



Discover America

Newsletter of the American Discovery Trail Society

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Autumn 2005

ADT Featured Trail: Cedar Valley Nature Trail

Governor Praises Iowa Trails Council Successes



Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack issued a proclamation recognizing the twentieth anniversary of the Iowa Trails Council this past year. The governor acclaimed that the ITC has pioneered trail achievements across the state. He also acknowledged that this has resulted in healthful outdoor opportunities for Iowans and visitors, provided significant economic benefits to the local communities, and protected natural corridors.

Governor Vilsack proclaimed his pleasure that the American Discovery Trail crosses Iowa, a state that has been a national leader in trail development and programs.

The American Discovery Trail Society would like to add its gratitude to Tom Neenan, the ADT Iowa state coordinator and founder of the Iowa Trails Council, for all his efforts on the behalf of trails in his state.

Bridge over the Cedar River on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail

Photo courtesy of Pastor Harold P. Martin

The state of Iowa is a leader in converting abandoned railroad right-of-ways into trails. The American Discovery Trail capitalizes on this by traversing 512 miles of Iowa, much of it on rail-trails. Dedicated in 1984, the Cedar Valley Nature Trail (CVNT) is one of those trails and one of our country's first rail-trail projects.

Starting in Hiawatha, near Cedar Rapids, the Cedar Valley Nature Trail traverses 52 miles along the Red Cedar River. It is already discovered and well-used by area residents, but the ADT brings national travelers to enjoy its lush forests, rolling farmland, classic small Iowa towns, and limestone outcroppings that edge the river.

Opportunities abound to view wildlife, wildflowers, and enjoy natural settings. There are even two 1,000-foot-long bridges over the Cedar River, which allow

a closer view of its waters.

The CVNT's northwest terminus is in Evansdale, near Waterloo and Cedar Falls. A number of connecting trails at each end of the trail lead into the nearby cities and a network of more than 70 miles of urban trails.

But these wonderful connections almost didn't happen. The CVNT is built on an Illinois Central Gulf railroad corridor that was abandoned in 1977. When Eileen Neenan, then mayor of Center Point, learned of the proposed abandonment, her husband Tom, chair of the Linn County Conservation Board, recognized its potential as a trail. He connected with other conservation-minded outdoor enthusiasts and began to form alliances.

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Along the Cedar River

Photo courtesy of Pastor Harold P. Martin



Reese Lukei (left) and Susan Moerschel present plaque to Jim Ippolito.

Photo courtesy of Reese Lukei

Ippolito Receives Award

Jim Ippolito, former ADT Delaware state coordinator, was given a plaque in recognition of his years of service to the ADT Society. The award was presented on National Trails Day at Cape Henlopen State Park, the eastern terminus of the ADT. Earlier in the day there was a trail-building event and picnic lunch.

Jim was presented the award by Reese Lukei, ADT vice president of government affairs, and Susan Moerschel, chief of the office of planning, grants and greenways in the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation. Cape Henlopen Park Superintendent Pat Cooper also attended.

Trail Signage and Publicity

Signage along the American Discovery Trail is still a work in progress. While some states, like Delaware, have helped to mark the trail themselves, other areas have not yet given permission for ADT markers. In these areas, trail users often rely on written descriptions from the ADT Data Books or information about the local trails that the ADT follows.

Ohio is working to keep the ADT in front of the public. Dan Gauntner reports in the July 28 issue of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that the South Western Ohio Trails Association has marked portions of the ADT in Ohio by putting stickers with the trail logo on the backs of street signs. This heightens awareness of the ADT and helps guide users.

SWOTA has also mounted a bronze plaque at Yeatman's Cove to publicize that the ADT comes through Cincinnati. Don Burrell, secretary of SWOTA, says it's a shame many people in the area don't know about the ADT. "I don't think people are even aware of it," Burrell said. "[But,] it's cool, because it's part of a national system."

