a part of this American adventure!
- Life Member - \$1,000
- Corporate Member - \$250
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The American Discovery Trail Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and donations may be tax deductible.

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2007 Long-Distance ADT Travelers As of September 26

It's been a busy summer for ADT hikers and bikers. Here's the progress at press time for this year's long-distance travelers. For more information, the ADT Society website, www.discoverytrail.org, has links to many of their journals for an in-depth look at their experiences and discoveries.

Traveler	Start Date	Mode	Heading	ADT Miles	Last Location
Mike & Crystal Davis with dog, Beaner	January 28	Hike/Bike	W	4,050	Beaver, Utah
Joyce & Peter Cottrell Hiking from Elizabethtown, Ohio to Denver, Colo.	April 2	Hike	W	1,800	Denver, Colo. Completed July 6
Trey Crispen	Mar 13	Hike	W	631	Burr Oak State Park, Ohio
Jim Hopson	April 30	Hike	W	2,023	Kansas City Has stopped for the season
Josh James	April 12	Hike	W	1,998	Council Grove, Kansas
Debbie Schachner Resumed April 21	2005	Hike	E	4,476	Harpers Ferry, W. Va.
Jim Shaner	2004	Walk	W	772	Londonderry, Ohio
Dave Toolan & Stuart Hamilton Resumed May 17	2006	Hike	W	3,519	Baker, Utah
Michael Daniel	June 17	Hike	W	1,039	Elizabethtown, Ohio



Peter and Joyce Cottrell hike Nebraska's Mo-Pac Trail. Photo courtesy of Ross Greathouse

Cottrells Hike It All

Peter and Joyce Cottrell of Whitefield, N.H., recently became the first people to backpack every single mile of the 6,800-mile-long American Discovery Trail.

In 2002–3 they hiked 5,058 miles on the ADT “southern” route from Cape

Henlopen, Del., through St. Louis and Kansas City, to Point Reyes, Calif. That effort took them through 13 states and they encountered flash floods, forest fires, knee-deep snow and blinding desert sandstorms. This year they completed the 1,800 mile “northern” route from Elizabethtown, Ohio, through Chicago and Omaha, to Denver, Colo.

Reflecting on their adventure, Joyce said, “The highlight has been the wonderful people we have met along the way. It took us by surprise to know the American people were so generous.”

Tahoe Rim Trail

(Continued from page 1)

Visitors will also experience the history of the Nevada mining boom of the Comstock era as they walk past long-defunct log flumes.

The Tahoe Rim Trail is unique in its multi-use distinction. The trail is open to hikers and equestrians, and in most places, mountain bikers. While some might anticipate user-group conflicts, the TRT has experienced positive interaction between outdoor enthusiasts, all looking to experience the wilderness in their own way.

The trail goes through two states, one state park, three national forests, three natural wilderness areas, and links up with the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and the American Discovery Trail. It is through these partnerships that the Tahoe Rim Trail has truly succeeded. The support of these partners and the help of thousands of volunteers have made the Tahoe Rim Trail one of the best hiking trails in the country, earning the National Recreation Trail designation.

The Tahoe Rim Trail offers something for everyone, from beginning hikers looking for that perfect view, to backpackers hoping to traverse all 165 miles, from children learning about the vibrant natural history of the area on our interpretive loop, to mountain bikers looking for the epic downhill.

ADT hikers heading west will be thrilled to climb out of the desert, and overlook the majesty of Lake Tahoe, walk through Jeffrey and ponderosa pines, and the green of Tahoe Meadows, all along what is one of best-maintained trails in the country.

Michael Alvino is an Americorps volunteer and the volunteer coordinator for the Tahoe Rim Trail Association.

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Scenic discoveries abound along the ADT. Long-distance hikers Mike and Crystal Davis enjoyed the beauty of Garden of the Gods in Colorado. Photo courtesy of Mike & Crystal Davis

Walking for the Health of It

Looking for a fun way to get your exercise? Percy Meriwether and his 16 co-workers decided to “walk” across the country on the American Discovery Trail without ever leaving town. As part of a company wellness activity, they each donned pedometers and kept track of their daily steps. Co-worker Alicia Hamlin would then convert those steps into combined miles and track their progress. They completed the miles in ten weeks.

To provide incentive and interest, Meriwether compiled a Power Point presentation of the sites they “saw” along the way. He said, “It made it more fun. People would comment on

the information they learned about the area. We all enjoyed seeing where we had been.”

Interested in a similar hike? A slide show about their adventure will be posted soon at www.discoverytrail.org.

Legislation Update

American Discovery Trail Society members report that they are making persistent efforts to encourage their representatives to sign on as a co-sponsor of the National Discovery Trails Act (H.R. 74). This bill will amend the National Trails System Act to include a new category of trails, National Discovery Trails, with the ADT being the first of them. With representatives’ offices so busy, it has been a challenge to get their attention for even worthy causes like ours, but we are making progress. We have 16 co-sponsors as of September 20.

Reese Lukei Jr., ADT Society vice-president of government affairs says, “Next year is the 40th anniversary of the National Trails System Act. We have something to celebrate with - the American Discovery Trail - a type of new national trail that brings trails right to the heart of our towns and cities where people need them and use them the most.”

Please continue to encourage your representative to sign on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 74. For more information on this bill, information on how to contact your representative, and sample letters you can use, visit the ADT Society website at www.discoverytrail.org.

Attention Federal Employees: Code 11245



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