Progress Along the Trail

Good things are happening all along the American Discovery Trail. Reroutes are getting more and more of the trail off roads. Mapping data is being field-checked and refined. More contacts with local groups are increasing our visibility and credibility. And more people are using and maintaining the trails. Here's a sampling of what we've accomplished.

In **California**, a rerouted section of the ADT at Lake Tahoe follows the Tahoe Rim Trail into Tahoe City and then the Truckee River Trail back to the original route. This brings trail users into town for resupplies and access to Lake Tahoe.

The **Utah** trail descriptions have been field-checked and updated in the ADT Data Books. They now include GPS coordinates for turns and much more detail, such as direction bearings.

Colorado is updating the trail descriptions to reflect changed conditions and adding bicycle- or horse-friendly alternative routes in places. Four new trails were completed and opened to ADT travelers: the Gold Camp Trail, Ute Pass Trail, New Santa Fe Trail (Extension), and Greenland Trail.

The Fifth Annual Colorado ADT Marathon was held on September 5 in Colorado Springs. A record number of entries included runners from many states. The event has become well-known and continues to grow every year. The marathon is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon and was named by *Trail Runner Magazine* as "one of America's top 20 trail marathons."

In **Kansas**, the Flint Hills Nature Trail is adding mileage around Ottawa, Coun-

cil Grove, and Herrington. The re-routes have added major historic sites to the ADT: the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farmstead in Olathe and the Kaw Indian Memorial in Council Grove. Additional re-routing is avoiding busy streets in Lawrence and Johnson counties.

Missouri has seen additional marking of the trail for Lewis and Clark campsites and other points of interest in connection with the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Nebraska is revising the approach to the Lied Platte River Bridge spanning the Platte River between Cass and Sarpy counties. Gary Gebhardt, the ADT Nebraska state coordinator, has been actively promoting a trail to extend the ADT to the

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People on the Trail— Coast-to-Coast Travelers

Each year more and more people seem to be tackling a trip across the whole country on the ADT. Their methods vary. Some do a state or a section at a time, while others want to go all the way in a continuous trip. Some are on horseback while others hike, bicycle, or even snowshoe. Some stick to the ADT route the entire way while others pick up adjacent trails to meet their needs.

The travelers themselves vary, too. Some are retired but others fit it into their work schedules. There are those who like to travel alone and those who travel with a spouse or other friends. Age doesn't seem to matter. Crossing the country appeals to people in their twenties or people who could qualify as senior citizens. The American Discovery Trail has something to offer everyone.

Here is a brief summary of those long-distance travelers who have been enjoying the ADT this year:

John Fazel, the ADT California state coordinator, is “sectioning” the trail by doing a portion every year. So far, he has logged over 3,000 miles using a combination of running, hiking, and mountain biking. This year he finished up Colorado and has only Utah and Nevada left to complete the entire ADT.

His trek through the Colorado Rockies took him over Argentine Pass and nine other passes over 10,000 feet high. While standing on top of 13,078-foot high Whale Peak on the Continental Divide he gazed down at a herd of over 100 elk. He had the feeling of being on top of the world and called it “one of the greatest days of my life.”

Suzanne Falksen has been riding her mountain bike across the ADT for four years. OK, maybe not continuously, but she did start in 2002 and has bicycled over 2,000 trail miles through Colorado, Nebraska, and parts of Utah. She has actually ridden almost twice that distance since she is supporting herself with her own car and must ride, turn around, and come back to the car.

East Meets West



The first-ever meeting of cross-country ADT travelers occurred on June 7, when eastbound Matt Parker and his horse, Silver, crossed paths with westbound hikers Ken and Marcia Powers. They met in Pomona Lake State Park in Kansas. Kansas ADT Coordinator Ron Ruoff and a reporter from the Ottawa Herald were there to share the moment as well.

Photo courtesy of Ken and Marcia Powers

Another section hiker is **Jim Shaner**, who is on a “One Nation Under God – Walk Across America.” As he walks he asks local residents what they would like for him to pray about in their area. He gets a chance to meet the people and makes a point of learning the history of each section he hikes. Shaner, who started his mission in October 2002, has logged a total of 543 miles to date on his westward hike.

Matt Parker has spent the last three summers riding a horse across the ADT. This year Matt resumed his journey in June from Allen, Kansas, and as of press time, was in Ohio with a total of over 3,000 miles in the saddle.

Matt began his journey in California in May 2003. He crossed the deserts and mountains of Nevada and Utah, while resting at ranches along the way, earning his keep by mending fences and herding cattle. In 2004, Matt crossed the Colorado Rocky Mountains and

the plains of Kansas before stopping due to severe winter weather.

“Sometimes I look at the trail as a job, sometimes I look at it with fear, but mostly I look at it as the adventure of a lifetime,” says Parker.

Ken and Marcia Powers sign off each of their website trail journals with the statement, Gottawalk. Indeed, they do. They have completed more than 4,000 miles of the ADT in their westbound thru-hike. They began their hike in February 2005, and have been hiking practically nonstop ever since. They had reached Nevada by September with a multitude of unique experiences along the way. Most recently, the Powers saw a herd of wild horses, hiked through the Duckwater Indian Reservation, found the water caches they had buried in the desert regions, and camped under starry, starry nights in the remote regions of the west.

Debbie Schachner left the West

(Continued on page 7, column 1)



The press was out in full force for the ADT bridge ribbon-cutting. Officials present included directors of Illinois' departments of transportation and natural resources.
 Photo courtesy of Chuck Oestreich

Mississippi River Bike and Pedestrian Bridge Opens

By Chuck Oestreich

Crossing the Mississippi River at the downstream tip of Arsenal Island between Rock Island, Ill., and Davenport, Iowa, has been a traffic-plagued battle for users of the American Discovery Trail, especially those on bikes. Sidewalks were minimal, with drop-offs into heavy traffic. But this key transit between two states is now a non-motorized joy.

A grand opening ribbon-cutting was held on August 30 for a bike and pedestrian bridge right next to a motor vehicle bridge over the rushing waters of Sylvan Slough—the arm of the river that goes around the historic Rock Island Arsenal Island—so walkers and cyclists can now enjoy unimpeded interstate connections.

Not only is the bridge a grand enhancement for recreationists, but since it's in the heart of the metropolitan Quad Cities area, it also is a viable transportation leg. Workers and shoppers on bikes or on foot, especially in this expensive gas era, will find the bridge crucial.

The bridge was a long-time dream in the heart of community planner Gary Vallem, whose untimely death came only six months before the bridge's opening. It took many years, much effort, and truly a community push to complete. All told, at least 10 governmental groups, private non-profits, and business enterprises joined together to build the bridge.

From the start the bridging effort across this scenic haven between large cities has been called the ADT Connection. Although that name is not official, it was the vision of the bridge as a part of a nationwide trail that generated results.

The American Discovery Trail continues to make good things happen.

Chuck Oestreich is the ADT's Northern Illinois coordinator.

Northern Illinois Closes in On Total Off-Road Route

Only about 15 miles (and a few short gaps) of on-road travel keep northern Illinois from being the first American Discovery Trail state to offer a true trail crossing from east to west, border to border.

And that 15 miles of trail is on track for being built. In the recent federal transportation bill, Illinois Rep. Jerry Weller earmarked \$800,000 for engineering of the missing route that would connect the Illinois & Michigan Canal and the Hennepin Canal trails as part of the 535-mile Grand Illinois Trail. Both of these trails, along with the Old Plank Road Trail, are on the ADT.

Trail enthusiasts recently held a meeting in Spring Valley to get the pedals turning and to congratulate Rep. Weller for his foresight, even though the 15 miles in question aren't even in his district.

Many advocacy group members attended, as well as state and local officials, including staff members of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, which would manage the trail once it is completed.

The speakers included ADT Northern Illinois Coordinator Chuck Oestreich. He reminded the group that this 15 miles will have national and even international significance, since it is a key link in the ADT.

The congressional appropriation is a significant start in the projected \$4 million trail section. But from the high level of energy exhibited by those at the meeting, it won't be long before people will be walking and biking completely through the Prairie State on a continuous green, non-motorized trail.

Making Connections...

Coast to Coast

American Discovery Trail Society

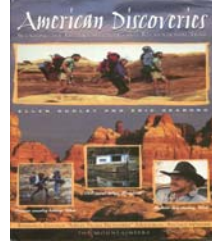
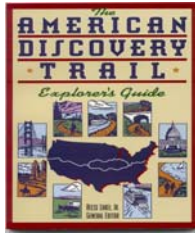
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American Discovery Trail Merchandise



ORDER FORM	Quantity	Price	Amount
The American Discovery Trail Explorer's Guide , by Reese Lukei, Jr., ADT National Coordinator Provides an overview of the trail and the vast resources that can be experienced along its route.		\$14.95	
American Discoveries - Scouting the First Coast-to-Coast Recreational Trail , by Eric Seaborg and Ellen Dudley - Describes the adventures while scouting the initial ADT route in 1991.		\$24.95	
ADT Trail Data (updated ADT Data Books of Bill and Laurie Foot, who hiked and biked the trail in 1997/1998). An excellent tool for detailed trip planning and on-the ground navigation. <input type="checkbox"/> DE to Cincinnati(Cin) <input type="checkbox"/> Cin to Denver (South) <input type="checkbox"/> Cin to Denver (North) <input type="checkbox"/> Denver to CA		\$15.00 ea.	
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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 a guidebook.

- Yes, I want to be a part of this American adventure!
- Life Member - \$1,000
 - Discovery Member - \$100
 - Family - \$50
 - Member - \$30

Did you know that the American Discovery Trail Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and your donations are tax deductible?

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Attention Federal Employees

The ADTS is participating again this year in the Combined Federal Campaign nationwide. Please consider a donation to the ADT Society when you give this year.

The ADTS donation number is 2350.



Many thanks to
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for its continued support of the
American Discovery Trail!

People on the Trail

(Continued from page 3)

Coast in May to hike across the ADT and raise funds to build a library in Kenya. But those high Sierra Nevada mountains received an enormous amount of snow this year and what was going to be a regular hiking trip turned into a snowshoe trek. Undeterred, she forged on and had reached 375 miles and Carson City, Nev., by July. After a break to wait for better weather, she plans to get back on the trail.

Schachner says, "The land was constantly changing from ocean to rolling hills, flat delta to the Sierras. The trail has so much to teach and I am eager to learn!"

Linda Losey is another horse rider on the ADT. Starting near San Diego and picking up the ADT in La Junta, Colo., Losey is riding across the country for a number of reasons.

"This is a healing journey," said Losey, an artist and writer by trade. "I decided to hit the ground running after going through my second divorce, losing my son in a tragic accident, starting a new job and taking care of three other children. I just needed to take some time for myself." She says she feels blessed by the support she has received and friends she has made along the way. It has been a life-changing journey.

Losey has reached Indiana and has ridden over 2,000 miles.

These long-distance ADT travelers are often a curiosity and inspiration to those they meet along the way. Many of them have been featured in newspaper articles that bring additional awareness of the ADT. But, also, many of them are helped by local residents they meet along the trail. They receive area trail knowledge, a drink of water, or local hospitality. The American Discovery Trail, by purposefully connecting the trails to towns and cities, helps both the ADT travelers and the communities along the trail to come to know others who lead different lives than themselves.

CVNT

(Continued from page 1)

At that time the idea of rail-trails was so new that many local residents and state government officials opposed such trails, fearing they would disrupt agriculture. Neenan reports, "It was one heck of a battle to get the job done. There were a few incidents of dropping trees, burning bridges, and spraying the trail, even laying boards with nails protruding under the surface of the trail."

But the Iowa Trails Council was founded and it eventually prevailed in obtaining state support for this project and later more than 50 similar rail-trails.

Fast-forward 20 years and you have a whole different story. Where farmers once feared that the trail might bring crime to their communities, they now appreciate the recreational and economic benefits the trail offers. Neenan chuckles, "Even those who were the chief opponents can be seen on their bikes on the trail today."

Trail users like to stop at the small communities along its path and visit the cafes and shops while the locals get to meet people from across the country enjoying their part of the world.

Most of the people on the trail come from the area and range from young people to senior citizens. To them, the trail is not only a way to reconnect the towns as the trains once did, but also a way to reconnect with nature.

The northern 15 miles and the first five miles at the southern end are paved while the remainder is crushed limestone. The trail is accessible for people with disabilities and appropriate for all types of bikes. As the original locomotives required a grade of 2 percent or less, the trail is flat over its entire length. It is also popular for walking, jogging, and cross-country skiing.

Beside the trail, the old railroad depots have been restored in Center Point and Gilbertville. Mile markers are posted along the trail.

Neenan relates, "The Cedar Valley Na-

ture Trail is a grand success today." Adds Laurie Foot, past ADT thru-traveler, "I remember how friendly the local communities were along the trail. It was great meeting those people."

Progress

(Continued from page 2)

center of Omaha, which resulted in the city council voting to accept federal funds to start the design process.

In **Ohio**, Buckeye Trail Association members have scheduled or completed 13 work days to maintain the parts of the Buckeye Trail that the ADT uses.

A seven-mile section of the Cardinal Greenway Trail in **Indiana** was opened, taking a few more miles off road in that state.

In **West Virginia**, the ADT Society is joining with others to preserve Blackwater Canyon, a key ADT section.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in **Maryland** this May to celebrate the addition of 2.1 miles to the Western Maryland Trail. The trail has helped to fuel the local economy and in 2004, had 76,000 visitors who pumped \$1.7 million into the economy of the Hancock area.

A 2.5-mile segment of the Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis Rail Trail was also dedicated recently. ADT Maryland State Coordinator Harry David Cyphers was featured in an article in the Carroll County *Gazette* about this accomplishment. This is another critical link in providing an off-road trail from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Bowie.

Delaware is in the process of developing a wayside exhibit at the eastern terminus of the ADT.



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Photo courtesy of Gary Ditsch

***National Trails Day:** June 4 was celebrated in Divide, Colo., by featuring a new four-mile long off-road section of the ADT from Woodland Park to Divide. The new trail gets ADT travelers off busy U.S. Highway 24. Trails enthusiasts christened the new ADT segment by hiking, jogging, mountain biking, and riding horses and donkeys. Some walked dogs from an animal rescue center and one person did the entire four miles on cross-country skis. Not much glide on the gravel!*

Bed & Breakfast Guide

The *Bed, Breakfast, and Biking Guide* for bike-friendly B&Bs and inns along the ADT, as well as other bike trails and routes, has recently been completed covering the route east of the Mississippi River and Iowa.

Pam and Don McMurray, the editors, noted that they did not include the southern leg of the ADT in Illinois since the River to River Trail is a hiking trail, but they will pick up the ADT west through Missouri. For more information, contact them at toll free, (866) 586-8057, or see www.BBBiking.com.

Travel Expo

Be sure to visit the American Discovery Trail Society's booth at the Adventures in Travel Expo in San Francisco. It is being held Nov. 12-13, 2005, at the Moscone Convention Center. We will be in booth # 1329.

Like the events the ADTS attended in Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C., this past winter, this expo will showcase exhibitors from all over the world representing destinations and services in the general, active, and adventure travel industry. A major sponsor is the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Backpacker Magazine
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